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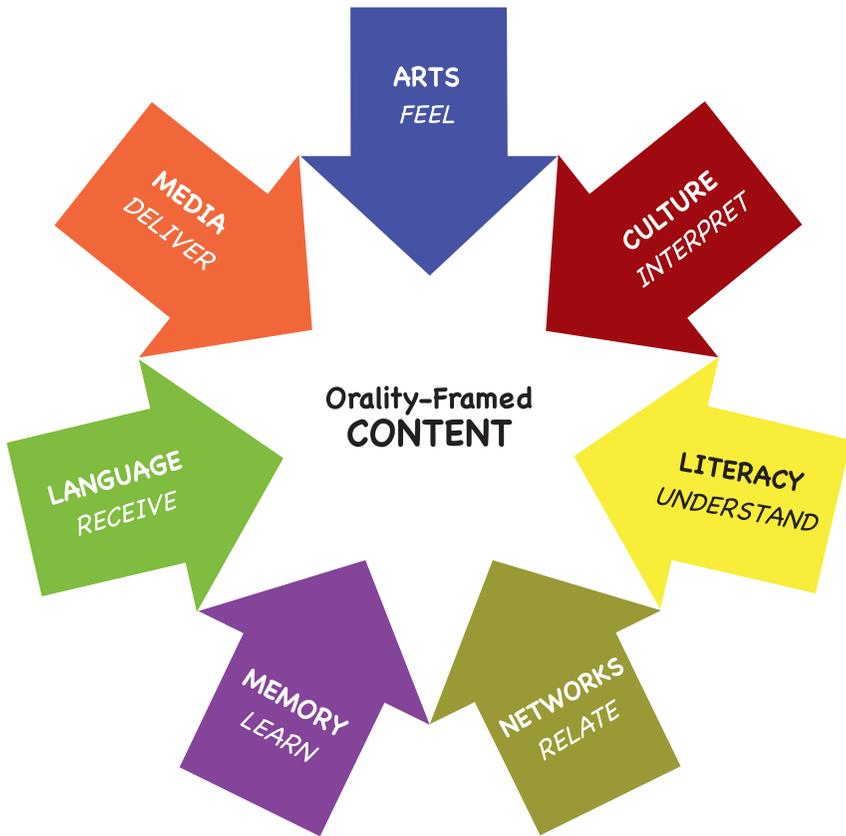
The Word Became Fresh



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-feratural*. 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 handling 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.



A Literate's Guide to the Oral Galaxy

Charles Madinger

Chuck Madinger has spent 27 years in missional vocational ministry and serves universities and seminaries teaching in the US and abroad. He has launched three mission and consulting organizations, helping to reach the Oral Majority with partners in over 20 countries, and is now completing a second doctorate in communication at the University of Kentucky.

A Literate's Guide to the Oral Galaxy | Part 1

Thomas Cahill described a few eras as hinges of history when doors opened that changed the course of the world—like the epic of *The Gifts of the Jews (How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels)* or *When the Irish Saved Civilization*. It's not like the world was transported (beamed over) to a new era. That took some time in the making. What was certain was that no culture would go untouched by these cataclysmic changes. Some eras were more than hinges. They were more like portals from one galaxy to the next, where those drawn through the gateway could never really come back.

Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg (now you know why we know him by last name only) gets credit for opening one of those portals from a world where in the 15th century more than 90% of the people on the planet could not read, and only the wealthy possessed the works

of art we now call books. That portal took us into the Gutenberg Galaxy (McLuhan 1962) and a world defined by textuality. But as Thomas Pettit describes, it was more of a “Gutenberg Parenthesis” or an interruption in the broader arc of human communication. He says that we are now, via the discursive architecture of the web, slowly returning to a state in which orality—conversation, gossip, the ephemeral—defines our media culture (Garber 2010).¹

It led to a world of the Digital Galaxy, and left us with the challenge of sharing a planet where people function in all three dimensions: orality, textuality, and digituality. The digital age was exemplified in Jonah Sachs' *Story Wars* this way: “Ideas today are never fixed: they're owned and modified by everyone. They move through networks at the will of their members and without that activity, they die.”² Curiously, Sachs doesn't see this as a new

phenomenon, but rather a return to the good old days, when stories were passed from one person to the next in the grand oral tradition. “In the broadcast era, access was power. And we developed all these bad habits when distribution was in the hands of a few. But now storytelling matters again” (Barrett 2012), and it’s coming digitally through Facebook to Ning.

Please, hear this article, do not simply read it. The style even betrays my academic fraternity, so don’t look for or take up the word-smithing tendencies that I normally do when reading a journal, because this is not intended to be an academic stake in the ground that once and for all defines orality for the missiological world. It’s not a theological apologetic for the eternal nature of God and our image-bearing dynamic of language producing, culture generating, speaking things into existence that were not before. It’s not a promotion of orality-framed methodologies like Bible storying, audio, or visual recordings. Finally, it’s not a prescriptive for engaging the Holy Spirit in our call to persuade the world to conversion and spiritual formation processes.³

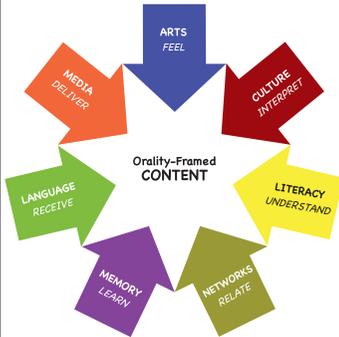
What the next few pages are meant to be is a call for further

thought, reflection, and research. The Holistic Model of Orality (see box on right) is not meant to be a formula or even a formal theory. The disciplines simply describe and relate to true research and the academic disciplines that should *inform and guide the steps* of our missiological strategies and any program or curriculum we hope to use among oral-preference learners as we move through the next portal into the digital age.

For now, let’s take a mental voyage to West Africa to work on a project with seasoned media professionals. Here you are working to produce a major program addressing your key subject matter. The group already understands their task of developing the agreed upon 13 episodes, and begins their conversation around the table.

“OK, let’s get to writing some scripts, and then start revising them together,” says one of the university-educated media specialists. The veteran called in to supervise the project stops them and redirects the process. “No, don’t leave yet. We need to stay at the table together and talk through each episode. Then, you can go write it down.” That’s another process—one driven by orality, not textuality.

Orality is simply the ways and means of communicating orally with either a preference over textuality (print) or to the exclusion of it. In purposes of mission, orality can be defined as “a complex of how oral cultures best receive, process, remember, and replicate (pass on) news, important information, and truths.”



How will our audience interpret the information we need to communicate? Who are they, and what makes them, and us, different? (**Culture**) How will they receive this information as relevant and applicable? What makes the good news good news to this people?

How will they readily receive the information as friendly? (**Language**) Does this sound like us, or is this another outsider?

Will they personally understand the information and terms? (**Literacy**) All too often, we want others to learn and use “our terms” so that “our message” gets traction using our well thought jargon rather than the colloquial terms of the grassroots.

What validates the message spreading it to a larger audience? (**Networks**) When working in primary oral cultures, who passes on information is more important than the information itself. How does that information travel through a village in order for it to be embraced, and how does it best move on to nearby neighbors?

What makes this information stick in the minds of the receivers, and will real learning take place? (**Memory**) The tools of cognitive psychology open passageways to store information or messages when we simply follow those learning paths.

How is the information packaged? (**Arts**) Most people remember a good story; they can chant back musical lyrics and sound bites from fifty years gone by, and turn on a sensation by watching a dance, or feeling the beats of drums can deliver a consistent message repeatedly so that oral learners often are transported into action.

By what method(s) is the message delivered? (**Media**) Nothing replaces the medium of face-to-face communication, but audience context, size, and channels have definite impacts on oral-preference learners and oral tradition cultures. **Mass Media** (large numbers of people massed together) creates a clear channel to send information, but lacks affinity, accountability or continuity for community action. **Collective Media or Meso Media** (seminars, conferences, church, or mosque gatherings) assemble people with greater affinity and some degree of accountability, but usually fall short of collective decision and action. **Micro Media** small face-to-face gatherings of connected people memorize whole sections after three repetitions. When all three forms are used in collaboration (mass, meso, and micro), the probability of transforming knowledge, attitudes, and practices increase dramatically.

These media professionals are no different than your mission organization, Bible school or seminary, or church with oral-preference learners. We have great messages, training, and programs, but we begin by processing in ways and means that make more sense to us than to our target audiences.

The veteran understands something that most of us don't: before composing and writing takes place, language and text are first oral. Jack Goody explains it this way: "The written word does not replace speech, any more than speech replaces gesture" (Goody 1968, 15-16). Walter Ong says, "Oral expression can exist and mostly has existed without any writing at all, writing never existed without orality" (Ong 1982, 8). Writing down our thoughts is important, but what precedes the writing is more important than the writing itself, and that is especially critical when working with oral tradition cultures and oral-preference learners.

What Is Orality—and Why Is It Important?

The dictionary states that orality is a reliance upon spoken, rather than written, language for communication. For our purposes in mission, orality can be defined as "a complex of how

oral cultures best receive, process, remember and replicate (pass on) news, important information, and truths" (Madinger 2010, 204). This explains why two of my heroes in the faith, Ray and Effie Giles, saw only modest growth in their early work in Ethiopia (using somewhat modified literate ways and means) until a young farmer took the gospel message he heard in the Sunday teaching and started singing it out in his field. When he returned to the assembly, the whole congregation sang it with him and learned it so well that other villagers heard the message and believed. Other villages heard the message in its "new song" and believed. A movement was born.

Why the term "orality"? Orality has been around for centuries, and used throughout multiple disciplines of study, but it's unfamiliar to a lot of people. It is similar to how we became accustomed to using the word "cancer", which Hippocrates coined around 400 BC from the Greek word for "crab" to describe ulcerations and growths—carcinomas and carcinoma.⁴ Cancer is a term used across every discipline. Orality enjoys that same broad use across disciplines.

Orality, as a topic of discussion and debate, played on the stage

as early as when Plato argued for moving completely to textuality, and Socrates insisted on the value of what we now call oral literature passed down in songs like those of Homer (e.g., the Iliad, with famous metered lines like, “Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth”). Old and New Testament scholars have long emphasized the oral nature of scripture and its teachings. The Bible as we know it did not even exist for the masses until the last 300 years or so, and the “first churches” passed along the stories and apostolic teaching primarily by orality, not textuality (the “early churches” had used both the oral and written approaches).

As a complex⁵, orality is an orientation of oral-preference learners, not just for oral tradition or non-literate cultures. We can frame that in a number ways:

- Reading literacy, where people range from non-readers/writers to proficient
- Ong’s *primary orality*, where aboriginal peoples still function

with no written language, and *secondary orality*, where electronic text and communication media emerge from reading literacy skills

- In more anthropological terms, as oral tradition cultures juxtaposed to lettered tradition cultures (see Figure 1), as will be discussed in the descriptive discipline of literacy

LETTERED CULTURES		ORAL CULTURES
Literary	COMMUNICATION	Oral
Institutional	LIFESTYLE	Communal
Individualism	TIME AND SPACE	Individualized Groups
Deferred	GRATIFICATION	Immediate
Linear	LIFE PERSPECTIVE	Circular
Individually Oriented	LEARNING PATTERNS	Group Oriented
Word is not the “thing”	LEXICON	Word is the “thing”
Figure 1. Tendencies ⁶ of Oral and Lettered Cultures. Adapted from Parker (1980, 45-48).		

Neither a dialectic nor about literacy vs. orality. We often hear of orality and textuality/literacy pitted as two contradictory concepts that only offer their solution, but neither orality nor literacy should be positioned in that manner. The thing itself, the sounded word that represents it, the technologies that archive it (from pictures to text), and our capacities to record it are part of the whole. Recapturing

orality is not a mandate to abandon or neglect literacy, but simply a description of another piece of the same puzzle. The literacy vs. orality is a biased and unhelpful dialectic when it comes to relating to a broad spectrum of people in oral or even highly textual societies.⁷ In fact, the orality movement explicitly calls for more efforts in teaching people how to read so that they can more clearly interact with the historically revealed word of God. At the same time, we realize that it typically takes 120 years for a primary oral culture to arrive at 30% literacy (Slack 2003). So what do we do in the meantime? And what of the fundamental characteristic of our being made in the image of a God who simply speaks to create things that were not there before? Missiologically, those who promote orality also call for teaching literacy, the need for all believers to be able to connect with the written historical word, and training leaders who can rightly divide it.

Not exhaustive. The disciplines that Ong referred to and I expanded with the Holistic Model by no means represent a static or exclusive taxonomy of characteristics or categories. Others may be even more applicable. Some may not be as relevant as others to a given

field of ministry. We know it is a good starting point, but experts in these and other disciplines must weigh in to help us design better tools and processes for reaching oral-preference learners. We also recognize the highly literate nature of the model, but view it on the same continuum from primary orality to high textuality, and it helps us conceptualize, plan, and act.

A frame to inform our strategies and instruction. The descriptive disciplines noted in Part 2 of this article and the related research disciplines intended to help teachers and practitioners fit their message and ministries to the oral-preference learners among whom they work. To the degree which we are willing to allow those disciplines to shape the message, program, or curriculum at hand is that which we allow our target audience to receive, process, remember, and pass on that message. Not only is this biblically and theoretically grounded, but I know from experience. We field tested it with three million people in Afghanistan, 750,000 in Sudan, over one million in East Africa, and another one million in Nigeria.

The problem is that we lived immersed in the literate/Gutenberg Galaxy for so long that we lost

our ability to *intentionally relate* to the Oral Galaxy that first defined us. Now we must move back in time in order to move forward into that next galactic experience of digital realities. Our unconscious textuality bias so dominates our missiological and pedagogical theory and practice that it suffocates any breath of air that our oral tradition partners and oral-preference learners might take on their own. We eliminated icons from the Eastern Church, physical gestures from the Latin Church, rhythm and drumming from African cultures, and the ties to our ancestors from our Asian brothers and sisters.

Why Is Orality Significant?

At least 80% of the world cannot or will not hear and understand our message when we communicate in literate ways and means. These people function as *oral-preference learners*. We can frame that in terms of reading literacy, Ong's primary orality and secondary orality categories, or in more anthropological terms as oral tradition cultures juxtaposed to lettered tradition cultures (Parker 1980, 3).

In light of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals promoting literacy, 80% sounds

high, but consider the massive growth of urban slums, where we find the lack of education among parents, young children, and orphans, and the decreased value of reading and writing. Canada alone will see a 25% decrease in reading skills by the year 2031.⁸ That goes along with the findings of James Slack (2003), who said that 20 million people are added to the ranks of the functionally non-literate every year, so that by the year 2050 there will be more functionally non-literate *people* than there are people living today.

This ranges from groups like the Kambari of northern Nigeria, who in one village surveyed only five people out of 200 (2.5%) who had any literacy skills at all. Or take Saudika, an Afghan who now lives in my hometown working in an Italian restaurant. She is the daughter of a wealthy merchant who educated her in English as much as possible during the era of Taliban dominance, and who before escaping to the U.S. through Pakistan had already born two young daughters. Once settled in her new home, her younger daughter developed an ear infection that required medical attention. When the doctor prescribed the antibiotic drops, she heard the pharmacist's directions, but the

dosage said “one *dropper*, three times per day.” She put one *drop* in the ears three times a day, resulting in total deafness from lack of treatment. She is not illiterate. She simply did not understand what she read, and the consequences will last a lifetime and beyond.

Now translate that to our sharing the good news. When our audience cannot receive and process the message the way we do as literate thinkers, they grow deaf to the message. We have the prescription, but it is not followed for lack of appropriate directions. *What is at stake?* We teach in our Bible schools and seminaries exclusively from our Textual Galaxy with residents of the Oral Galaxy, and our students model our text preferences and fail to connect with their own people.

We use evangelistic and discipleship methods designed for text-oriented learners, with Western worldviews, and we make converts who rarely find transformation in their own worlds. Those are negative realities, but now translate them into positives. Training Oral Galaxy residents using the principles and methods from their part of the universe while introducing them to the Textual Galaxy is seed planted in good soil. It yields a crop 100 times over.

They don’t hear or understand our message when we communicate with literate ways and means.

“Ways and means” often carries the meaning of the resources and methods of working especially with budgets. The ways of collecting revenue, and the means of distributing it. When we use those terms in communication, we are saying that there are *resources* (ways) we have of packaging our message, and *methods* (means) of delivering them.

Our *resources* (ways) for our programs come in the content we develop to reach people with the good news or help them grow in it. That content must connect with the real needs of the audience and how scripture applies to those needs from their perspective. The seven descriptive disciplines of orality (see Part 2 of this article) lead us to better *package* that message (*ways*) with cultural sensitivities (*culture*), put it in terms the audience can relate to and understand (*language* and *literacy*), use mnemonic tools to make sure the truth sticks (*memory*). We *deliver* the message (*means*) through locally-practiced *arts*, by *networks* of trusted relationships, and *media* forms that reach as far as we can and as deeply as possible.

A Literate's Guide to the Oral Galaxy | Part 2

We argue in this journal that the degree to which we frame our message for oral-preference learners and oral tradition cultures is the degree we allow that audience to receive and process the information for the Holy Spirit to bring deeper understanding and conviction. This is the foundation of the descriptive disciplines that follow. The more our audience understands, the more scripture does his work. As Professor Russell West of Asbury Theological Seminary explains,

God could have used mathematics to communicate his message to the world, and many of us would get it. The rest of us would simply have to say, "I guess that's just not for me." People might come to the faith because they feel the love of those converted through math, and they might even begin to understand some of it on an elementary level.

But, God did not use math symbols and equations. He used language symbols and utterances. He spoke through the prophets and his son (Heb. 1:1-3). Before he wrote the commandments in stone, he spoke in Hebrew to a prophet from the tribe of Levi.

The Complex of Descriptive Disciplines of Orality

The intent of this model is for academicians and practitioners to meet on common ground that may not precisely describe either side of the coin. Take the categories and seed thoughts from Appendix 1, and begin examining your ministry, programs, and instruction. Appendix 2 provides some definition and examples of theories. Let me take some time to explain the categories in Appendix 1.

Descriptive Disciplines (informative) aid us in defining the guiding principles of orality in practice by informing, describing, and helping us conceptualize orality. They are built on relationships with other disciplines in more general terms that help us get our mind around something very complex, yet very simple.

Research Disciplines (normative) give us the theoretical foundations and rules of engagement when it comes to the field of study. There are usually several research disciplines within each descriptive. Here is where we are woefully negligent in our field work of mission. For decades, SIL/Wycliffe and others have spoken into the issues of language and literacy.

Christian anthropologists and some theologians attempted to guide us through the landmines of contextualization and analyzing social networks before beginning our work. The arts and media ministries touch hearts by the millions, but we relegate them as an “add-on” to our grand curricula or programs. People who know education try to help us understand the ways people learn and how to create healthy learning environments, and we somehow dismiss that as not allowing the Holy Spirit to take our content and do something miraculous.

The point here is that as we integrate the disciplines of orality, we will design, implement, and practice better mission strategies among oral-preference learners and oral tradition cultures.

Issues are the cascade of questions that must be answered if we are to reach oral-preference learners. Each research discipline would look like an *information tree* informing us of a series of questions that lead to a series of questions that lead to questions until we are satisfied our message or program completely connects with our audience as best we can. Orality is the trunk, and the seven descriptive disciplines are the limbs informed by the branches of research disciplines with multiple factors represented by twigs that ultimately bear fruit.

Use media as a limb from the field of communication. The research disciplines branches within media could include mass, meso, and micro-mediated applications. Let’s say we want to micro-cast a specific message to a group with high affinity and high accountability, so we begin in that part of the information tree with questions like:

- What groups of five to ten people already naturally gather to share information or entertainment?
- Do we want to form new groups that also share a lot in common and are accountable to one another living among our target audience? Of those groups, who needs our message?
- Are there clear leaders of those groups (may well be unstructured and unofficial, but others look to for direction)? How often do they meet? Where do they meet? Do we know a gatekeeper in the group?
- How do we deliver the message and with what small media technology (cassette, DVD, VDC, MP3, MP4, community radio, etc.)? Who owns the technology? Who is responsible for the technology?
- How do we close the information loop so that we can evaluate the program?

Biblical Examples reinforce our efforts and give precedence for producing strategies and instruction with a view to how God designed us and the principles behind the methods rather than the example itself. If we hope to embed something in the memory of our group or movement, look to the example of God telling Moses, “Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites so that it may be a witness for me against them” (Deut. 31:19). Later, we see a story that permeates the whole culture as with Saul and David:

The women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands...
(1 Sam. 18:6-7)

A succession movement had begun.

Theoretical Grounding lies behind all scripture and every good practice. The key is not necessarily reproducing practices (development projects, Bible story sets, schools, community health evangelism plans, etc.), but knowing more of why they succeeded.

Following through with our example of the Song of Moses and Miriam, God knew that he could tell the people, “You need to be faithful, or you’ll face dire consequences.” But in a song we bypass logical, straightforward arguments and go right to the heart of things. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Cacioppo, Feng, Petty, Rodriguez, 1986) of psychology reinforces that and helps find creative ways of engaging a message to avoid distractive thoughts. We process messages either through a direct processing route or the peripheral route. Direct route processing calls for an argument. Peripheral route processing goes around the argumentation to a deeper place in the heart for association. It can be used or abused so that people don’t think. They act, then think about it later and longer.

Developing more effective training and memorable learning experiences are also aided by the *Social Cognitive Theory* (formerly social learning theory of Albert Bandura) that guides us into developing ministry where people learn from and with the experiences of others. Participatory communication theories show how to get people in the grassroots to define the key issues they face, how to address them, and how to decide on their own solutions.

We need the insights of Lev Vygotsky's and his *Zone of Proximal Development*, which shows how people learn when one who has less experience looks to one who has more, or Jerome Bruner's *Scaffolding Theory* (Wood, Bruner, and Ross 1976, 90), which helps us take people from where they are in their understanding, attitudes, and behaviors to move them to the next level. The point is that grounding theories keep us focused on the essentials of how God put us together, and our missional community needs outside voices speaking into our processes and strategies if we are to get better at our work.

Applying Orality to Work in the Field or Classroom: An Example

Through the degree to which we allow these seven descriptive (and other research) disciplines to inform and guide our strategies and instruction, we will find greater impact. We need to act as if we had a 7-person design team representing each discipline that would help our planning processes. The more questions they ask that guide us with good counsel, the better we'll connect with our oral-preference learners. Many of us spent anywhere from four to 12 years or more in formal higher education seeking others to train us for ministry and mission. Do

we now really believe we have all the answers? Ask more people with experience, get more answers to the right questions, and give your audience a better chance to really hear and understand your message.

Let's go back to our West African planning session of media specialists, and practice with those living in an Oral Galaxy. We're going to frame an entire program for an oral-preference learner audience of widows trying to learn entrepreneurial skills. We begin the storyboard for each episode, charting it on the whiteboard with a decision tree.

For the culture, we select the Hausa tribe and examples from some female heroes of the faith in Kaduna State, among the sub-tribe of the Nikyop ("Let's reason together"), and is one of the dialects heard in the closest major town of Kafanchan, "Kafa uku" (meaning, Three Legs). The network relationship we'll go through is with Hosea-David, the district head, living in the village of Ambam, along with the elders of that particular village.

We'll be using testimonies of successful regionally-recognized Christian business women, and capturing some of their messages in song. The women of the village will

learn and perform these together. Mnemonically, we'll add motions to the songs to aid the women in remembering the words about running a business by biblical principles and accurately passing them on to the next village.

To keep the biblically-grounded message consistent and to ensure they answer application questions we raise about the messages, we'll be using a small media player with internal memory for the recorded Bible translation in their heart language and an SD Card for the modular sessions on how to start and grow a micro-enterprise. The end goal is to ensure the widows have long-term income and renewed status in the community, and that they will learn the program well enough to take it to a nearby village with many Muslim women to start the program there. The small listening groups with Bible-centered messages may begin a whole church-planting movement.

Conclusion

For too long, we've lived in the Textuality Galaxy with little regard for the "deeper magic"⁹ at work among us in orality. It existed before the universe, and will go with us into eternity (Rev. 7:9-10; 15:3ff).¹⁰ Again, this message is not a call away from literacy, but a call to embrace

the totality of who we are as oral creatures, especially as we reach out to oral audiences. Having lived with textuality for so long, relearning our orality roots may take some intentional efforts. You'll go through that same learning curve from mechanical, to awkward, to novice, and eventually to unconsciously integrating orality with expertise.

This is a call for remembrance, reflection, research, and response. Some of us remember the days before the Sputnik, the Russian space program that put the first person in space, the Apollo program that took us to the moon and bred microwaves, Velcro, shrinking computer technologies, and new languages of the emerging Digital Galaxy. We were out of this world focused on new galaxies, but most of the next generations will never go there or even think in digital terms. They still live in the Oral Galaxy, with primary orality or oral tradition cultural values and practices.

Reflect on it. Living in the Oral Galaxy is not a bad thing, it's just a reality. Others moving into the Digital Galaxy do not remember what the world was like back then, but by a combination of creation design and the end of modernity, set out into the new galaxy with

a preference for oral and visual packaging (ways and means) of their information and learning.

How do we capture the best of how God made us as oral communicators and bring it with us in the new world? How do we connect with those who may never launch out to the new galaxy since they have to leave previous ways and means of learning and communication preferences behind?

Research! Don't just talk about, and don't just give your self-evaluated anecdotal evaluations and reports. We desperately need biblical scholars to drive the theological pilings in the ground, strengthening the foundation. We need experts from each of the research disciplines to inform and correct our novice notions of what they are spending their careers practicing. We need mission organizations and churches brave enough to put their work under the research microscope and do some pure qualitative and quantitative investigational labor. We must have collaboration and cooperation among schools, seminaries, funding partners, and the mission force to do any of this well. Who is training the new cadre of workers who eat, breathe, and think in digital terms? Who

trains leaders to connect with the grassroots in a purely orality-framed perspective, and not just methodologically giving them bible story sets to implement and diffuse.

Respond. Make some concrete plans, and let us know through the International Orality Network what your plans are for present and future work.¹¹ Get to International Orality Network-type events, read (yes read—you live in the Digital Galaxy), and publish new examples of how people practice orality—what principles seem to make it click in that context, and what might be generalized from those experiences. We need seminaries and Bible schools who will rethink their curricula and accreditation to find ways of training oral-tradition-background students beyond the constraints of textuality so that they can actually relate what they learned back home in an orality context.

The hinge is swinging. As you enter, how will you keep connected with the Oral Majority? What will you do differently to adapt to the new Digital Galaxy? What will you do to take the best of that new world to those who cannot get there yet?

Appendix A

Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
CULTURE	Cultural Anthropology	How do we make sense of this for our world?	Acts 14: healing at Lystra Acts 15: beyond Judaism	Performance Theory
	Theology	The nature of God as one who speaks, and that image of God in humanity.	Colossians 1:9-23	
LANGUAGE	Socio-Linguistics	How does our society shape the way we use our language?	John 19:26-27: "Dear woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'" Regional proverb spoken with meaning	Speech Act Theory
	Applied Linguistics	Factors of language learning. How does a language move to scripted technology? Discourse Analysis	Acts 17:16-34: Athens	Direct Method (For Language Learning)
	Semiotics	The use of symbols, signs, metaphors, etc. The meaning of words in their context	The Lord's Supper and baptism John 6:41: "I am the bread that came down from heaven."	Triadic Signs Model of Text Comprehension
	Lexicography	Mental Dictionary: "What does that word really mean for this people?"	John 1: THEOS	Modern Theory of Lexicographic

Appendix A Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
LITERACY	Language Arts	What is the value of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing among this people?	Revelation 1:3: “Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it.”	Socio-cultural Model
	Education/ Literacy	How do we contextualize and understand what we read/hear?	2 Peter 3:15-16: “...He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters.”	Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky) Interactive Theory
MEMORY	Cognitive Psychology	How the brain receives, stores, and retrieves information	Deuteronomy 31:19: “Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites so that it may be a witness for me against them.”	Elaboration Likelihood Model
	Educational Psychology & Behavioral Psychology	How we learn and respond in the most productive learning environment?	Acts 10: Why did Cornelius and his household needed to hear and respond collectively? Matthew 13:3: “He told them many things in parables”	Social Learning Theory Participatory Learning

Appendix A

Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
NETWORK	Sociology	How people function together	Mark 2:13-17: Jesus calls Levi, who then brings him to a gathering of his friends.	Socio-Ecological Model for Behavior Change Participatory Communication
	Network Analysis	The ties of social relationships		
ARTS	Performing Arts			
	Ethnomusicology	How does a culture embed its values in music?	Exodus 15:19-21: "Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.'"	Rice: Three Dimensions of Ethnomusicology
	Vocal Instrumental	How do we express ourselves emotively?	Psalm 150	Evolution of Music
	Dance	How do I "become" the message?	Jeremiah 31:13: "Then will their maidens dance and be glad." 2 Samuel 6:14: "David danced before the Lord with all his might."	Performance of Unity
	Narrative, Proverbs, Parables, Folktales, etc.	How do we relate truths in forms connected with life experiences?	Acts 7:1-50: Stephen's "Story of Our Fathers"	Acts 7:1-50: Stephen's "Story of Our Fathers"

Appendix A Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
ARTS	Visual & Graphic Arts			
	Sculpting	What can we make to represent the truth we know and cannot see?	Exodus 35:30: “Then Moses said to the Israelites, ‘See the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Jur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze. To cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship.’”	Religious Aesthetics
	Architecture	How might our buildings reflect our culture and values?	1 Chronicles 28:11: “Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement.”	Art and Worship
	Photography/ Digital Design	How do we preserve the images of our culture?	Revelation 1:11-12: “Write on the scroll what you see, and send it to the seven churches.” . . . “I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me.”	Christian Contemplative Practice
	Painting			Moral Foundations of Aesthetic Judgments

Appendix A

Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
ARTS	Decorative Arts			
	Jewelry		Exodus 39:8: “They fashioned the breast piece – the work of a skilled craftsman.”	Form and Function
	Clothing/ Fashion	How do we express our identity through what we wear?	Exodus 39:1: “From the blue, purple and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for ministering in the sanctuary. They also made sacred garments for Aaron, as the Lord commanded Moses.”	Fashion Code Theory
	Martial Arts	How can we use body movement to reinforce knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors?	By design	Brain based learning theory
MEDIA	Communication			
	Mass Media	Reaching large numbers of people with a message	Sermon on the Mount. “You have heard it said....but I tell you. . .” Joshua 8:34: “There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and the children, and the aliens who lived among them.”	Agenda Setting Message Framing

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Disciplines of Orality

Descriptive Discipline	Research Disciplines	Issues	Biblical Examples	Theoretical Grounding
MEDIA	Meso-Media	Reaching a middle-sized group with a message	Matthew 4:21: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues. . .”	Interaction Process Analysis
	Micro-Media	Reaching a small group with a focused message	Matthew 16:13: “When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’”	Participatory Communication

Appendix B

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Agenda Setting	We have the ability to affect how people think about a topic, help organize it, and tell others what to think about. What are the important issues to talk about? Through repeated exposure to a message (priming), the public agrees with that agenda (public agenda), which may then lead to setting a policy agenda and ultimately cultural change. www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLqOIeS6gX8
Brain-based Learning Theory	Orchestrated immersion, i.e., creating learning environments that fully immerse students in an educational experience. Relaxed alertness, i.e., trying to eliminate fear in learners, while maintaining a highly challenging environment. Active processing, i.e., allowing the learner to consolidate and internalize information by actively processing it. www.funderstanding.com/brain/brain-based-learning/#sthash.D0JsA8Ry.dpuf and www.ascd.org/publications/books/104013/chapters/movement-and-learning.aspx
Direct Method	Language is best learned by directly listening to and engaging in conversation versus learning grammar and vocabulary in rote exercise (Brown 1987). www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvtR0WI4ukc
Elaboration Likelihood Model	Persuasion can change or form attitudes via one of two routes: the Central Route (high elaboration) processes arguments with careful scrutiny, while the Peripheral Route (low elaboration) relies on credibility of the message and its presentation, as well as internal connection with it (Petty and Cacciopo 1986). changingminds.org/explanations/theories/elaboration_likelihoold.htm
Evolution of Music	While much of this field is Darwinian, it does speak to the place of music in cultures through the ages. "Today, music still serves the function of demarcating personal and group space, creating social cohesion, arousing to action and just pure enjoyment. Because of its ability to reawaken and allow us to re-experience primeval survival emotions, music is also cathartic and therapeutic" (Levman 2000). evolution of modern music; Greece to Renaissance ; A digitoralist commentary
Formative Processes in Music	How people historically construct, socially maintain, and individually create music through analytic procedures (Rice 1987). www.eltingo.org/images/Theories%20of%20Ethnomusicology.pdf
Model of Text Comprehension	We create representations in our mind of new words (vocabulary) that relate to our own experiences. People who have a preconceived notion and need for that item better remember the word (Kintsch 1998). psycnet.apa.org/?fa=main.doiLanding&doi=10.1037/0033-295X.95.2.163

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Fashion Code	Davis concludes that it is better to consider fashion as a code and not as a language, but a code that includes expression of such fundamental aspects of an individual as age, sex, status, occupation, and interest in fashion (Davis 1992). angelasancartier.net/theories-of-fashion
Interaction Process Analysis	Here, we analyze the contributions of group members in four general categories: (1) social emotional positive contributions, (2) social emotional negative contributions, (3) attempted answers, and (4) questions. By analyzing each group member, we can determine how to better engage each person relationally or move toward a collective task.
Message Framing	This relates to Agenda Setting and how we structure and organize a message so that it gives cues about how to understand the content about any issue. We can show either flattering or complementary pictures of someone or something, our choice of language, or even tone of voice used to frame how others perceive them. www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPqA07apDsk
Form and Function	The form and function of jewelry in most cultures with long history helps identify not only the affiliation, but status role in the community. But for more than adornment, jewelry is wealth to be displayed or bartered. www.contemporary-african-art.com/african-jewelry.html#sthash.Dmd6UKqJ.dpbs
Generative Music Theory	There rules (a grammar) for generating music that include: (1) grouping structure, i.e., any contiguous sequence of pitch events, drum beats, or the like can constitute a group; (2) metrical structure, i.e., “Every beat at a given level must also be a beat at all smaller levels present at that point in that piece”; (3) the smallest level of beat defines the time span; and (4) there is a single event in the underlying grouping structure. electro-music.com/forum/phpbb-files/replygenerativetheorytonalmusic_156.pdf
Modern Theory of Lexicology	Dictionaries (even mental dictionaries) are utility products for collective understanding (Bergenholtz and Tarp 2003). The concept of dictionary usage, 130.241.35.204/ojs/index.php/njes/article/viewFile/231/228
Moral Foundations	Addressing the question of why the pursuit of truth is no longer acceptable in academic circles even though it has been intrinsic to the purpose of art at most times and in most cultures. Without the pursuit of truth, of some degree of knowledge of what is true and good, the humanities necessarily lack intellectual and cultural grounding and purpose (Pontynen 2006).

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Oral-preference Learners	These are people who “can’t, don’t, or won’t” read to receive information and truth. They may live in a literate culture, but cannot read. They may be literate, but will not read since they prefer electronic media sources with high use of audio and visual presentation. www.mnnonline.org/article/16415
Oral Tradition Cultures	Cultures from Appalachia and Native Americans to the Australian Aborigines that value oral forms of communication and information archiving over literate. Their use of narrative, proverbs, song, genealogy, visual art, etc. with collective memory and processing are highly relational even as textuality spreads to and permeates their societies. fds.oup.com/www.oup.co.uk/pdf/0-19-925778-7.pdf
Participatory Communication	Participatory communication engages the people we hope to help at a level where they aid in defining the issues and participate in the decisions for solutions. It differs from “diffusion type communication,” where we take our message to other, and get them to agree to our definition of the problems and embrace the solutions we provide. Transformation is much more likely when communication comes from the bottom up rather than top down. web.idrc.ca/openebooks/066-7/
Performance Theory	In an oral tradition we need to look at the non-literal meaning of the words as they are spoken or “performed”, and see the communication performance as an event rather than simply a technology (Bauman 1974). www.faculty.de.gcsu.edu/~mmagouli/performance.htm
Performance of Unity	The performance of art forms (in this case, dance) help define the collective identity of a cultural group (Mendoza 2000). books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=z_TsK7LKCi0C&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=Performance+of+unity:+dance&ots=cPfBL8XPFH&sig=wN254ri5jO_TuJ5KnSEoCtYAKOc#v=onepage&q=Performance%20of%20unity%3A%20dance&f=False
Social Cognitive Theory	Individuals learn from watching other people in action. Implications of this theory come into play when we reach people that others watch for an example. Cornelius was well respected, and his family followed what they saw in him (Bandura 1977). www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMBlwjEoyj4
Social Ecological Theory	In order to understand human development, the entire ecological system in which growth occurs needs to be taken into account from the person outward to those closest, to the community, to the culture, and the society (Bronfenbrenner 1977). www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html

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Sociocultural Model	Reading and writing as we learn language in a literate culture is an autonomous activity that produces cognitive skills. In an oral culture we learn in social environments dependent upon one another, and we produce social achievement (Goody 1984).
Speech Act Theory	When you state / say / utter something, the act of speaking those particular words within your culture makes a declaration. Jesus makes an utterance act: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” With your shared understanding of his words, he is now making a propositional act (he is sending you). The message is an “illocutionary act,” because it makes you interpret the offer as an invitation. If you accept and affirm this statement (even non-verbally), he completed a successful “perlocutionary act” by your acceptance. Here is where knowing culture is essential (Littlejohn and Foss 2011). https://sites.google.com/a/sheffield.ac.uk/all-about-linguistics/branches/pragmatics/example-research-speech-act-theory
Textuality	The quality or use of language characteristic of written works as opposed to spoken usage (Oxford Dictionary). More so, it includes the very transition from hearing a word to recording it (Dressler 1986). Seven Standards of Textuality
Transportation Theory	The theory suggests that enjoyment can benefit from the experience of being immersed in a narrative world, as well as from the consequences of that immersion. Consequences implied by transportation theory include connections with characters and self-transformations (Green, Brock, and Kaufman 2006). onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2004.tb00317.x/abstract
Triadic Symbols	A sign, an object, and a meaning—all three elements form a triangle of meaning. The sign represents the object, or referent, in the mind of an interpreter. A cross, the word itself (sign)—the word is not the actual cross, it merely symbolizes one (the object) that has a meaning of execution to the first-century Jew (Parmentier 1985).
Zone of Proximal Development	In order for learning to happen through social connect with three concentric circles, we begin with the learner and what he or she can do on his or her own without help. We have a learning goal of what he or she cannot yet do (outer circle). The middle circle represents what he or she can do with assistance and some direction (Vygotsky 1978). www.youtube.com/watch?v=rX8lRh1u5iE

ⁱReferences in this appendix are listed in the full reference list at the end of Madinger’s main article.

¹See Megan Garber in the web article, <http://www.niemanlab.org/2010/04/the-gutenberg-parenthesis-thomas-pettitt-on-parallels-between-the-pre-print-era-and-our-own-internet-age/>

²We need to constantly revisit this term and concept, and publish more research and practices that navigate this new course. See especially the Editor's Note from the first and second issues of the *Orality Journal*.

³For more on these topics, read some of the experiences of Jim Slack, Rich Brown, Wayne Dye, Avery Willis, Mark Snowden, Grant Lovejoy, and the new pioneers of this renaissance (bibleandmission.redcliffe.org/resources/bible-and-orality/).

⁴See example, www.bordet.be/en/presentation/history/cancer_e/cancer1.htm

⁵Think of a school campus, corporate office buildings, or industrial areas. Every building houses some type of specialized function, but they collectively produce something much bigger. As a complex, the disciplines of orality do just that.

⁶These are not *typologies*, but *tendencies* and *preferences* that can be culturally learned but affect cognitive development.

⁷James Gee (1986, 719) points out that rather than thinking in previous dichotomies of oral/literate, literate/non-literate, civilized/primitive, and restricted literacy/full literacy, we see literacy as necessarily plural. There are different kinds of literacy.

⁸<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/ccl/Reports/ReadingFuture/LiteracyLevels.html>

⁹Used in the sense of C.S. Lewis with reference to the plan set in motion before time began for Aslan to sacrifice himself and take on the guilt of one condemned. Similarly, God gave us a power to connect at a much deeper level that could lead to transformation of those redeemed.

¹⁰<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtRmWb1YhQE>

¹¹Please do contact us at c.madinger@gmail.com (research task force) or www.oralcity.net/contactus

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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.



More Than Words: Linguistics, Language and Meaning

Gilles Gravelle

Gilles Gravelle is Director of Research and Innovation with The Seed Company. His research and writing focuses on translation, missiology, technology, and strategic planning with the goal of improving mission and ministry models in general and Bible translation practice in particular. His PhD is from Free University, Amsterdam. He bases out of his home in Seattle.

The seminal work of Erick Havelock and Walter Ong influenced our understanding of how primary oral cultures and print-oriented cultures communicate, process, and retain information. Havelock described orality as action or performance-oriented communication and literacy as syntactic linear sequencing (1984, 24-25). The former involves auditory processing, whereas the latter linear analysis of symbols. This assumes differences in thought processes, as Havelock and Ong have argued. Whether someone is speaking or writing, information is produced. How a listening and reading audience makes meaning out of that information in the process of translation is the subject of this article.

Linguistic Meaning

A structural functional understanding of linguistics says meaning is disembodied and represented by universal codes. The meaning is indicated through signs and symbols, such as alphabets,

characters, and sign language. In this light, translation “can be looked at as a process of substitution, in which one code for referring to a realm of universal forms is replaced with another code referring to the same realm” (Tymoczko 2010, 290). Maria Tymoczko points out how this model presents meaning as a relatively simple thing. It can be analyzed, understood, and then transferred into the code system of another language, hence the disembodied universality of meaning.

Linguistic universals are the forms and structures that all languages presumably utilize to generate meaning, and on the surface it seems to be consistent. Descriptive linguists can identify those universal syntactic operations in most any language. Syntactic positions indicate semantic roles. Changes in word order shift the role of subject and object. This is the translation theory of form and meaning; to decode and encode, a positivistic understanding of how

meaning is made. However, the turn to transdisciplinary studies in the field of translation is now challenging this notion of meaning and translation. Making meaning is perhaps more complex than we have imagined.

Where Does Meaning Reside?

This is not a recent question. During the last century, linguists such as Wilhelm von Humboldt and Benjamin Whorf believed meaning resided in language. Franz Boas hypothesized that meaning resided in the mind in the form of mental images (Slobin 1996, 72). If meaning resides in words within a syntactic structure (e.g., phrase, sentence, and paragraph), then the code model of translation seems predictable and thus workable.

However, Tymoczko questions the simplicity of this translation model. She argues that in addition to linguistic meaning, there is ideological meaning, metaphorical meaning, embodied meaning, and emotional meaning. Meaning is derived from genre and performatives. It is also derived from historical and cultural context. Embedded within these two contexts are situations, practices, customs, symbols, and qualities that all express meaning (2010, 282-284).

Rather than view all of this as meaning to be transferred in translation—if that were possible—Christiane Nord suggests that translators consider this meaning as information. She argues that only part of this complex web of information can be transferred in translation. Thus, “a translation is a new offer of information in the target culture about some information offered in the source culture and language” (1997, 26). Translators make choices over the information they deem necessary to bring into the local language and culture. How, then, do translators deal with meaning generated by non-linguistic signs? This is the Jakobsonian notion of intersemiotic translation.

Non-linguistic Meaning

Robert Hodgson explains, “Non-linguistic signs are potentially words, images, cultural artifacts, secret codes, thoughts, feelings, plants, animals, lines and colors, smells and tastes” (2007, 164). He also speaks of how the Bible has been translated in non-linguistic forms. That is, biblical information is communicated dynamically through performance in music, drama, dance, storytelling, and recording. The information is also communicated in a static way through sculpture, icons, mosaics, and stained glass. The receiving

culture makes meaning from these sorts of non-linguistic signs through the five senses of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell (2007, 167, 182).

Along with this linguistic and non-linguistic information, add the context-generated information a hearer or reader brings to the text being translated into his or her cultural setting—that is, his or her naturally-occurring biases, assumptions, experiences, knowledge, and perceptions. This is the filter he or she uses to make meaning from the information being transferred through translation. The combination of linguistic and non-linguistic signs represents a significant amount of information that a receiving language hearer or reader utilizes to make it meaningful in his or her own cultural context. It is clear that the linguistic code model seems like an oversimplified understanding of translation and meaning-making.

Embodied Meaning

Dan Slobin claims, “The language or languages we learn in childhood are not neutral coding systems of an objective reality. Rather, each one is a subjective orientation to the world of human experience, and this orientation affects the ways in which we think while speaking” (1996, 91). During the last decade, advances in

cognitive sciences support Slobin’s claim. Laboratory experiments in cognitive processing of information (i.e., thinking) suggests that instead of symbols conveying meaning, meaning could really be something much more closely intertwined with our experiences in the world. That is, meaning is not made away from our bodies—specifically our minds—but instead is tightly connected with our bodies (Bergen 2012, 12).

Studies using MRI imaging suggest that meaning is made in our minds through simulation. That is, “actively imagining or visualizing an action uses parts of the brain that actually control those imagined actions... That’s because, to a large extent, when we’re visualizing, our brain is doing the same thing it would in actual practice” (Bergen 2012, 25). The brain sends signals to the muscles to move them. It also does that when just imagining a movement, albeit at reduced levels so muscles don’t actually move.

Simulation involves seeing. Our visual system sees non-present things in the “mind’s eye” in the same way it sees present things in the world. So this means that thinking is performing. When you are seeing it in the mind’s eye, you are performing it in your mind, too. When you hear language about

things, like the action of running, you use the same brain pathways to visualize it as if you were actually doing it. It's not just vague perception. You construct very detailed meaning. You hear a sound in your mind. You see an action happening. You imagine a result.

Your mind's eye places you in a distinct position in relation to the thing you are visualizing. You visualize brilliant colors. You see all of this in your mind just from hearing or reading something. In other words, there is far more information encoded in your mind than what you draw from when hearing, reading, seeing, touching, or smelling something. All of that comes from experiences in the world. This is what embodied meaning is.

Bergen takes it a step further in saying, "If we use our brain systems for perception and action to understand, then the processes of meaning are dynamic and constructive. It's not about activating the right symbol; it's about dynamically constructing the right mental experience of the scene" (2012, 16). Therefore, the hypothesis states that meaning is not disembodied universal code represented by signs and symbols. Rather, the signs and symbols stimulate meaning that is already present in the brain through experiences.

If so, then meaning really is more of an embodied experience. Conjuring mental images is accessing embodied information (2012, 45). When you hear, read, or see, you are making meaning and not just decoding phonetic sounds in syntactic constructions or analyzing linguistic symbols in linear type face, according to Bergen.

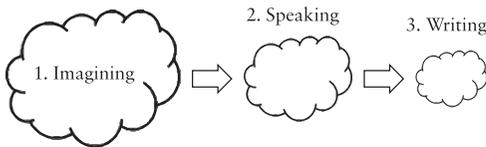
Mental and Oral Processing (or Thinking and Speaking)

Based on this understanding of where meaning resides and how meaning is made, what meaning-making process would benefit translators? Should they just mentally decode the meaning conveyed by the writing system of the source language and recode it in the target language writing system? Or would oral processing of the source language text with the target language audience produce clearer or more precise understanding of what should be conveyed in the target language translation?

Slobin says that when people are thinking, they are not so constrained by the grammaticalization patterns of their language. They can think more freely in concrete and abstract ways. But when they verbalize meaning, their language forces them to speak in more constrained ways according to how their language

works. Testing convinced Slobin that events involving seeing, as in seeing a story in a picture book, are experienced differently by speakers of different languages. That was evident in the process of making a verbalized story out of the pictures they looked at (1996, 88).

Therefore, orally processing a text with the target language audience would aid the translator and the audience in knowing what each of them understands the text to mean. First, as they act out the information in their mind (i.e., make meaning), then as they verbalize the information through oral language, which begins to reveal how they understand the text, and finally as they code the information in their written language. The following graphic illustrates the path and amount of information conveyed from imagining to speaking to writing the translated text.



The oral processing step (2) seems critical in helping a translator know how the audience understands the text to be translated. How does the audience imagine situations, actions, and timeframes from the

source text? What sort of non-linguistic information is shaping their understanding of it?

As Tymoczko and Nord say, there is far too much meaning that can be brought into a written translation. Nord believes that a translator must choose how much information to communicate in the translation. This means some negotiation must take place, assuming the translator works closely with the target audience. Oral processing allows for this sort of negotiation. The goal is to figure out what should be said or written and what should be left unsaid or unwritten.

What Does Worship Mean?

Consider the following example from the Meyah language of Indonesia. A Western translator wants to translate the concept of worship symbolized by the English verb (or noun) “worship” into Meyah. Thinking about the concept, the Western translator sees what worship is by visualizing it in his mind’s eye. What the translator visualizes will draw from his own experiences of worship. He will also draw from what he visualized in his mind’s eye while studying the word *proskuneo* “worship,” literally “bow low,” in the Koine Greek language context where it was

first used. According to the theory discussed in this paper, the translator is making meaning of it all.

The translator's thinking for speaking process requires him to communicate in another language, one that he learned. He receives help from Meyah speakers by asking them how they express "worship." But it's not a concept these Melanesian people have experienced. They understand "appease" or "pacify," but they don't understand worship. The former concept is typical of animist societies. Benevolence is not a characteristic of the spirit world in their experience, thus they do not worship those spirits, at least in the Western understanding of the word worship.

In addition, the English and Meyah grammaticalized forms force both language speakers to express worship differently. There is no way to reconcile the differences to produce the same meaning. Oral processing allows for meaning negotiation to take place. The translator and target language audience need to arrive at some degree of mutual understanding (i.e., agreement) of what "worship" means in Koine Greek—as far as one can know—and how that can be expressed in Meyah.

Abstract concepts, such as worship, are packed with complex intersemiotic

meaning—the sort mentioned earlier. It can't possibly all be translated from one language code into another through a word or phrase. Choices have to be made to capture in a coded word or a phrase so people in the source language and people in the target language understand those concepts to mean in generally the same way. It seems oral processing to negotiate understanding would aid in the translation process. This is because mental simulation helps the translator and the target language audience to see together what is meant to be conveyed in the word "worship."

Conclusion

Oral processors and print media processors mentally simulate the things they hear or read, according to Slobin and Bergen. Havelock says primary oral cultures process information differently. Slobin believes differences in meaning are apparent when speakers of different languages verbalize the same information, as testing has shown. Either way, oral processing of a text to be translated (or indeed, oral translation) could greatly aid in producing similar experiences in the mind of the receiving language speakers so that what they simulate matches, more or less, what is simulated in the mind of the source language oral or written text. That is a goal of translation.

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I Love to Learn but I Don't Like to Read: *The Rise of Secondary Oral Learning*¹

W. Jay Moon

W. Jay Moon is Associate Professor of Church Planting and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary. From 1992-2001, he was an SIM missionary among the primarily oral Builsa people in Ghana, West Africa, and focused on church planting and water development. His two upcoming books discuss oral discipleship.

The wrinkled brow and heavy sighs informed me that this seminary student was frustrated and discouraged. He plopped down in the chair, slumped down with his head resting on the seat back, and started talking. A slow trickle of emotion at first grew into a rushing river.

“I love to learn, but I don't like to read!” he started. “All of the reading assignments are weighing me down. I start a lot of interesting books, but I usually end up not finishing them. For my class assignments, it's even worse—it takes me an hour to write down on paper what would take me ten minutes to say out loud,” he continued. This river was now overflowing the banks, gathering increased force by the minute.

His next words burst forth like a call for help from a drowning victim, “Why are all of the assignments based on my ability to write down my thoughts anyway? It would

be much more efficient to speak to the professors and dialogue with students in class instead of writing it out. Furthermore, once I finish seminary, I will likely be evaluated by others based on how I communicate orally instead of in print.” Hopelessly, he sighed, “I feel like quitting school all together!”

Unfortunately, this student is not alone. The above fictional story is based on many conversations with seminary students who are oral learners. In a study over a 9-year period, 53.5 % of seminary students preferred oral learning compared to print learning. These are bright and dedicated students called by God for ministry, yet they prefer to learn and be transformed by oral means compared to print means.

Walter Ong (1982) used the term “secondary oral” learners to describe these students. In the 1980s, Ong observed that a new learning preference called “secondary orality” was occurring

due to recent technological advances such as television, radio, movies, etc. Secondary oral learners are those who have the ability to read and write, but they prefer to learn or process information by oral, rather than written, means, aided by electronic audio and visual communications (Lovejoy and Claydon 2005, 63–64). Rick Brown (2004) describes this historic shift as follows:

A general trend in history has been the progress from primary orality to some literacy with residual orality, and from then in some cases [e.g., U.S. academia] to a print-oriented culture. The modern trend is to move on to secondary orality, to a post-literate or multi-media culture...

Whereas previous generations in U.S. seminaries assumed that print-based means of teaching and assessing were effective to produce student learning and transformation, many contemporary students prefer to learn through oral means. Jonah

Sachs observed that contemporary learners are now accessing information through digital means, and they are exhibiting the characteristics of oral learners. As a result, he described these secondary oral learners using the term “digit-oral” as follows:

The oral tradition that dominated human experience for all but the last few hundred years is returning with a vengeance. It’s a monumental, epoch-making, totally unforeseen turn of events . . . our new digital culture of information sharing has so rejected the broadcast style and embraced key elements of oral traditions, that we might meaningfully call whatever’s coming next the digital era. (2012, 20)

While some have called this learning preference the “21st Century Literacy” (NMC 2005), the roots of this learning preference stretch far back into oral cultures. At one end of the continuum, primary oral learners cannot

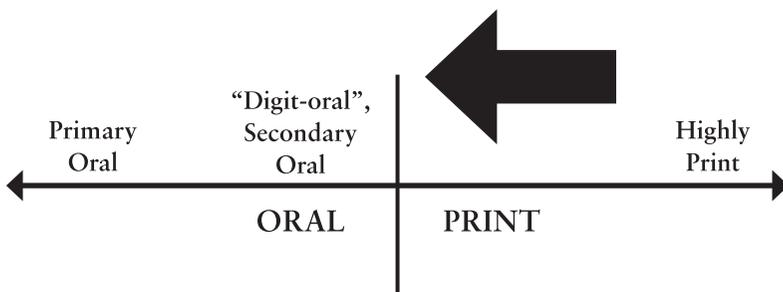


Figure 1. Shift in learning preference from print to oral.

read or write. At the other end of the continuum, there are highly print learners. In between, there is a range of learning preferences. The secondary oral learners fall near the middle, as they shift from a print to an oral learning preference as shown in Figure 1.

In this article, I will do two things: (1) describe the design of a 9-year research project among seminary students to quantify their preference for oral vs. print methods of learning and assessment and (2) summarize the data that demonstrates an increasing preference for oral learning of seminary students compared to the print learning preference of seminary faculty.

Background of Seminary Students Assessed

Over a period of nine years, 281 seminary students were assessed and observed in the classroom. The students came from various cultural backgrounds, as shown in Table 1:

Cultural Background	% of Students
African	4.6
Asian	6.8
Native American	1.8
North American	86.1
South/Central American	0.7

Table 1. Student Cultural Backgrounds.

The students were enrolled in the following degree programs:

Degree Program	% of Students
DMin	3.2
DMiss	0.7
MA/MDiv	87.5
North American	8.5

Table 2. Student Degree Programs

All of the students were enrolled in classes taught at Sioux Falls Seminary or Asbury Theological Seminary.² As evidenced above, the students were from diverse cultural backgrounds, and they were in various programs of study. The most common demographic or “typical student” studied, however, was a Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Divinity (MDiv) student from North America.³

Keep in mind that all of these students have completed an undergraduate degree (or the equivalent); therefore, they *can* read and write since they have completed the rigorous admissions standards for both seminaries (as required by accreditation standards). The question is not one of intelligence; rather, the questions are, “How do students prefer to learn and have their lives transformed? How can professors accurately teach and assess the students’

learning? Is this through oral or print methods and assessment instruments?” By answering these questions, students can move from frustration to learning.

Assessment Instrument

In order to assess a person’s learning preference, an “Orality Assessment Tool” was developed by Lynn L. Abney (based on Ong’s work) for use in primary oral cultures.⁴ To test the learning preferences

of secondary oral learners in a seminary, the students were asked to complete the “Learning Preference Assessment” (LPA) as a class assignment. The students were not informed that this assignment was to assess the preference of oral vs. print learning; rather, they were told that it simply assessed their learning preference without any correlation to intelligence or IQ. Table 3 highlights a few of the differences that were assessed.

Category	Oral Learners’ Preference	Print Learners’ Preference
Dialogue	Learn mostly in dialogue with others, often communicate in groups	Learn mostly alone, often communicate one-on-one
Oral Art	Appreciate clarity/style of speech through oral art forms (e.g., stories, proverbs, songs, drama)	Appreciate clarity/validity of reasoning through interesting literature
Experience	Learn best when teaching is connected to real events, people, and struggles of life	Learn by examining, analyzing, comparing, and classifying principles that are removed from actual people and struggles (events are examples)
Holism	View matters in the totality of their context, including everyone involved (holistically)	View matters abstractly and analytically (compartmentally)
Mnemonics	Mnemonic devices like stories, symbols, songs, rituals, repetition serve as valuable memory aids	Written words can be recalled later; therefore, value brevity and being concise. Stories merely help illustrate points
Participation	Respond to a speaker and participate in a storytelling event	Read alone and listen quietly

Table 3. Summary of Differences Measured in LPA.

The assessment consists of 40 questions with opposing pairs. The score for each question ranges between 0 and 4 for a total combined score on the assessment from 0 – 160. A score of 80 or below indicates that the student has a preference for oral learning, while a score of 81 or above indicates a print learning preference. Along the continuum of oral vs. print learning preferences, the combined scores fall into the following categories:

0-25: Primary oral. Someone who cannot read and write. Alternatively, the person has great difficulty or strongly dislikes reading. Thinking is shaped in oral patterns.

26-50: Highly oral. Highly values oral learning approaches due to personality, cultural background, and life experiences.

51-80: Oral tendency. Tendency toward oral thinking and learning. Secondary oral (digit-oral) learners often fit in here, as they transition between oral and print preferences.

81-120: Print tendency. Tendency toward print thinking and learning. Person has been schooled, but does not fully interiorize print learning as the highly print learners.

121-160: Highly print. A heavy emphasis on print has shaped the person's thinking/learning in print patterns. Shaped by extensive schooling.

Assessment Results

The test results of the 281 students indicate that the largest category of students falls in the oral tendency (47.5%). Combining this group with the primary oral and highly oral students, the total number of students with an oral learning preference (LPA score \leq 80) is 53.5%.⁵ The scores are shown below in Table 4.

Learning Preference	Primary Oral	Highly Oral	Oral Tendency	Print Tendency	Highly Print
(LPA Score Range)	(0-25)	(26-50)	(51-80)	(81-120)	(121-160)
% of students	0.5	5.5	47.5	42.5	4

Table 4. Learning Preferences of Seminary Students.

To compare the learning preferences of seminary students to that of seminary faculty, faculty from the following seminaries were asked to take the LPA as part of their faculty training:⁶ Sioux Falls Seminary in South Dakota, Baptist Theological Seminary of Richmond in Virginia, and William Carey International University in California. The test results of 23 faculty showed that the largest category of faculty falls in the print tendency (69.5%). There are no faculty members with a primary oral or highly oral preference, and only 21.5% of the faculty had an oral learning preference (LPA score ≤ 80). The results of the faculty assessments are in Table 5.

Learning Preference	<i>Primary Oral</i>	<i>Highly Oral</i>	<i>Oral Tendency</i>	<i>Print Tendency</i>	<i>Highly Print</i>
(LPA Score Range)	(0-25)	(26-50)	(51-80)	(81-120)	(121-160)
% of students	0	0	21.5	69.5	9

Table 5. Learning Preferences of Seminary Faculty.

Finally, I made a visit to LeTourneau University in 2013 to meet with 32 undergraduate students who were majoring in religious studies. Since this represents the likely rising seminary freshmen class, it would be instructive to see a snapshot of the learning preference for these future seminary students. The largest category of students falls in the oral tendency (65.5%). When combined with the primary oral and highly oral students, the Letourneau students with an oral learning preference (LPA ≤ 80) is a whopping 78%. Table 6 summarizes these results.

Learning Preference	<i>Primary Oral</i>	<i>Highly Oral</i>	<i>Oral Tendency</i>	<i>Print Tendency</i>	<i>Highly Print</i>
(LPA Score Range)	(0-25)	(26-50)	(51-80)	(81-120)	(121-160)
% of students	0	12.5	65.5	22	0

Table 6. Learning Preferences of LeTourneau University Religious Studies Students.

Comparison of LPA Results

Table 7 compares the above data in one table. Notice that the oral learning preference increases from the faculty to the seminary students to the LeTourneau students. The oral learning preference in the faculty is 21.5%, while this jumps to 53.5% for the seminary students. This huge gap indicates a likely source of misunderstanding in learning assessment and methods. An even more dramatic difference is observed in the LeTourneau University students who showed a whopping 78% oral learning preference compared to only 21.5 % for the seminary faculty. Clearly, the gap between the learning preferences of faculty vs. students is widening.

Learning Preference	Oral Learners	Print Learners
(LPA Score Range)	(≤ 80)	(> 80)
% of 23 Faculty	21.5	78.5
% of 281 Seminary Students	54	46
% of 32 LeTourneau Students	78	22

Table 7. Comparing LPA scores of Faculty, Seminary, and LeTourneau Students.

To track the increase in oral learning preference over time, the LPA scores for the seminary students were recorded for each year of testing. Table 8 shows the number of seminary students and percentage of those with an oral learning preference over the 9-year period.

Test Year	# Students Tested	# Students with LPA ≤ 80	% Oral Learners
2005	55	23	42
2006	24	13	54
2007	25	14	56
2008	68	37	54
2009	39	20	51
2010	15	10	67
2011	0	#####	#####
2012	0	#####	#####
2013	55	34	62

Table 8. Seminary Students' LPA Results over Time.

The last column in Table 8 demonstrates the increase in oral learning preference over a 9-year period from 42% to 62%. Plotting the percentage of oral learners over time portrays this upward trend.⁷ A linear regression of the data demonstrates a general increase in the percentage of oral learners over the 9-year research period. See Chart 1 below.

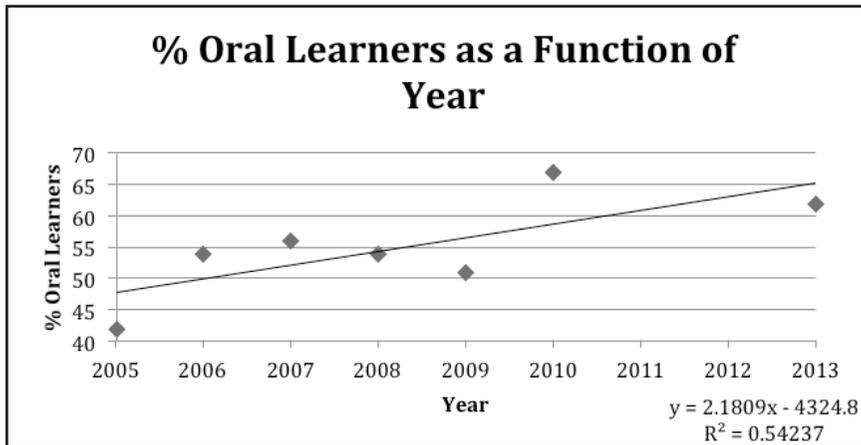


Chart 1. Seminary Students: % Oral Learners over Time.

This data suggests that there is a learning preference shift occurring in the seminary students that needs to be understood and addressed further. If faculty do not address this shift, seminary students who are gifted and called will continue to come to faculty offices with frustration.

Conclusion

The wrinkled brow and heavy sighs of frustration by the students described in the introduction are etched in my memory. These students were often defeated, questioned their own intelligence, and some even questioned their own call to ministry. I can only imagine the number of seminary students who never came to my office—they simply quit their seminary studies all together. The LPA gives an objective measure of

their preference for oral vs. print learning, which helps me to teach and assess their learning more effectively, as described by the following seminary student's email.

*Hello Dr. Moon,
 I just wanted to say thank you for the class this semester, but I also wanted to point out one element in particular that has really helped me professionally. The oral vs. literacy assessment*

has helped me understand my own learning preferences but it has also helped me understand my students. Since taking that assessment and learning what it means, I have shifted my thinking in teaching to recognize how this might affect my students of diverse backgrounds. We push the literacy model of teaching and testing and I have found that some students are having a hard time adjusting. I started to implement more story telling and oral based formative assessments to more accurately pinpoint if my students are actually learning. Paper and pencil tests do not portray the learning gains that oral students might show if they were given alternative options that fit their styles. As a result, I have seen students express what they know in new ways because of the adjustments I am making. There are many other elements

of the class that have helped me, but this one has made the most immediate impact in my teaching. My point is...Thank You. I am a better teacher because of this simple assessment.

Sincerely, Blair

Blair is recognizing the secondary oral learning preference shift that Ong first observed in the 1980s. Ong, however, had no idea that the explosion of digital media was just around the corner. The small flame of secondary oral learning has blazed into a brush fire of digit-oral learning. This has led to a significant increase in those who learn best and are most likely transformed when learning comes through oral means. Recognizing and adjusting to this oral learning preference can help move oral students from frustration to understanding.

¹Portions of this article were first printed in another article by the author. See Moon 2013.

²From 2005-2013, I taught Intercultural Studies classes at both seminaries. Dr. Terence Mournet taught New Testament classes at Sioux Falls Seminary for part of this time and conducted the same research. While I have an oral-learning preference, Mournet has a print-learning preference. Our hope is that both perspectives will inform and balance each other in the research.

³While we tried to gather as diverse a group as possible, we were limited by the students that were in the classes. I am proposing to do further studies to determine the effect of cultural background on oral vs. print-learning preference.

⁴This assessment tool was based on Ong's work "Orality and Literacy." See <http://orality.net/media/420>. The assessment was adapted by removing the category titles "Oral Communicators" and "Print Communicators." The research was then applied to seminary students instead of a primary oral audience; therefore, the learning style categories and descriptions were also adapted.

⁵This is the average of all of the scores over the 9-year test period. All of the percentages in the following data are rounded to the nearest 0.5%.

⁶For a further description of a faculty consultation by the author, see Moon 2013.

⁷The dips and spikes in the graph show that the data is not entirely consistent, but the linear regression indicates an overall upward trend. Further research should be conducted with larger sample sizes.

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Improving Memory for Bible Story Content by Using a Scene-Visualization Process

Mark A. Getz

Mark is a lay Bible teacher from central Illinois who for the past several years has been collaborating with professional storyteller John Walsh. They have been refining strategies to communicate the stories of the Bible within the basic storyline of Scripture using storytelling and active learning techniques.

Two people were walking down a road. They were so sad. As they talked, a man came up and walked along beside them. It was Jesus, but they were kept from recognizing him. In the ensuing conversation, the two explained to him about the events of the previous few days. They were confused about the report that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had hoped would be the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, had been seen alive three days after his murder and burial. Jesus rebuked them for being slow to believe the message of the Jewish prophets that the Messiah was destined to suffer before entering his glory.

The following statement in this story summarizes their next few hours of conversation in a way that redefined Jewish history forever: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).

The foundation of the biblical record is the historical storyline that culminates in the story of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. Many people would love to hear and understand this storyline if only someone would explain it to them. Besides this clear incentive to learn and tell the stories of the Bible, Jesus himself added further incentive when he charged his followers to communicate about himself in such a way that others would follow and obey him (Matt. 28:18-20).

Since the majority of the world prefers or needs on oral presentation of this material, an effective telling of the stories is important and strategic. Such an approach necessitates a simple and effective way for teachers to learn the stories. The purpose of this article is to consider how to best learn and relate a Bible story in a way that is reproducible and conducive to learning a large set of stories, one at a time.

The process outlined below is a collection of steps that were borrowed from many different biblical storytellers and after experimentation, knit together into a set of steps that seem to work well for many of the people who desire to tell Bible stories and learn this method. Feel free to pick and choose whatever steps work best for you and add them to your own personal learning process. But do hang on to other strategies that better fit your learning style.

The key steps in this process are summarized in the accompanying diagram and are detailed below. After I explain each step, I will give an example illustrating the step in italics.

Pre-learning: Choose a Designated Learner and a Story

Perhaps the most important step in learning a Bible story is to choose a designated listener (or audience) who wants to hear a story on a regular basis. This could be your children, grandchildren, a Sunday school class, a small group, nursing home residents, a friend, or an interested acquaintance. The discipline of learning typically only occurs on a regular basis if you are doing it for someone else. This step creates a sense

of obligation and a deadline—two elements crucial to ongoing learning.

Once the listener is chosen, it is time to start learning the Bible story. Although the stories can be taken straight from the Bible, it is usually easier to start with a story set that has been selected by experienced biblical storytellers. There are multiple resources that offer sample story sets from which to choose. An example of a focused story set can be found at www.btstories.com and a complete set can be found at www.bibletelling.org. Whatever source you use, the principles for learning the story are the same.

For the purpose of illustration, let's look at the story of Jesus calming the storm from Mark 4:35-41; 5:1 and follow four steps.

1. Read and summarize the story. Read the text or listen to a recording of it, then summarize the story in one or two sentences. You can do this out loud to yourself or preferably with a partner who is also interested in learning the story. (This is a different role than the designated listener and should ideally be a different person.) This step forces an integration and verbalization

of the story in the learner's mind. Therefore, don't retell the story using a long run-on sentence. Rather, sum up the story in a couple short phrases.

In our example, I would say out loud, "A terrible storm came up while Jesus and the disciples were crossing the lake. Jesus calmed the storm and the disciples were terrified."

2. Scenify and picturize the story.

Next, divide the story into scenes, or "scenify" the story. Changes in location or time are natural breaks. Ideally, there should be two to four scenes per story. Sketch the scenes on paper and add in any people or significant things that are present in the story. Sketch quickly. Do not take extra time to make a good drawing. The idea is to identify all the places, people, and things in the story. Now describe your drawing to your partner without retelling the detailed story.

In our example, I picture three scenes on the Sea of Galilee. The first scene is on the west bank, where Jesus and the disciples get into boats. The second scene is in the middle of the lake during the storm. The story finishes on the east side of the lake.

In the first scene, I include stick figures of Jesus, the disciples, and the crowd. There are several boats on the west bank and the sun sets farther west. One speech bubble would be drawn pointing to Jesus.

The scene in the middle of the lake contains a boat being rocked by waves. There is a storm cloud overhead. In the boat are the disciples, and Jesus is lying in the back of the boat on a cushion. There are four speech bubbles here—two for the disciples separated by two for Jesus.

The final scene has the boat arriving with all passengers on board on the east side of the calm lake.

3. Block and describe each scene.

The next step is the most crucial to the learning process. It is called "blocking the scene" and is analogous to the process a movie director would undergo to move the script from the page onto the stage. Designate areas in the room for each scene and mentally picture the people and "props" in front of you. Walk around the imagined scene, looking and pointing to where you have mentally placed each item. Next, explain to your partner (or aloud to yourself) what is in each scene, pointing to where you see it, and describe what you "see" happening.

Do not give into the temptation to tell the story at this point. Rather, just describe what you see and explain what happens in a summary form. You are blocking the scene, just as the movie director would do when explaining how he or she wants the scene to look to his or her cast. Once you have done this, the elements and flow of the story will be embedded in your mind.

In our example, I tend to block the geographic scenes as if I am standing in the north and looking toward the south. This places the lake in front of me with the west bank on stage right and the east bank on stage left. The storm occurs in front of me, in between myself and the person to whom I plan to tell the story. After placing the lake in the room, I walk from stage right to the middle and then finish on stage left, all the while pointing to the items as I picture and describe them.

The dialogue and narration parts of the story are the most difficult to learn. There are many techniques to help with this, but the truth is, this part will take more time and effort. Knowing how many “dialogue bubbles” occur in each scene and being able to quickly

summarize the flow of conversation is a good first step.

Sometimes, the main ideas can be represented by objects in the mental picture of the story that are “picked up” and talked about by the character. Hand gestures are especially helpful at representing the components of the dialogue and tying the thought-flow together. Sometimes, that dialogue just needs to be memorized. Work on the hard parts of the story separately and repeatedly until they are easily recalled. They will then fit smoothly into the more easily visualized parts of the story.

For the dialogue boxes in our story, in scene one, I picture Jesus pointing to the other side of the lake when he speaks and I point there myself when I say, “Let’s go over to the other side.” During the storm, I picture the disciples shaking Jesus, so I reach my hands down and shake Jesus when I say, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” Then, I raise my hands to the sky as Jesus rebukes the wind and says to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” My hands go palm up and then point to my heart as Jesus asks, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no

faith?” Then, the disciples point to Jesus, the sky, and the sea as they say, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

4. Read, tell, and repeat the story.

Now that you are finally ready to learn to tell the story, go back and read or listen to the story again while “seeing” where the words fit into your mental picture of the story.

Once you are ready, set aside the text and walk through the scene once again, but this time, instead of describing the scene, actually tell the Bible story. After you have stumbled through the story once, go back and reread it to see what you left out or inadvertently added. Now tell it again in the same manner. Repeat the process until you have it. The content of the Bible story should now be locked into your memory.

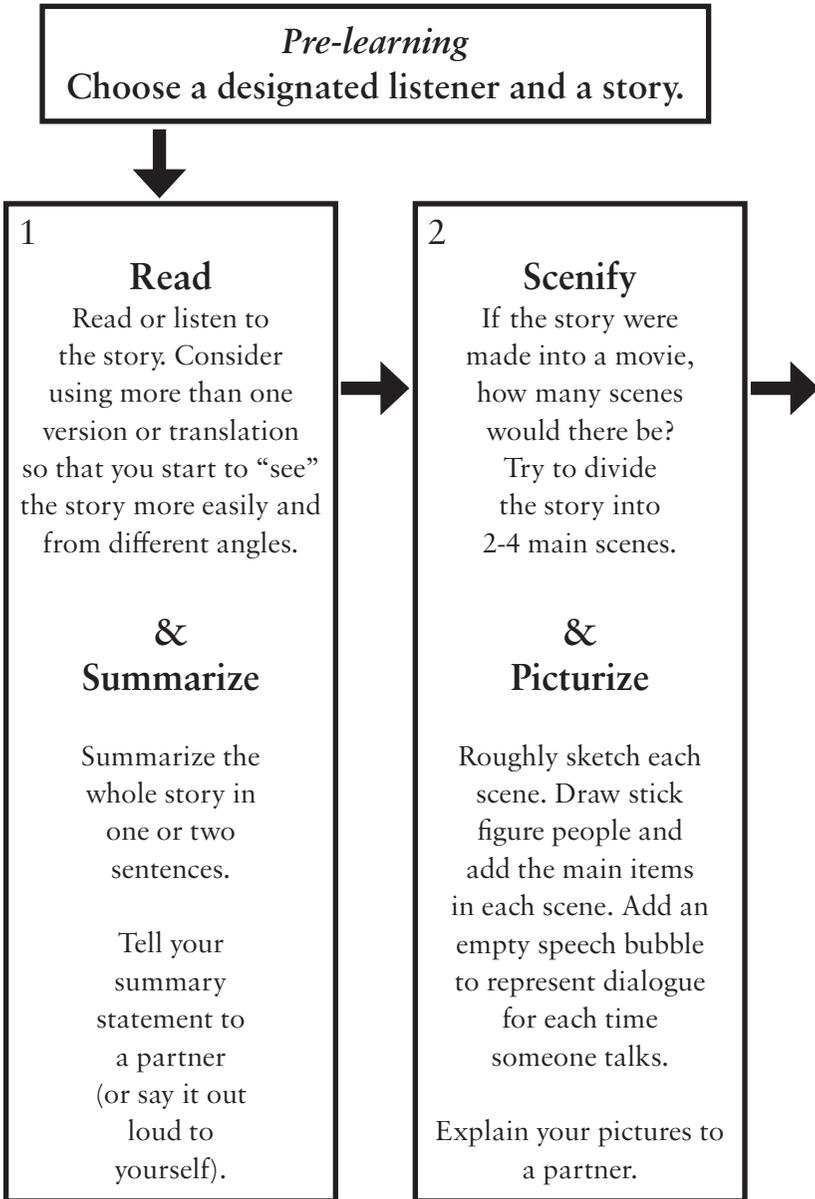
Post-learning: Tell the Story to Your Designated Listener

Now, go and tell the story to your designated listener(s) and anyone else who is willing to hear your story. Once you have told the story correctly about five times, it will be unforgettable. Interestingly, it will be fairly easy for the listener to repeat the story back verbatim, since a told story transfers that mental image so effectively that the story that has

become unforgettable for you will now be unforgettable for them.

As you tell the story, keep the picture and flow of events vivid in your mind. Tell the story slowly so your listener has time to develop the picture in his or her mind. If you forget a part of the story while telling it and remember it later in the telling, don’t get flustered. Just pause and say something like, “Now what I didn’t tell you was that Jesus had previously gone to the back of the boat and fallen asleep on a cushion.”

Any new process is difficult at first. Attempting to tell a Bible story is no different. However, those who walk through this process typically react with the statement, “I can do this!” Working with mental pictures first rather than just memorizing words may initially seem like an unnecessary extra step. However, once the process is learned, it usually speeds up learning and significantly improves long-term retention and recall. It also helps when translating the story to a different language or adjusting the story for time constraints. A commitment to learn and tell the stories of the Bible requires determination and effort, but hopefully these steps can make this goal more easily achievable.



Post-learning
Tell the story to your designated listener.

3

Block

Move the scene off the paper and into the room in front of you. Designate where in the room each scene occurs and where each person and item is placed and moves in the scene.

**&
Describe**

Walk through and around the scene in its location and describe where each person and item is placed.

Explain what happens in order just like a movie director would do for his cast. Describe, but do not tell the story in this step.

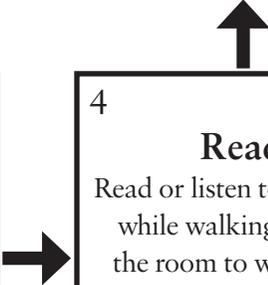
4

Read

Read or listen to the story while walking around the room to where you have placed each person and item in your mental scene. Attach the words of the story to your mental picture of the story.

**&
Tell**

Put the story text aside and now walk around the room and tell the story while “looking at” your mental picture of the story. Recheck the text for errors or omissions. Repeat the telling and checking process until you can tell the story accurately.





Leader Development and Orality: A Lab on Leadership Formation in the Church of Asia

Joseph W. Handley, Jr.

Joe Handley graduated Azusa Pacific University and then began working at the University's Office of World Missions. After working on his masters, the Lord called he and his wife to Rolling Hills Covenant Church in 1998, where Joe served as the Global Outreach Pastor. In June of 2008, Joe answered the call of God to become the new president of Asian Access; he is currently completing his PhD at Fuller Seminary.

At its core, Asian Access (A2) is about developing leaders who multiply churches that transform communities and nations across Asia. A2 believes that the local church is God's primary agent for spiritual and social transformation and that our best effort is to lift up seasoned, yet emerging young leaders to lead the Church.

This laboratory ('lab') series includes a number of case studies on leadership development from networks across Asia—some are connected to Asian Access, and all are connected to movements and networks in and of themselves. Most of the case studies pertain to networks other than A2; they represent the movement of God in Asia rather than the work of any one particular mission, network, or organization.

When I joined the mission five years ago, I knew that leader development and church multiplication were

key issues as the Global Church shifts from North to South and from West to East. These shifts are far more comprehensive than that popular slogan or jingle. They are evident in multiple arenas of faith and life and are addressed in this article.

A2's leadership model focuses on collaborative learning through cohorts of pastors over a 2-3-year period. This allows local leadership to sift through solid material and presentations brought in initially from the outside. These leaders then find ways to adapt and transform the learning into a local context.

While most of the pastors can read and write, their preferred and optimal learning style is oral, auditory, and sensory, rather than literary. This is pertinent because most of the educational and leadership formation models coming from the West are based on

readings, writing assignments, and a one-way, lecture-based pedagogy.

These pastors have expressed appreciation for community-based learning, experiential pedagogies, and learning through dialogue, rather than through reading. This lab will explore some of those stories, as well as interviews with other organizational leaders to discern how the Global Church can strengthen its effectiveness in developing leaders.

Cambodia

It was a thrill to attend one of my first leader development sessions with Asian Access in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Walking through what had been a notorious torture center during Pol Pot's reign of terror kept my attention focused and provided a gruesome pictorial of what I was hearing from each pastor. One of the pastors, formerly a brutal general during *The Killing Fields* era, had come to Christ. After graduating from the Asian Access leader development program, he went on to plant 30 churches near Siem Riep where many of the Khmer Rouge peoples lived. What a transformation!

As I attended the sessions, I was impressed with the written curriculum provided by the faculty

member. It was filled with practical examples of reproducing disciple-making leaders and emphasized being a leader in one's family. Upon meeting and hearing this faculty member share, I was entranced. I was so impressed with this trainer that I asked him, "Why would you come and teach 12 leaders in Cambodia when you are invited to train thousands in India?" His response was:

That's easy. Leverage and impact! Sharing here with 12 key influencers will have far more impact as we interact with one another than just me speaking to several thousands. We can **learn and process together**. In addition, Joe, I know that each of these leaders represents significant movements and/or denominations in this country and they are reproducing everything they learn.

The key phrase in his reply was "learn and process together." I was impressed with his content, delivery, preparation, and style; yet, when it came time for interaction, I noticed an odd, awkward silence. This went on day after day. Outside of the sessions, I played table tennis with the pastors and heard them staying up late at night processing what they learned. They were

gaining powerful insights, but they weren't sharing them during the sessions. As a newcomer, I saw my role as one of listener and learner.

By the end of the week, I asked the Cambodia national director what he thought of the session and how it went overall. This was insightful and significant since the faculty member who taught the session had received high ratings in India. In Cambodia, however, the national director told me that while the session went well and the pastors learned a lot, most of their learning took place with one another through their peer interaction between and after the sessions, not during.

While these pastors could read and write, the literary and lecture approach was not an effective learning environment for them. They preferred interaction and small group time to discuss and learn together. They were not as enamored as I had been by the volume of written materials and the words written on the white board! While the lectures were adequate, no time had been allotted for discussion in community with the faculty member.

These Cambodian leaders *took their learning to the street*. During

the times set aside for recreation and rest, they discussed, debated, and challenged one another in their own language. They stayed up late at night, sharing stories from their own lives and adapting what they were hearing into a format that worked better for them. They invested many "extra miles" together to get where they wanted to go.

Attending the session in Cambodia and getting feedback afterwards has been invaluable. Since then, we have started coaching the session directors, translators, and faculty on how to best facilitate learning in orality-based cultures.

This story highlights an important truth for leader development in the world today. The vast majority of the world—including literate and educated leaders—learn best in oral environments where they don't just read materials and listen to lectures. Rather, learning happens best when these leaders have the opportunity to engage with the faculty and one another, discussing how the new ideas might work or not work in their contexts and cultures. It happens through dialogue and discussion, debate and conversation, sharing and prayer—together.

More stories will follow in the coming lab of ideas...



The Arts: Effectively Packaging the Gospel for Oral Audiences

Erica Logan

Erica Logan is the Managing Director for Heart Sounds International (Operation Mobilization) helping ignite culturally relevant and biblically appropriate worship especially in places where Christ followers are restricted, persecuted or unknown. As an ethnomusicologist, Erica serves as an arts consultant and workshop facilitator for contextualizing the Gospel through indigenous expression.

“To understand just one life, you have to swallow the world.”

—Salmon Rushdie

The lights go down. The hustle and bustle of the crowd begins to fade. Only the crinkling of candy wrappers remains when a blanket of hush falls on the room. Your sense of excitement and expectation rises, when suddenly your ears are flooded with the sound of a magnificent fanfare and your eyes are drawn forward to the bright colors exploding on the giant screen. A wave of relief washes over you and you settle in, relaxing your mind. You know that for the next two hours, you are free. Free to watch, enjoy, cry, or hold on to the edge of your seat, traversing the spectrum of emotions as the story unfolds, the actors, sets, and storyline engrossing your mind and heart at will.

Sound familiar? It is the cinema—the arts at work. If you are a westerner, this is a familiar experience—one with high

expectations and symbols of significance that alert your senses that something important is happening. It is something worthy of your attention. You’ve planned ahead to be there at a certain time. You’ve gone to a special location. You’re eating particular food—popcorn—a signifier of fun to you. Your eyes, ears, mouth, even your body (in padded reclined seating) are all involved in a total experience. Now compare that to sitting in a lecture hall. Which is more memorable?

Even in Western-style churches where lecture-style presentations are common, the arts are present. There are colorful banners and greenery on stage, windows bursting with color, and people dressed in suits. All of these are artistic expressions that communicate value to audiences and signify a message worth remembering.

The combination of familiar sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and touch—multiple stimuli happening in expected ways—penetrate deeper into long-term memory. In his article on the seven disciplines of orality, Dr. Charles Madinger says it like this, “The arts penetrate the deepest recesses of the mind, challenge or affirm the values of the heart, and promote behavior that might never be realized without the power of these emotive mediums.” (Madinger, 2010, 208—209).

There is, however, a crucial distinction to be made. The general power that creative expression has to connect emotion, intellect, and action is universal, but the power of a specific art form to communicate a specific message in varying communities is not (in this case, a community may be defined by age, urban development, race, or gender, as well as the nations and people groups of whom we typically think). Going to a movie theater might evoke excitement and wonderment in one cultural setting. It might even be a wonderful bridge for telling the story.

But in a different cultural community, it might end up being an oddity that is difficult to replicate. It might be that the enduring things are shared in

the village square with dancing, singing, elaborate costumes, and roasted meat. A holistic message is better understood when it seamlessly connects the heart, mind, and body simultaneously in familiar ways. We listen more closely, think more deeply, and allow the familiar heart expressions of communication, native to our culture, to tell us how to be.

The arts are a vital form of communication, particularly between humanity and God. Every person, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender should have a clear path toward not only hearing about God but communing with him. Ron Man and other worship theologians speak of worship as a cycle of revelation and response: all that we are, responding to all that God is.

Biblical worship is not a time, a place, or a particular form, but a matter of the heart. It is when the praise in our hearts journey outward through our hands, our mouth, or our feet, that it then takes on a form. Everyone’s forms exist within a culture that shapes and guides it. It is this package of expression, containing within it the precious cargo of our deepest reasons for living, that is the arts—the singing-dancing-

wailing-storytelling-painting-carving-cooking-beading-weaving-hennaing package of expression from God's people. These expressions give worshipers a voice to speak.

Wycliffe missionaries Jack and Jo Popjes spent 22 years studying the Canela language in Brazil and translating the scriptures into the Canela language, but they were having difficulty understanding the Canela music. SIL ethnomusicologist Tom Avery came to help make sense of the complicated music system. After the idea of scripture songs was introduced to the Canela Christians, they began improving and making additions to Tom's suggestions.

In time, the Canela were using over half of their Bible study times to sing the new Canela hymns. With tears in his eyes, one Canela man told Jack, "You gave us the book in which God speaks to us, but your friend Tom gave us songs in which we speak to Him" (Popjes 2006, 148). Amazingly, until that point in time, the Canela Christians felt they were only having a one-way conversation with God. The Canela songs gave them a voice to talk back to him. By respecting and empowering these symbolic

expressions, we are paving the way for biblical *koinonia*—intimate participation with the fellowship of Christ.

In a recent article, Dr. Solomon Aryeetey, founder of Pioneers Africa, boldly pleads with the Western Church to allow the Majority World to co-create with them. He says:

Contrary to what is widely believed in many evangelical circles, and even in many great centers of theological and missiological thought, the end result of all missionary work is not the planting of churches. Neither is it even the establishment of church-planting movements.

The final product is a Bride for a Bridegroom. A Bride without spot or wrinkle, a Bride which is an amalgamation of every identifiable segment of the worldwide Body of Believers in the Lord Jesus. Each segment is given the space and the opportunity to bring its God-ordained unique contribution to the table. And every segment, out of a deep sense of the beauty and ingenuity of our God, wholeheartedly celebrates and embraces this wonderful diversity. (170)

He boldly goes on to say:

God is supremely glorified when we [the Majority world] too celebrate what he has done in us! It is not yours [the Western Church] to dictate what product we bring to the table. That remains a sacred transaction between God and us....

The Holy Spirit has been cultivating eternity in our hearts long before your missionaries came to us. And God knows we are eternally grateful to these gallant heroes, many of whom literally laid down their lives for Jesus and for his gospel.... We owe them a debt of gratitude that only eternity can repay! These men died not so that the Western mindset may prevail over the globe. They died so that Christ may receive glory out of the tribes and nations of the earth, as each brings out of their own treasure stores their unique praise and their particular brand of worship. This is at the heart of the principle called *koinonia*. (2012, 172)

Bryant Myers speaks along similar lines in his book on transformational development among the poor, saying, “When we usurp their story, we add to

their poverty” (1999, 112). Many well-meaning individuals have used missional strategies that unwittingly disrespect the receivers and contribute to their spiritual poverty by leaving buried the rich treasure stores of unique and skillful talents embedded within the fabric of a culture. They are never unearthed, examined, and brought into God’s light as new, redeemed creations. Instead, a reliance upon the missionary to dictate new creations is perpetuated, leaving a wake of half-hearted Christian expressions because the forms are only half understood and unable to penetrate into the social fabric of everyday life.

To use storytelling as an example, Dr. Hartnell was having little success using literacy-based materials with the Digo in Kenya, so his team developed an entire series of Bible stories based on a well-known chronological approach. The stories helped, but the Digo audience continued to have difficulty remembering the storylines. So Dr. Hartnell began to follow the traditional Digo stories to find out what the significant features were that made them so popular. He found differences in length, repetition through song, and other various linguistic features.

Eventually, he teamed a traditional Digo storyteller with a local pastor, and together they produced the story of Noah using the traditional features. After an extensive survey comparing the two story styles with local groups, he was overwhelmed with the positive responses to the contextualized story style and is now redoing all of the Bible stories they originally produced 20 years ago into the traditional Digo storytelling style.

I will admit, this process feels risky and can take a lot more time. Honoring fellow believers in their journey with God means taking the control out of our hands and placing it in theirs. It then requires us to step back and trust the Holy Spirit to speak and commune with his disciples.

While working with the Urarina in Peru, I was faced with the potential reality of a culture that had no music and little creative expression. At least that is what they said. We were stumped. My team was sorely tempted to step in with suggestions for new art forms for their worship, but we decided to encourage them to pray and seek God for what they could offer to him from their culture.

They weren't happy with this at first. They even said, "Just tell us what to do." But within a week's time, the Urarina Christians had not only a song to offer, but dancing, beading, weaving, and symbolic cultural stories. My team's original ideas were similar, but instead of the ideas coming from our mouths, they came from the Urarina's own conversations with God and contained within them unique cultural symbolism rich with meaning. The process empowered the Urarina with the understanding that they were fully capable of developing the life of the church in their community. It is imperative that we approach new believers with a servant's heart and create space for them to respond to him in their own ways.

So how do we do it? What if we don't understand the artistic culture of the community? What about syncretism? How do we begin to sort these issues? Yes, there are dangers and pitfalls to be avoided and the process takes careful consideration and time. But we do not need to be an arts specialist to be an advocate for *koinonia*. It starts with genuine interest in the expressions within a community and why they do them. In essence, it starts with questions.

- Ask your friends and neighbors about their creativity. How and why do they do what they do?
 - Engage a local artisan by taking lessons. Local artisans are often a repository of culture and history in the community.
 - Encourage a Bible study on the biblical meaning of worship. It can set the foundation within a church community to look beyond the prescribed ways they may have adopted in their worship.
 - Above all, empower the local leaders (both in and out of the church, both official and unofficial) to think through their communities' issues and how local arts might address some of them naturally. If they are Christians, encourage them to pray and seek God for specific ideas.
 - Every new creation needs to be evaluated in a naturally gracious way for accurate representation of scripture and acceptance by the community.
- This takes time and patience. But the results can be reproducible, deeply impacting, and eternal. A wonderful and in-depth resource available to inspire and guide us through the process is James Krabill's *Worship and Mission for the Global Church* and its companion, *Creating Local Arts Together*.
- Taking all of these concepts into consideration, it now becomes possible to imagine Mark 12:30-31: a *koinonia* community where "all cultures are using all of their gifts to worship, obey, and enjoy God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Schrag 2013, xv). Praise be to God.

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Media: The Mortar that Holds It Together

The ION Audio Scripture Engagement Task Force¹

David Swarr and Lori Koch²

As one of the seven disciplines of orality recognized by Dr. Charles Madinger’s holistic model, media plays a significant role in both encompassing the truths of the other recognized disciplines—culture, language, literacy, social networks, memory, and the arts—and delivering the message to those waiting to hear it. Media forms that are thoughtfully and intentionally produced and distributed can enhance and ensure quality scripture exposure, learning, and engagement by capitalizing on these strengths: accuracy and completeness, reproducibility, scalability, accessibility, and sustainability.

In 2011, the International Orality Network endorsed “A Declaration on Making Disciples of the World’s Oral Learners through Audio Scripture Engagement” (with “audio” encompassing audio-visual forms of scripture as well). The Declaration states,

We believe that the foundation of discipleship is the shaping by, and obedience to, the Word of God. We believe it is the inalienable right and privilege of every person, including every

oral learner, to have access to the Word of God in their own heart language and in a media format they understand.

The Declaration issues an urgent call to make “the entire Word of God available to every person who can hear.”

This Declaration, combined with what has been learned and proven about the value of different media forms and approaches, should be thought through when considering how to effectively minister to oral peoples. Let’s consider the following five topics.

1. Accuracy and completeness.

Much of the Christian media content currently available is a verbatim reproduction or careful restating of scripture or Bible stories translated by well-trained and highly-committed individuals. Once the message is captured accurately in a media form, it can become as authoritative a source for truth as a print Bible over centuries of use. When the media content is a full New Testament or full Bible, it becomes an accurate and complete presentation of biblical truth for

the oral learner. An additional advantage is that it becomes an unchangeable and exhaustive source for oral learners to refer back to time and time again.

In southwest Ethiopia, a storytelling methodology was employed to communicate the gospel to an unreached people group. During the following decades, some 26,000 people became Christians. Once the Gospels had been translated, recorded, and distributed among these believers using an intentional engagement strategy, the feedback was astounding. With a more complete understanding of scripture, the people discovered deeper truths about the Christian walk. For example, they had been unaware that having multiple sexual partners was inconsistent with scripture. Armed with this knowledge, they changed their behavior accordingly and built on the foundation of the truth they understood.

2. **Reproducibility.** Once the message is crafted and produced, copies can be disseminated via a wide array of devices and digital means, independent of the skills, training, and giftedness of the individuals conveying the message. An

elderly woman in a Quechua village high in the Peruvian Andes received an audio New Testament in her language. She had never been to school and could not read, and although a long-time churchgoer, she never felt confident in her ability to tell others about Jesus. With the audio Bible, she gained the confidence to approach people and invite them to listen. She now describes herself as an evangelist, learning more about the gospel each time she listens.

3. **Scalability.** Any number of people can be equipped with an appropriate media device and content. Certainly, experience has shown that the best engagement of the scripture content happens in a context of intentionality, accountability, and group interaction. Often, this process can benefit from appropriate training from an external source. But whether or not such training is available, there exists an enormous missionary task force of non-reading believers who can be equipped with a media tool and empowered to go out and become effective evangelists and missionaries among their own people. Although seemingly simple, it's effective and it works.

4. **Accessibility.** With mobile phones increasingly ubiquitous and the digital footprint ever expanding, it is becoming easier and less costly to provide both devices and media content to a wide audience, even those in remote locations. A ministry engaged in providing audio scripture on physical formats alone estimates to have reached some 50 million individuals worldwide over the course of 37 years of outreach. Yet within just three years of digital delivery, the same organization can count more than 100 million unique users of audio-visual scripture content through an array of digital outlets, including web streaming, download, smartphone apps, podcast, and Internet radio. Even more strikingly, this digital content is being accessed from rural areas of China, as well as from cities and remote areas within the Middle East, regions where it can be risky for mission workers to reach into and perilous for the locals who may be seen with them.

Just as the network of Roman roads served as a means for spreading the gospel in the first century AD, the Internet serves as a modern-day “Roman

Road” for delivering the gospel message almost instantly to nearly every country on earth.

5. **Sustainability.** When the apostles first set out on foot to spread the news of Jesus Christ, the speed and breadth at which the message could be disseminated were limited by human, financial, and technological resources. Early scribes of the printed scripture could not have imagined the Gutenberg Press and what a revolution this would represent for spreading the gospel. Gutenberg himself could not have imagined the vast array of media and delivery systems we enjoy today to deliver the same message efficiently and inexpensively. Even with these advances, few involved in modern missions would dispute the tremendous value of one-on-one, face-to-face evangelization and discipleship.

But Jesus himself recognized there is a great harvest, just few workers to bring it all in. Media plays an important role in providing an increasingly sustainable model for delivering the gospel message (whether combined with or separate from intentional human

interaction) in the appropriate languages and formats to reach oral learners. Today's economic reality is making it more necessary and affordable for people living in even the remotest and economically disadvantaged corners of the world to own some type of mobile phone or device. Cell phone manufacturers are producing affordable, solar-powered feature phones for use in these contexts. An estimated 5.5 billion people worldwide are mobile phone users. An intentional focus on providing biblical content compatible with today's mobile devices is a sustainable model for today and for the future.

Madinger cites three choices of media delivery: mass, collective, and small. While each choice has its advantages, the ideal choice is likely a mix of these three, with each complementing the other to increase kingdom impact. Below are strategies to demonstrate how the strengths of each can be deployed for maximum effectiveness.

1. **Mass media.** The mass media are an integral part of our lives and society, influencing and shaping our opinions and values. Even remote oral societies tend to have

access to modern mass media such as radio and television, and with the advancement of technology, others will become increasingly ubiquitous. Christians need to leverage all possible avenues at our disposal. Personal experience is the most powerful motivator for change. Mass media, through the use of realistic, vibrant, concrete, and credible stories, exert extraordinary influence because they transport people into the role of participant. The viewer/listener lowers his or her defenses and allows the program/story to work on his or her thoughts in much the same way as he or she might experience the world for him or herself.

This method, called "vicarious modeling," is the primary technique driving large-scale change efforts around the world. Scientific studies have shown that exposing people to believable models affects not only their thoughts and emotions, but also their behavior. For example, in 1993, Radio Tanzania aired a radio drama aimed to educate listeners on HIV/AIDS transmission. The show described the escapades of a flamboyant truck driver who engaged in risky behavior. As a

result of this program, 25% of the people in the broadcast area reported having modified their behavior to avoid HIV infection.

2. **Collective media.** Using media to educate and influence groups in a more focused and intentional way can be an effective way to deliver the message. For example, JESUS film showings are a well-known and proven method for presenting the gospel to large groups. Adding to the effectiveness of such a methodology would be the addition of small media to follow up such a presentation.

In Peru, an indigenous mission worker was teaching a workshop among his own people. Afterward, he showed the attendees a video about alcoholism. One of the children in the group started to cry, saying “That’s my dad! That’s my dad!” He explained his father was exactly like the man in the movie. And like the family in the movie, his family cried and suffered as a result of the father’s actions. With his alcoholism exposed, the boy’s father cried and repented, now having understood the effect of his behavior on his son. This family’s vicarious

experience through watching the video was the catalyst for repentance and change.

3. **Small media.** Life is done in a group, and this is especially true among oral learners. Small group interaction remains the gold standard for impactful scripture engagement and life transformation. Along with audio-visual scripture tools, good results have been observed using an obedience-based discipleship method which essentially seeks to answer this question: *What does this passage/story/teaching from scripture ask or require of me as a follower of Jesus?*

For example, Samuel Buya has never read a book, but he leads a Bible study of more than 60 people in his East African rural village. A farmer by trade, Samuel received an audio Bible in his language and now gathers with his neighbors to hear God’s word almost every evening. Samuel himself has listened through the Gospel accounts several times and now understands his life is a gift from Jesus. He says others are learning the same as they listen. The people of his village had a reputation for violence, even to

the point of killing, but Samuel and his neighbors have seen a difference since they started listening to scripture two years ago. They have learned to live in peace with their neighbors and family.

There is no one-size-fits-all media approach for maximum effectiveness. An intentional combination of human interaction, appropriate content, and media methods should be considered for the particular context. In northern India, such a combination of content and methods was used to great effect to minister to eight unreached people groups in the area. Pastors and leaders were first trained in storying methodology. Story sets were crafted in the eight languages and then recorded. The heart language story sets were placed on an audio listening device along with an audio New Testament in the language of wider communication.

Then, the pastors and leaders began using a combination of their own training as storytellers, as well as the recorded content on the players, to minister in their communities and the surrounding areas. It is worth noting that most of the people were non-literate and generally unfamiliar with Christianity due to their geographical remoteness. They would usually start with the story

sets, whether recorded or presented themselves, and eventually present the audio New Testament when appropriate. Whether this was done in churches or small groups, the pastors reported a very favorable response, with many baptisms and conversions.

Access to and engagement with scripture is critical in Christian ministry among all peoples, including oral learners. Whether in the form of Bible storying, a scripture-based video, or an audio recording of formally-translated scripture, effective ministry to oral people groups is not a question of either/or but of both/several. Quality, biblically-based approaches provide the building blocks for coming to faith in Christ in oral cultures. But, like building blocks stacked without mortar, you cannot go very high without them becoming unstable.

A solid oral strategy includes a presentation mindful of all seven of the disciplines cited by Madinger, captured in appropriate media formats to promote accuracy, reproducibility, scalability, accessibility, and sustainability. In this way, media can provide the stability needed to build a long-lasting, growing body of believers in oral cultures.

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“Mobilizing” the Story of His Glory (Part 1)

Keith Williams

Keith Williams spent ten years serving as a church planter in Asia before launching Mobile Advance, a ministry of WEC International. Keith also serves on the steering team of the Mobile Ministry Forum (MMF).

My call to missions came partly through the reading of mission biographies. I was spellbound by Hudson Taylor’s exploits and thrilled as I read Bruchko (Olson 2006) to see how God could use a young man much like myself to bring a jungle tribe to himself. I was ready to set out, assuming I would find myself with a trusty machete in hand, hacking my way through the jungle to bring God’s word to some tribe as yet untouched by humanity.

While this was not to be, in time I did find myself reaching out to a nomadic people who still lived very much as Abraham did. These men and women still slept in tents, cooked over dung-fueled fires, and daily brought their livestock out to pasture in the wilderness.

But there was a stirring that was happening. I’m not sure when I first noticed its presence. Perhaps it was the first time I sat in a wedding or funeral tent and saw hands reaching into robe pockets to pull out and begin playing with a small, shiny device. Perhaps it was on the walk

through the village when I noticed a group of young men gathered to excitedly watch the small screen held before them. Or maybe it was the time the young man talking on his phone rode by me on his camel.

I don’t know when I first noticed the change, but it really hit home when I found out that my friends were no longer setting up their tents where they could find water, but rather, where they could find mobile phone reception. People, who for thousands of years had chosen their migratory routes on the basis of the availability of water and pasture, were now making those decisions based on how many signal bars they saw on their mobile phones!

Fast forward a few years to the day I met Abu Mohammed at my neighbor’s funeral. Abu Mohammed, as it turned out, fulfilled all the noble ideals of his people—he was generous and brave, hospitable and an accomplished hunter; he was a man who still lived in the remote parts of the wilderness just as his

ancestors had for thousands of years before him. As the evening wore on, Abu Mohammed took the role of emcee, regaling us with poetry and stories—some true, some less so.

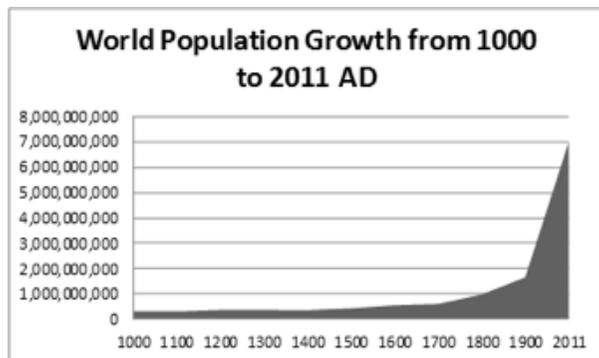
At one point, however, Abu Mohammed stopped and reached into his robe and pulled out a phone. With a couple deft strokes, he set the device into motion and allowed it to be passed down the length of the tent from one viewer to the next. When the phone reached me, I was astonished to find that this 40-something man's—man of his tribe had put together a video of his hunting exploits—shots of him holding a gazelle by its antlers, others of him showing off his rifle, and so on. What was equally astonishing was the fact that he had even figured out how to add a local song in the background. This meshing of all that was ancient and noble in the people I was reaching out to with the latest in modern technology took my breath away.

Our Changing World

It seems that much is growing exponentially today.

The pace of change has never been greater than it is today. While God and his word blessedly will never change, we must have our eyes open to see the changes around us and a heart open to hear what God may be saying about how those changes impact our ministries. **We live in exponential times.**

The world's population is growing exponentially. It took thousands of years to reach the first billion people on earth. Another billion were added in just 123 years, and a whopping five billion more souls were added in the last 89 years alone (Population Curve n.d.).



Human knowledge is expanding exponentially. The widely-accepted maxim is that the sum total of all human knowledge now doubles every two years. Backing that up, studies show the amount of global digital information created and shared between 2005 and 2020 will grow by a factor of 300 (IDC 2013, 1).

Technological change is also ramping up exponentially. The amazing technological progress of the last 150 years led John Dyer, author of *From the Garden to the City*, to speculate that Abraham Lincoln would have felt far more at home sitting in a tent with Abraham than in a home in modern-day America (Dyer 2011, 21). One needs only to see a toddler playing with a tablet to realize that this next generation is going to live with—and adapt to—technological changes at a pace never seen before.

Do you recall why the men of Issachar were commended in the Bible? It was because they understood the times and knew what Israel should do (1 Chron. 12:32). They knew God and searched out the happenings of their world and combined the two to find the right way forward. Oh, that we might be like them, and from a firm grounding in God’s word, truly understand what our exponential times mean and what the Church should be about in them.

The Mobile Revolution(s)

Looking more closely at the exponential change in technology, we see that the mobile phone, which celebrated forty years since its creation this year, is having a

revolutionary impact on the world in which we live.

Ubiquity. According to the World Bank, only 4% of the Developing World’s population had a mobile connection in 2000, and yet 13 years later, only 4% of the world’s population DO NOT have a mobile connection (the mobile-cellular penetration rate in the Developing World stands at 89%) (ITU 2013). A telling statistic is that people in India are more likely to be able to use a mobile phone than a sanitary toilet (U.N. News Center 2010). When we answer Jesus’ call to be his witnesses “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8), we shouldn’t be surprised to find that mobile phones are already in most of those places.

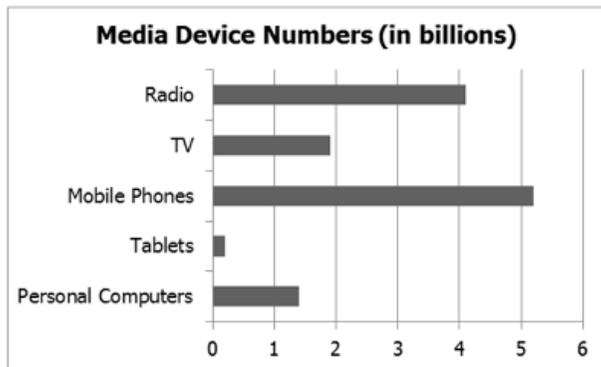
Mass media made personal. In addition to becoming the most quickly-adopted technology in human history, the mobile phone has become the most personal media ever. In a survey conducted in eight countries by Time magazine, 44% of respondents said that their mobile device was the first thing they saw in the morning and the last thing they saw at night before falling asleep (Time, 34). In fact, the average person looks at his or her phone 150 times a day (200 times if it is a smartphone) (Ahonen 2013). Beyond that,

however, people seem to be almost psychologically-attached to their devices. They put on special covers and choose custom ringtones in order to make the device express who they are or aspire to be.

Convergence. One of the reasons more people have a mobile phone than any other modern media (see chart below) is that the feature phones and smartphones encapsulate the functions of all the other media devices combined. A Kyrgyz herder can listen to the radio, watch videos, play games, and access the Internet all via a mid-priced feature phone (smartphone not required). Watch *Teleuse@BOP profile: Chamara Pahalawattage* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=je0L9quCleI> or scan the QR code at the end of the articleⁱ) to get a fuller sense of how important the converged capabilities of the mobile phone are to those living at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

Beyond simply consuming media, modern phones also enable users to become media producers and

distributors through built-in audio recorders, cameras, video recording capabilities, and Bluetooth phone-to-phone transmission. Not only does the mobile phone replicate the abilities of all the other media that preceded it, but with new sensors and it always being on, it provides many capabilities never dreamed possible. Look no further than the myriad apps available for smartphones to see how the mobile phone brings amazing capabilities into the pockets of hundreds of millions of people. The WordLens app, for instance, allows users to see a menu in a foreign language automatically transform into one written in their own language.



(Tomi Ahonen Almanac 2013 and <http://techcrunch.com/2012/0424/forrester-760m-tablets-in-use-by-2016-apple-clear-leader-frames-also-enter-the-frame/>)

Revolutionary results. This convergence of mobile penetration, presence, and capabilities has led to some unexpected, revolutionary results. Studies have found that a

10% increase in mobile penetration in developing countries correlates to a 0.8% increase in economic growth (Qiang and Rossotto 2009). This has led some to say that the mobile phone has made a greater impact on development in Africa than all the foreign aid ever given to the continent (All Africa 2009).

Revolutionary advances in health care are being made in developing countries through mobile innovations. These include low-cost microscopes/optical testing devices that can be attached to camera phones, SMS/texting-based health education campaigns, and mobile data collection. The last several years have made the mobile device one of the most powerful tools ever invented for bringing down unpopular governments. The pen may be more powerful than the sword, but the mobile device may just be more powerful than the tank.

The Church’s Call to Take up the Mobile Phone

If the vast majority of the world population is now equipped with mobile phones, and if these devices do indeed provide all the media capabilities that the previous mass media offered (and then some), then we have entered a new era of always connected/always media-

enabled humanity. While the form of the technology may move beyond handheld devices into “super watches” and augmented reality glasses, the key concept here is that from now on the vast majority of humanity will be able to connect to one another and partake of media almost whenever they want and wherever they are. This is an earth-shaking change and it suggests the need for a paradigm shift in the way we approach world missions.

Mobile ministry takes advantage of this shift and provides a number of unique benefits:

- 1) **Access to a very personal space.** Mobile devices are an intensely personal part of an individual’s life. When that person allows Christian media onto his or her device, the message is that he or she is providing access to one of the most private and valued parts of his or her life.
- 2) **Just-in-time media.** When a missionary is at a store, on the bus, or in some other common situation, what is he or she most likely to have with him or her? Keys, a wallet, and a mobile phone. The person isn’t very likely to be carrying a DVD player, tape player, or computer. If that mobile phone has some Christian media

loaded on its memory card, or an outreach app, the missionary is ready at a minute's notice to find an appropriate story, song, or video clip, and share it with the unreached person with whom he or she has struck up a conversation.

- 3) **Reproducible ministry.** A goal of most missionaries is to foster a ministry that can be re-created by the people they are reaching out to without the need for outside assistance. Because mobile ministry uses tools that the least-reached already own, it is eminently reproducible.
- 4) **An approachable means of widespread gospel seed-sowing.** Recent studies have shown that a hallmark of successful church-planting efforts is widespread gospel seed-sowing. This ensures that as large a percent of the population as possible have a chance to interact with the gospel. In his seminal work on church planting movements, David Garrison, states that “in Church Planting Movements, hundreds and even thousands of individuals are hearing the claims that Jesus Christ has on their lives. This sowing often relies heavily upon mass media evangelism, but it always includes

personal evangelism with vivid testimonies to the lifechanging power of the gospel.”

One of the thrilling things about mobile ministry is how it can go viral. With most phones now enabled with Bluetooth, media can be zapped from phone to phone easily and at no cost. One experiment conducted by Purdue University found that a simple agriculture video installed on seven phones in a village in Nigeria spread to 118 people in 50 villages after only one month. (Follow this link or the QR code at the end of the articleⁱⁱ to view the video about this experiment—<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0Z4GtfHiX0>.) In a similar way, I was delighted to discover that one of the biggest distributors of the “mobilized” gospel materials developed for our outreach turned out to be a Qur’anic teacher in another country.

- 5) **A Guttenberg Press for the illiterate and impoverished portion of the Church.** Martin Luther referred to the Guttenberg Press as “God’s highest and extremist act of grace, whereby the business of the Gospel is driven forward” (as cited in Misa 2004, 23).

While the Gutenberg Press was a milestone development for the spread of the gospel among the literate and well-to-do, the mobile phone has given the masses the opportunity to receive the Bible in oral form, as well as to record and share their own testimonies, stories, and songs in audio or video form.

- 6) **New access to many millions of the unreached.** An unfortunate fact of the world we live in today is that less than fifteen percent of all Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims have a personal relationship with a Christian (Johnson, et al. 2010). While nothing can ever replace a personal relationship, radio, Internet, and mobile ministry provide a chance to initiate contact and, Lord willing, bring about the first steps in creating face-to-face relationships. That said, the Internet is used by only 2.7 billion people, while 4.3 billion use mobile phones (Ahonen 2012). In other words, mobile ministry opens the potential of connecting with 1.6 billion people who live beyond the reach of the Internet. It is significant that eighty-four percent of Internet users are accessing it via either mobile devices alone or some combination of mobiles and PCs (Ahonen 2012).

A Mobile Instead of a Machette

While I never ended up with a machete in hand getting the gospel to a remote people, I did find that having a mobile has enabled me to have a part in getting the gospel to many remote peoples. Farida, for instance, fell in love with Jesus through the videos she saw on my wife’s phone and asked where she could meet him. Saalim could never have brought a Bible into his army barracks, but relied upon the Bible on his mobile phone to help him grow in his faith. Basma, a woman who had been widowed for five years, could well have been stoned to death after it was found she was pregnant. However, her fellow villagers had seen on a mobile phone’s screen Jesus rebuking the Pharisees and restoring the woman caught in adultery. Learning of Jesus through poetry and video on a mobile phone certainly played a large role in Basma’s coming to faith in him.

In the second part of this series, I will share ways you can implement mobile ministry in your outreach. In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about mobile ministry, visit the following sites:

<http://www.mobileministryforum.org>

<http://www.mobileadvance.org>

<http://www.mobileministrymagazine.org>

i



ii



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Telling the Gospel Through Story

by *Christine Dillon*

Reviewed by Tara Rye

Reviewed by Dr. Tara Rye, the Dean of Women at Grace University in Omaha, NE. She is passionate about communicating the Word of God in a way people understand. She is a published author, an active speaker, and has served on short-term missions in several countries. She also uses biblical storying weekly at a homeless shelter and on the radio.

Dillon, Christine. *Telling the Gospel Through Story*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012, pp. 224. \$15.00. Source ISBN-13: 978-0830837946

Author Christine Dillon serves as a missionary for the Overseas Mission Fellowship (OMF). She currently serves as a church planter in Taiwan. Dillon's book, *Telling The Gospel Through Story* provides a practitioner's dialogue on how to evangelize in a way that will make hearers want more.

If anyone understands that the power of story happens in a conversation, Dillon does! Dillon converses with the reader as if they are sitting in the corner cafe together sipping tea. Though this book is filled with practical guidance on how to shape a good story, how to evangelize through Bible storytelling, how to lead good Bible discussions, and how to motivate others to use storytelling, it does not read like a textbook. But do not let its conversational

tone fool you, for this book should be used in the same way as a textbook. Dillon walks the reader through the practical steps one must take to allow God's story to flow in daily conversations and in classroom situations. She reminds the reader "success is not method-based" because "storytelling is an art and not a science" (84, 64). Part of what grips the reader is the honesty with which Dillon communicates her own trials in learning how to communicate the gospel effectively. Dillon openly shares her mistakes in becoming a practitioner of the principles discussed: "Storying is discipling people to conversion" and "evangelism should not be hurried" (12). She reminds the reader that it is okay to leave a hearer hanging with a mystery and that there will be times to say nothing at all.

Dillon also artfully illustrates how a Bible storyteller can use the discussion questions to match the learning preference of the hearer. Dillon shared the fear she felt before sharing a Bible story to a highly literate group of leaders that were quite familiar with the Bible story. She challenges the reader to "encourage highly literate groups to ask their own questions" to engage discussion about the passage, explaining that the key to successful engagement happens with pushing the discussion to "higher levels" when the participants are more

familiar with the Scriptures (119).

Dillon removes the debate as to whether Bible storytelling is for only oral learners; the highly literate with an oral preference are amongst us. So, instead of viewing Bible storying for a certain group, the reader recognizes that all people are challenged by this method of teaching. Dillon encourages the reader to find ways to motivate others to become Bible storytellers. Anyone seeking to communicate the gospel will find this book practical, insightful and significant.

Miraculous Movements

by Jerry Trousdale

Reviewed by Tara Rye

Trousdale, Jerry. Miraculous Movements: How Hundreds and Thousands of Muslims are Falling in Love with Jesus. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012, pp. 273. \$7.69. Kindle edition. Page Numbers Source ISBN: 141854728X. Publisher: Thomas Nelson (March 6, 2012). Amazon Digital Services, Inc. ASIN: B00759NKOM

Author of *Miraculous Movements*, Jerry Trousdale, understands the power of a great story. His experience with the pastorate, church planting, and Christian publishing provide a rich knowledge and experiential base for the truths that are weaved within the true stories shared about the movement of God among the Muslims through Discovery Bible studies.

Miraculous Movements unfolds an intentional method to reach Muslims through the discovery of God in the Bible (p. 14 or d. 6%). Trousdale captures the reader as he retells countless stories of real Muslim men and women coming to know Christ through the power of prayer, compassion, Bible stories and questions. Be prepared to sit on the edge of your seat as you read

about all-night prayer gatherings, secret baptisms, and even the raising of the dead. Trousdale reminds the reader that believers need to expect the unexpected in order to experience miraculous favor from God. Believers need not fear Muslims, but see them as a people group that needs to be disciplined into salvation.

Trousdale points out Muslim leaders who have been interviewed seek to restrict the translation of the Qur'an because they want to conceal that the Qur'an is filled with contradictions and that it affirms the special status of Isa al Masih—Jesus the Messiah (p. 77 or d. 36%). In addition, the lack of assurance of salvation disturbs Sheikhs and imams (p. 77 or d. 36%). Trousdale challenges believers to reach the heart of Muslims through prayer, genuine friendship, and through open and honest conversation (p. 85 or d. 40%). Emphasizing that obedient disciples make disciples

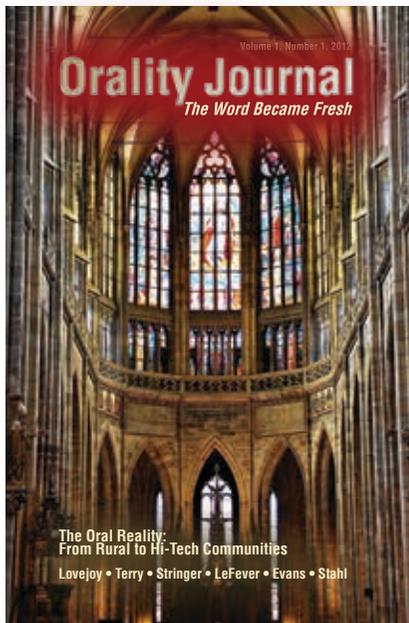
and obedient churches plant churches Trousdale explains, "If we want to emulate the model of Jesus, we must learn to minister as He did, meeting human needs while also confronting the lost with the truth of the gospel" (p. 89 or d. 42%). This prepares the way for sharing the gospel with a person of peace.

For those who cannot experience international missions first hand, this book provides a literary experience that awakens the heart, mind, and spirit to want to experience international missions or at the very least experience mission mindedness where you are living. For the one on the field this book provides encouragement to remain faithful to the task. For the one wondering how to reach their Muslim neighbor, it provides simple, relational examples of others who internalized the Word of God and poured it out in a story. A definite must read!



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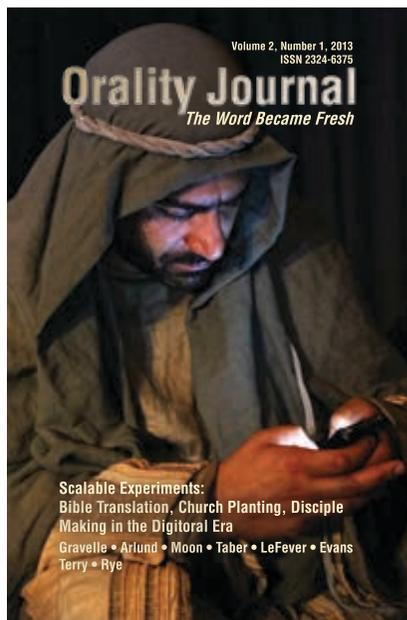
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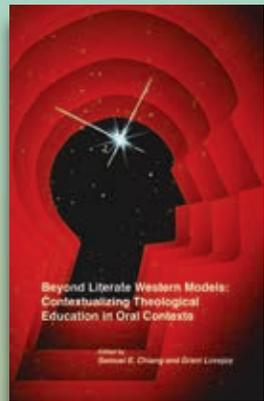
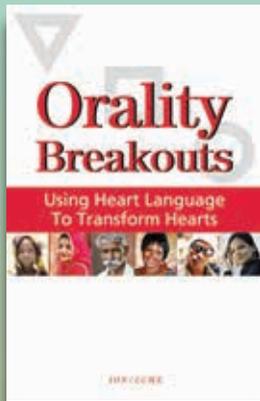
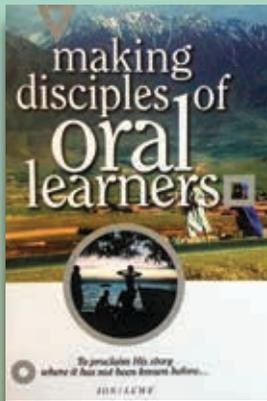


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