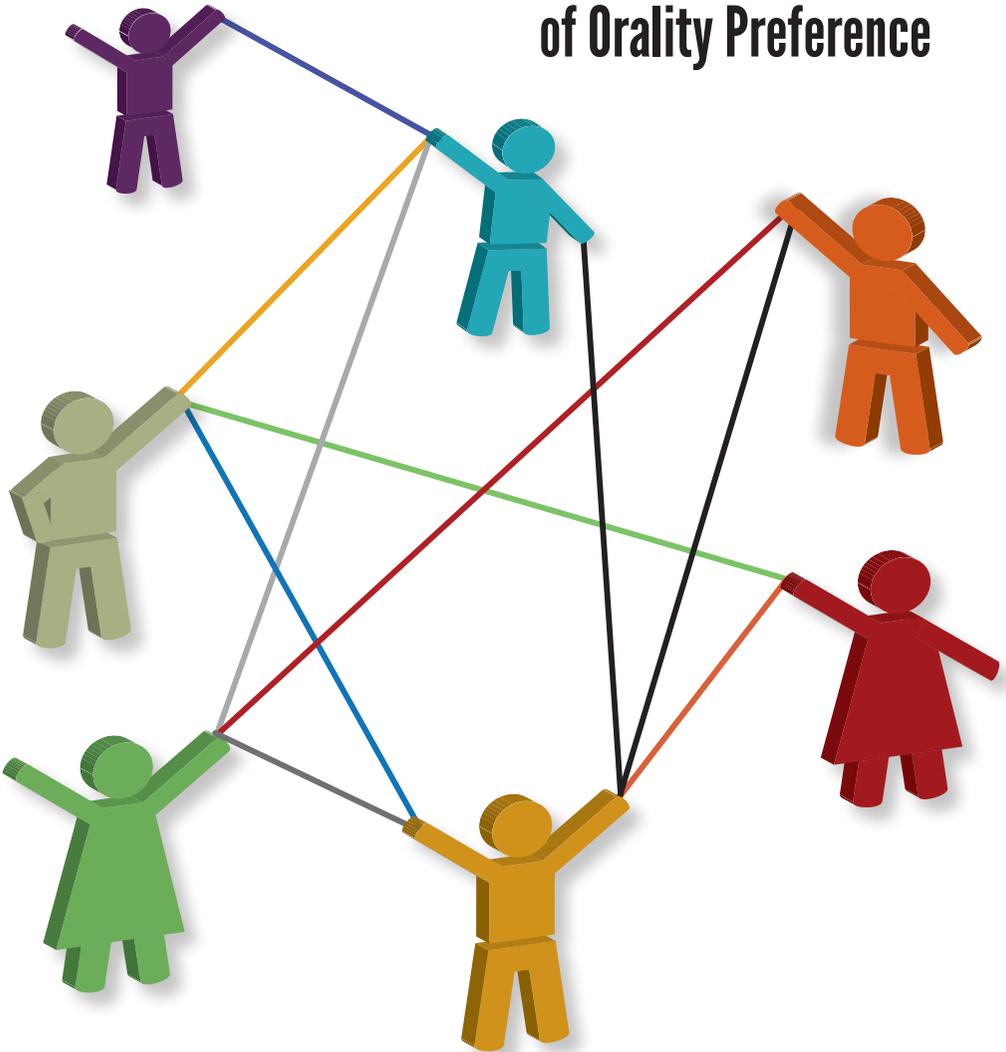


BEYOND LITERATE WESTERN CONTEXTS:

Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference



Edited by
Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy

Endorsements

“I am impressed! Honor and Shame has often been researched and reported on in culture studies and other disciplines. Orality of course is a growing movement and a focus of continuing study. Now comes this unique book, full of subject matter from scholars and practitioners combining these two areas of study. They connect the dots of the biblical world of honor and shame with the honor and shame cultures of today and tomorrow, treating both the content and the practice of orality related to these topics. Additionally, the chapters on current case studies and approaches to oral assessment are certainly worth our attention. I am honored to be one to recommend this book!”

- Dr. Freddy Boswell,
Executive Director, SIL International

“In the last decade, a revolution has occurred in mission strategies among oral preference cultures as traditional literate methods have been replaced by oral story methods. Likewise, a growing understanding of honor and shame has contributed to reshaping ministry methods for greater effectiveness. The result has been significant spiritual breakthroughs among some of the least reached peoples of the world. Drawing from the rich experience of practitioners and the scholarly research of academics, *Beyond Literate Western Contexts* provides valuable insights into the best practices emerging from the orality movement and the critical ministry implications of honor and shame-based cultures. Anyone with a passion for advancing the Gospel among oral cultures will benefit from this excellent source of stories, case studies, research, and theological insights.”

- Kärin Primuth,
President/CEO, VisionSynergy

“Beyond Literate Western Contexts helpfully explores how presenting the gospel through honor and shame lenses in a context of orality and story enhances our understanding of the gospel. Giving a global perspective on how to teach and preach the kingdom message is always of value. This book utilizes the experience of teachers from around the world and gives an important glimpse of how this can and should be done.”

- Dr. Darrell Bock, Executive Director for Cultural Engagement, Howard G. Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership and Cultural Engagement,
Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies,
Dallas Theological Seminary

“This is another milestone in the effort of International Orality Network. This is very helpful in exploring how presenting the gospel through honor and shame lenses in a context of orality and story will enhance our understanding of the gospel. Honor is a dynamic and relational concept. On the one hand, an individual can think of himself or herself as honorable based on his or her conviction that he or she has embodied those actions and qualities that the group values as honorable, as the marks of a valuable person. This aspect of honor is really self-respect. On the other hand, honor is also the esteem in which a person is held by the person’s group that he or she is a valuable member of. In this regard, it is having the respect of others. It is a problematic experience when one’s self-respect is not matched by corresponding respect from others, but strategies can be developed to cope with the discrepancy here. When the powerful and the masses, the philosophers and the Jews, the pagans and the Christians all regard honor and dishonor as their primary axis of value, each group fills out the picture of what constituted honorable behavior or character in terms of its own distinctive sets of beliefs and values, and evaluates people both inside and outside that group accordingly.

“The meaning of shame is somewhat more complicated. If honor signifies respect for being the kind of person and doing the kinds of things the group values, shame signifies—in the first instance—being seen as less than valuable because one has behaved in ways that run contrary to the values of the group. The person who puts personal safety above the city’s well-being loses the respect of society. His worth is impugned; he loses face; he is disgraced and viewed as a disgrace. In another sense, however, shame can signify a positive character trait, namely, a sensitivity to the opinion of the group such that one avoids those actions that bring disgrace. Out of this kind of shame, a woman refuses an adulterous invitation; a soldier refuses to flee from battle.

“If humanity is to evolve beyond the propensity toward violence that now threatens our very survival as humans, then it can only do so by recognizing the extent to which the code of honor and shame generates and obligates religious and socio-political violence. If we wish to bring this violence under control, we need to begin by reconstituting new moral codes involving an honor and shame mindset.”

Rev. Bauta D. Motty, PhD
Provost, ECWA Theological Seminary, Jos, Nigeria

“This insightful book combines and commends two effective communicators of the gospel: (1) orality, which promotes telling stories to bless the illiterate; (2) universal human realities of honor and shame, which can bridge the lost to Jesus and the gospel. Shame came with the sin of Adam and Eve. Sinful humankind

has since wrongly coped with shame, including honor-killing of even loved ones. We are called to live by and teach godly honor and shame, e.g., honored by being seated with Christ in the heavenlies, we need not feel shame for having no earthly status symbols.”

- Rev. Dr. Michael Shen,
Principal Emeritus, Singapore Bible College

“This book is a rich and stimulating contribution to an issue that concerns us all: the effective understanding and communication of the gospel for transformation and disciple making. The interwoven realities of honor/shame and orality are brought to life by experienced reflective practitioners. Each is intent on discovering how to tell the biblical story more meaningfully and faithfully. Academics, trainers and cross-cultural workers will all benefit from the story, reflection and shared learning that make up every chapter. Highly recommended.”

- Dr. Paul Bendor-Samuel,
International Director, Interserve

“How we communicate with each other matters, and doubly so when we communicate in a cross-cultural context. The biblical worldview presented and case studies provided are of great value to both organizations and institutions.”

- Rev. Dr. Lloyd Kim,
Coordinator, Mission To The World

“It is very important and a great blessing that *Beyond Literate Western Contexts* makes the papers presented at the ION Consultations available for a greater audience. It is well known that oral learning is important as a mission strategy; however this book shows the importance of orality in a much wider context and is a book of high value.”

- Hjalmar Boe, International Director,
Norwegian Lutheran Mission

“The publication of this book with its main theme on orality comes out at a strategic time when theological scholars and mission practitioners, having recognized the significant place of oral-learning approaches for effective understanding and communication of gospel truth, are now identifying best ways and tools for accurate assessment of oral teaching and learning methods in both mission practices and theological training discourses. Further, this book

reinforces the scientifically proven fact that people learn values and ideas more effectively through narratives or stories, thus reaffirming orality as an effective pedagogical tool.

“The uniqueness of this book is how its diverse global authors highlight the importance of honor and shame category in understanding oral-preference learners in non-Western cultures. It shows the role of honor and shame in shaping effective communication of the gospel to oral cultural contexts that constitute the majority world. By using biblical and contemporary stories as well as theoretical and theological foundations for both shame and honor, this book examines how effective communication of the gospel can be enhanced by grasping the core dynamics of oral learning.

“In light of the significance of orality for effective teaching and learning, this book challenges and inspires theological training institutions to re-evaluate their curricula towards oral-preference learners and to reconsider the assessment tools for oral learning methodologies. In this regard, the various authors use diverse case studies to invite theological training institutions and organizations to embrace the best approaches for not only incorporating oral learning techniques into their teaching, but also in assessing oral-visual learning that is the preferred learning style of the majority-world living in non-Western contexts, while also progressively becoming part and parcel of online education of our digital era.

“It is on the basis of these preceding reasons that I highly recommend this book for all involved in theological training at institutional and organizational levels throughout Africa where a high percentage of its inhabitants learn and communicate effectively through oral preferences. Through the diverse new oral learning strategies and models in this book, African scholars and theological institutions are empowered to re-evaluate their learning methodologies and assessment mechanisms which have for decades been widely influenced by Western literate theological training orientations.”

- Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Chemengich,
Executive Director, Association of Christian Theological Education in Africa

“Reaching oral learners with the Gospel of Christ is one of the great missiological challenges of our time. This carefully researched and argued book will provide essential help for all those seeking to understand the scale of the challenge, as well as the approaches needed to fruitfully reach the billions who are shaped by such a mindset.”

- Lindsay Brown,
International Director, the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization

“This excellent book addresses a serious gap in the way we think about effective communication of the Gospel. The understanding of honor and shame dynamics and the importance of an oral tradition have often been neglected in a lot of the Western paradigms of theological education. Full of captivating stories and examples, this book delivers a rich cultural exegesis of the concepts of honor and shame. Rich in insightful reflections on biblical stories, this book illustrates how oral communication patterns enable the whole community to hear clearly the message of the gospel in their mother tongue, not only so that they may respond to it but also in order to reproduce the message. The many authors from diverse cultural backgrounds carefully explore how the concepts of honor and shame interact with oral preference in communicating the gospel among different peoples. This is a thought provoking reference book for anyone seriously wanting to communicate the gospel effectively, creatively and cross-culturally beyond the literate context.”

- Rev Dr. Patrick Fung,
General Director, OMF International

“Don’t be intimidated by the long, scholarly title. This book is practical, understandable, and a great encouragement to anyone who wants to share the Good News in a way that will open hearts and change lives.”

- Phil Tuttle,
President/CEO, Walk Thru The Bible

“Indigenous languages and oral cultures are precious people groups who are indelibly linked to their worldviews. The oral communication strategy is critical to the Gospel. I highly recommend your attention to *Beyond Literate Western Contexts*.”

- Roy Peterson,
President/CEO, American Bible Society

“Through case studies and theological reflections the book shows that orality is part of a relational orientation of personality and culture as expressed through the value pair of honor and shame. In a second set of theoretical and practical articles, it reflects how to assess oral performance as compared to texts. In a world population that has a growing preference for relational and oral functioning, these two missiological reflections are essential for better achievements in the communication of the Gospel, theological education, and many other aspects of missional life style. The book can be an eye opener for academic readers, reflective practitioners and field workers.”

- Dr. Hannes Wiher, professor of missiology in Africa, Asia and Europe
Coordinator of the Network of Evangelical Missiologists for French-speaking Europe
Author, *Shame and Guilt: A Key to Cross-Cultural Ministry*

“I so much appreciate the pioneering work of Chiang and Lovejoy in editing this collection of writings into a book. *Beyond Literate Western Contexts* continues to shed light on the neglected areas of honor and shame when it comes to disciple making. There is much to learn from its contents when it comes to reaching our oral preference world!”

J. D. Payne, Ph.D.,
Pastor of Church Multiplication, The Church at Brook Hills
Author, *Pressure Points*

“This rich collection of stimulating essays is an important contribution to missiology. The combination of missiological reflection, biblical interpretation, theological reflection, and case studies will appeal to both practitioners and scholars. I found it particularly inspiring to read about effective use of inductive oral Bible study, oral Bible schools, and storying-based theological education. Honor/Shame and Orality are two topics anyone interested in understanding how God is currently at work in the world needs to understand. This book is an excellent place to begin that learning.”

Lindsay Olesberg,
Senior Associate for Scripture Engagement,
the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization

“God’s good news for humanity is even better and certainly fuller than most of us realize. Moreover, well-intentioned Christian faithfulness to God’s truth can unwittingly restrict not only the scope of what the triune God has done to make the world right again, but also the ways by which divine communication with the breadth of complex humanity takes place. *Beyond Literate Western Contexts: Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference* constructively sheds light on both the splendor of the Gospel and the multiform magnificence of humanity restored in Jesus Christ.”

- Dr. J. Nelson Jennings,
Executive Director, Overseas Ministries Studies Center Editor,
International Bulletin of Missionary Research

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'...man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.'

Deuteronomy 8:3 NIV

'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

Matthew 4:4 NIV

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IMPORTANT WORD...

Robert B. Sloan Jr.

In the earliest days of the Church, Christians heard the Scriptures read aloud. All of the New Testament books that we so often read on printed pages were originally read aloud by a single reader in front of a gathered group of Jesus' followers.

There were many factors important for those of the early Church as they read the words of God: the sounds of the words, the rhythm and cadence of the narratives, the way each spoken word hit upon the ear, the way readers were to emphasize certain expressions (e.g., "Let the reader understand" [Mark 13:14]).

By contrast, today an individual reader will sit down with the canonical collection of texts and silently read to him or herself the words which have been recorded on the page. Hearing Scripture read aloud in a group is a very different experience from silently reading Scripture to oneself.

The orality movement emphasizes the acts of speaking and communicating the message of Scripture not only for historical reasons, but also in order to recover the means of teaching Scripture in a world that is highly illiterate. I commend these essays to you, believing that the New Testament Christians' earliest experiences in worship, especially when it came to hearing the reading aloud of their sacred text (including the words of their apostolic witnesses), offer an enriching experience. Not only is oral Scripture reading and teaching useful for our own spiritual edification in the context of community worship, but it also provides powerful new opportunities and vehicles for sharing the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Dr. Robert B. Sloan, Jr.
President, Houston Baptist University

FOREWORD

Jerry Wiles

One of the major benefits of the ION consultations is experiencing the power of shared knowledge and the collective memory of group participation. In our orality training with Living Water International, we emphasize the power and benefit of this kind of shared knowledge and the collective memory. It is remarkable to hear and observe the wisdom and insight that can come from simple people who have had little or no formal education. When we hear a story from the Bible, ask questions, and discuss in groups, we see the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit giving understanding.

The principle of relational, communal, and participatory learning is part of the experience of the Orality in Theological Education consultations, as it is with orality training around the world. When the right questions are asked of the right people in the appropriate context they usually come to the right answers.

In fact, biblical scholars (including pastors, and mission, and ministry leaders) usually come to recognize that orality methods and strategies are foundational to communicating the good news of Jesus to everyone and making disciples among all people groups. It is important to point out that Jesus didn't say to make disciples of all literate people groups, but all people groups. Therefore, we must also think of the language groups of the world who have no written script or form and those who still have no scripture translated into their heart language or mother tongue.

As the orality movement continues to grow, increasing numbers of educators, mission, and church leaders are recognizing the multi-faceted aspects of the movement. Some aspects include issues relating to honor and shame cultures and assessment of orality preference, as was the emphasis of the consultation hosted by Houston Baptist University in 2014. It was an excellent building block on the previous consultations hosted by the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton

College in 2012 and in Hong Kong in 2013. The influence and impact of these consultations are increasing the visibility and credibility of orality in encouraging ways. Overall, there seem to be some major paradigm shifts and breakthroughs in the global mission and church movements.

There are also signs that orality methods can be tools for renewal and awakening among the Church in the West. We hear reports of pastors and church leaders beginning to work together as a result of participating in orality training events and connecting with each other in new ways.

Orality training and informal (or non-formal) theological education is becoming even more important where missionaries and church workers are unable to use literate or technological resources. In restricted areas, or limited access countries, orality training and informal theological education can equip followers of Jesus with just what is in their heads and hearts so that what they know can be reproduced in the heads and hearts of others.

One New Testament scholar from an Asian country recently pointed out that understanding oral traditions and the history of the early Church helps us grasp the significance of orality in mission strategy and church life today. It is the way that the gospel spread throughout the entire populated world in the first century and the way those early followers processed their faith.

Jerry Wiles, D.D
President Emeritus, Living Water International

PROLOGUE

Samuel E. Chiang

“You have dishonored our church. You must leave now.” My translator and I were in shock. My translator had quietly tried to ingratiate himself with the attendant, but without success. We were silently ushered out of the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site housing the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the seat of Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

Outside the church complex, I asked, “Why did this happen?” My translator said that several of the attendants observed that I was chewing gum while on the tour and that this brought dishonor to the church, community, and the Saints who were buried there. In turn, I had brought shame to both myself and my translator. For me, this was a rude awakening and a reconnecting into the realm of “honor and shame”¹ that I had thought primarily existed in Asia, where I have resided.

Ever since that episode towards the end of the last decade, I have been on a journey to understand how the Ukraine—a highly text-based culture with a colorful history—could be so vibrant in its expression of an honor and shame worldview.

This journey is parallel to the one that theological education is seeking to understand in this decade. Highly text-based societies (some call them highly literate societies) are thought to be highly individualistic and ensconced in a guilt/innocence worldview, having undergone a privatization of faith. This observation is generally correct. However, with the proliferation of personal screen devices, our worldviews are being reshaped (Chiang 2014, 395-397).

Each device has a digital screen that can represent multiple platforms of social media. A walled-garden of Facebook, to LinkedIn, to Google Plus and many other powerful social networks are shaping the culture of the community. This

is often done for the sake of “friends—fans—followers,” who have subscribed to the code of the community and commenced the migration from an individualistic disposition to a collectivist culture which is underpinned by an honor and shame code.

This not-so-subtle change has impacted the halls of education, holding enormous implications for theological education. Let me share eight questions/observations:

- (1) How does our theology embrace honor and shame, and are there curricula available for theological institutions, seminaries, and organizations?
- (2) What are the nuances and dimensions in oral-visual learning, and do we understand them?
- (3) Since the learners are becoming much more oral-visual in their learning orientation, what are some orality-based assessments that can be done in online format?
- (4) How does honor and shame influence pedagogy/andragogy?
- (5) The learner’s consumption of information is becoming oral-visual, but our distribution of knowledge is text-based; how do we make adjustments?
- (6) With access to knowledge that is global, what is the role of lecturers/professors who are now only a portion of the knowledge ecosystem?
- (7) With individuals who are much more community-oriented and collaborative, what is the assessment process for the course?
- (8) How do we assist the learners to be more effective in cultures which are more orality-based in nature, and are fully honor and shame in worldview?

The cohorts from previous consultations held at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College and Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary have already expressed the need to explore honor and shame cultural contexts, along with the assessment of orality preference. Both theological educators and academicians have spoken of the need; the question is simply of the timing and setting to discuss these matters.

The Backstory to Houston Baptist University and Consultation Design

Within the orality movement, we are committed to be Spirit-led, nimble, and agile; we are also committed to see the passions of individuals and organizations expressed for the sake of the kingdom.

Jerry Wiles, who helped Houston Baptist University (HBU) to house the Dunham Bible Museum, called me one day to discuss how the administration at HBU were highly interested to host an orality and theological consultation. My heart leaped. Was it possible that we were able to go to a first-class university with a beautiful urban campus? Furthermore, would this be the right place to tackle two large, interrelated topics? Finally, would the timing in early July work for top-level academicians and thinkers when they have the usual summer courses, or overseas teaching, and/or vacations?

HBU welcomed the topics we were seeking to address and generously provided all housing, food, and Wi-Fi. God's gift of a site to host the consultation was both overwhelmingly generous and caring.

Similar to previous by-invitation-only consultations, we were well over-subscribed. God brought together 62 of us. We knew from the previous year's event in Hong Kong that six projects were proposed and all had already been completed within eleven months. We were anticipating how God would lead us in this consultation, and how men and women would come together to collaborate.

Participants came from 19 different countries, representing 20 different theological institutions and universities, and 24 organizations, churches, and denominational associations. We were graced with 32 individuals who held doctorates and who were creatively engaged. Chancellors, presidents, provosts, and academic deans were peer learners with the practitioners in the room. And practitioners felt that their hearts' cries were heard! The unique chemistry allowed organizational and church leaders to dream together and pose forthright questions which resulted in collaboration.

Grant Lovejoy, Chuck Madinger, Mark Overstreet, David Swarr and I were the Programming Task Force, anchored through prayer by Linda Bemis and her core prayer team. We continued what we had done previously, as described in our second book, *Beyond Literate Western Practices*.

The participants had to read the papers ahead of time so as to meaningfully engage within the intimate and intense time during the consultation. Each day, Dr. David Capes, lead scholar in a new Bible translation called THE VOICE (a joint project of Thomas Nelson Publishing and Ecclesia Bible Society), anchored our exploration and deliberations with a thoughtful reflection of scripture and the early Church. On day one, we held panel discussions on each of the topics and intensively processed topics and identified key issues. Then, on the second day, we chose a modified “open-space technology” methodology, and participants self-selected into a domain or topic of their own interest to further conversations and potential collaborations on them. View the full list of participants on pages 207-215.

Conversations and Collaborations

Conversations flowed into the night. Weeks and months have passed, and out of the dozen projects that have resulted from the consultation, over half have been completed to date.

The chapters in this book allowed us to become learners; as learners, we were able to construct knowledge together. Jeffery Hays² also joined us by video to speak about honor and shame and the gospel in the Middle Eastern context. Thus, the video³ and the chapters were the catalysts and drivers which took our conversations forward.

This book is divided into two large sections: “Honor and Shame” and “Assessment of Orality Preference,” with the two editors providing the Prologue and Epilogue. We are providing the chapters similarly to how we conducted the consultation—leading with case studies, and complementing with theoretical underpinnings.

The authors of chapters in the “Honor and Shame” section write from a mosaic of contexts: Central Asian, East African, Latin American, East Asian, and Southeast Asian (and, of course, the video supplementing the Middle Eastern context). Jayson Georges, Steve Evans, and Phil Thornton provide insights and theological perspectives to honor and shame and the oral preference learners in case study format. Jackson Wu, Werner Mischke, and Chris Flanders provide the theoretical foundations to the conversation.

Similarly, authors of the “Assessment of Orality Preference” section provide case studies (albeit much more from an African perspective), which are complemented with theoretical underpinnings. Beatrice Kadangs, Stephen Baba, Daniel Runyon, Phil Walker, Jennifer Jagerson, and Steve Kemp provide case studies from West Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, and South Asia; both in formal and non-formal theological education contexts, as well as in non-governmental contexts as they relate to oral preference learners. Mark Overstreet and Chuck Madinger complement this with theoretical frameworks from adjacent fields—community development and from tier-one university research on orality-based communications theory and practices.

We have also taken the unusual step of including an annotated bibliography as a chapter in this book—we discovered that both significant topics are new enough that this is needed. William Coppedge has invested significant time annotating the selected bibliography so that it may serve as a catalyst for further research and reflection.

This Faith Journey Continues...

The conversations from these chapters have continued in light of the global renaissance of orality, a seismic shift in the worldview of the oral preference learners in the digital (see Sachs 2012; Chiang 2013, 7-10) era. We believe the heart cry of theological educators, in both the formal and non-formal domains, should be to assist every oral preference learner with theological studies and to be effective disciple makers. The digital era has changed knowledge, access, and authority—the very foundations of education. In light of this, how do we reconsider our curricula and assessments in an honor and shame worldview so that oral preference learners are able to receive, process, remember, and pass on the word of God?

¹See www.doceo.co.uk/background/shame_guilt.htm

²Jeffery Hayes is one of only 26 Arabic translators certified by the U.S. Government; and has made a wonderful contribution in the area of translation, including Bible translation. We invited him to provide a perspective on “Honor and Shame” in the Arabic World.

³See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7K3jEqSj94>

PART I: Honor & Shame

“I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame.”

Zephaniah 3:19 NIV

Chapter 1

Reconstructing Central Asian Honor Codes via Orality

Jayson Georges

Jayson Georges, M.Div., is Missiologist-in-Resident with Encompass World Partners, focusing on developing tools and theology for Christians in honor-shame contexts. He blogs at www.HonorShame.com. He served in Central Asia (2005-2013) doing Business As Mission and church planting, but now lives in a refugee community outside of Atlanta.

Abstract

Orality can be an effective strategy in Christian education and disciple-making for reconstructing cultural honor codes so that Christians live and evaluate life according to God's code of honor. Here, Jayson Georges analyzes the effectiveness of a parable to transform worldview meta-narratives and thus reorient notions of honorableness and shamefulness. He assesses two oral strategies—an evangelistic narrative and a disciple-making approach—specifically contextualized for honor-shame dynamics in Central Asia. In the conclusion, the author suggests two ways to further develop biblical narratives for honor-shame contexts.

Kent, my ministry colleague, got in a taxi to travel between two Central Asian cities. In the car with him were the driver (male) and two other men. A young girl was placed in the last seat by her father, who instructed the driver to take care of her until the final destination. As they drove along, the three men began talking about the various women in their lives, which naturally made the young girl uncomfortable.

Then, they addressed her: “Come to my house. I will feed you. It will be a relaxing time.” They began discussing among themselves how good it would be to stop the car and spend time with the girl. She was visibly uncomfortable. Turning to Kent, they asked, “What do you think? Do you like that idea?”

Kent replied, “Well, you could do that if you want to. It’s your choice. But it reminds me of a riddle.” “Oh yeah, what riddle?” they responded. And Kent told them this...

So he walks out of his house onto the street. As he's walking along confidently, he looks over and he says to himself, "Wow, she looks good. I think I'll have her." So he goes over and does his thing with her. He keeps strutting down the street, and he sees another and says "Mmm, I like her. I think I'll have her, too." So he goes over and fulfills his desires with her. Then he sees some food laying there, so takes some for himself. Then a third time he sees a good looking one, takes her, and then carries on. Who is he?

At this point, the three men are glowing in anticipation, naturally thinking, "What a real man to exert such power!"

"He is a dog!" Immediately, the car was silent. "So, you can choose what you do and how you live. As for me, God created me a man and I'm choosing to live like one." There was no more salacious talk.

This incident succinctly illustrates three primary features of the Central Asian honor code: patronage, gender roles, and hospitality. Patronage—the provision of material goods in exchange for loyalty and respect—was the social arrangement proposed to the young female. Fulfilling social expectations of "manliness" caused the men to seek honor through female conquest. Hospitality—the gracious display of generosity towards outsiders to formalize new relational identity—was behind the men's offer of a "local resource" to Kent. Patronage, gender expectations, and hospitality are central channels for the acquisition and maintenance of honor in Central Asian culture, even to the minimization of Islamic piousness (i.e., Middle East) and social harmony (i.e., East Asia).

Reconstructing Honor Codes via Orality

At the surface rhetorical level, Kent's engaging parable with a shocking conclusion captured the listeners' interest. But more fundamental was how that parable functioned to redefine the listener's basic worldview meta-narrative. The parable of a dog rewrote the assumed narrative of honorability and shamefulness, and new attributions of worth were created.

In light of the prominence of honor and shame values in the Central Asian worldview, orality techniques must ultimately reconstruct notions of honor and shame by effectively relocating listeners as characters in an alternative plotline. The dog parable successfully removes womanizing behavior from cultural discourses attributing glory and dominance for behavior commonly associated

with a royal harem. It relocates salacious talk into an alternative discourse of scavenging canines, a debasing and shaming reassessment (cf. 1 Sam. 17:43; 24:14; 2 Sam. 9:8; 16:9). Humans perceive, interpret, and normalize life through narrative lenses (Wright, 1992: 38ff). As a result, honor codes are grounded in implicit worldview meta-narratives which orality methods can effectively modify and subvert.

Orality, a common cultural feature of collectivistic, honor-shame societies, must not merely communicate theological concepts, but overturn prevailing worldview narratives for interpreting life. Stories can effectively illustrate ideas but they best serve to reroute paths to honor and shame amidst Christian witness and theological education. Effective Christian narratives align human attributions of worth (i.e., what and who is honorable and shameful) with God's eternal code of honor.

Jesus' parable of the wicked tenants in the vineyard (Mark 12:1-11) functions precisely in this manner by reformulating the narrative of salvation history. Jesus redefines Israel from an elect nation with privileged status (i.e., honor) to ungrateful servants requiring expelling (i.e., shame). The parable is hardly a moral lesson on stewardship; rather, it reconstructs who is honorable and shameful (Wright 1992).¹

Moral change in collectivistic societies occurs only as social conceptions of honor and shame transform, but not through judicial rulings or political legislation (Appiah 2011). In relation to Christian fruit-bearing, this indicates that disciple-making involves reconstructing Christians' honor code. If the goal of Christian education entails (1) replacing sinful misplacements of honor, (2) orientating one's affections to honor God, and (3) rewriting prevailing honor codes, then oral narratives help construct worldviews. Christian education seeks to transform Christians' code of honor so their ascriptions of value parallel God's. In sum, orality, properly utilized, redefines honor and shame by reshaping one's worldview narrative.²

Summary: Orality → New Worldview Meta-narrative → New Honor Code → Honoring Life

Ministry Efforts in Central Asia

Our team, working in church planting and Business As Mission, experimented with multiple forms of non-formal theological education for worldview

(re-)formation among Central Asians. Our objective was to address the culturally prominent values of honor and shame. The objective of our theological education was not merely “What does the Bible say about *honor and shame*?” but the more encompassing question of “What does the Bible say is *honorable and shameful*?” This question ultimately leads to “*Who* does the Bible say is honorable and shameful?”—a question of who is related to God’s people (cf. Matt. 5-7; Rom. 9-11). Let me share two examples.

Example #1: In an effort to contextualize the biblical story for a national church-planting team, I prepared a one-hour didactic study of salvation history in the language of honor and shame, employing primarily the dynamics of defilement, purity, and ethnic incorporation as emphasized by the New Perspective on Paul. The theological content resonated with the national believers, even prompting one believer to ask in tears, “Why has nobody told me this? I’ve told my sister that God forgives her, but she always says her shame is too great for God to accept her.”

To disseminate those theological concepts orally, our team formulated an evangelistic narrative of salvation history in the language of honor and shame entitled *Back to God’s Honorable Village*.³ The 15-minute story employed indigenous symbols for honor and shame and became our primary evangelistic tool. The central theological theme presents listeners with the choice of selecting prevailing cultural honor or God’s eternal honor. Because of the nominal nature of Islam in Central Asia, we embedded the narrative in primarily cultural (contra religious) constructs.

We have used *Back to God’s Village* for six years and here is what we found⁴: the non-believer’s cognitive understanding of salvation has been aided, but that has not consistently induced biblical salvation—a reorientation of affections resulting from spiritual regeneration (John 3:5-8; Heb. 6:4ff). One may comprehend the eternal honor God offers, but remain unwilling to relinquish his or her current status or jeopardize his or her family reputation to accept adoption into God’s family.

This reality was not unique to our situation. John 12:42-43 says, “Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.”

As we trained believers to retell the narrative, it unexpectedly functioned as a foundational worldview narrative for their personal maturation and ethical formation. While evangelistic in intent, believers ultimately used the narrative to inform their own behavior and decisions by locating themselves within the narrative's plot as an active agent of honor reception.

Example #2: Another exploration of theological education for learners with oral/narrative preference and honor-shame orientation was in the arena of discipleship content. Our team recognized certain issues that were perennially hindering Christians' personal and corporate maturation: marriage/singleness, persecution, offense/bitterness, ethnocentrism, and materialism.

Upon reflection, we concluded that misguided notions of honorableness and shamefulness in each of these spheres prompted believers to make imprudent choices. To deconstruct prevailing cultural attributions of worth, we created discipleship lessons that included a contemporary case study highlighting the cultural dynamic and a biblical narrative offering an alternative code of honor (Elliott 1994; Appiah 2011).

For example, the core concept for materialism was: "God's honor frees us from coveting material goods as status symbols." Here was the contemporary case study stated:

Nurbek was a top student in his university class as an English major. After several failed attempts to visit America after graduation, he found a job teaching English in his hometown for \$140/mo. Though he enjoyed working as an English teacher, he could not afford a car, a wedding, or a house. Relatives in the village asked when he would become a man. Explain Nurbek's inner sentiments and public reputation.

We read the story of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:28-37), then discussed what the story teaches about the relationship between honor and material possessions in God's kingdom. Through case studies and biblical narratives, we sought to disciple believers to act in a manner honorable in God's eyes (Elliott 1994).

Future Explorations

Looking forward, some areas requiring missiological development emerge from the nexus of orality and honor-shame dynamics.

The first would be **developing a usable document recounting biblical examples of people whom God has redeemed from shame unto honor** (Laniak 1998; cf. the style of International Association for Refugee’s “Refugees in the Bible”). Such a reference document would provide Christian workers with a core set of biblical narratives addressing contextual concerns of honor and shame. Moreover, this would help complement legal-based notions of salvation history dominant in Western theology (i.e., Firm Foundations; McIlwain 1991) with a contextual soteriology in which Yawheh works to remove the threat of shame and restores honor for his people. Effective implementation of orality for Christian ministry utilizes biblical stories to recast the grander scriptural drama into the cultural language of honor and shame.

Second, we would do well to **develop a set of stories specifically geared towards helping reconstruct Christians’ honor code for a range of situations** commonly encountered in honor-shame societies. Here are two examples of how biblical narratives address specific honor-shame dynamics.

Example #1: When a Central Asian assumed a new leadership role with Cru, he recounted how God used the story of Eli’s sons, who were ultimately shamed for abusing authority for social distinction (1 Sam. 2:12-36) to reshape his cultural notions of leadership (authoritarianism, nepotism, personal gain, etc.). To the leaders, God clearly illustrated “Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

Example #2: When a group of Christian ladies inside a housing compound in Africa heard the gunfire of approaching rebels, they remembered how Abigail averted disaster by honoring David with a generous feast. They likewise experienced God’s salvation by preparing a full table for the opponents bent on their destruction. The book of 1 Sam. 25:33 teaches us: “Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from avenging (i.e., restoring eroded honor through violence) myself with my own hand.”

Because Christians in honor-shame cultures face social circumstances unanswered by Western Christians, missionary educators could craft a set of biblical stories for defining honorable conduct to navigate various ethical quandaries.

¹Jesus' vine and branch imagery in John 15 is similarly misinterpreted as illustrating a theological concept regarding individual spirituality. By claiming to be Yahweh's true vine through whom God's kingdom would be realized, Jesus challenged a fundamental Jewish narrative regarding the Jewish Nation (cf. Ps. 80, Isa. 5) and invited the disciples to adopt a new metanarrative and honor code regarding ethnic Israel to guide behavior during their impending distress.

²Unfortunately, a primary indication of effectiveness in transforming an honor code is hostile resistance (cf. "When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him" [Mark 12:12a]). Several Central Asians warned Kent he was rather fortunate the fellow passengers did not respond violently.

³Back to God's Village is a whiteboard cartoon that is based on that narrative. It is available on youtube.com (short link: tiny.cc/u727cx). Full text is available at honorshame.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Gospel-Story-Back-to-Gods-Honorable-Village.pdf

⁴These comments reflect upon the story's narrative effectiveness in reconstructing Central Asian honor codes. Further socio-cultural reflections are available in Georges (2011): 304-305.

Chapter 2

Naked and Ashamed: A Case Study of Shame and Honor in Central Ethiopia

Steve Evans

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Abstract

Shame and honor are an integral part of the culture of the Alaba people of central Ethiopia. To be shamed, or be the cause of it, often results in being ostracized from community. Once honor is restored, one is welcomed back. The Alaba people are a Muslim people, and Teke's father is an imam; this shame was hard for him. Over time, honor was restored and once again community was reestablished. A large part of Teke's story is the biblical story of the demon-possessed man, found in Mark 5 and Luke 8. It is evident that this story connects to the Genesis account of the fall of Adam and Eve and that both stories connect to Teke and the Alaba people. All three are stories of shame and honor. As the Gospel narrative is introduced to Alaba culture, transformation takes place.

“For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me” (Matt. 25:35-36).

Shame and honor are an integral part of the culture of the Alaba people of central Ethiopia. To be shamed, or be the cause of it, often results in being ostracized from community. Once honor is restored, one is welcomed back. Teke shamed his family twice—first, because they thought he was crazy, and second, because he embraced Jesus as his Lord and Savior. The Alaba people are a Muslim people, and Teke's father is an imam. This shame was hard for him. Over time, honor was restored and once again community was reestablished.

A large part of Teke's story is the biblical story of the demon-possessed man, found in Mark 5 and Luke 8. It is evident that his story connects to the Genesis account of the fall of Adam and Eve and that both stories connect to Teke and the Alaba people. All three are stories of shame and honor. As the Gospel narrative is introduced to Alaba culture, transformation takes place.

Shame and Honor: A Redemptive Theme in the Bible

A redemptive theme is a thread carried throughout scripture. It is often metaphorical, one that explains or elaborates on what Jesus ultimately did to redeem people from their fallen, sinful situation, and to which a response is called for (i.e. believe, obey, trust, love, repent, etc.). A dictionary definition of the word "redemption" typically considers it to be a fairly broad concept: buying back, winning back, freeing from something that causes distress or harm, payment of ransom to free from captivity, taking someone out of a situation that is detrimental or helping to overcome it, releasing from blame or debt, reforming, changing for the better, repairing, restoring, offsetting the bad effect of something, making worthwhile (Payne, Hall, and Burns 2006, 1).

Shame and honor is a major redemptive theme found in scripture, and a shame and honor worldview is prevalent in many cultures around the world. "It seems like the shame/honor idea really affects most relational cultures," says Tricia Stringer, orality specialist and oral scriptures translation consultant. "We just don't always call it shame/honor. We often talk about relationship, or even peace sometimes. Peace comes, especially for women, when shame goes. Purpose comes, especially for men, when shame goes" (Personal communication, March 23, 2014).

The theme is especially relevant to shame (vs. guilt) societies, or those cultures in which maintaining honor is more important than law and justice, which is another redemptive theme found in the Bible. Honor (how one is perceived by the community) is external and is more important than internal feelings of guilt. One must try to bring honor to the family. However, someone who has brought shame to the family is typically more receptive to the gospel. For instance, having an illness that causes one to be rejected by family and community results in feelings of shame. Healing will restore the honor (Payne, Hall, and Burns 2006, 11).

The account of creation and the fall in Genesis 1-3 introduces the concept of a shame and honor redemptive theme. Of course, several other themes are expressed at the same time. At the end of chapter 2, we read, "Now the man and his wife were

both naked, but they felt no shame” (Gen. 2:25). When they disobeyed God, however, and heard him walking in the garden, they hid themselves and God called out to them:

That evening they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden; and they hid themselves among the trees. The Lord God called to Adam, “Why are you hiding?” And Adam replied, “I heard you coming and didn’t want you to see me naked. So I hid.” “Who told you you were naked?” the Lord God asked. (Gen. 3: 8-11)

Genesis 3:21 then says that God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and Eve. He covered their nakedness, alleviating shame and restoring honor.

This theme of shame and honor is picked up in the story of the demon-possessed man found in Mark 5 and Luke 8. The authors of *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* for both Gospel accounts say that the intent of demon possession is to make one less than human. All dignity is lost, implying a life of lost honor, a life of shame. In the story, the man is ostracized from the community, tormented, naked, and a menace and danger to himself and others.

When Jesus entered the man’s life, however, everything changed. After the “legion” of demons possessing the man fled and entered the pigs, many from the nearby community arrived to see what was happening. This is what they saw: “He was sitting at Jesus’ feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane” (Luke 8:35). The man desired to follow Jesus, but is told to go home and tell others of what God had done for him.

In his shame, the man was naked. In his salvation, the man is clothed, restoring his honor. Jesus takes away shame. Jesus provides honor. Jesus himself said that to clothe the naked is a good thing, along with feeding the hungry, giving drink to those who thirst, and caring for the stranger and prisoner.

He said, “For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me” (Matt. 25:35-36).

Looking at these verses on their broader context, one can see that there is something about being able to help others have honor restored to them that is pleasing to the Father.

That Story Is My Story!

The first time Teke heard the biblical story of the demon-possessed man, an astonished and delighted look spread across his face. “That story is my story!” he exclaimed. “I am that man.” Teke and his wife, S’rai, were participating in training to be missionary evangelists among their own Alaba people of central Ethiopia. They were learning how to share the gospel, disciple and raise up leaders, and plant churches through Bible story-telling. Trainers from two mission organizations led the sessions.

A few days later a trip was planned to a village to learn more of the Alaba customs and culture. After three hours of driving and walking on rough rural roads, students and trainers arrived. The group was introduced to a village elder. To the trainers’ amazement, it was Teke’s father. Teke was either bold or crazy, everyone thought, because they knew his own father had put Teke under a death threat. Soon, a large group of villagers gathered around the visitors and everyone sat under a large acacia tree, which is common in Africa. After extended greetings, the trainers told of their home country and families.

Then, Teke’s father began to share about his son. He said Teke was a promising Qur’an student, having been invited to train in Mecca, which was a great honor. Teke had become an imam, he said, but one day Teke went crazy. Teke tried to kill him and others. He went around day and night fighting with everyone and screaming crazy things. Teke’s story was, indeed, like the story of the demon-possessed man, the trainers thought. The father then pointed at the trainers and said, “One day, your God healed my son, but since he had converted to Christianity, we have to kill him.”

Teke had become a believer when walking by a Christian funeral. Music being sung about Jesus touched his heart. At that moment, he was both saved and healed.

After the father finished the story of his son, the trainers asked, “Can we tell you a story from God’s holy book, which is like your son’s story?” The father agreed. By then, over 70 people had gathered under the tree. The story of the demon-possessed man was told, and when finished, everyone applauded. No one was offended by the story, and in fact, everyone seemed to like it. Then, the father again pointed at the trainers and said, “I give my blessing for my son to be your brother, and to work with you.”

Much later, Teke and S'rai's parents wanted to hear more stories from God's word, so the trainers told them all the stories they had learned in their trainings. Their parents said, "We give our blessings for you to tell these stories to the rest of the people in our village." Teke's father also gave permission for other members of the family to become Christians if they chose to do so.

The village imam had also been hearing the Bible stories and said, "These are good stories. Our people need to hear them." He continued, "When you come here to tell these stories, you will need a toilet, so come use the toilet in our mosque. You will also need a place to cook your meals, so come to the mosque and use our kitchen." Muslim leadership extended grace and hospitality to Teke and S'rai. God's word shared through stories opened doors in Teke and S'rai's village and helped restore honor to what was once a shameful situation in Alaba culture.

When asked how he shares his faith throughout the Alaba region, Teke responded, "By telling stories to others." A good first story is the story of the demon-possessed man, he said, "Because that story connects with my life. It is my story."

Go and Tell Others

Everyone was talking about a man who was healed from demon possession, and it called for investigation. The man lived in a village deep in the Alaba countryside, where a dozen huts lined the edges of a field, all enclosed by a wall of planted cactus. There, he gathered his family and began telling his story to researchers who wanted to hear firsthand what had happened. He said that he had been "going crazy," and while everyone knew this condition was a spiritual problem, they did not always have a way to help.

The man said he was always a "normal person," but one day became suddenly and uncontrollably violent. He became a menace to his village and a danger even to his own family. For everyone's safety, his family chained him to the house to keep him contained while they sought a solution. They asked for help from the local mosque, but nothing the imam tried worked. They went to the local witchdoctor, who made sacrifices and performed rituals, but to no avail. The man said he remained chained to his house. Then, the family heard about Teke and sent for him.

Teke came and asked the family to unchain the man. They refused. “Unchain him,” Teke asked once again, and the family still refused. The only way they would agree to unchain the man was if they could draw up a document that Teke would sign saying he would personally be responsible for any harm or damage the man might cause. Teke agreed and the chains came off. He prayed with the man and told him the story of the demon-possessed man. Teke introduced him to Jesus. The man believed, and he was instantly healed, in his right mind again. But the story doesn’t end there.

The story of the one possessed by evil spirits stayed with the man. He remembered it and could tell it, and tell it he did. That very week, the man went out sharing the biblical story of the demon-possessed man and sharing his own story, telling how Jesus changed his life. Several people came to faith as a result.

The researchers asked the man’s father, “What do you think about this? You tried everything to heal this man and only Jesus could heal him.” The Muslim father responded, “Yes, we were amazed. Jesus was the only one able to heal him.” The father and other members of the family were asked, “If Teke came up here every week and agreed to start a story group with you and teach you the stories of Jesus, would you want to come?” The father, brothers, uncles, and other members of the family members—eight in all—committed to attending a new story group.

The power of the story of the demon-possessed man for those who are demon-possessed is real and evident. Lives that were shamed have been restored to honor.

Observations and Notes

As one of the trainers, I have firsthand knowledge of this case study. However, I’ve tried to rely heavily on the notes, writings, reports, and recollections of others. Bruce Williams and Steve Simms, both orality specialists with E3 Partners, were co-trainers with me, and Doug Bender did on-the-ground research for E3. Grant Lovejoy and David Garrison of the International Mission Board, along with Williams, conducted a church-planting analysis of the project for possible inclusion in Garrison’s book, *A Wind in the House of Islam*. I was able to obtain notes, reports, and writings from all five of these men. I am affiliated with the International Mission Board, and the project was an E3 project.

I must also note that Annette Hall, Tricia Stringer, and Stephen Stringer, all orality and Bible storying specialists with the International Mission Board, provided

tremendous insights (and shared their notes) on shame and honor in the Bible and in culture. The Stringers are also trained by SIL/Wycliffe in linguistics and Bible translation, and they serve as consultants for narrative scripture projects. In addition to providing resources on the redemptive theme of shame and honor in scripture, I received several chronological Bible story sets based on the theme, with detailed explanations on why each story was chosen.

Williams mentioned that after the church-planting analysis interviews were done, he said to the translator that he was disappointed there was no evidence of multi-generational church beginnings. The translator responded, “You have seen it.” When asked to explain, the translator cited the following generational list:

- M learned the stories from S and started a group (1st generation)
- W was in M’s group, learned the stories and started a group (2nd generation)
- B was in W’s group, learned the stories and started a group (3rd generation).
- B taught the “old lady”, who learned the stories and started a group (4th generation).
- The “old lady” taught D, who learned the stories and started a group (5th generation)
- D is teaching another person the stories (6th generation)

“We had interviewed M, W, and B,” Williams said. “We did not interview the old lady, although we did see her at B’s home. The old lady was the missing link between seeing a three-generation reproduction and recognizing a sixth-generation reproduction” (Personal communication, March 27, 2014).

While Garrison did not specifically cite the Alaba project in his book, he did come to the conclusion that narrative chronological presentations of scripture played a significant role in many Muslims accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord:

A number of Muslim movements to Christ were birthed through some form of discovery Bible study, a growing familiarity with the biblical salvation narrative. Through the Bible they discovered for themselves God’s plan that began in creation and continued through the prophets – prophets they recognized – before culminating in the life, teachings, and work of Jesus Christ. By the time these “discoverers” encountered Christ in the New Testament, they were convinced of his authenticity and had given their lives to him in humble submission. (Garrison 2014, 247)

Although Garrison did not specifically refer to the Alaba in his book, Lovejoy confirmed that Garrison's conclusion was indeed true for the Alaba:

Several of the interviewees told how Bible stories were instrumental in their coming to faith and are part of their ongoing encounter with God's word. At one home we asked the Christians to tell us a biblical story and several were apparently able to do so. The story appeared to flow smoothly and easily from their lips. A teenage girl told one story and was ready to launch into a second when the group stopped her, but it seemed obvious that she knew the stories and was willing to tell them in front of a group of men, including we foreigners. A 28-year-old woman also told her story. The men in the group said she is a strong leader in the congregation; she is the third wife of a church leader who had been an imam before his conversion. The fact that all four of them could tell a biblical story without referring to a Bible or much advance warning (only a few minutes) lent credence to reports that Alaba people know Bible stories and tell them routinely in their daily activities. (Personal communication, March 13, 2014)

Lovejoy also alluded to how the gospel helped restore honor to a broken culture and a broken community.

In the interviews, Alaba people who had come to faith in Christ told how they had come to faith. Frequently, they reported seeing a difference in the lives of Christians; Christians were peaceful and got along within their families better than the Muslims did. Converts said that the Christian community was a welcome alternative to the extensive working of witchcraft against each other that was widespread in the Muslim community. Christians were obviously more kind to people, to both Muslim and Christian. (Personal communication, March 13, 2014)

Conclusion

It is important to understand the concept of shame and honor in a culture. To misunderstand may result in miscommunication of the gospel. A study of the Alaba people and this project shows the impact a chronological and narrative presentation of the word of God can have on a people, community, and culture. Effectiveness is exponentially increased with the use of Bible narratives that address the worldview issues of shame and honor. A direct application of Bible stories linked to this redemptive theme and individual lives is immediately made.

Stringer said that people who live in shame and honor cultures have developed their way of thinking over their entire lives—everything about their social interaction and family values is shaped by the way that shame and honor play out in their society.

“One story alone will not completely change the way they think about themselves or behave. One story alone will not change their core beliefs,” she said. “However, one story may set them on a journey to finding honor in the eyes of God, or to release them to be able to set out on the journey.” Shame and honor cultures are often relational cultures (at least in Africa and many parts of Asia). Relational cultures, especially, are based on “story” – how one's life is played out over time. However, just as a person's belief system is developed over time through the stories or experiences of their life – through the events, the conversations, the formal or informal education, the behavior of people around them, the reaction to behaviors, etc., a shift to a biblical worldview must be developed over time and through story. This lends itself to a chronological, rather than topical, presentation of the Bible, in order to present the Bible as an epic story that develops with an ebb and flow much like “real life experience.”

A western mindset says stories should follow a sequence based on rhetorical argument rather than a chronological presentation. However, a relational approach says that we should let an idea develop naturally and over time. In this case, an idea is consistently and repeatedly presented, perhaps with a different twist each time. After a number of times, the hearer begins to subconsciously assume that the idea is good and true. This type of presentation is closer to the way things happen in “real life,” and is more readily accessible to the way of thinking of most people who live in a shame and honor culture. This type of presentation also allows the person to learn for himself, rather than being told, which “saves face” in a culture where shame is undesirable. (Personal communication, April 10, 2014)

Stinger said that chronological story sets give people a “hanger” on which to hang their new ideas, and a way to say, “Look, this happened to this person or to this people group over all this time, so it must be true!” “I've seen this over and over in many settings,” she said.

Clearly, evidences of restored honor are present in Alaba culture. God's word in narrative form has touched and transformed lives, making a difference in the community as well. What was once shameful has been restored to honor. Not only are Alaba embracing Christ, but some are actually being healed of demon possession. Exciting, too, is the fact that these stories addressing worldviews issues, including shame and honor, are not only remembered, but are being passed on, resulting in multi-generational believers and groups. We can learn from this Alaba project, and we can learn from Teke as well.

Chapter 3

Honor and Shame in Latin American Culture

W. Philip Thornton

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Abstract

The role of honor and shame among many of the peoples of Asia and Africa has been well established.¹ The purpose of this chapter is to widen the scope of this dialogue to include Latin Americans. I will argue that there has been a “blind spot” in our understanding of honor/shame in the Latin American culture which has made the preparation of church leaders in our Western-oriented theological seminaries and Bible schools less effective than it might have been. I conclude with five questions which merit further attention for those doing theological education in Latin America.

In the following observations numbered 1-12, I have relied heavily on the works of Dr. Eugene Nida (1974) and Dr. Marvin Mayers (1982), as well as my own experience working as a missionary in Latin America for over 30 years. However, the association of these cultural characteristics specifically to the issue of honor and shame is mine.

- 1. Arguably, the most culturally revealing event in all of Latin culture is the bullfight. For Latin Americans, the bullfight is not a sport; it is an art.** When evil as expressed by this tremendous power of nature—the bull—meets God’s supreme creation, man, art is created! The bull is strong and beautiful, both respected and feared. He represents the problems of life that each spectator brings to the arena.

In contrast *El Matador*, the bullfighter, is less than athletic in appearance. Often slight of build and dressed in pastel colors covered in gold and silver sequins, he represents the weaknesses and vulnerability of all those watching. Standing in the stead of the spectators, he cannot shrink from the fight. He does not have to be the most expert, but he must not show cowardice. To do so would bring shame on those whom he represents.

2. In a strata-rank system² where everyone perceives themselves to be above or below everyone else in the system, certain expectations follow those who hold a higher position on the social ladder (e.g., keeping his shoes shined, or wiping off his car every day, or not having a sufficient number of maids in his household). Failing to fulfill those expectations has repercussions. Associating with one who does not “behave his status” produces shame rather than honor and thus is to be avoided.
3. Sexual conquest is a well-known part of Latin culture (*machismo*). In Colombia, I often heard this phrase in response to what it meant to “be a man”: *conquistar a las mujeres y tomar aguardiente* (conquer women and drink hard liquor). The Latin male approaches a potential sexual conquest with caution. He will drop hints, establish firm associations, and perhaps make open proposals. If the woman responds positively and goes through with the arrangement, the male has been fulfilled as a man (honor). If, however, the woman is merely teasing the man and fails to complete the arrangement, the male is shamed.

This same attitude plays out in other arenas of life in Latin America. For example, if a male wishes to publically name godparents for his child, he will check out every angle before finally approaching the person or couple he is seeking to name. If the invited godparents agree, all is well and the male is honored by their acceptance. If, however, there is hesitancy or refusal after the invitation has been extended, his feelings will be significantly hurt because of the shame he has incurred.

When the Latin male’s machismo (manliness) is ignored or undermined, the result is shame, and some form of retaliation which seeks to restore lost honor may follow.

4. The Latin woman is likewise affected by the shame/honor continuum. A wife can lose her honor by committing some sexual act with a male and “being found out.” On the other hand, her husband can be involved in numerous extramarital sexual affairs and the wife is expected to remain quiet. To confront him would bring shame to both him and to her.
5. Within the family unit, the father is the authority. Tasks which may cause him to lose his position of prestige are to be avoided. For example, my wife and I were eating in a restaurant in the city of Bogotá. An upper-class family sat

at a table across from us. The little girl in the family was bouncing around in play when the bow on her dress came untied. Her first movement was to her father, who immediately sent her to her mother for the task of re-tying the bow—not because the father was incapable of the task, but rather because it was not his task to be done. To have responded positively to the little girl would have meant a loss of prestige in the eyes of those of us in the restaurant.

6. **Less intense, yet very present, is the role that appropriate dress plays in gaining access to a person of importance, such as a government official.** In the Latin culture, one dresses up to the level of the very highest status that is possible for them. When I wanted to put a request before a government official, I wore a suit (preferably dark in color), a white shirt, a tie, and on the way to that official's office I had my shoes shined! If I dressed less than my ascribed status, I was showing a lack of respect (honor) to the official. The result would be that my visit was rejected or unnecessarily delayed for hours.
7. **In spite of the attention the Latin male receives, the woman in Latin America plays a key role in maintaining the honor (or shame) of her family and extended family.** By her actions (i.e., fulfilling the expectations associated with her role), she maintains her reputation and the reputation of those associated with her. As such, her reputation becomes a major concern for the man and is to be protected with all due diligence. Woe be unto anyone who soils her reputation!
8. **The death of a family member carries potential for family honor or shame.** For this reason, preparations are elaborate. The type of food served, the processions, the rituals, the dress—all are scripted to honor the memory of the loved one who has died. To do less is to represent the family poorly and bring shame upon them.
9. **Vulnerability in Latin culture is seen as weakness and is to be avoided.** The language itself reflects this trait. The phrases *se perdió* (it lost itself) or *se cayó* (it dropped itself) are passive responses that place the blame for error on the object, not on the person who lost it or dropped it. If uninterrupted and smooth reading is an expectation of one's social position, a person with poor oral reading skills will not read in public. To do so would lower his or her status and bring him or her shame. A person who is reprimanded in public may be driven to seek retribution, or a family in financial straits may seek money from a relative or employer so as to maintain the perception of financial stability. In other words, Latin

society is designed to support the person who is trying to avoid the appearance of weakness or cover for the one who is experiencing shame.

10. Shame/honor can be associated with one's state in life. Among the very poor you might hear "*nacer pobre es un delito*" (to be born poor is a crime). This stands in stark contrast to the North American egalitarian formula "to be born poor is no disgrace." I observed this phenomenon at work when I visited a Quechua village in the mountains of Perú. As we gathered in a small church building, an elderly Quechua lady began to cry softly as she expressed her "shame" at not being able to receive us in a manner with our perceived status. She was born poor and was ashamed of her status in life in the presence of her visitors.

11. The church has not escaped the honor/shame phenomenon. Popular Roman Catholicism posits sin in the body (flesh) due to its inherent weakness (*yo soy carne* – I am only human!). The spirit can remain pure even though the body may be sinful. So it is that the thief can take stolen money and buy a candle to burn before his patron saint, or the prostitute can take the money she has just earned and place it before a statue of the Virgin Mary. The spirit can maintain its honor even when the flesh is involved in sin.

12. Historically, the conflict between honor and shame can be observed in the young *mestizo* born of the Spanish *conquistador* who took an Indian wife. The boy idealized his father who brought him status and honor, but was never present in his life. On the other hand, his Indian mother who loved him and provided for all his needs brought him shame because of her lowly status. The residual of this historical reality manifests itself in the Latin male psyche.

Let me share four illustrations from my own experiences in Latin America.

- It was early morning when a man whom I had come to know at church entered my office. As he sat before me, he explained that his wife was sick and he needed to purchase medicine, but he did not have the money. In his words, he wanted to "borrow" one hundred pesos. I responded to his request by "giving" him the money he had requested, and I did so fully aware that it would never be paid back. To have asked for the money to be a gift would have been embarrassing to him (i.e., shamed him), so he simply changed his wording to maintain his dignity and honor, both of us knowing what he really meant.

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- Omyra, a young Indian girl, came to live with us to be our house helper. She was newly arrived from the *campo* (rural area) and needed to support herself since her family was so poor. After a while, Omyra indicated that she wanted a personal relationship with Christ. One Sunday, we were attending a church service and Omyra was sitting in the row in front of us. It was time for communion. As was the custom in this congregation, everyone moved forward to receive the elements. As the shuffling settled, Omyra was left sitting at the end of her row while three other “churchgoers” sat at the other end. These three glanced down the row at Omyra, perceived her status as being lower than theirs, and moved to the row in front that was already full, leaving Omyra alone. Simply sitting in the same row with one of a lower status had enough potential for shame that the three felt compelled to move.
 - It was time for me to have the honor of laying the cornerstone for the new church. Words of thank you were expressed amidst tears of joy, and my wife and I were presented with gifts from the pastor and his small congregation. Somewhat later, the building contractor came forward and presented me with a beautiful briefcase, a gift far more expensive than any other we had received. As he put the gift in my hands with a big smile on his face, he made it clear to me that this gift was from him personally, not from the congregation. His gift and the way he presented it brought him honor.
 - I had struggled all day to explain to the young Quechua seminary students how their Quechua culture was rich in stories and customs which could easily be “bridges” for sharing the gospel. Finally, one young man stood and explained to me in Spanish that his parents had sternly warned him to never speak the Quechua language or talk of Quechua ways in the presence of others. To do so would identify him with a people of lower status and bring shame not only upon the young man but also to his family. In terms of honor/shame, the Quechua cultural heritage I saw as helpful, he saw as hurtful and to be avoided.

Questions to Explore

The implications of understanding the role of honor and shame in Latin culture are significant for theological education. Below are five questions which merit further discussion.

1. Is it possible that “conversion” in Latin America (at least in the evangelical sense) could be better understood as Christ restoring honor and removing the stain of shame for those who have “sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”?
2. If expressing one’s manhood traditionally involves behavior that is unacceptable to evangelical Christianity, how can the Latin male “be a Christian” and “be a man” at the same time?
3. Given the role of honor and shame in both the Latin and Muslim world, is there a significant place for training Latin Americans as missionaries to Islamic lands? If so, what do theological schools in Latin America need to do to prepare these cross-cultural workers?
4. How does the role of honor/shame affect the training of pastors in Latin America? Given the widespread influence of Western models, what needs to be done differently in terms of curriculum?
5. If honor and shame play a more significant role than heretofore acknowledged, how should the message of the gospel be reframed to more adequately speak to Latin culture?

¹See <http://wernermischke.org/resources/>

²As opposed to caste or class. In strata rank, every person perceives himself to be above or below everyone else in the system.

Chapter 4

The Gospel of Purity for Oral Learners: Bible Dynamics for Blessing the Unreached

Werner Mischke

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Abstract

In the Old and New Testaments, impurity and uncleanness relegated people as lower-status social ‘outsiders’ in varying levels of shame. The greater the uncleanness, defilement, or pollution, the deeper the shame. Likewise, cleanness, sanctification, or holiness identified people as higher-status social “insiders” in varying levels of honor. The greater the cleanness, purity, even holiness, the higher the honor.

The Mosaic laws of Leviticus defined for the Hebrew people purity codes and the cycle of sanctification. Although strange to Western/secular sensibilities, these purity codes are crucial to understanding both God’s covenant with the Hebrews, as well as the radical nature of Christ’s ministry. Jesus transcended OT laws of ritual cleansing, offering his cure for people in shame due to moral failure, disease, disfiguration, or death. The NT frequently uses “purity language” to describe what God has done in Christ for humanity. The gospel is much more than a cure for sin/guilt; it is also a cure for sin as uncleanness/shame.

The Western theological default toward judicial language in presenting the gospel should be supplemented by purity language for better contextualization. The gospel of purity will better resonate with peoples in oral and honor/shame cultures. Many of these peoples are unreached in the Buddhist, Hindu, or Muslim blocs—all of whom practice their own distinct cleansing rituals and are honor/shame-oriented in their cultural values. Therefore, developing an awareness of the gospel of purity is a strategic issue.

Mark Noll writes, “The contrast between the West and the non-West is never between culture-free Christianity and culturally embedded Christianity, but between varieties of culturally embedded Christianity” (2009). Western theology is embedded in its own Western culture (Netland 2006; Walls 2006; Newbigin 1989; Hiebert 2010). Thus, the West promulgates a gospel message with a legal framework—a law and guilt-based gospel focused on individuals.

Moreover, this Western version of the good news is often considered the *exclusive way* to present the gospel (Baker and Green 2011) and thus comprises an unintentional theological hegemony *vis à vis* the Majority World Church (Whiteman 2006).

This problem of Western theological bias may be unintentional. Nevertheless, it perpetuates an “assumed” or truncated gospel (Bosch 1992; Wu 2012). The pivotal cultural value of the Bible’s ancient peoples is honor/shame (Malina 1993; Neyrey 1998), and the general inability of Western Christians to see this represents a blind spot. And since the values of most unreached peoples are (like the Bible societies of the ancient Middle East) collectivistic and shame-based, the removal of this blind spot represents a golden opportunity to contextualize the gospel (Tennent 2007).

We can partially remove this blind spot by examining the social system and cultural values of the ancient Hebrews. The “cycle of sanctification” was a defining feature of Hebrew society (Hill and Walton 2009). Below, I will explore the honor/shame dynamics of this system. In our exploration, I rely heavily on “mental maps” and “purity language” to explain how Jesus rewrote the social “purity maps” throughout his ministry (deSilva 2006). The NT has abundant material which uses purity language to articulate what Christ has done for humanity through his life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. I will conclude by offering recommendations for promoting the awareness of a contextualized “purity gospel” for oral peoples.

The Cycle of Sanctification

For the Hebrews, everything in life was categorized in relation to the ultimate standard of God’s holiness. Because God desired relationship, he provided specific instructions for how to prepare for and engage with him in worship and daily life. The comments of Andrew Hill and John Walton concerning the book of Leviticus are fitting:

On the basis of Levitical law, everything in life was either holy or common for the Hebrews. Those things determined common were subdivided into categories of clean and unclean . . . Clean things might become holy through sanctification or unclean through pollution. Holy things could be profaned and become common or even unclean. Unclean things could be cleansed and then consecrated or sanctified to be made holy. Common (i.e., clean) things or persons devoted to God become holy through the mutual efforts of human activity and sanctifying (or consecrating) and of the Lord as the sanctifier. Uncleanness may be caused by disease, contamination, infection, or sin; it could be cleansed only by ritual washing and sacrifice. (Hill and Walton, 2009, 133–134)

Moving toward Honor or Shame?

The actions of people in the cycle of sanctification were of two types, as shown in Figure 1¹—moving toward honor and the holy, or moving toward shame and the unclean.

1) Actions moving a person towards holiness, towards God (and honor):

- **Cleanse:** People who were unclean needed to go through ritual cleansing in order to become clean. There were rules for many kinds of uncleanness: bodily and sexual discharges, including menstruation (Lev. 15; 18:19), touching someone with disease (Lev. 13), touching a corpse (Lev. 22:4–6), eating unclean food (Lev. 11), and various diseases of which the worst was leprosy (Lev. 13).

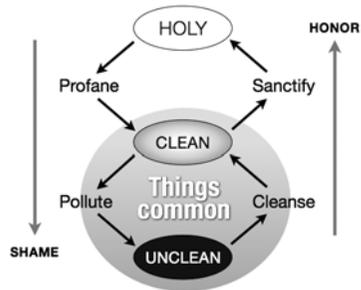


Figure 1: The Cycle of Sanctification

- **Sanctify:** If a person was clean, he or she could sanctify him or herself to become holy (or separate) in order to enter the presence of God. This was necessary for the Levitical priests in order for them to serve in the temple.

2) Actions moving a person away from holiness, away from God (towards uncleanness/shame):

- **Profane:** A priest who was holy could become profaned by association with anything common (Lev. 21). In turn, he would have to be sanctified—a ritual

done in cooperation with God—in order to regain his “holiness” and the ability to enter the presence of a holy God.

- **Pollute:** A person who was clean could be polluted and thereby become unclean by a variety of things: sexual activity, menstruation, touching a corpse, eating unclean food, or having a disease. The unclean person would then have to follow the appropriate laws of cleansing to once again regain his or her position of cleanness (cf. Ezek. 16:1-62).

Jesus Heals a Leper

Let’s consider a passage of scripture linking OT and NT concepts about purity:

While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him. And he charged him to tell no one, but “go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” (Luke 5:12–14, cf. Mark 1:40–44)

How can we grasp the depth of uncleanness, shame, and exclusion of the “man full of leprosy”? How can we grasp the corresponding brilliance of how Jesus interacts with him? Leviticus offers much insight, especially chapters 13 and 14², where God requires that people afflicted with leprosy be dealt with in this way:

The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, “Unclean, unclean.” He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp. (Lev. 13:45–46)

Make note of three things:

- *The leprous person was to make himself unattractive:* He “shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose.” Leprous persons were not allowed to dress in attempt to cover up their disease.

- *The leprous person was to announce his uncleanness:* “He shall ... cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’” He was to proclaim his uncleanness and shame publicly.
- *The leprous person was to be isolated and segregated:* “He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.” The health of the larger community could not be compromised by the disease of the individual. The leper had to be quarantined.

Since the Jews had their identity rooted in their community, the pain and degree of exclusion for the man full of leprosy was extreme. Of course, there were good reasons for isolating people with contagious disease. God was providing boundaries for their survival.

Uncleanness and Shame

What may we observe about Jesus and the “man full of leprosy”? Let me share a number of thoughts.

First, the man full of leprosy had little hope of becoming clean or regaining his honor. How would he ever be reaccepted into his community? His was a life of isolation, embodying despair and shame. *Except that Jesus came to town.* And so the leper “fell on his face and begged” Jesus to cure him. In full view of his watching world, he pleaded, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.”

Second, Jesus “stretched out his hand and touched” the man full of leprosy and said, “Be clean.” Two miracles happened. One, the leper was cleansed. And two, Jesus did not *himself* become unclean! His personal purity was untainted. That a man could transcend the cycle of sanctification was unthinkable to the Jewish mind.

Leprosy was an extreme form of uncleanness, and that uncleanness was easily transferred from one person to another. It is striking to ponder what other transfer took place in the interaction between Jesus and the leper. When Jesus touched the leper, was the leprous man’s disease and shame absorbed into the compassionate perfection and honor of Jesus? Was the holy purity of Christ somehow transmitted to the man full of leprosy, making him clean?³ What new reality was Jesus introducing?⁴

Third, we observe that Jesus was concerned for the man's reintegration into his own community: "Go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them." Jesus wanted the leper to have his honor restored among his own family and friends. This restoration could proceed if the proper cleansing rituals were observed as prescribed in Leviticus 14.

In light of Leviticus, this short account of Jesus healing the leper implies a complex world of boundaries, regulations, and rituals for God's people. The Hebrews had various mental maps regarding the holy, the clean, and the unclean (deSilva, 2000). They are maps of: people, space, time, dietary regulations and the body. Below, I consider only maps of people.

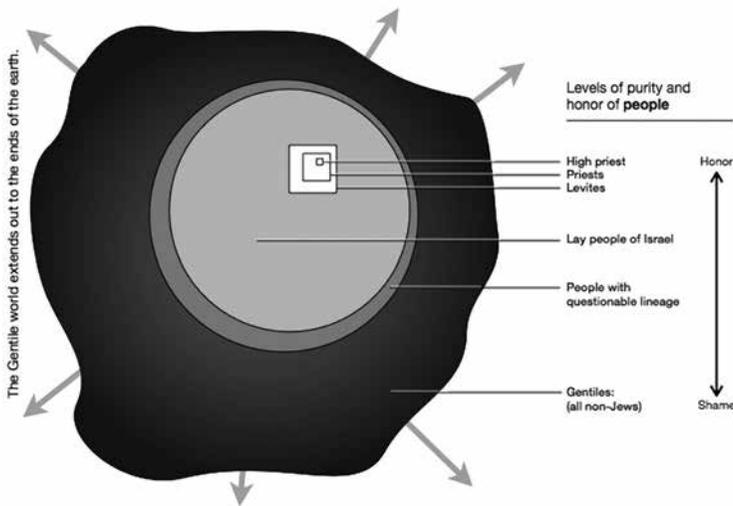


Figure 2: A conceptual "map of people" as understood by the ancient Hebrew world⁵

Maps of people: The spectrum ranged from the high priest at the highest level of honor, purity, and acceptance, to the priests, then the Levites, then the lay people of Israel, then the Jews of questionable lineage, down to the Gentiles at the lowest level of uncleanness, rejection, and shame.

In Figure 2, the squares represent the Levitical priesthood. The circles represent the people of God, Israel. The squares connote "being inside of, yet separate, from the rest of Israel." The circular shape represents Israel's "being inside of, yet separate, from the rest of the world." Israel was to be separate from the nondescript, amorphous, unclean world around them—the world of non-Jews, the Gentiles.

There are three main points concerning purity codes and honor/shame:

- In the social world of God’s people (the Jews) in both Old and New Testaments, the laws and practices about purity and uncleanness corresponded to honor and shame.
- The observance of purity codes was required by God in order for his people to enter into and remain in fellowship with him.
- Jesus rewrote the purity maps by touching the leper and healing him. He violated the traditional purity codes by transcending them. Jesus introduced a new set of variables for determining what is common or holy, unclean or clean, outside the group or inside the group, shameful or honorable.⁶

Purity Language in the Gospel Message

The Apostle John used purity language to describe how Christians can *enter into* and *remain in* fellowship with one another and with God. John explained that it is the blood of Jesus which has the power to cleanse God’s people from their sins:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:7–9)

Jesus prayed to the Father for those who would believe, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). The process of sanctification—to be set apart in order to draw near to Almighty God—was redefined. Sanctification went from being primarily an *external* cleansing ritual to primarily an internal cleansing with God’s truth.

Perhaps the Bible’s most extensive material about reconfiguring purity maps is contained in the letter to the Hebrews. Here is a short list:

- Reflecting the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, the atonement of Christ is summarized as “*making purification* [emphasis added] for sins.” (1:3)

- The sacrifice of “the blood of goats and bulls” is contrasted with the far superior sacrifice of Jesus Christ as high priest—who offered his own blood to “*purify our conscience* [emphasis added] from dead works to serve the living God.” (9:13–14)
- The cleansing power of the atonement of Christ touches that which is most internal— “our conscience.” Even persons who are victims of the sins of other people and who live with persistent shame can be “cleansed from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9) through the atonement of Christ.⁷
- Believers are admonished to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts *sprinkled clean* [emphasis added] from an evil conscience and our *bodies washed with pure water*” [emphasis added]. (10:22)

Purity Practices and Ritual Cleansing in Major Religions

Like Judaism and Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam also have purification rituals in their practice.

Purity in Buddhism: “Purity (*suddha*) is an important concept within much of . . . Buddhism, although the implications of the resultant moral purification may be viewed differently in the varying traditions. The aim is to purify the personality of the Buddhist practitioner so that all moral and character defilements and defects . . . such as anger, ignorance and lust are wiped away, and Nirvana can be obtained.”⁸

Purity in Hinduism: “An important part of ritual purification in Hinduism is the bathing of the entire body, particularly in rivers considered holy such as the Ganges; it is considered auspicious to perform this form of purification before any festival, and it is also practiced after the death of someone, in order to maintain purity.”⁹

Purity in Islam: The Qur'an says, “For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean” (2:222). “Observing cleanliness of the soul, the clothes, and the surroundings is obligatory upon every Muslim, and this is considered as one of the pillars of Islam . . . Before offering prayers, it is necessary to perform [ritual purification] . . . If the body or clothes show traces of blood, pus, urine, feces, semen or alcohol, then [purification] becomes essential . . . The Quran says: None shall touch it but those who are clean (56:79).”¹⁰

Conclusion: A Gospel of Purity for Majority World Peoples

Let's summarize. First, conditions of cleanness and uncleanness are deeply intertwined with the dynamics of honor and shame. Second, both the OT and NT have ample material about purity and cleansing; the NT sometimes uses purity language to describe the atonement of Jesus Christ and the life of the Christian community. Third, the great majority of unengaged and unreached peoples of the world are Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist, all of whom have their own purity maps, codes, and practices. Fourth, since the cultural dynamics of purity and honor/shame are held in common by the Bible's cultures and many Majority World peoples, it represents a significant opportunity for contextualizing the gospel.

These four points lead to our conclusion: It is strategic to communicate the gospel to oral-preference Majority World peoples using purity language from the Bible's stories, parables, principles and other material.

The man who was full of leprosy pleaded, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." Using similar language, believers can share the good news of Jesus Christ. There are many Jesus stories by which to communicate the gospel of purity. From these stories, a strong bridge to the atonement of Christ can be built. When introducing the gospel, believers can ask, for example, "Can I tell you a story about God coming to earth to cover your shame, and to make you clean forever?"

In order to increase the effectiveness of cross-cultural ministry to oral-preference Majority World peoples, the Western legal framework for the gospel can be supplemented by the gospel of purity.

¹Diagram adapted from Hill & Walton: *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), “Figure 6.1. The Cycle of Sanctification,” p. 133.

²Leviticus 13 describes the complex process for diagnosing whether a person had leprosy and how they were to be treated. Leviticus 14 describes the complex laws and process for cleansing lepers.

³The concept of “transmitting holiness” is contained in Ezekiel: “And he said to me, ‘This is the place where the priests shall boil the guilt offering and the sin offering, and where they shall bake the grain offering, in order not to bring them out into the outer court and so transmit holiness to the people’” (Ezek. 46:20, cf. Ezek. 44:19).

⁴The fact that Jesus remained pure and untainted even though he touched or was in the presence of an unclean person is also clearly seen in other gospel stories. For example, Jesus visits the house of Simon the Leper (Matt. 26:6–13, Mark 14:3–9); Jesus restores a woman with a discharge of blood (Matt. 9:18–26, Mark 5:21–34, Luke 8:40–56); Jesus raises to life a girl who was dead (Matt. 9:18–19, 23–26, Mark 5:21–24, 35–43, Luke 8:40–42, 49–56); and Jesus heals a demon-possessed man who lived “among the tombs” (Matt. 8:28–34, Mark 5:1–20, Luke 8:26–39).

⁵Diagram extrapolated from deSilva, 256–257.

⁶See pages 10—12 in this link:
wernermschke.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/The-Gospel-of-Purity-rev.pdf

⁷This is especially important for people who experience “uncleanness” as a result of, for example, sexual abuse.

⁸See “Purity in Buddhism.” Accessed February 20, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purity_in_Buddhism

⁹See “Ritual Purification.” Accessed February 20, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual_purification

¹⁰See “Ritual Purity in Islam.” Accessed February 20, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual_purity_in_Islam

Chapter 5

Rewriting the Gospel for Oral Cultures: Why Honor and Shame Are Essential to the Gospel Story

Jackson Wu

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Abstract

In this chapter, I demonstrate the intrinsic relationship between the gospel and an honor-shame worldview. In short, the gospel is framed by honor and shame. This point is important not only for theology, but also for missions, particularly in oral cultures. In the first section, I will show how biblical authors explain the gospel in ways that make sense to oral learners who are often characterized by an honor-shame worldview. Drawing from this thesis, I will then highlight a few implications for both theological education and contextualization.

The discussion raises a few questions. What has prevented people from seeing the gospel through the lens of honor and shame? What might this indicate about contextualization? I suggest the problem we face is systemic but solvable. If an honor-shame worldview is inherent to the gospel, we have reason to rethink certain theological priorities. Accordingly, I will propose a “theological agenda,” listing a number of themes that are especially relevant for ministry within oral cultures. We will find that an honor-shame worldview enables us to read scripture in an integrated fashion.

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necessary relationship exists between the two, in practice they are closely linked. Because oral cultures are inherently more communal, they tend to be characterized by an emphasis on honor and shame. I personally am not aware of any oral cultures that would not be described in terms of honor-shame. It should be recognized that honor and shame, at some level, are a part of all human cultures.

Drawing from this thesis, I will then highlight a few implications for both theological education and contextualization. The discussion raises a few questions. What has prevented people from seeing the gospel through the lens of honor and shame? What might this indicate about contextualization? I suggest the problem we face is systemic but solvable.

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The Gospel Is Already Contextualized for Honor-Shame Cultures

The biblical authors always frame their gospel presentations using *at least* one of three themes—creation, covenant, and kingdom.¹ These motifs determine how other subthemes are used. Accordingly, this framework brings unity to the Bible’s overarching story. These three themes are interwoven closely together. Thus, we best understand their significance within the grand biblical narrative in contrast to a highly systematized theological framework.

I distinguish those themes that *frame* the gospel from those that *explain* the gospel. The latter have their significance within the context of the former. The three framework themes each carry distinctive connotations in the Bible. We should interpret explanatory motifs like law, grace, redemption, justification, and adoption within the particular framework that shapes the Bible’s metanarrative. Thus, structuring a gospel presentation in a biblical way is more than simply mentioning a few key words, like “king” or “create.” Rather, these themes *control* the plot and tone of the story.

Monotheism in the Bible highlights the fact that one true God is the true King over the entire world. For example, throughout Isaiah 40–66, creation

language functions to magnify God's kingship. Isaiah 52:7 makes the explicit announcement, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'" (cf. Isa. 40:9). Similarly, Paul demonstrates how to apply the doctrine of creation in evangelism. In Athens, he uses monotheism to overcome cultural and philosophical divisions of his Greek audience (Acts 17:22–31).

Through a series of covenants, the Creator-King restores his kingdom in the world. In Acts 13:32–41, Paul directly proclaims "the good news [εὐαγγελιζόμεθα] that what God *promised* to the fathers, this he has *fulfilled* to us their children by raising Jesus . . .," after which he recalls the Davidic covenant in which God would raise up a king from David's line to forever rule over the nations (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12–14; Ps. 2).

Covenant and kingdom similarly frame the gospel summaries found in Romans 1:2–4 and 2 Timothy 2:8. Finally, Galatians 3:8 unambiguously *equates* the gospel with the Abrahamic covenant; namely, "In you shall all the nations be blessed" (cf. Gen. 12:3). In the context of Genesis, the Abrahamic covenant is clearly presented as the means by which God will rescue fallen humanity, who had been scattered into many nations. Not surprisingly, Paul then appeals to monotheism in Galatians 3:20 to confirm that God's promises included both Gentiles and Jews.

How does the Bible integrate creation, covenant, and kingdom within an overarching narrative? The creation language of Genesis 1 suggests that God makes the world to serve as a sanctuary, a temple where God dwells with his image bearers (cf. Beale 2004, Walton 2009). The gospel announces the Creator's sovereignty, his right to rule all nations. In the ancient world, the word "gospel" inherently entailed the idea of kingship and did not necessarily carry overt religious connotations.² The various covenants in the Bible explain the means by which the Creator-King will bring salvation to the world. These three motifs frame the biblical story in ways that carry certain connotations closely associated with honor-shame cultures.

Honor and Shame Explain the Gospel

Honor and shame are intrinsic to this three-pronged gospel framework. The table below shows the relationship between the gospel themes (discussed above)

and characteristic features of honor-shame cultures. In what follows, I first give a brief overview of an honor-shame worldview. I will then demonstrate how honor and shame explain the gospel in a way that faithfully draws together a diverse range of themes within biblical theology.

Biblical Themes		Honor-Shame Cultures	
Creation	Sanctuary	Holiness	Purity
Covenant	Salvation	Harmony	Promise
Kingdom	Sovereignty	Hierarchy	Power

Certain characteristics typify an honor-shame worldview. There is usually a more evident concern about issues related to purity, ritual, symbolism, tradition, and social boundaries. In addition, people from honor-shame cultures are more collectivistic than individualistic.

Therefore, a moral person makes it a priority to maintain harmonious relationships. People are expected to demonstrate loyalty to those belonging to their “in-group,” such as a family or clan. In these societies, one’s relational network acts as a functional savior from trouble. Finally, honor-shame cultures tend to be hierarchal. Honor is ascribed based on social rank. Power and authority are critical for social harmony.

As a person gains influence and power, he or she also gets more “face” (and vice versa). “Face” essentially describes a person’s value according to standards of a particular social group. Social position is largely determined based on one’s face. In order to get face, one must conform to social expectations. Social transactions always require an exchange of face (much like a credit card). Allegiance to the group and its leaders are expressed in a variety of symbolic ways.

We will reframe the summary above in a way that prepares us to see the relationship between honor-shame and the gospel. In an honor-shame culture, people’s lives should be marked by purity and honor. However, society is full of broken relationships, shameful behaviors, and abuses of power. In an ideal world, social and government leaders would unite people, not to contribute to the chaos. Humans would love one another as a family. Loyalty and reconciled relationships are key components to solving the world’s problems and bringing about social harmony.

Even in a few brief sentences, we can already recognize an outline of the biblical story; yet, this narrative is clearly told from an honor-shame perspective. In the following paragraphs, I will highlight some of the ways that honor and shame frame the gospel. I make a claim that some people may think counterintuitive: *the gospel is already contextualized for honor-shame cultures*. In the gospel, Christ “saves God’s face” when he honors God and removes human shame. These conclusions are confirmed via exegesis (Wu 2013, 193–292). The entire narrative presumes an honor-shame framework.

The creation theme addresses a number of issues important to those who live in honor-shame cultures. What do people regard as “sacred”? Many honor-shame societies set apart certain lands, structures, and people for a special purpose, such as worshipping ancestors, spirits, or idols.

Yet, the gospel reorients our view of the world. God does not actually live in temples made with human hands (cf. Acts 17:24–25). The gospel foretells the day when God will instead dwell with his people forever. God’s people reject dualistic notions that regard physicality as “bad” and hope for a disembodied existence in “heaven.” In the Bible, “heaven” is described as God’s throne, his dwelling place (2 Chron. 6:20; Isa. 66:1). Thus, we long for heaven and earth to unite when God recreates the world to be free from the curse of death (Rev. 21:1–3).

Because God made the entire world to be his sanctuary, people must reevaluate social boundaries that define purity and impurity. Rituals, sacrifices, and foods cannot purify a person from defilement (cf. Mark 7:15–20; Heb. 7:8–10; 9:9–15; 10:1–4). A biblical theology of creation eliminates common social divisions that are based on the dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. From among all countries and tribes, the holy God seeks to make “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession” (1 Pet. 2:9). The Lord says, “Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified” (Lev. 10:3).

The covenant motif also has implications for honor-shame cultures. In the Abrahamic covenant, God promises to restore harmony to the world by blessing all nations. The Mosaic covenant is one means by which God keeps this promise. He established a sacrificial system that foreshadows how he will reconcile the world to himself and to each other. God’s promise to David is for

all “mankind” (2 Sam. 7:19) since his offspring will forever reign over all nations (Ps. 2:7–8). Ultimately, God fulfills all his promises through a “new covenant” (Jer. 31:31–34), summarized by Ezekiel 36:25–27, which says,

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses [*sic*], and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Accordingly, the gospel reveals God’s righteousness in that he keeps his promise to restore harmony to the world. Although others fail us, God is faithful. This universal order will not be maintained through a series of mere “laws.” Rather, God’s Spirit changes people’s hearts so that we will have a proper sense of shame. As a result, we want to glorify him.

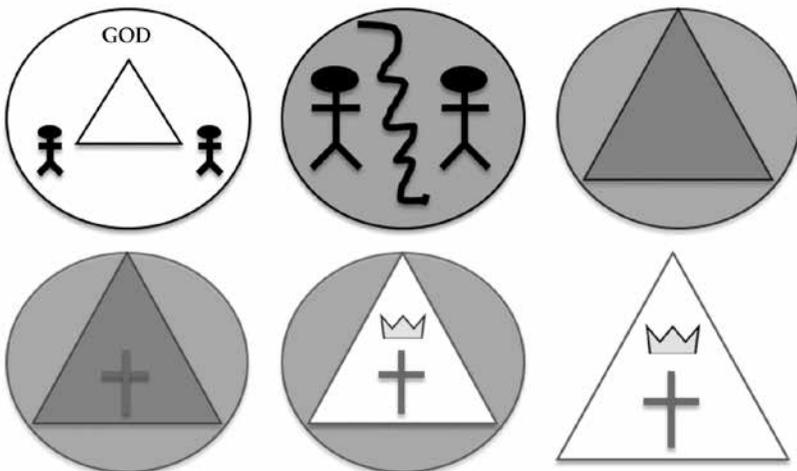
Thus, the gospel demonstrates why relationships are truly significant. Whereas people commonly use relationships to exploit others for personal gain, the Creator God uses relationship for the benefit of those who were enemies. He is the true Father of the human family, consisting of all nations. In short, the gospel redefines social relationships. A person’s identity is ultimately determined by whether he or she gives allegiance to God and joins his family.

The gospel declares that God in Christ has reclaimed his kingdom. Biblically speaking, divine kingship in fact is one of the primary implications of monotheism (cf. Isa. 40–66). He usurps every authority that brings about chaos and seeks honor for himself rather than the Creator. Christ is sovereign over every demon, disease, dominion, and even death.

His life, death, and resurrection relativize our cultural assumptions about the world. It is precisely because Christ did not conform to social expectations that he is holy and can purify us from corrupt desires and actions. It is because he loved outsiders and broke cultural traditions that Christ was able to reconcile the world. Christ lost face with social authorities and so was shamefully killed and cursed. Yet, it is for this reason that God raised him from the dead and so honors him, who is now seated on the heavenly throne as king of all kings.

The graph below illustrates the gospel metanarrative.

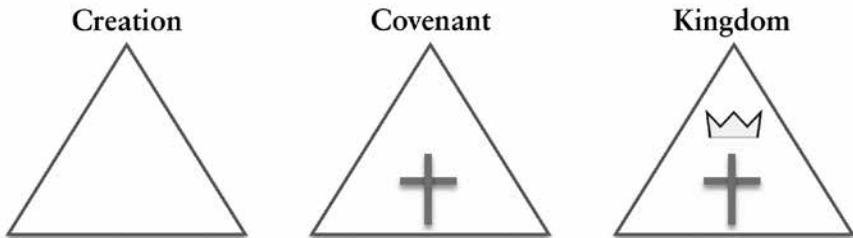
- First, God creates the world (circle) to be the place where God would dwell in harmony with his people, much like a temple (foreshadowed by the triangle).
- Second, a break in relationship results in shame, disunity, impurity, exclusion, and disharmony. The shaded area depicts this state of affairs.
- Third, God establishes a series of covenants (represented by the triangular temple) through which he promises to bring righteousness to all nations and inaugurate his kingdom, which will endure forever.
- Fourth, Christ (represented by the cross) enters a defiled world in order to fulfill God's covenants. By dying on the cross as a sin offering, he becomes a curse in order to bless the nations.
- Fifth, Christ not only dies to cleanse his people; he resurrects. By defeating death, he reigns as God's son (symbolized by a crown). Accordingly, those who join God's family through faith in Christ also share his glory amid a rebellious world (i.e., the contrast of white and shaded areas).
- Sixth, the Creator King vindicates his honor by ridding the world of evil (i.e., no more shaded area). He reestablishes his glorious kingdom, having recreated the world to serve as a Temple in which he dwells with his people forever. (This is marked by the entire world having a triangle shape.)



Honor and shame are inherently built into the gospel. The very framework of the gospel demonstrates an honor-shame worldview. We conclude that the biblical authors use the themes of creation, covenant, and kingdom to present a message already contextualized for oral cultures. Oral cultures have an innate capacity to grasp key biblical ideas in ways that are not instinctive for many people in Western cultures.

For example, we can easily distort the meaning of “sin” by explaining it using merely one metaphor (i.e., breaking a rule or law). More fundamental, the Bible says we “sin” when we “dishonor” God (Rom. 1:21–23; 2:23–24). We all “fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).³ Thus, the gospel redefines what is rightly regarded as honorable and shameful.

We preach “the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4). In Christ, we see the face of God. Christ became a sin offering in order to restore creation and build his people into a holy temple in which he dwells (Rom. 8:3–23). Christ died to demonstrate God’s righteousness “for all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (2 Cor. 1:20; cf. 5:14–6:2; Rom. 3:25–26). In resurrection, he defeats death so that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24–28).



Next, I highlight a few implications for contextualization and theological education. We have seen that honor and shame are inherent to the biblical narrative. Why have Christians not seen how honor and shame shape the gospel story? I suggest that we have failed to emphasize these themes for the same reason many missionaries struggle to contextualize the gospel today. Simply stated, people tend to begin with systematic theology and neglect biblical theology.

Contextualization Precedes Systematic Theology

“I know everything about American culture because I’ve seen all the episodes of *Desperate Housewives!*” Those words came from a Chinese college student, who had never actually been to America. At the time, he was engaged in a debate

with an *American* woman about what *her* home country was really like. On the one hand, the student is not entirely mistaken. The television show *Desperate Housewives* does depict what is true of certain aspects of people in the United States. However, his oversights are obvious. He did not know “everything” about American culture. He was completely oblivious to the fact that the show only gives one narrow perspective of America.

This conversation illustrates the challenge evangelicals face when contextualizing the gospel in oral cultures. We can also assume too much when studying and teaching the Bible. We all interpret the Bible from limited perspectives. Over time, we can easily confuse our theology (which is developed from within a certain cultural perspective) with biblical truth itself (which transcends any one particular culture).

As people ask questions about various topics, systematic theologies inevitably emerge. One then begins to confuse doctrine with exegesis. Even if individual doctrines are correct, the way we organize them may not reflect the perspective or emphasis of a biblical author. Practically, *one’s understanding of a story determines the way he or she tells that story*. Therefore, a stunted view of scripture and the gospel will affect everything from evangelism to theological education.

Evangelicals generally assume a particular understanding of the gospel that is shaped by Western systematic theology (Wu 2013, 10-33). For instance, traditional gospel presentations prioritize the law-motif, focus on individual salvation, and mainly draw from select biblical texts such as Romans and Galatians.

When missionaries start with systematic theology, they complicate or even compromise the gospel, *even if* they are teaching truth. People inevitably read scripture in ways that prioritize particular themes and texts that reflect their assumptions and not necessarily those of the biblical authors. The problem is not that they confuse right and wrong, but instead what is primary and secondary. Are we preaching the gospel in the likeness of our systematic theology?

Our view of the gospel shapes our approach to ministry. If we implicitly take our systematic theology as the implicit starting point for contextualization, we will veer towards pragmatism. Why? Since evangelicals assume a Western formulation of the gospel, they typically explain contextualization simply in terms of communication or application (Wu 2013, 21-39). Thus, missionaries use various

“redemptive analogies,” “bridges,” and stories to share the message in a way that is relevant to a local culture. The problem with this view of contextualization is that it starts in the wrong place. Contextualization fundamentally begins with exegesis and thus biblical theology.

Contextualizing the gospel in oral cultures begins with biblical theology, not simply theology that is biblical. Jim Hamilton describes biblical theology as “the interpretive perspective” that the biblical authors use to present their message (2014, 16). Biblical theology is concerned with the symbols, patterns, and emphases that unite “the overarching metanarrative that is the Bible’s big story” (2014, 22). We should first observe how the Bible frames the gospel message on its own terms.

What is the alternative? Lacking a framework inherent to the Bible, one inadvertently imposes a structure onto the narrative. Thus, many Western missionaries will naturally select and organize stories in ways that tacitly reflect Western culture. Even though they are using a “storying” methodology, their narrative becomes a “Trojan horse” for their systematic theology.⁴

A Theological Agenda for Oral Learners

What are some implications for theological education? In what follows, I propose a theological agenda for honor-shame cultures. By this, I mean two things. *First, what key theological themes need to be reconsidered in view of the fact that honor and shame are intrinsic to the gospel?* This is primarily an exegetical-theological question. *Second, what issues and motifs are especially important for us to integrate into our methods of evangelism and theological education?* This is more of a practical question. Due to space, below I survey only a limited sample of theological topics and debates. Readers are encouraged to identify other subjects potentially relevant for ministry in honor-shame cultures.

We need first to rethink **our understanding of the gospel**. In particular, fresh consideration should be given to see how biblical authors understand and integrate the three themes of creation, covenant, and kingdom. *What connotations do we associate with each theme? Do these three themes frame the way we tell the biblical story? Are we applying them the way the biblical authors do?*

One must keep in mind that even if all of our doctrines and stories are true, it is possible that we may wrongly orient the way we tell the gospel story. In other words, it is possible to compromise the gospel by settling for truth (Wu 2013). As

an illustration, consider typical presentations that depict God as a judge. A king can act as a judge, but a judge is not necessarily a king. Might we compromise the royal message by settling for a merely legal motif?

In the previous section, we identified a major encumbrance to contextualization. *Systematization should not precede contextualization*. By identifying this problem, we can add one more item to our “theological agenda.” Thus, we conclude that biblical theology must be prioritized in theological education and in the process of contextualization. To do so will require careful planning and reflection. We will have to use methods conducive to helping people do orality-based exegesis.⁵

Also, missiologists need to explore further various implications of the **covenant concept**. It is especially relevant for honor-shame cultures due to its emphasis on identity, group unity, symbolic markers, and loyalty. Unfortunately, the covenant theme has not framed many of the evangelistic and training materials used by contemporary missionaries. Consider, for example, how the gospel in modern gospel tracts would make sense of Galatians 3:8, where Paul says the *Abrahamic covenant is the gospel*. He does not say that it is merely *background* for the gospel. Inasmuch as we are not able to *equate* the two, we need to reevaluate our understanding of the gospel, indeed the grand biblical narrative.

Many people struggle to figure out how Israel’s history should shape missiological strategy and theological training. Some people may think that teaching a lot of Old Testament theology to modern Gentiles is too much to ask. In fact, it may be exactly what is needed. Like many today who live in oral cultures, the ancient Mediterranean world (Israel included) was profoundly shaped by a concern for honor and shame. Accordingly, it is important that we find ways to present the gospel as the completion of Israel’s story (cf. McKnight 2011).

What might we learn from the **temple** imagery? I suspect we have not sufficiently explored the significance of the sacrificial system in its OT context. At one level, sin offerings removed the threat of God’s wrath, but how exactly do the sacrifices work? There are many indications that purification and holiness are linked to themes like honor and glory (cf. Exod. 29:43; Lev. 10:3; Isa. 8:13; Rom. 1:24; 2 Tim. 2:21). Might it be that one way the sacrifices atoned for sin is that they served to vindicate God’s honor (cf. 1 Sam. 2:29; 1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 96:8; Isa. 43:23)?

As I have argued elsewhere, Christ's death pays our honor debt to God (Wu 2013). Biblical authors frequently regard sin as a "debt" (Matt. 6:12, 14; 18:34–35; Luke 11:4; cf. Isa. 52:3). In the Pentateuch, sin offerings and atonement are consistently presented in economic terms (i.e., restitution, compensatory payment). Noteworthy passages include Exodus 30:11–16, Leviticus 5:11–16; and Numbers 5:5–10; 31:48–51.

One might be tempted to dismiss these associations out of fear that people will mistakenly think they can "bribe" God. However, the fact that people might misunderstand or manipulate language does not deny the reality that God still uses this imagery to explain atonement via sacrificial offerings. Fear of misunderstanding must not dictate our theology and nullify God's revelation.

Although I cannot endorse everything that goes by the name "New Perspective on Paul,"⁶ that entire debate about Second-Temple Judaism and Paul's view of justification can benefit missiological practice. Thus, we better understand that the "law" in Romans and Galatians refers to the Mosaic covenant. It cannot be reduced to an abstract "universal human law." Doing works of the law marked someone not simply as a "moralist" but as a member of God's covenant community.

From this perspective, ethnocentrism and cultural pride become paramount gospel issues (cf. Eph. 2:11–3:6). Although it is true some people might try to "earn salvation" through good deeds, it is time we reconsider the problem that Paul addresses. Instead of focusing on "how" one gets saved, perhaps he is explaining "who" can be saved.⁷ Might we at times talk about guilt when we should be talking more about shame?

Furthermore, we need to clarify the **meaning of "faith"** and the source of identity. In John 5:44, Jesus defines faith in terms of honor/glory when he asked his opponents, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" God's people do not find their identity according to group membership (e.g., ethnicity, tribe) and its symbols (e.g., Israel and the law). Instead, the gospel calls us to give allegiance (i.e., loyalty, faith) to King Jesus.

Honor-shame cultures also have an inherent capacity to grasp "**union with Christ**" language. Being "in Christ" means that we recognize Christ as the

representative “head” of the group. Because we identify with Christ, we share in his honor and shame, life and death. In addition, missiologists may want to join a related debate: Does the phrase πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ mean “faith in Christ” or “the faithfulness of Christ” (Bird and Sprinkle 2009)? In cultures that stress loyalty and filial piety, this conversation may be especially relevant.

Ecclesiology is a critical issue for honor-shame societies. The gospel does not merely demand that an individual leave his or her family; it invites people to join the larger human family. Indeed, this was Jesus’ promise (Mark 10:29–30)! Conversion means changing one’s group identity. The gospel, framed as it is by honor and shame, necessitates a comprehensive ecclesiology.

For typical oral learners, individual salvation apart from community does not sound like good news. A lot of missiological literature focuses on rapidity and quantity of churches. In some ways, honor-shame cultures will be less enamored by empirical measures of ministry success. A gospel that is truly “good news” will produce a united community whose character is transformed by a divine “sense of shame.” We need to ask, *how do churches identify themselves? Do we implicitly teach that the church is a “volunteer organization?”*

What about **soteriology** in an honor-shame context? We have already discussed related subjects like justification, in which we join God’s people via identification with Christ. We also want to highlight a number of themes, such as the Holy Spirit, glorification, new creation, and rescue from shame.

Honor-shame cultures tend to be pragmatic when it comes to religious faith. They want to know that salvation concerns the present as well as the next life. The Holy Spirit purifies our desires so that we can live holy, God-glorifying lives. The fruit of the Spirit marks out God’s people, not titles, or rituals. True repentance is a change in honor-shame standards. Therefore, we should not merely talk about “heaven” or “eternal life” in the abstract sense. Rather, Christians anticipate a new heaven and new earth when we will be physically resurrected. In short, we should emphasize that salvation is communal, cosmic, and concrete.

The Bible also explains salvation in terms of honor and shame. John gives explicit evidence for “glory imputation.” Jesus prays, “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are

one” (John 17:22). God imputes to us the glory he gave to Christ. Salvation culminates in our glorification (Rom. 8:30). Because Christ’s followers are heirs of God, they will be glorified with Christ “provided we suffer with him” (Rom. 8:17). Although God’s people “lose face” in the present age, ultimately they “will not be put to shame” (Rom. 10:11). In Christ, God saves their “face.”

Finally, the above reflections challenge us to consider our **view of scripture**. In the Bible, the one true God reveals himself to all nations. Thus, the Bible’s theology is not restricted to the language, thought forms, and symbols of any one particular culture. Historically speaking, however, Christian theologians have overwhelmingly emphasized legal language to the neglect of honor-shame imagery.

Naturally, this background influences the work of modern-day missionaries. For example, consider evangelism and theological education within oral cultures. Missiologists wisely highlight the importance of using stories to reach oral learners. Various articles consider issues like story selection and ordering. Yet, contextualization among oral learners requires more than storying. It is more than story selection. We first need to develop a biblical theology that makes sense of our web of stories. *But are we actually doing this?*

Certainly, many missiologists rightly stress the need to tell the “grand story” of the Bible; yet, *what framework are people using to shape that overarching narrative? What implicit theology underlies our story selection? On what basis have we chosen one story thread and not another?* For example, consider different ways people conceive of the gospel. One might see the gospel as the message about how one gets saved. Another person regards it as the proclamation that Jesus is King. A third person says the gospel is the fulfillment of Israel’s story. Each of these perspectives will lead people to frame their presentation with a different set of stories.

However, the biblical authors have already provided us with a distinct framework for presenting the gospel (as we have seen above). The three motifs determine how other themes interrelate. They also provide the interpretive context from which one discerns theological priority and emphasis. If we are not careful, our cultural and theological presuppositions will subtly shape

the story we tell. We could invert major and minor themes. Perhaps, our presentation of the “grand narrative” may actually derive more from our systematic theology rather than from a biblical one.

Biblical Theology Presents an Honor-Shame Gospel

I have attempted to demonstrate that honor and shame are intrinsic to the gospel. These are not mere cultural labels tagged on to the “real” gospel. Rather, honor and shame are built into the framework of the gospel itself. This is because the biblical authors consistently frame their gospel presentations in terms of three themes—creation, covenant, and kingdom. Together, they give order to the grand biblical narrative. These motifs address a number of key concerns commonly found within honor-shame cultures.

There are practical implications for recognizing the contours of an honor-shame gospel. Thus, I have offered a “theological agenda” that identifies a number of theological themes relevant to oral learners. Some people may need to reconsider their understanding of contextualization in order to minister effectively and faithfully among oral learners. Christians from traditional, Western backgrounds, for example, may want to reevaluate the way they tell the gospel story, the theological themes they emphasize, and their approach to contextualization.

What if we fail to take seriously the importance of an honor and shame worldview? Inevitably, we will rewrite the gospel for oral learners. And that makes no sense.

¹I fully defend and explain the Bible's use of these three themes in my forthcoming book to be published by William Carey Library. These three motifs consistently appear where gospel-language is explicitly used (i.e. the עֲוֹן, εὐαγγέλιον- word-group).

²For a thorough study of the term "gospel" in ancient contexts, see John Dickson, "Gospel as News: Εὐαγγέλιον- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul," NTS 51 (2005): 212–30; For a broader perspective on the "gospel" in the NT, see Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

³Conveniently, we can define sin in terms of honor and shame using Romans 1:23, 2:23, 3:23, which I have elsewhere called the "Romans 23 principle." See <http://jacksonwu.org/2014/03/05/using-the-romans-23-principle-to-explain-sin/>

⁴Of course, one's biblical theology is never perfectly free from the influence of systematic theology. That is not the point. Rather, the two disciplines have fundamentally different approaches. It is a process wherein one learns to distinguish them in practice and so prioritizes biblical theology.

⁵I offer a few initial suggestions in a blog series. See <http://jacksonwu.org/2013/04/04/contextualization-among-oral-peoples-doing-theology-for-the-unreached/>

⁶The "New Perspective on Paul" debate is one of the most important discussions among biblical theologians in the past 30 years. For an introduction to the topic, see Kent L. Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul: An Introduction* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2010); Mark Mattison, "A Summary of the New Perspective on Paul | *The Paul Page*," A Summary of the New Perspective on Paul, October 16, 2009. www.thepaulpage.com/a-summary-of-the-new-perspective-on-paul/

⁷The main problem may not be "achieved" honor/righteousness but rather "ascribed" honor/righteousness. See <http://jacksonwu.org/2013/10/15/china-justification-and-the-problem-of-ascribed-righteousness/>

Chapter 6

Honor and Shame: A Review of the Process and Articles

Christopher L. Flanders

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If, as the International Orality Network notes, over five billion inhabitants of this world are oral learners or people with strong preferences in that direction, and if the majority of the non-Western world's mission practice has been developed with literate people in mind,¹ then this situation constitutes an area that demands significant attention. This set of conditions demonstrates deep neglect among many who send to or work in oral contexts. The scope of the problem is immense and the level of importance is high. Although I am not typically involved in these conversations, I am sympathetic and think they are important.

Therefore, I begin with the assumption that the issues that drive the Orality Network and similar efforts are worthy of focused attention. In particular, it is good we are highlighting issues involving honor and shame as being worthy of special attention. I consider this to be one of the great missiological "blind spots" that persists, despite hopeful recent developments.

Werner Mischke makes a critical point, referencing Mark Noll that "the contrast between the West and the non-West is never between culture-free Christianity and culturally embedded Christianity, but between varieties of culturally embedded Christianity." I am heartened to see that the articles all share this basic understanding. This is critical, it seems to me, for us to profitably address the issues that are central to our focus.

This one statement, if truly believed, represents an amazing step of progress among mission workers and thinkers. It opens the way for true cultural exegesis (both reflexive upon the culture and gospel understandings of the senders, as well as upon

the cultures of those to whom people are sent). Without this commitment, we likely associate our culturally-formed understandings of the gospel with the *gospel*, failing to note that the gospel always transcends our cultural locations and formulations.

When I was working on my Master's degree in the late 1980s, I became aware of the so-called *context group* in biblical studies.² It opened my mind to the profoundly Western ways in which I had read the Bible. There were limited conversations in missiological literature about honor, shame, and associated issues, but these were relatively few in number.

Often, these missiological studies did not demonstrate awareness of the broader realm of biblical or theological studies and were primarily strategic in nature (i.e., aiming primarily at communication). Many of these attempts to address issues involving the different cultural worlds of non-Western contexts would have likely assumed that the gospel, as understood in a modern Western framework (e.g., legal, penal, guilt-based) was foundational, but that cultural understanding could help us speak a word to those whose cultural assumptions were different (e.g., non-legal, non-penal, and shame/honor based) in a contextualized and more relevant fashion.

To see this group of present-day missiologists being fully conversant with these deeper issues (biblical and theological) and also these scholars who just a short time ago would have been relatively unknown among missiologists representing these significant areas of biblical and theological conversations would have blown my mind. In particular, I have been heartened by the nuanced understandings these five excellent articles demonstrate.

It is typical to respond to a single chapter and thus give the proper attention that chapter warrants. The challenge in this current set up is that I have five, each of which would be worthy of an entire conversation and response. Instead of giving the detailed and particular attention any one deserves, I will proceed in the following fashion. First, I will focus on themes I consider important. These themes are present to a degree in each of the five articles and represent important topics the authors bring to light.

After discussing these themes, I will consider additional issues I think this topic requires. Finally, I will attempt to focus our conversation on the specific purview of the section, i.e., the implications of our understanding of honor/shame for theological formation among oral learners.

Theme 1: Ubiquity of Honor-Shame Dynamics

The first theme that undergirds each paper, either explicitly or implicitly, I will term the *ubiquity of honor-shame dynamics*. This point Phil Thornton makes remarkably clear by doing what I term cultural exegesis in the key of honor/shame. His chapter helpfully draws attention to the prominence of honor and shame in South America, but in a way that often eludes the eyes of non-locals. That such is indisputably the case in South America, but is often ignored, highlights the fundamental reason we are discussing this topic here—namely, the underestimation of honor/shame dynamics in contemporary cultures.

Although Thornton's chapter is perhaps the most extensive in cataloguing for the reader various honor/shame dynamics in a local context, all the articles operate by the fundamental assumption that this is not an uncommon occurrence. Indeed, Thornton's wonderful description of concrete, ethnographically rich, pastorally sensitive understanding of honor/shame in the South American context demonstrates just how profound is the daily experience of honor and shame.

So, I heartily agree that honor/shame dynamics are prevalent and surely powerful in these contexts (though I only have cursory familiarity with most of them). It is difficult, I contend, to overestimate the full extent that these dynamics are operative in the personalistic contexts which constitute most oral learning cultures.

Additionally, these articles all helpfully call our attention to the fact that these dynamics are equally as prevalent in scripture as they are in contemporary oral cultures. Honor dynamics are so dominant, as Jackson Wu contends, that they demand we re-think our very understanding of the gospel, since much of our current Western understandings of the gospel have developed without notions of honor and shame having material influence.

A helpful example of this is Mischke's chapter. It is undoubtedly the case that many Western readers would interpret the clean/unclean dynamic of the Hebrew Bible as both central to Jewish understanding and also related primarily to Jewish legal culture (e.g., break this law or prohibition and you are unclean; perform these acts of restitution and your "guilt" is gone and you are morally cleansed). Mischke performs a great service by noting the profound communal dimensions of Hebrew purity codes. Because of this, those deemed "unclean" suffer banishment

(albeit often temporary rather than permanent) or status demotion within the community. In a highly communal context such would inevitably result in a state of public shame and likely deep personal anxiety associated with social and personal deficiency.³

Similarly, Mischke is surely correct in asserting how cleansing (e.g., a leper) was significant in restoring a person to social wholeness and human dignity, a fundamental type of social honor. Full inclusion back into the covenant community bestows normal human honor/dignity and would also indicate a repaired relationship with God as well.

Wu helpfully notes Paul's incorporative Christology, i.e., being "in Christ" is fundamentally about gaining the honorable status of membership of the people who belong to the Messiah. Similarly, "Christ in us" should likely resonate deeply with honor significance among those for whom high-group honor is materially significant. This association of sharing in the honor and status of Christ would certainly yield great honor and provide incredible resources for personal and communal identity.

Theme 2: Honor/Shame Oblivion

But, as is obviously the case, despite this profound cultural importance of honor and shame, these experiences are ones we westerners often miss. So, the second theme I wish to note is what I term *honor/shame oblivion*. This is a state in which many of us westerners often find ourselves. That is, we can at one level understand and acknowledge something called honor and something called shame. But, it seems to be—to borrow Clifford Geertz's well-known anthropological notion—experience-distant. We are very often oblivious to these fundamental honor-shame dynamics in our world and in the Bible simply because we do not have our social radars tuned to receive those signals.

This central thrust of these articles deserves reflection. It seems that we often miss honor in the Western world because we disregard it as either an outdated concern of bygone days or else something that is the possession of very foreign cultures (e.g., East Asia or the Mediterranean world) but not something operative in our current cultures.

To the question of why westerners miss the honor/shame dimensions of the biblical story, Wu offers an explanation: "Simply stated, people tend to begin with

systematic theology and neglect biblical theology.” Yes, this is likely the case. To put it another way, our theological frameworks (worked out in terms of our own local, Western issues and contexts) often preclude us from seeing clearly what is indeed in scripture.

I think Wu is spot on—we simply miss what we do not see or understand and impose (unknowingly!) a more familiar structure on the biblical narratives. We also miss the mark when we confuse exegesis with doctrine. True enough; however, our exegesis is compromised too! According to Wu, we “will naturally select and organize stories in ways that tacitly reflect Western culture.”

Also, there exists the honor and shame-laden vocabulary of the New Testament that often is obscured by poor translation and common parlance. This contributes to the continuation of such honor/shame oblivion. Although there are many other terms that deserve note, I mention only one as an example. This involves the honor-laden New Testament *makarisms*, poorly rendered in English as “blessed” or “happy” when it is clear that the term marks esteem and honor.

Most occurrences in the New Testament are often rendered “how blessed.” The best-known of these occur in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5:3-11 (“Blessed are you . . .”). K.C. Hanson draws attention to how we must render these *makarisms*. That is, rather than an eschatological or personal emotional state, these terms actually constitute honor-laden value judgments.

To be *makarios* is to be honorable or honored. This means that the *makarisms* are fundamentally, according to Hanson, “the conditions and behaviors which the community regards as honorable” or “one’s self-respect in conjunction with the community’s affirmation of that evaluation.” Thus, Hanson translates these *makarisms* as “how honorable.” The point in Matthew 5 is then about Jesus’ re-definition of the honor code for his new community and how a rejection of the dominant honor code in society actually leads to true honor, which comes from God through Jesus. There is much more here that deserves mentioning⁴ but is far outside the scope of my response.

Such “oblivion” is certainly true not only of how we read the Bible, but how we perceive different cultures. My own experience regarding the related issue of “face” in Thailand is evidence of this. During my 11 years there as a missionary,

I certainly was aware of the importance of face, honor, and shame to Thais; however, I could not begin to fathom the actual depth of these experiences until I began my ethnographic fieldwork for my dissertation.

To my astonishment, I “discovered”⁵ 29 frequently-used terms in the Thai language that designated various types of facework. As soon as I learned these terms and began to understand their prevalence, I began to read Thai culture much more effectively. I began to see honor, shame, and face in places they had always existed but of which I was completely unaware.⁶

One of my favorite theologians, Stanley Hauerwas, reflects on his own experience of ambivalence about the concept of honor:

Initially, I had strong reservations about the idea of honor, since historically and sociologically I associated it with forms of life for which I have little sympathy. That my reservations about the idea of honor are not just a personal quirk is suggested by how little honor is used as a working word in our everyday speech—we no longer think of our moral behavior as a matter of honor, but doing the right thing, performing praiseworthy actions, or ‘doing one’s own thing.’ The contexts in which honor is still used are highly regimented and associated with institutions that seem to imply that honor consists in uncritical obedience to the commands of superiors. Thus, to defend the idea of honor or to reassert its importance seems to be either hopelessly naïve or perversely conservative and authoritarian. (Hauerwas, 1995, 224)

Hauerwas continues about his newly-found appreciation for honor and the role it should play in any social organization (particularly universities and churches) by marking off those attitudes and forms of behavior that are legitimate ends in themselves. The standards of honor “are significant exactly because they are the way a particular society reinforces and articulates to itself the forms of life that give that society its reason for being” (Hauerwas, 1995, 225). Honor structures the life of every community, functioning as a critical moral bridge between the self and society (Hauerwas, 1995, 224). Hauerwas exemplifies a former honor-averse American who, upon careful reflection, has reoriented his take on honor and even come to embrace it as a critical tool for moral excellence.

Similarly, theologian Marilyn McCord Adams argues that a general neglect of honor in Western theology stands in sharp contrast to the central value “honor/shame calculus” occupies in the biblical story. She notes how social esteem and honor form a powerful source of human meaning and purpose. The denial of that honor, that is, shame, depletes meaning and, ultimately, the sense of human worth (McCord Adams, 1999, 107). She notes how it is honor (glory, praise, and adoration) that will be the currency of heaven (McCord Adams, 1999, 128). So, according to McCord Adams, honor (and shame) is central to the ongoing revelation of God’s story in history and constitutes a fundamental dimension of eternity.

I highlight Hauerwas and McCord Adams because they represent Western theological reflection at the highest level that has advanced past this honor/shame oblivion and regained an appreciation for honor (and shame) due both to the force of its social importance and also its biblical and theological resonance. The very type of realization all five articles argue for, Hauerwas and McCord Adams demonstrate is in fact also happening in Western theology.

Many have moved from oblivion to recognition and appreciation. This is the move I argue we must all make. It is a move that will open us up to the already pervasive honor/shame dimensions in our own context, make us more aware and empathetic to honor/shame dynamics in other cultural contexts, and help heighten our sensitivities to honor/shame dynamics in the Bible.

Theme 3: The Deconstructive Task

The third significant theme is what I would call the deconstructive task that is incumbent upon those of us coming from a Western perspective. This is explicit, for example, in Jayson Georges (*reconstructing*) and Wu (*rewriting*). Thornton, Mischke, and Steve Evans, however, are just as much about deconstructing our truncated Western understandings and unacknowledged biases.

Theologian Kathryn Tanner notes how the early Christian community took the culture-specific notions of honor and shame given to them by the surrounding culture and transformed them by infusing a new cultural difference. This meant that though incorporating much of what these notions entailed, early Christians changed the goal of the dominant honor codes (now the goal is to do the will of God), substituted new scriptural warrants for engaging in such practices, made unexpected content substitutions (humility, service, and suffering are

now honorable), “seeing moral achievement on those terms not as the individual accomplishment of the philosopher but something requiring sustenance from a particular religious community and guaranteed only by God” (Tanner, 1997, 109).

This task of deconstruction falls on two specific groups. First, it is westerners who must undergo a type of deconstructive re-education. This is one of the most fundamental points and assumptions of the articles. The second is related, i.e., the call for believers in their own context to engage in a type of critical reflection and deconstruction of the dominant honor-shame codes that society delivers. This is indeed what much of the New Testament was attempting to do. Early Christian engagement with culture in general and honor codes in particular involves profoundly what I have termed the “Christian reorientation of honor.”

Mischke notes how Jesus’ touching of lepers was tantamount to the re-writing of Hebrew purity codes. A profound example of this subverting and redefining the honor code based on new canons of honorable behavior (in this case, Jesus privileging human need for acceptance and community over religious codes). Thornton’s five questions are penetrating and helpful, providing precisely the type of creative engagement we need in every context.

The work Georges notes with parables provides an additional excellent example of subverting of dominant honor codes and reconstructing these codes along new canons or standards. This is exactly the type of strategy that Jesus, and early Christians, practiced. As Georges contends, it aims to “overturn prevailing worldview narratives for interpreting life.” The contextualization of discipleship materials involves this deconstructive work to help “deconstruct prevailing cultural attributions of worth” and providing alternative constructions of honor code.

The deconstructive task exemplified in these articles matches Tanner’s insight about earliest Christianity. By extension, the Christian community has the creative task in every culture either to affirm, subvert, or transform dominant honor/shame codes by engaging these with the virtues and truths that come from the gospel. This must happen *vis-à-vis* honor/shame.

As Wu perceptively notes, these types of interpretive moves also call us to reconsider our understanding of the gospel. It is true that “the gospel is

already contextualized for honor-shame cultures.” The basic terms that we associate with gospel (e.g., sin, justice, righteousness), however, are thoroughly infused with Western cultural notions. This is to some degree as it should be. I appreciate the call to engage “The New Perspective” as one way to push us out of our theological comfort zones and habits and advance our perspective on the good news.

In my book *About Face*, I highlight the value of how “The New Perspective” helps us see afresh possibilities for the gospel that would likely resonate more deeply with non-Western oral cultures than has our traditional understandings of Paul, the Law, and salvation by faith (thought of primarily in a Western legal mode).

I think this is true in two senses. First, we must rethink the theological frameworks within which we understand the gospel. A fruitful way to consider this in a fresh light is the notion of *theosis* (alternately termed *deification*, *dignification*, or *divinization*). Though outside the scope of this chapter, I find Jayson Georges’ chapter on Mischke’s website helpful.⁷ Also, the last half of *About Face* addresses this issue as I write about our need to reconceive the soteriological task.

Second, we obviously must allow a heightened awareness of honor/shame to infuse our apologetics and practice of evangelism. I think of how early on in our university ministry work in Thailand we were so insistent that the urgency of the gospel required a particular posture based on our individualistic reading of Luke 14:25ff, viz., counting the cost.

We would urge that they need not consult family or friends, but follow the Holy Spirit’s leading to accept the gospel and publicly display their commitment in baptism. We only later learned how powerful a testimony it was to spend time going to the home of these seekers and honoring family, both implicitly and explicitly (honoring parents by noting the honorable change in lifestyle, praising them publically for the ways they had raised virtuous children, seeking a blessing from parents as their child entered into the honorable lifestyle of dedication, love, and truth-seeking).

Although unaware of all the details, I wonder if the amazing story of Teke (in Evans’ chapter) is partly about the honoring of the father and community (honoring

the community with the opportunity for hospitality to the group of believers and the word of God) and the associative honor generated by the comparison of the son's life and the story from a sacred text. The comment, "These are good stories. Our people need to hear them," seems likely a result of this type of social honorification. Honoring, it seems, is what was involved in allowing a leader/big man to extend hospitality, to respond not in argumentation, but in associating his son with a powerful story from the Holy Book, a story that met with such positive reaction and allowed the father to associate positively with an honorable connection.

One area I wish to push against and challenge us to rethink is our notions and use of the terms honor/shame culture (over against a legal, guilt, or justice-oriented culture). Here I wish to note briefly that this dichotomizing is at best a sloppy inaccuracy, at worst a potentially harmful distortion that might actually lead us to harmful conclusions.

Ever since the extremely popular work of Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, this distinction between honor/shame cultures and guilt cultures has occupied a prominent place in Western vocabulary. This dichotomy was extended as a legitimate anthropological framework in the 1960s and 1970s⁸ but received significant pushback from the next generation of anthropologists. Indeed, anthropologists today generally reject such a stark parsing of any society with the binary distinction of honor/shame versus guilt culture.⁹

Recent work by diverse scholars such as moral philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (contending in *The Honor Code* that honor is essential for functioning morality and growth of civilization), political scientists Sharon Krause (who in her book *Liberalism With Honor* contends that the experience of honor is fundamental to our humanity and can benefit the functioning of society), and Christina Tarnopolsky (who argues in *Prudes, Perverts and Tyrants: Plato and the Politics of Shame* that certain dimensions of shame are essential for understanding our mortality and human vulnerability and finitude) all point to the continuing and necessary function of honor and shame in the Western world.

Suffice it here to mention that—as Wu notes in the first footnote of his chapter—honor, shame, guilt, justice, and law are operative in every culture. A fair guess would be that this is the view of each of the authors of these five articles.

Cultures, sub-cultures, and individuals differ in how they construe these various social experiences. Is private, individually-located honor (e.g., dignity, virtue) primary, or is greater value placed in social relations, communal norms and public displays? This is not the place for a lengthy discussion of this issue as the issues involved are quite complex.¹⁰ I would caution us, however, to chasten our usage of honor/shame and guilt/justice to reference cultures. Instead, I encourage us to develop more descriptive and accurate designations that will help us identify specifically what dynamics of these cultural dimensions are in fact distinct.

Implications for Theological Education among Oral Learners

I wish now to address three areas for which a focus on honor-shame could lead to fruitful theological formation with oral learners. These include theological, methodological, and affective implications.

Theological Implications

It seems that all the presenters have in mind the important theological and biblical implications of better understanding the honor-shame issues. Such a renewed perspective is critical for understanding the basic dynamics of all cultures, not just ostensibly honor-shame cultures. Likewise, to better understand these issues only takes us deeper to the basic thought-world and value sets of the earliest Christians. Indeed, to read the Bible faithfully requires us to deconstruct many of our own biases and, possibly, deeply-held theological perspectives.

More than a simple increase in understanding, what I believe is warranted is a full-scale project to deepen our understanding of these issues. We might think of this as adding to our interpretive toolkit the tools of honor-shame exegesis. This means that those of us who are aware of these critical issues should endeavor to read, interpret, and teach with these lenses. We must not only acknowledge such, but also work to do the hard work of integrating these perspectives deeply into our interpretations and instruction. We must read the Bible, paying close attention to how it is working to bring highlight, challenge, and perhaps subvert dominant cultural honor-shame codes, groups, and criteria.

By this, I do not only mean examining the Bible with such lenses; this must include culturally-specific dynamics in local contexts. Well-known Harvard anthropologist Michael Herzfeld notes that there is no such thing as “honor,” only culturally-specific “honors.” The English term “honor” is an inefficient gloss that covers a variety of

indigenous terminological systems (Herzfeld, 1980: 339). His point is that although there is a fundamentally similar dynamic to honor (and shame) across cultures, there are variables and functions of this basic cultural experience specific to each context. It is incumbent upon each of us to tease out these culturally-specific distinctions, canons, functions and dynamics that make honor and shame deeply cultural, and therefore incapable of full understanding outside of culturally deep, linguistically specific work. There is much for us to do here!

Methodological Implications

The second area this topic has important implications for in theological education is that of methodology. I work in theological education, teaching mostly North Americans in a Western seminary in West Texas. We are highly literate and operate in that context. While it may not be immediately evident how attention to honor/shame might influence our pedagogy and educational methodology, allow me a few ideas.

First, I think it critical that we intentionally integrate an encomiastic approach to the Bible, theology, and ministry. That is, we must not only use, but also actively instill in our students, the perspectives that allow us to read the Bible through honor-shame lenses. We must “authorize” such an approach by our active encouragement. We must normalize such an approach and prevent it from being merely an exotic type of exegesis. It must become the way we read the Bible.

We do this first of all by helping them ask these very questions. *How does this story/text/doctrine communicate honor? Shame? How would this relationship/virtue/vice lead to enhanced honor within God’s saved community? Before God himself? What are the proper limits of boasting (i.e., making verbal honor claims), that is, how can—and in what—do Christians boast? How are these different than the strategies of those around us who do not know Christ? How does the Church in various ways replace itself as the primary social “court of reputation” for believers in this context? How does Jesus uphold the best honor aspirations of our culture? In what ways would Jesus agree with what our culture terms shameful? How is the Holy Spirit leading us to uphold, challenge, subvert, and transform these honor-shame codes from the dominant culture?* There are many other such questions that would be critical for leaders to gain “fluency” in asking. The example we set is perhaps the greatest challenge for them to catch such a vision.

Similarly, I would encourage a pedagogy that embraces more overt expressions of honor (and shame). Public approval, both verbal and in concrete rituals, would be critical to effective theological formation in oral contexts. Rather than the highly competitive individualistic characteristic of much Western educative models, recognition of groups that work and succeed together might be more successful in the long run.

I am also reminded of how we proscribe lack of effort, poor performance, and cheating. When I was a doctoral student, the seminary I attended had two versions of their ethical guidelines for students. One involved a more Western traditional focus on the “wrongness” of cheating. The other, distributed to all but crafted in particular for non-Western students, focused on the deep shame (for oneself, which would surely become known to those important to the student, and was clearly evident before God) of cheating or taking what is not your own. This strikes me as an important move we must also make.

I also find it fascinating that the types of communicative approaches these authors advocate (e.g., parable, storytelling, encoded ritual) to be particularly honor-laden. In high-context, collectivist, personalistic cultures, what can be more honoring than the inductive, invitational format of parabolic and narrational teaching? It is an honor to be asked to contribute, to be granted the opportunity to respond with one’s own thoughts. Such, it seems to me, is inherently honorific!

Affective Implications

Finally, I do believe that this discussion has important implications for how we work among oral learners in the area of affect and motivation. It was Kant who set a strong bias in Western philosophy and social theory that the fundamental motivation for ethical behavior was “good will,” i.e., the desire to do a thing simply because it is the right thing. Honor, shame, and the “hot-blooded” passions were insufficient, likely misleading, and ultimately damaging. Although enjoying a long pedigree in the Western tradition, this approach strikes me at best as extremely thin, and at worst incapable of sustaining long-term motivation among most of the world’s population.¹¹

Indeed, if one looks closely at the Bible, it is immediately clear that dangling the carrot of honor and holding the threat of shame are dominant forms of motivation, positive and negative, prescriptive and proscriptive. It would behoove

us to re-familiarize ourselves with the ancient conversations of praise and blame, of honor as the proper reward for true virtue and to shame the possession of those who reject the truth. The authors of scripture also were quite familiar with this epideictic and encomiastic world. This will surely provide a more robust and satisfying approach to helping our students gain and sustain motivation in their theological studies.

Conclusion

I have laid out the areas I would suggest for further investigation: (1) deliberately embark on a life-long (re)learning project of understanding honor and shame, how it relates to contemporary Western cultures, non-Western cultures, and historical cultures such as ancient Israel and the first-century Mediterranean world; (2) reinvigorate our training institutions and processes with careful attention to honor/shame dynamics; and (3) gain clearer understanding of the various ways that honor and shame can motivate God's people to do the will of God in this world, particularly among oral learners.

I end by paraphrasing Andrew Walls' oft-quoted remark about what might constitute an authentic indigenous African theology. Applied to our topic, authentic, culturally-specific, indigenous, honor/shame sensitive theological education among oral learners should either puzzle us ("That's weird. I wonder why they do it like that?") or profoundly trouble us ("Hmmm. I'm not really sure this is right"). It is when we are open to communities moving into places that can evoke one or both of these reactions that we know we are moving in the right direction.

¹This would need to also include all those non-Western practitioners trained by westerners and who likely struggle with a kind of neo-colonial literacy-biased world authorized by their Western teaching and example they received. We all know the implicit power of authority that comes by virtue of being Western.

²This is the working group of biblical scholars that intentionally work to bring to their biblical study the fruits of social scientific models and theories. Of note are John Elliot, Bruce Malina, and Jerome Neyrey. More recently, Louise Joy Lawrence and David deSilva have done excellent work in this area as well. For more information, see the Context Group website at www.contextgroup.org.

³I wonder if there remains some residue of a Western perspective here. Donahue contends that in the Gospels the term “unclean” (*koinos*) is an antonym not of dirty but rather *idios* (private, one’s own) (Donahue, 219). If true, the distinction is between what is commonly available and what is distinct, i.e., set apart or especially dedicated, in this case, to God. Thus, the basic meaning of *hagiazein* and the Hebrew *qaddesh* would be less about being spotless (a more recent, Western moralistic interpretation) and more with the sense of Rudolf Otto’s *mysterium tremendum*, completely distinct and *wholly other* (e.g., the scene in Isaiah 6 where the seraphim are likely not extolling the moral purity of Yahweh, but his divine uniqueness).

⁴E.g., rendering most biblical occurrences of “glory” (a heavily theologically loaded translation) with the more accurate “honor”; highlighting the essential shame dimensions of terms such as *elengchein* (John 3:20, 8:46, Eph. 5:11, 13, Heb. 12:5, 1 Tim. 5:20, 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 2:16), which contain a dimension of conviction by exposing to shame. For a brief survey, see my section on sociocultural interpretation of the Bible in *About Face*, 202-209. To delve more deeply into this see deSilva’s wonderful work, *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation*.

⁵The Thai people knew this all along. They did not need to discover anything. I was the one who was ignorant.

⁶In the modern Western world, we tend to collapse face and face-related behavior into other categories, such as politeness, image, identity, or various extensions of personal dignity and esteem. As Goffman notes in his seminal essay on face, even in modern Western culture, “The members of every social circle may be expected to have some knowledge of face-work and some experience in its use. In our society, this kind of capacity is sometimes called tact, savoir-faire, diplomacy, or social skill.” Yet, all such activity is “modified, prescriptively or proscriptively, by considerations of face”

(Goffman, 217). If Goffman is correct (and I think he is), Western culture engages in face and facework as profoundly as does any putative face-culture in the non-Western world.

⁷<https://wernermischkedotorg.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/dignified-theo-of-divine-honor-sjt.pdf>

⁸This was particularly the case with the popular anthropological studies of the Mediterranean by Julian Pitt-Rivers and J.G. Peristiany.

⁹For those who reject this traditional distinction (though for differing reasons) see Barnett, 1966; Creighton, 1990; Lebra, 1983; Lynd, 1958; Rosaldo, 1984; G. Taylor, 1985.

¹⁰For a full treatment, see Chapter 3 on the misconstrual of honor, shame and face in my book *About Face*.

¹¹This is the heart of the argument Appiah makes about restoring honor to contemporary Western discussions of moral philosophy and social policy.

PART II:

Assessment Of Orality Preference

*“have you never read, “ ‘From the lips of children and infants
you have ordained praise?’”*

Matthew 21:16 NIV

Chapter 7

God's Communication Challenge: Oral Preference and the *Tribal Bible*

Daniel V. Runyon

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Abstract

An assessment of orality preference in story form, "God's Communication Challenge: Oral Preference and the Tribal Bible" explores inherent limitations when attempting to communicate the infinite to the finite. God's communication challenge is to place large thoughts into small minds through matching the message to the audience. The dual reality is that the sovereign, unchanging, eternal Word must become continually incarnate to every people group in every generation. Techniques used for achieving this objective derive from a four-week missiology course taught in 2013 in Malawi, Africa. Teaching methods summarize the appeal of cultural manifestations such as music, dance, and poetry. The chapter reports student-learning outcomes, explains the origins of the Tribal Bible, and reveals some practical and theological implications of storying the Bible.

Four-year-old Renee Munn received a basic Bible primer from her grandmother, an artist known for her Bible story Scene-O-Felts that contextualized scripture for children. The book for the granddaughter was entitled *I Learn to Read about Jesus*, so instead of reading about Dick, Jane, and Sally, the granddaughter read, "Look, look! Look and see. See the baby. See baby Jesus" (Runyon 1962, 6). The author of the children's book wisely test-marketed the story by having her 6-year-old son read it to her, then changing words and phrasing to meet his reading level. She was contextualizing: matching the message to the audience. Author and editor recognize the importance of audience sovereignty—that the needs of the audience dictate how a message should be packaged—even if the audience is four years old.

"In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1), the Apostle John wrote as he explained the dual mystery of God's eternal nature and the reality of the

incarnation: “The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us” (1:14). John’s communication challenge stemmed from a lifetime of personal experience with God that most humans cannot imagine. Yet the information gap between John and us is tiny compared to the gap between God and us.

I answered one science-minded person’s inquiry about the *Tribal Bible* by saying the new quantum computer begins to explain how a thing can be two places at the same time, thereby giving us a glimpse into the omnipresence of God—but we still have about as far to go in comprehending God as my three chickens have in comprehending me. In my sovereignty over them I communicate as best I can, and in fact the chickens do know a few basic and predictable things about me, yet in reality I remain utterly inscrutable to their tiny brains.

The chickens illustrate God’s communication challenge: explaining the infinite to the finite. His preference for the oral technique is evident when he walked with Adam in the garden, when he visited Abraham at his tent, when he gave instructions to Moses on the mountain, when he sent Gabriel to speak with Daniel, Mary, Joseph, and John—and when he walked this earth telling parables.

Orality preference takes nothing away from linguistic heroes including Jerome, Wycliffe, and Tyndale who translated scripture; it merely widens the scope to recognize the host of mostly-forgotten heroes who incarnated the scripture through story. The *written* word bridges generations and preserves the purity of truth revealed by God; the *incarnate* Word targets every generation to make known the relevance of God’s truth in that setting.

Unchanging, eternal Word must become continually incarnate to all people in every generation. We must embrace God’s communication challenge by partnering with him in two ways: meticulously preserving the integrity of his word as it was given to us, and making the Word “flesh” in every conceivable way.

God’s oral preference is revealed in the following five texts paraphrased below from the preface to the *Tribal Bible*:

- “To restore the twelve sons of Jacob to their rightful place is a very easy thing for me; I will also make you a light for all people—you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isa. 49:6).
- “Into their *minds* will I put my law; on their hearts will I write it . . . Everyone

in all tribes will *know* me [not necessarily read about me, but know me in their hearts and minds] from the most important chiefs to the least of the women and children” (Jer. 31:33-34).

- This is our agreement with God: “The Lord said, ‘My spirit which is on you, and my words which are in you, will always be on your mouth and on the mouths of your children and ancestors—from now on—for all time’” (Isa. 59:21).
- “Good news of the rule of God will be taught to every family living on planet Earth, and then will come the end” (Matt. 24:14).
- Even the final missionary effort by angels shows a preference for oral communication: “I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven. He had the eternal good news to *preach* over the ones sitting on the earth: over every nation and tribe and tongue and people” (Rev. 14:6).

* * *

The above investigation of God and his communication challenge sets the context for the *Tribal Bible* that resulted from teaching a four-week missiology course at the Great Commission Bible School in Lilongwe, Malawi. The host missionary urged me to embrace oral tradition styles of teaching. I read material at storyrunners.com and the books listed in my references to deepen my understanding of the ways oral tradition brain-function differs from printed word brain function. I gained a deep appreciation for how the Bible created the soul of Western civilization.

I adopted a seven-act outline of the biblical drama from the missiology text and simply used the Bible as the sole text. I selected 15 Bible stories from each section of the Bible and assigned one story to each student. The students’ task was to tell these stories in their tribal languages using familiar entertainment techniques learned from childhood in the evenings around the cooking fire. The laborious part was for the African students to write down the stories in their tribal languages and back-translate them to English. This way I could comprehend their work and have a basis for their grades. Their stories give a strong taste of the gospel the way Jesus first told it—through stories often told to a few folks at a time. Creating the *Tribal Bible* involved typing and carefully editing their stories to achieve Western literary expectations while retaining the native charm.

“There are certain kinds of understanding that we have no access to except by means of story,” writes Marilyn McEntyre (2009): “Stories invite us to reflect on basic questions... How do things happen? How are they related? What have they to do with us?” (113). “They offer the kind of knowing that comes in glimpses, moments, flashes of memory, associations” (114).

In Malawi, our purpose for teaching missiology with stories was first to imprint the message on the minds of the speakers. Students then practiced telling their stories without looking at their notes. At the end of telling of the stories, they asked their listeners questions such as “What do you like best about this story?” “What do you struggle with or not understand?” “What do you learn about people?” “What do you learn about God?” “What needs to change in your life after hearing this story?” (Dillon 2012, 201-202). Conversation is the natural aftermath of a story and serves to imprint the message on the minds of listeners.

I encouraged my class to move beyond recitative storytelling and to create narrative poetry—an easy transition for these Malawians who habitually came into the classroom singing. They danced gracefully and harmonized spontaneously. One day, I read a Psalm and mentioned that David loved music, which led him to worship God with poetry and song. If David could do it, so could they. When I assigned one of the students L. L. B. Kachinjika to make Genesis 6-8 into a song for his congregation, he no doubt had a familiar melody in his head as he wrote, “Woe to the generation of Noah who departed from God. Their minds became evil and their eyes were blinded. But God saw their evil and shortened their years of living” (*Tribal Bible* 2014, 16).

G. M. Chikoya’s haunting rendition of Genesis 3:1-24 was spellbinding in his native tongue, and hints of his genius show clearly in the English translation: “Oh! The serpent! You’re more crafty than any wild animals today. My mamie, Eve, Why have you heard this deceiver? Why are you respecting him as your husband Adam? Oh! The serpent! Why are you talking to Eve as your wife? How wiser are you than God?” (*Tribal Bible* 2014, 13).

The question regarding changes in the storytellers as a result of re-expressing scripture has an anticlimactic answer. They did not know the enormous stretch a Western university professor was making for his course content to fit their cultural norms. They merely embraced the stories, told them, and agreed to use more Bible stories in their preaching. The technique was too familiar for them to sense it was in any way innovative. Through story, the Bible bridged a cultural gap—and a bit of God’s communication challenge was achieved.

The related question about their theological development is more complex. I was assigned to teach missiology. I began by acquainting the class with the

many ways the Bible models how to practice missions. From Joseph in Egypt to Esther in Persia, from Jesus in Samaria to Peter at Pentecost, from Paul in Athens to John on Patmos, we read and re-told key missionary stories. We gained a glimpse of God's mission in the world and made a seamless connection between the story in history and our role in the ongoing narrative. I added stories from Jerome (patron saint of translators) to Hudson Taylor to Billy Graham, but the homework I assigned was for them to tell the story of God in our family, neighborhood, and congregation. Theological development was achieved by contextualizing "missiology" without using forgettable terminology.

If "theological development" solely means comprehending the fine points in Calvin's systematic theology or erudite definitions of terms like "soteriology," then I left my students in a helpless state. But if theology is the study of God made possible through knowing his word, then I think we experienced a dramatic success. Learning true stories from God's word helps my students know God in practical ways they can comprehend.

Questions to Explore

First, how can the language, techniques, and content of theology courses be adapted to connect more intimately with oral-preference learners? We must be careful of this question, for it may take us so far as framing a new creed for the Church. In the book *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body*, Howard Snyder and I used inductive rather than deductive reasoning as we compared the New Testament with the Nicene Creed. Our thinking revealed that the four classic marks of the Church identified by the creed tell only half the story. A more accurate definition would offer a church that is:

"DIVERSE as well as ONE
CHARISMATIC as well as HOLY
LOCAL as well as CATHOLIC or UNIVERSAL
PROPHETIC as well as APOSTOLIC." (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 22)

Second, to what extent should the language of theological material be contextualized into vocabulary that resonates with a post-Christian oral culture? To give one mind-jolting example, imagine replacing the term "sanctification" with a word such as "evolution" to explain the process whereby a person becomes more Christ-like.

In the final link of God's communication challenge, he hands the challenge to us—and the resulting stories will fill heaven. The opening example provides a fitting conclusion: That artistic grandmother who made Scene-O-Felts to put the gospel into the minds of American youth lived just 34 miles from the lady who labored at the same calling with *I Learn to Read about Jesus*. That artist's granddaughter (Renee) and that writer's son (me) met and married 20 years later.

Because of our cultural heritage, the oral tradition of storytelling the Bible comes as naturally to us as it did to our African students. It pleases us to join with you in the work engraved on my mother's tombstone: "I love to tell the story of Jesus and his love."

Chapter 8

A Case Study among the Yoruba Igbomina People of Nigeria in Understanding Metaphorical Imagery of God as Mother Hen in Psalm 61:1-4

Stephen Baba

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There has been call for the use of a method that will aid a better explanation of the Scriptures to the Africans (cf. Mugambi 2001, 7-26; Yorkes 1995, 145-158; 1999, 5). Tite Tienou observes that a lot of people living in Africa have not grappled with the realities of everyday living in Africa. This is because they have an incorrect attitude towards culture and the understanding of it (Tienou 1970, 20). George Folarin, Olusegan Oladosu, and I observe that there are various works on the theories of enculturation when it comes to biblical hermeneutics (2012, 15-36).

One such scholar is Chris Manus (1993, 2003). He believes that there is a need for the development of an African methodology for biblical research. He extensively discusses the various approaches but moves away from the ancient bipolar to the four steps of engagement of biblical interpretation by African scholars (2003; cf. Adamo 2012 and Ukpong 2000). Manus observes that “the exegete must however ensure that the story that is co-related suits the text under study and readily touches the soft spot of African readership” (2002, 51; 2003, 17, 32; Adamo 2005).

David Tuesday Adamo observes that Western Old Testament scholarship on the Psalms has traditionally focused on questions like authorship, literary forms, and theology, but the issue of orality has been neglected. He opines that many African Christians find these approaches too mechanical because they do not meet the daily needs of people who are confronted with life challenges and how to deal with the power of enemies and death. They are constantly faced with the

question of how to address the issue of protection against the enemy (2005, 14-15). Also, Adamo reiterates that an interpreter should put into use what the people living in communities in rural African areas can understand in the explanation of the Bible. They should address issues closer home to their own people using what they can easily understand orally (2012, 5).

In a related view, Gerald West follows a similar terrain of biblical hermeneutics in Africa, using the enculturation engagement of biblical interpretation (1995, 2008, 1993). Other scholars who follow this method of doing biblical interpretation are Justin S. Ukpong and Louis C. Jonker. Samuel Peni Ango, citing S.O. Abogunrin, also observes that: "African biblical scholars need to decolonize biblical interpretation by responding to their religiously and culturally pluralistic context" (2010, 23; cf. Abogunrin 2004, 9).

In another work, the same author argues that "the Bible is more real to the peoples of Africa (than Western peoples), not because they cannot reason scientifically, but because most of the things described in the Bible still happen around us daily" (especially with the metaphorical imagery of the mother hen in Africa as used in this passage) (Ango 2003, 17).

Cornelius Abiodun Olowola observed that the African understanding of God cannot be eradicated from the Africans. He observes that there is a point of contact. According to him, "there are good things in African traditional religion, which any Christian theology relevant to Africa must take into serious account. One example is the African belief in a Supreme Being" (1993, 63). Ango is in support of this assertion. He believes that "this aspect of African belief is an important factor in effectively teaching about God in Africa, and provides a further argument for a theology of Christian education in Africa [and that] . . . there is the need to make Christian theology accessible and understandable to Africans through the medium of effective teaching."

Up to the present, scholars are continually calling for the use of what Africans know from their environment so as to have a better understanding of the scripture. Therefore, the task before me and other biblical scholars in Africa, as earlier mentioned, is for an understanding of the protective power of God. This is explained in Psalm 61:1-4, using the authentically African understanding of the metaphorical imagery of a mother hen's protection of her chicks found in the typical Nigerian Yoruba Igbomina village.

As an African who had the experience of village life in Nigeria, I believe that presenting the gospel using the orality form is a method for us in Yoruba land. This prompted me to study Psalm 61:1-4 on the use of orality by looking at the metaphorical imagery of God as Mother Hen in Africa using a comparative analysis. I use the understanding of mother hen in Africa for a better understanding of the protective power of God in the interpretation of Psalm 61. The task of this work is an exegetical understanding of the metaphorical imagery of a physical mother hen in Africa for non-Africans who cannot understand the biblical realities in the usage of the imagery of mother hen in the protective aspect of saving the chicks known by Africans.

I believe that interpreting this text using the imagery of mother hen in Africa is possible because African culture is so similar to Jewish culture. It is hoped that the use of the protective power of the mother hen in Igbomina village in Nigeria makes it possible for Africans to understand biblical realities like the reality of God's protective power over his people as used here in the picture of a metaphorical imagery of a mother hen in Psalm 61 for the African.

A Review of Previous Work on Psalm 61

Except for a few African scholars who worked on the Psalms recently, the major concerns of such scholars are on oral and literary traditions as a fresh approach to interpreting the Psalms. The discovery shows that not many scholars from Africa wrote on Psalm 61. That is to say the majority of the work on the Psalms are Western projections¹ and this may be a weakness. The potential weakness on the part of Western authors is due to their lack of full understanding of the mother hen and its chicks.

Here in Africa, it is very easy for an African to know how the mother hen protects its chicks, because the Africans—whether old or young—see this daily in their lives, beginning from their village experience as opposed to sitting in their refrigerator. It is therefore, necessary, to use the mother hen metaphor as used in Psalm 61 in addressing an issue in the culture of the Yoruba Igbomina people in Nigeria. This makes scripture relevant to the lives of members of the communities where it is applied.

Demonstration of the Method in Psalm 61:1-4

This Psalm is the oral lament of an individual who was in a great trouble. This type of oral lament is found among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Psalm 61 is

well structured. The Psalmist starts with an oral introductory cry. The Hebrew word *רָנַתִּי* used with *שְׁמַעְנָה* is translated *hear my cry*. The term *רָנַתִּי* “my cry” is from *רָנָה*. It is a common noun feminine singular with a first person common singular pronominal suffix. The Psalmist clearly states that this is an individual oral lament in verse one, “my cry”. Verses 1-3 serves as the introductory cry. Through the morphosyntax, the Psalmist states that this is an individual oral lament in verse one: “my cry.” Verses 1-3 serve as the introductory cry.

The structure of the chapter is followed by a petition in vv. 4-5. The prayer of the Psalmist is for the king (vv. 6-7) and has a section on a vow of praise in verse 8. The Psalmist is in a situation in which he does not know what to do. The principle of “scripture interprets the scripture” is necessary in the interpretation of this Psalm. A quick search of the Psalmist’s ordeal shows that he has gone through many trials in life, one of which being the rape of his daughter (2 Sam. 3:1-17).

It is also evident that Absalom, his son, rebelled against his father in 2 Sam. 15:1-16:20. He conspired to send his father away from the throne (2 Sam. 15:1-18) and disgraced his own family by committing adultery with some of the wives of the king in the presence of Israel (2 Sam. 16:20; Waltke 2007, 660-67). This same son Absalom had a bad adviser, Ahitophel, who advised him to conduct a battle against his father which he successfully carried out in 2 Sam. 17:1-13.

One can see that the Psalmist is in serious trouble. Although he is a planner of war and a warrior who has fought many battles which he has won, his son is his enemy. He has no motivation to fight because this is a battle he has not planned for and the opponent is his son. The Psalmist is exiled. It is during a time like this, when his heart is overwhelmed, that God inspires in him this prayer.

In literary studies, artistry is very important in getting a message across to readers. The writer of this Psalm has a very dynamic artistry. He starts with an introductory cry: “Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayers.” This is the oral lament of an individual praying to God. The Psalmist lets the readers know his position. He is in a state of confusion—he is removed from his place of security, at “the ends of the earth” (v. 2a), calling to the God he knows.

The narrator also tells the readers the reason for calling on his God. He is in need of assistance because he is going through a turbulent situation, in which

he is overwhelmed and uncertain (v. 2b). However, he reveals his assurance in this God, as he has found refuge in him, the “strong tower against the foe” (v. 3), in the past.

In this text, there are four major things the Psalmist desires the Lord do for him. The desire of this individual reveals and affirms that God has protective power over his children as a mother hen has for the chicks.

His first desire is that **the Lord would lead him “to the rock that is higher than I.”** The choice of words here shows that it is a lament of an individual; the syntax is very clear. Lead who? Lead “me” and not “us.” The word “me” implies individual and the verb **תִּנְהַיֵּנִי** (lead) implies guidance, instruction or direction (Brown, Driver, and Briggs 2000, 634-635), especially in a situation when one does not know who to trust or confide in. It is in such a time that the Psalmist prays for direction from God. He is also very specific concerning where he intended the Lord to lead him. He specifically mentions the rock that is higher than him. One should ask who the rock is; rock means different things, but here the connotations have to do with “fence” or “place of security.”

An illustration of a lost sheep in the bush can show readers that “rock” means protection. If a sheep gets lost in the bush and it doesn’t want an animal like an eagle, lion, or bear to kill it, it will locate a rock that is higher than it to hide. The sheep hides inside the hole of a rock so that when a lion comes, it will not be able to enter. The term rock, as used here, is probably spiritual and referring to the New Testament—the rock as a type of Christ in 1 Corinthians 10:4.

One major problem is that a lot of people today are going for worldly protection; they go for protection from a person who needs safety or protection for themselves (fetish priests, witchdoctors). The Psalmist is in trouble on every side; his chief army officer is a conspirator. His chief counselor, Ahitophael, has deviated from him. His son is a total disgrace to the family, and his kingdom is gone. His wives are humiliated in the presence of Israel by his son. Ahitophael was with Absalom but David said, “I will go for rock protection,” the rock being Christ.

The second place that David desires that God will lead him to is found in verse 3 of Psalm 61. His desire is to *run to the tower*. What is a tower? In the Old Testament period, a tower was a place of safety or defense from the enemy, a place of security in the time of war. Life is a war and Christians are in constant battle,

fighting the enemy who is wiser, greater, bigger, smarter, and more connected than we are. Today, Christians find themselves in a place where their enemies are bigger, and those who want to crush them are more connected.

I looked back to the period of the military regime in Nigeria. When they told you, “We will show him where power lies,” or when the corrupt politicians in Nigeria told you, “We will tell him where power lies,” you could vanish if you didn’t take care. This was a continent where people in authority said, “We will crush you” and in this Psalm they too say, “We will crush you.” David is going through trouble but he desires a solution from the rock and the tower. In scripture it says, “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,” and that “the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runs into it and the Lord saves him and he secures refuge” (Prov.18:10).

When David is in serious trouble, his heart is overwhelmed and he doesn’t know what to do, his second desire is to run into the tower, a place of refuge, so that those planning his destruction would not triumph nor win the battle.

The third place of safety that the Psalmist desires is found in verse 4: **“Lead me or guide me to the tabernacle.”** This is a tent of God for meeting with his people, the sacred tent in worship of God. This is contrary to those who believe that when they are going through problems the church is not the place to go. There are many in the church who only go on Christmas and Easter. They are the kind of people who think they only need God in emergencies.

The Psalmist is saying that the house of God is not for victorious people alone; it is also for struggling people. He believes that the house of God is a place of safety. This is because in the house of God one would hear messages that would encourage and motivate him or her. It doesn’t mean that when you come to the house of God your problem is solved immediately; rather, “don’t let your problem drive you away from the house of God.” Tabernacle is the place of safety and protection.

The last place that David desires to run into for protection in time of troubles is **“the shelter of your wings,”** or simply put: to hide under the shelter of the wings of the most high. In the Old Testament, literal wings are associated with birds (Isa. 10:14); however, in the Old Testament poetry and wisdom literature, the wings of the most high are a figurative expression of God in the protection of his people.

This figure of the mother hen may be difficult for an American child to understand, but very easy for the Africans and the African child because it can be discussed with them orally and they can see it.

The ancient culture portrayed in this text is just like that of the Africans; the picture David wanted his readers to understand is a figure of a mother hen that protects its chicks under its wings in time of any attack. Whenever Africans see a mother hen with its chicks but all of a sudden an eagle comes, the mother hen will make a voice that will warn the chicks. The mother hen lifts up its wings to come and hide under its wings, and then the chicks run under its wings for safety and protection. The chicks cannot see the enemy, but the mother hen sees the enemy from afar. The protection of the mother hen with its wings does two things for the chicks: (1) the chicks receive warmth and (2) the wings serve as a gate or fence, protecting them from the sight of the enemy.

The Psalmist observes that just like the mother hen in Africa protects their chicks, God protects believers. There is protection under the wings of the Most High God.

Conclusion

Ogunkunle observes that “African Christians want to be saved from various enemies confronting them” (Ogunkunle, 67). As a result, there are many people providing heretical teachings which are not theologically sound and are not providing biblical solutions to people’s problems in the faith community. As a result of such heresies, some people have run away from the Lord and have gone after escapism gospels or worldly protection.

The nation of Nigeria at the age of 50 is going through a lot of problems: corruption, bad leadership, terrorism, decadence in Nigerian banks, examination malpractice, and cultism just to mention but few. Nigeria, your children are your enemy, but you cannot fight back.

In the faith community the sons of pastors, elders, and church workers are enemies in their homes, but they cannot fight back. Heresy abounds and many church leaders are looking for worldly protection. It was in such a situation that the Psalmist wrote this Psalm. He presents four major things that he desires to do when his heart is overwhelmed. These are also applicable to Christians today.

Christians in Nigeria, whether theologically trained or untrained, will be able to read and interpret this Psalm together, hearing God speak to them in their specific context. This will then allow them to put more confidence on God as their protector, the one who is like the African mother hen. Mother hen as it is used in this text is figuratively mirroring God as protector of his people. This allows the believers to hide under the wings of the Almighty God instead of hiding under the protection of worldly people. This work is also applicable to other Yoruba people groups and many people in Africa.

¹Herman Gunkel, "Psalmen," in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. iv, 1913 rev ed., 1927; idem., *The Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 30-39; Pius Drijvers, *The Psalms: Their Structure and Meaning* (New York: Harder and Harder, 1965). See also Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 1-50*, vol. 1: The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966) and Leopold Sabourin, *The Psalms: Their Origins and Meaning*, vol. 1 (New York: Albe House, 1969).

Chapter 9

The *Simply The Story* Method: Next Steps in Oral Strategies

Jennifer Jagerson

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Abstract

Preliminary investigation into the Simply the Story (STS) method of Bible storytelling seems to demonstrate its effectiveness as a form of inductive oral Bible study. There are particular elements of the method that may contribute to this: (1) the commitment to the use of the text of scripture itself, (2) inductive questions that are particularly well-developed for the discovery of my intent for the narrative genre, (3) the manner in which the stages of the method and the questions in particular draw learners into a deep meditation and consideration of the narratives, and (4) the training of participants to not only learn the method, but to immediately train others. STS has developed Oral Bible Schools (OBS) that take participants through 296 biblical stories from Genesis to Revelation using their stages of inductive Bible study. A number of organizations engaging oral strategies have developed highly effective methods for initial evangelism and discipleship for oral learners, particularly among the least reached. The OBS of STS may provide a secondary level of training to develop leadership and more deeply establish new believers and church plants in the world.

The *Simply the Story* Method: Next Steps in Oral Strategies

The use of oral strategies for the proclamation of the gospel and initial discipleship has seen great advances as they have been embraced by major mission agencies and implemented on every continent. The question arises about what happens next as indigenous churches form and further training in scripture and discipleship becomes necessary. Some form of more extensive training, short of sending indigenous leaders to a literate Bible school, seems necessary. The OBS that have been developed by *Simply the Story* may provide a model for such training.

Introduction to *Simply the Story*

Simply the Story is one among many organizations seeking to develop missionary strategies to reach communities made up of primarily oral learners with the message of the gospel. STS provides several forms of training, two of which make up the main thrust of the ministry. There is a week-long workshop that trains participants to conduct and lead others through inductive Bible study using oral discussion. STS has also implemented Oral Bible Schools (OBSs) in a number of countries. Nationals gather in groups of 12 or less and are trained in 296 Bible stories from Genesis to Revelation. While STS practitioners have engaged in church planting and have had churches arise from their ministries, the STS model does not provide specific strategies for church planting.

While formal research on STS strategies is still in progress, preliminary evidence suggests that the effectiveness of the method is due in part to the stages of the storytelling model and the manner in which individuals and communities are trained to deeply search the biblical text. Restrictions of space require that explanations through scholarship in Bible hermeneutics, theology, literary theory, and educational psychology will be limited, but references are provided for those who wish to study further. I will then use examples from the field to illustrate these points. After considering these issues in light of the STS model, I will briefly consider storytelling models from several other organizations. Finally, I will pose questions regarding next steps.

Hermeneutics and STS

Preparation

In the various forms of STS training, participants learn to prepare to tell the stories of the Bible on the level of a dynamic equivalence of the text. Each sentence must match the meaning of its correlating sentence in the biblical text with nothing added or left out, including the names of places or minor details. The practice of crafting stories is not used. The organization trusts the bilingual national leaders on the ground as well as a number of translation resources such as MegaVoice to provide nationals with the stories in the trade language or their own dialect or language. This may include creating dynamic equivalent translations from the trade language to a local language (D. Miller, personal communication, March 27, 2014). The commitment to remaining close to the biblical text allows participants to search for the intention of the biblical authors. This includes questions that are particularly well crafted to study the literary conventions of the narrative genre used by the biblical authors to communicate meaning.

Interpreting the Meaning of the Text

In the spiritual observation stage, participants are taught how to interpret the biblical text. They are trained to prepare an introduction that includes any aspects of theology or historical context that are necessary to understand the story they will tell. After learning the story well enough to repeat it without notes, they move slowly and chronologically through small sections with a basic set of questions as a form of inductive study.

They explore the setting, the choices and motives of the characters as expressed by what they say and do or choose not to say and do, and the impact and long-term results of their actions as they play out. This forces them to carefully consider the situations of each character and the risks posed by the problem of the story, engaging their emotions, as well as their intellect. They look at the range of choices that each character had at each point so that the choices they did make and the possible motives behind them are understood more fully. This includes the character of God, the response of the human characters to him, and the spiritual implications of these interactions.

This manner of attending to the text puts a proper focus on what the biblical authors emphasized through repetition, volume and description, the order of what is told, and what seems to be left out. The development of the problem of the story and the manner in which it is resolved as the characters interact is key to understanding the point of the story (Osborne 2006; Edwards 2005; Sternberg 1987; Ryken 1974).

These critical aspects of interpreting the meaning of the narrative genre are not considered by literary scholars to be a mere development from western culture. It reflects the ancient, universal way that meaning is conveyed through story (Aristotle 1997; Alter 1981; Frye 1990; Campbell 1968). This is where trust in the divinely-inspired author's capacity to communicate meaning effectively is particularly crucial.

The robust manner in which this process trains literates and non-literates alike may legitimize the use of the method for not only initial evangelism and discipleship, but for the training up of indigenous pastors, teachers, and lay people. This method contributes a second step of training for oral learners that helps fill in the gap between full-fledged, literate Bible college education (which is unrealistic for many members of the Majority World) and basic levels of evangelism and discipleship.

Finding Applications from the Text

The next stage of the STS method is personal application. Participants are asked if the significant spiritual observations they have found in the story are still relevant today. The goal is to start broadly by asking about the world, then their own community, and finally the more personal realm of their own lives or those they are close to. This provides an opportunity to check their lives against the testimony of scripture, which is a primary goal of the biblical authors (Osborne 2006; Sternberg 1987; Ryken 1974).

Preliminary case study interviews conducted with STS leaders from seven nations suggest that the nature of narrative is such that the participants have often already begun relating the circumstance of the story to their own experiences, sometimes provoking profound emotional responses. By carefully breaking interpretational observations of the biblical text and personal application into two distinct sections, the STS method teaches participants to honor biblical meaning in its own context apart from their own opinions and experiences. This increases their ability to approach the word objectively so it can speak to the circumstances of their lives rather than reflect their own presuppositions and biases. Failure to make the distinction between right interpretation of the text and personal application puts the participant at risk of losing both.

Testimonies

Field notes and interviews were taken in Gurage, Ethiopia, where the STS method has been engaged on an extensive level by a local evangelical denomination. In January 2014, they graduated 54 students from six OBS that met for approximately a year. Several significant themes emerged:

- (1) **The method solidified the stories of scripture in the minds of participants so they could carry the stories with them.** This allowed them to meditate on the word at all points of the day. It also gave them an immediately available, engaging, culturally natural way to share the word with others, including along the roadside, in villages in groups and homes, in Muslim communities where the presence of a Bible would not have been welcome, as professors in Bible college, and within their own families.
- (2) **The method afforded them a way to pursue a much deeper understanding of scripture.** Both non-literates and graduates from Bible colleges and seminaries said that the spiritual observation questions forced them to go slowly and

deeply through the narratives to find deep theological truth in a way that they hadn't known was possible from the biblical stories. This transformed: their understanding of God, their relationship with him, their ability to apply his word to their own lives through obedience, and their ability to teach others to independently and deeply study scripture.

- (3) **It made the study of scripture possible for anyone.** This included giving them the ability to pass the skill on and share the word together in a community of insightful learners. This included the educated and non-educated, old and young alike. One participant told of a 6-year-old who heard a story once and immediately went and shared with her village. By the time she was done asking the questions, they wanted an Oral Bible School in their community.

The OBS graduates discussed how the method allowed many people to participate through discussion while staying close to the text, keeping them active and accountable to what they were learning and showing them that each participant could find rich treasures from the Bible. It gave the Holy Spirit an opportunity to work through different voices (as opposed to one preacher or teacher) so they could bless each other. This allowed for the dynamics of powerful spiritual bonding, often leading to prolonged sessions of study going well after class had ended.

The communal sharing contributed to significant personal transformation, including times of tremendous joy in discovering aspects of God's glory, weeping with repentance or grief, and new resolve to make new personal choices. They explained how the method led to a level of mastery that provided the confidence and competence to launch participants into meaningful, effective ministry that could be replicated to those they teach. This confidence seemed to open up the world of the biblical narratives to them as independent learners and teachers, well beyond the specific stories they had learned at the OBS.

Concerns about STS

While the stories learned in the OBS cover the range of the metanarrative of scripture, they do not necessarily highlight the chief stories that scripture seems to provide as the primary events or movements of God. Nor do they draw clear connections between them to demonstrate the causal flow of God's work across the metanarrative.

Furthermore, the list of Bible passages for the OBS includes sections from genres such as the Epistles and the Psalms. The rules of these genres do not follow the same rules as the genre of narrative. The questions that are so well formed for stories in the STS model might not be the best for other portions of scripture. Furthermore, while STS provides an excellent teaching tool, the organization does not include training for the work of church planting as with methods such as ST4T.

Other Methods

There are a number of organizations that are working to implement oral strategies. The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, E3 Partners, and OneStory (a partnership formed between like-minded agencies such as Wycliffe, YWAM, and Pioneers) each consider their method of storytelling to be a form of pre-evangelism or early proclamation of the gospel and discipleship (G. Lovejoy, personal communication, March 26, 2014; D. Lundberg, personal communication, March 20, 2013; B. Williams, personal communication March 20, 2014). All three organizations develop stories by taking a range of narratives and crafting them with nationals into story sets.

Each group attends to the metanarrative of scripture and the gospel, as well as forming story sets that are culturally relevant to each particular people group. OneStory, which has the most extensive process of the three, developed their strategy in order to go into Unengaged Unreached People Groups where no scripture or prior knowledge of Christianity exists (B. Kelly, personal communication, April 4, 2014). They form teams of nationals and missionaries, including members with exegetical training, to develop the stories and translate them into the local language. Then they create recordings of the translations to test with local nationals in order to copiously check the meaning of words and inferences so that the story that is told honors the meaning of the text (D. Lundberg, personal communication, March 20, 2014). Fellowship groups (or what might otherwise be called church plants) are then formed around the teaching of these story sets.

Statistics are a challenge to gather for a movement that is unified behind the goal of replication and handing off leadership and skills so that nationals are genuinely independent. This is further exacerbated by the manner in which these organizations use their resources to support other ministries. For example, STS has formally conducted 80 OBS in 11 countries since they first began implementing them in 2009. Six of those OBS were conducted by the aforementioned local

evangelical denomination in Ethiopia. The amount of ministry flowing from those students as they go out and implement their training is nearly impossible to measure.

Each of the organizations represented in this chapter has its own distinct way of training and moving their method to the field. What one is struck by in discussions and interviews with their leaders is the remarkable similarity in their intense and diligent commitment to reaching oral learners for the gospel.

As oral strategies gain influence both among scholars in the field of missiology and on the mission field among the least reached, leaders will have to consider what comes after initial proclamation and discipleship. Newly evangelized regions, language groups, and/or church plants will require more biblical training. Will this necessitate a shift to literate methods, or can oral strategies be developed to give a second tier level of training that lies somewhere between initial proclamation and Bible college? The *Simply the Story* method of oral inductive Bible study and their development of OBS may effectively provide such an option.

Questions to Explore

- How do those in the orality movement plan to utilize the best of what is offered by the academic disciplines that are related to their efforts (such as theology, biblical studies, Christian education, and literary scholarship) to inform their missiological concerns and create a cooperative community that is mutually respectful and beneficial?
- How do those in the academic disciplines of theology, biblical studies, Christian education, etc., view their role in the Great Commission? This includes (1) their role as the gatekeepers of knowledge and training for pastors and missionaries who will be working with oral learners and/or those without access to the Bible, and (2) their support of missiological efforts to reach oral learners?
- How far do the goals of ION and the orality movement extend in terms of contextualized theological education? What are current effective models that go beyond initial evangelism and discipleship? At some point, will an integration of literate methods and oral strategies be necessary to establish a church for the long term in a people group, or is it possible to do so using entirely oral methods?

Chapter 10

Teaching the Mind, Training the Heart

Phillip R. Walker

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Abstract

For nearly a millennium, education has been moving further and further down the road of rationalistic reductionism. From scholasticism to the enlightenment to the modern university and seminary, education has moved away from developing a synergistic and holistic approach that focuses on both character and knowledge. This has led the seminary and Bible school down a path that rewards academic excellence over Christlike character (2 Pet. 1:5-11). Africa Theological Seminary (ATS) has spent two decades moving in this direction while becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the journey. Founded on the goal of discipling leaders who would disciple others (2 Tim. 2:2) while maintaining a commitment to theological excellence, the seminary found itself drifting away from its primary goal and aligning to the academic focus. ATS decided it was time to bring balance to theology and theopraxis to better align the seminary with its understanding of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Going Back to Go Forward

Africa Theological Seminary (ATS) was slow to appreciate the value of the orality movement. The seminary understood the need to equip learners with skills to communicate with oral cultures using storying, but slow in seeing the broader lesson. As the seminary became familiar with orality, there developed a convergence between our research and orality.

Orality provided a living window in what our research had uncovered about transformation. Transformation of the mind and transformation of the heart flow through supporting, but different paths. The heart pays attention to experience, real or vicarious (Cron 2012, Kindle 175). Storying (including all forms of oral communication) is the primary means for passing on culture and affecting the

heart. What the orality movement affirmed is that the process of storying is the highway to the heart (Chiang 2010, 5) and thus systemic transformation.

When Peter called the church to grow in godly virtues and knowledge (2 Pet. 1:5-7), he was calling them to experience a life touched and empowered by God within. His was not an academic lesson to learn, but the power of God to experience in and through their lives. This is very different from our current academic model with its focus on learning and knowledge. Jamie Smith notes in his book *Desiring the Kingdom* that we were not made by God to be academics, we were created to be lovers—of God and of one another (Matt. 22:37-39) (2009, 40-41). Our call is not to theology, but to the God of theology. Theology clarifies and explains the revelation of God in our lives. The encounter with the living Jesus must first affect the heart before it affects the mind.

Heart/Mind Divide

The brain appears to have two major processing centers that are both cooperative and competitive (McGilchrist 2009). They correspond roughly to the heart and the mind as used in scripture. Mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible, the heart is at the core of who we are (Keathley 2014). It is in the heart that our true selves reside (Prov. 4:23; Matt. 6:21, 12:34, 15:18). The “heart” operates primarily at the unconscious level providing guidance and direction through our life narrative (Siegel 2012, 11).

The mind has a more distinct and focused objective. The mind helps manipulate the world around us by developing models to enable us greater control (McGilchrist 2012). The mind, like the heart, must go through a process of transformation (Rom. 12:2) to ensure it aligns with the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

A problem lies with the growing power of the mind, which gives us the illusion of certainty and control. Ian McGilchrist sums it up this way: the mind’s “values are those of utility and pleasure . . . It does not understand the power of metaphor, through which alone meaning would come about . . . That is not its purpose . . .” (McGilchrist 2012, Kindle 421). He believes that the main purpose of the mind is to enable us to manipulate our environment. The mind believes that transformation follows the logical acquisition of knowledge: right beliefs equal right behavior. While this is not exactly wrong, it is definitely incomplete. While behavior follows beliefs, the opposite is even truer. Beliefs follow behavior (Gazzaniga 2012, 86); the heart is changed by its choices (Matt. 6:21).

The orality movement has opened a window to the traditional methods used for heart change. Theological educators have been wrestling and discussing what value there is in the orality movement for our institutions. Some have approached it as a pedagogical issue of learning style or technique. Others have wondered about the value learner preference between oral methods and literate methods. While these may be helpful, the greatest value is in understanding that the path to the heart travels through orality methods.

Theology, Theopraxis, Praxis, and Emergence

Secondary orality is the universal norm and it is not likely to change (Weaver 2008, 36). While academic study remains important, its delivery forms will change with the times. As the delivery of education changes, the seminary must remain true to its calling of discipleship and education. The seminary must find a way for theology and theopraxis to co-exist. Learning does not exist in a vacuum. It is critical that the seminary extends its influence into the hearts and homes of leaders through practical, godly practices that can be applied to church and ministry. This theology-theopraxis-praxis activates a feedback loop that reinforces theology and practice to change lives.

Spiritual transformation needs real-life context. Our academic approach, with a little practice in the disciplines, seldom has the long-term systemic results desired. Spiritual transformation is synergistic and is an emergent property within the context of life. This has led ATS to see its mission in terms of community impact. The addition of Business As Mission (BAM) to the curriculum, combined with practical help with its implementation within the church, has proven successful in extending the discipleship influence from the seminary to the church and into the community. This process then reinforces both theology and behavior as everyone sees the power of the gospel to affect the community.

Discipleship

The goals of the orality movement and theological education are both the same: to see men and women come to Christ and then grow in Christ-likeness as they fulfill God's call for their lives (Eph. 2:10, 2 Pet. 3:18). The two mandates of Matthew 22:37-39 and Matthew 28:19-20 form the essence of the call. The success of the orality movement reveals the weakness of theological education. As there are two major processing centers in our brains, transformation must follow two different pathways.

ATS has adopted a motto that reflects our intention about our processes: Train the Heart, Instruct the Mind, Empower the Hands (TIE). Pedagogy is constantly refining methods to instruct the mind, but it has lagged behind in developing Christ-like character. True transformation is a grace process. But grace follows obedience as the individual chooses to follow Christ (Rom. 8:29, 2 Cor. 3:18, 2 Pet. 1:5).

The great potential of orality is its focus on discipleship in the context of community. Community is the canvas on which transformation is painted. Transformation is not a subject, a set process of character and values, but an emergent property of the heart. Trying to facilitate spiritual transformation through understanding various subjects and topics like character, ethics, and values is like trying to understand the taste of a delicious stew by sampling the various ingredients that go into it.

A program or a linear process can never achieve discipleship; it must become a lifestyle where the white space between courses takes on ever-greater importance. Where the orality movement naturally engages people in their everyday lives, the seminary works in an artificial environment that has little direct contact with the real world. The educational learner asks, “What do I need to know?” Orality asks, “What do I need to do?”

We are not dealing primarily with orality preferences, but mind/heart choices. The Majority World lives life where secondary orality is central. It is a place where stories, songs, dance, and drama train the heart, while informing the mind (Deut. 6:4-9). It has been the way of cultures since time began, the way God has designed us to align our heart, not just our minds, to the real world.

“Spiritual formation, without regard to any specifically religious context or tradition, is the process by which the human spirit or will is given a definite ‘form’ or character” (Willard 2002, Kindle 169-172). The process of formation is the same: Frequency+Feedback+Intensity+Time (FFIT). We become whatever we do over a long period, do frequently, do with passion, and receive feedback in the process (Gladwell 2008, 40). The difference is the focus and the power used in the process.

Change

For the past 20 years ATS has seen an ever-greater commitment to academic excellence while drifting in its commitment to intentional discipleship. ATS has

been working on a plan to fill in the “white spaces” of the learner’s experience to balance theology, theopraxis, and praxis. Discipleship must regain primacy over information; theology must find expression in theopraxis. The following are some steps ATS has taken to adjust the focus:

1. **The order of the towel.** The first commencement speaker challenged ATS with the “order of the towel.” The seminary presents each graduate with a towel first, before the degree, to symbolize the call to servanthood.
2. **Washing of dishes.** In the beginning of ATS, everyone, including faculty and administration, washed their own dishes after lunch. This was a practical necessity that became symbolic of servanthood.
3. **Learner/facilitator commitment to the seminary’s mission, values and objectives.** In the first class meeting, learners and facilitators explain how they plan on living out the values and objectives of the seminary.
4. **20% application.** ATS courses are done on a modular basis with learners attending classes three times a year. Every course has a requirement that 20 percent of the course is a practical application in their respective ministries.
5. **Practicum.** In their last year learners are required to develop a capstone project in their ministry. During the period, one or more faculty visits the ministry in order to interview participants and see the implementation firsthand.
6. **Mentoring.** While on campus, learners participate in small group mentoring weekly guided by a faculty member.
7. **Beginning this year learners will begin a weekly inductive Bible study where one story a week will be learned and discussed.** The goal is to have at least 60 stories committed to memory by graduation.
8. **Corporate reading.** Beginning last year, the seminary launched a program of all staff, faculty, and learners reading the same devotional daily.
9. **Chapel.** There are two chapels a week, one for all members of the seminary community and a second one for the cohorts. The latter is run and led by the

learners. Speakers are encouraged to use either the corporate devotionals or the stories they are learning as the basis for sharing.

10. **Classroom integration.** The seminary will purchase *Teaching and Christian Practices* edited by David I. Smith and James K.A. Smith, for faculty. This is a book describing how teachers at a Christian university integrate theopraxis into a variety of courses.
11. **Less is more.** Faculty will be encouraged to adopt the 25/25 rule. This requires the facilitator to balance 25 minutes of teaching with 25 minutes of integration for every academic hour taught.
12. **Tea time.** Our learners have come from over 100 denominations. For many, this is the first time to be in a safe environment with those from other ministries and denominations. As self-organizing adults, they set up their own sports activities and work together on outreach projects apart from the seminary.
13. **Business As Mission (BAM).** The seminary has launched a BAM program as part of its curriculum and service. There is a basic introduction course and a Training the Trainer course directly linked to the seminary. Currently, ATS is conducting a pilot project with specific alumni to implement these within the church and their communities.
14. **Alumni follow through.** In addition to #13 above, ATS sponsors seminars and conferences target the 900 graduate alumni. The seminary believes its measure of success is based on the success of the graduates to effect change in their communities, not simply those who graduate.
15. **Course facilitators must meet the dual criteria of academics and commitment to discipleship.**
16. **The seminary reviews its commitment to the mission and values each term with each cohort.**

Conclusion

The mind and heart learn differently. The mind learns through cognitive input that is processed and regurgitated consciously. While the mind is taught

consciously, the heart, which is the seat of who we are, must be trained. Traditional forms such as stories, parables, songs, drama, etc. form the vehicles for training. While the conscious mind chooses what to learn, the unconscious heart absorbs everything and seeks to integrate it into a life narrative that guides much of our behavior (Gazzaniga 2012, 74). The seminary's *laissez faire* approach to training the heart has led to theological correctness without a corresponding strength of Christian character.

The orality movement has surfaced the amazing reality that (1) literacy is not essential for spiritual growth, (2) hearts are affected by stories more than by theological deduction, and (3) the context of community for social learning is critical for transformation. Our ATS learners are already pastors and leaders (we do not train for the ministry, but in the ministry) who have grown up listening to the stories of their cultures. But the media is replacing the aunties and uncles around the campfire as the purveyor of a new culture and new stories. Hollywood, Bollywood, Nollywood, and Cairo are telling the stories that are becoming the foundation for both behavior and belief in the new world. It is time for the seminary to move from the ivory tower of educating the mind to rebalance the scales by focusing on the heart.

The great strength of the orality movement is the life change of its practitioners within their respective communities. The great strength of theological education is its ability to explain the work and scope of God in human history. There is transformative power when the two are balanced.

Chapter 11

Will Our Message “Stick?” Assessing a Dominant Preference for Orality for Education and Training

Charles Madinger

Chuck Madinger served 27 years in vocational ministry, and now works with missions, universities, and seminaries around the world. He launched three organizations for reaching the Oral Majority, and is completing a Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky to lead a post-baccalaureate program in Oral Instructional Communication.

In an age fascinated with athletics, sports, and entertainment, commentators and analysts train our eyes and minds to examine players from multiple perspectives. Watch for their range of motion when pitching or striking a ball. Does the basketball release from the exact position with wrist motion? Does the goalie lunge, the swimmer extend, the diver tuck, the golfer rotate, or the runner stride to their best potential? Then, we evaluate the whole performance... did they score the most (or least) points, make the best time, and defeat all other opponents; and what is their record in competition?

We need to take that same eye and mindset to our instruction and communication strategies. *How do we assess learners to maximize their potential for thinking, valuing a concept, and their ability to contextually put it into practice?* Not everyone learns or deals with new information the same. We're not just talking about our historic references to learning "domains" (visual, audio, and kinesthetic or even cognitive, affective, and behavioral).

In this chapter, we will consider six pieces of Assessing Orality Preference (AOP). These chapters reverberate with a movement to promote orality and the training needs of oral tradition cultures and oral-preference learners. However, this process demands an inward reflection on how we approach learning. Each author excels in their area and poses important questions for the mission and theological education.

The two related issues are first, "How do we assess this *preference*?" Second, "How do we assess and evaluate the *learning process and performance* of those with high orality preferences?" Pragmatically, these two questions determine a

degree of our impact as mission leaders or theological educators. This particular chapter addresses the first question, and the review of the Assessing Orality Preference articles addresses the second. As far as our effectively educating and training leaders goes, everything hangs in the balance.

By not dealing with these questions, we simply keep on producing graduates, whether in formal or informal education and training, who can textualize their “learning” (write it for tests, papers, and projects), yet we limit their fruitfulness as they labor for kingdom transformation of their oral tradition cultures. Using our sports analogy, it’s like giving soccer players an American football and asking them to kick it accurately to one another for a goal, giving a golfer a tennis ball, or a runner snowshoes. Could they play their game? Sure they could, but not to their potential. Yet, we do the same thing by forcing oral learners to dominantly use the tools of textuality.

Assessing Oral Preference

Assessment is not just about determining how to assign grades to student learning; it looks at a set of processes designed to improve, demonstrate, and inquire about student learning (Mentkowski 1999). When it comes to our particular challenge in the orality movement, we ask, *How do oral preference populations draw upon their patterns of communication and learning developed at an early age? How do they process information in different ways and means and package it differently than do textual preference learners and teachers? How do we figure out what teaching methods to use to connect them with truths that transform? Or on the other hand, do we keep teaching and working the way we were taught and expect those with strong orality preferences to just “get it?”*

Over the past 15 years, several people have committed thought and effort to develop some kind of a scale that can capture the learning preferences for oral learners (such as Jim Slack, Lynn Abney, and Jay Moon). Each of these attempts at quantifying and assessing this kind of preference has taken us closer to an orality movement that could stand on actual research and apply the principles of orality to nearly every field.

In doing so, they have all run into the same objective wall: quantifying the characteristics of textuality and orality. Inherently, we know the difference and put labels on those differences. But we need more than that. We need solid conceptualization (theory) of orality and well-documented characteristics of the range of orality to textuality orientation.

Solid Theoretical Grounding

First, assessing an orality dominance needs more than anecdotal allusions to the characteristics of orality and textuality.¹ We need research and practice grounded in solid theory—some set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of orality by specifying relations among the variables attempting to explain and (or) predict what orality is and does (Kerlinger 1986). This is not to say that grounding our observations and assumptions in scripture is not important; it is. But if orality is an observable phenomenon that clearly is learned and passed along, it can, like all other disciplines, describe the “why” and “how’s” that consistently demonstrate those realities.

In its primary sense, orality is defined as the use of the spoken word to formulate, send, receive, and understand messages (Madinger 2013). On a deeper level, orality is a significant *learned framework for interpreting the world around us*. This becomes especially clear when observing primary oral cultures that function completely outside the touch of textuality that think of and express themselves through narrative discourse (Ong 1982). Ong’s *secondary orality* describes cultures that move from primary orality to the technologizing of the word. If accurate, it implies that individuals and cultures can move from being highly oral to highly textual or highly literate as James Slack first diagramed it for us. They adapt to a new orientation while retaining their orality at a much deeper and subtle level.

In further defining orality, its boundaries can be determined with the criterion of a logical test, like a syllogism (Dubin 1978, Wallendorf and Reilly 1983):

- 1) *A country or culture of origin determines the framework for understanding the world.*
- 2) Orality is a significant factor in the framework of how people understand the world.
- 3) Orality is a function of one’s country or culture of origin (Hofstede 1983).

If the framework of orality is established through the context produced by one’s culture of origin, all other possibilities of holding an orality preference must be related in some way to that culture of origin (education, language, order, etc.).

Orality is first embedded in social cognitive development. It relates to how a person learns to think and then builds a framework through which he or she can order the world with the assistance of those around him or her during early

stages of language learning. Lev Vygotsky (1962) describes the acquisition of language and concept formation as a function of interacting in a social and cultural environment. This *culture-laden activity* determines the filters through which a person interacts with the world intellectually and socially (Heibert 1999).

Children developing in the framework of textuality often learn free play with small building blocks. What do you see on those blocks? Letters and numbers. Is a child playing by him or herself or with others? The stories he or she hears are usually read from a book, a book with pictures, but a book nonetheless. We even point to the words as we read. In the world of orality, a mother not only tells stories—often without the aid of a book—but sings the story as well. In fact, almost every developmentally important lesson for life gets turned into a story or song. Thus, the framework grows.

Walter Fisher (1980) views this development as a kind of psychological transformation focused on cognition and intelligence and treats cognitive development as the construction of hierarchically ordered collections of specific skills. In other words, one skill builds on the next and provides the foundation of all those to come after it. As it pertains to orality, a person may learn a new frame of reference (textuality) in the same way he or she learns any other cognitive process, but orality remains the framework into which other frameworks must be syncretized. Therefore, we can see why our international students from oral-tradition cultures can pass our tests, write theses, and “earn” our credentials.

So then, *how do we design our strategies and instruction to match the level of orality preference?* Those individuals or groups scoring high in orality require interacting with the subject matter for learning in the obvious ways ION leaders have been preaching for years—narrative, song, dance, proverbs, etc. But since *orality and textuality are not antitheses, but function as a continuum*, we also must heed the Aristotelian adage “memory is the scribe of the soul.” It’s only a matter of degree how we technologize the word (read and write), but that technologizing takes a range of intentionality and skill for those who see the need to do it.

Research to Confirm Orality Characteristics of the Framework

For more than 30 years, scholars and workers in the field have attempted to classify, categorize, and typify the characteristics of orality. But in doing so, much of the discussion given to describing the characteristics of the orality framework uses anecdotal evidence rather than well-tested and generalizable principles and practices.

Granted, anecdotal evidence makes sense, but very little of it has been validated through the related academic disciplines of anthropology, sociology linguistics, cognitive psychology, etc. that demonstrate how God made us as communicators and learners. Now the time has come for the next wave of scholarship to hypothesize and “prove” that which we observe across multiple populations so that we can more confidently and accurately integrate the disciplines of orality into our strategies and instruction.

William Parker looked at these characteristics as an African American educator and he nailed it. His typologies and characteristics came from years of working with young black students in the U.S. asking why they had so many troubles with learning in our schools. It led him to the historic roots of the Euro and Afro cultures and how their differing life orientations explained the academic struggles of so many black students in America. They struggled to demonstrate the same kinds of competencies demanded by standardized tests and the assessment processes designed by and for a lettered culture.

In contrast, he clarified the bias of standardized tests, and why lettered culture students and schools stood in a position of advantage. His central characteristics admittedly lacked the same empirical evidence as our later attempts, but he gave us some specific categories to begin a more systematic effort to describe them and demonstrate how they are lived out (Figure 1). They are not polar opposites, but function on a polar spectrum that showed distinct orientations.

LETTERED CULTURES		ORAL CULTURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary • Outline • Information archived In writing • Memorize what is read 	COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral • Storyline • Information stored by story, song, etc. • Memorize what is heard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional 	LIFESTYLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualism • Time and Music: Measured, metered and enjoyed 	TIME AND SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized Groups • Time & Music: An event to be experienced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deferred 	GRATIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear 	LIFE PERSPECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually Oriented • Values the information 	LEARNING PATTERNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Oriented • Values the source of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word is not the “thing” 	LEXICON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word is the “thing”

Figure 1. Adapted from: William C. Parker (1980) and James Slack (2003)

Jim Slack talked about it as an anthropologist and theologian. Jay Moon and Lynne Abney² talked about it from the missionary and professorial point of view of applying it in our classroom and field experiences. The strength of their contributions comes from common sense, praxis, and the issues Ong raised from the fields of anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Moon's categories prove quite helpful when considering the disparity of learning strategies and assessment for oral learners enrolled in formal and informal theological education. At the least, his research warns of a significant shift toward orality preference in the 21st century. The limitation of their work is that the categories have not been validated by research, and the instruments they developed cannot deliver what they hoped to demonstrate.³

Oral vs. Print Learning Preferences

Category	Oral Learners' Preference	Print Learners' Preference
Dialogue	Learn mostly in dialogue with others, often communicate in groups	Learn mostly alone, often communicate one to 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

Now the time has come to take their foundational work and craft an orality preference scale that measures the degree of orality preference. It might quantify the underlying framework by which oral peoples not only understand their world, but can also connect, communicate, and educate with others sharing that same framework.

The Orality Preference Scale⁴ (OPS), shaped at this Houston Baptist University event, is an attempt at building an instrument that meets the criteria of survey design established by researchers in the social sciences (Bradburn, Sudman, and Wansink 2004; DeVellis 2011). It is one-dimensional in that it allows the participant to understand his or her *degree of orality preference* that percolates from his or her developmental framework. Previous efforts attempted to show direction of textuality and orality within the same tool, but that requires far too many factors to analyze.

If one scores high in orality, it translates into an interpretation that his or her textuality framework is low, but it is not measuring textuality itself. It also suggests that depending on the degree of high orality preference to which our population moves, we must incorporate more oral instructional methods and fewer textual.

For the purpose at this consultation, the OPS attempts to measure five characteristics of orality:

1. **Communicational processing.** How narrative and its variants become a conduit for information and truths. This includes proverbs, folktales, and other means of transmission.
2. **Cognitive processing.** How we acquire knowledge, learn, and use memory.
3. **Social processing.** Individual to collective processing.
4. **Temporal processing.** How we view time and space, the kinds of music and dance, and even a reference of how we use narrative.
5. **Technological processing.** What forms are preferred for “technologizing the word:” concrete to abstract; archiving information in narrative and song to the permanency of text, etc.

These processes reflect our missional definition of orality: the way an oral preference population receives, processes, remembers, and passes on information and truth. They also reflect the seven descriptive disciplines of orality as we plan and implement our programs or courses of study.

Our hope is that we can produce several iterations of the scale that target multiple populations. The version produced for Houston builds on the previous attempts that look at adults with some degree of formal education, and we hope it can reveal an orality preference even by those living in and with a textuality framework. They learned textual ways and means to one degree or another but retain an orality framework at a much deeper level. This will be quickly translated into multiple languages and provide a relatively quick assessment for those training the next generations of leaders. A second version will use a bit simpler vocabulary and encompass a more general population that might well include those with minimal literacy skills or practice.

The bottom-line application boils down to this: *How do we measure a person's degree of orality preference? How can we best design our education, training, and strategies when working among oral tradition cultures or those individuals and groups that simply prefer learning through oral ways and means?*

As this chapter goes to print I am just completing a two-day workshop in Zambia that used radio-drama formatted content (*Holding Esther*) to train 100 caretakers of exploited orphans. Everything about the workshop was built on the principles of orality and capitalized on the nature of this oral tradition culture. They listened to each episode of the drama twice: the first time to identify the characters, plot, and what they might learn about good and bad caretakers. The second time they listened to pick out the content matching the learning goals.

They sat in groups to discuss it, took their tea together under a tree, talked about it, and came back to the large group. Not only did they share all the things embedded in the drama, they also made profound insights on how to improve the care of children in their charge. By the second day, a drama group gave a live presentation of the radio-drama, others performed their poetry and prose, and two men sang a song they “composed” that brought down the house. These servants all ranged in age and education, but when asked they communicated one universal message: “I learned more in this kind of training (narrative based) than anything I’ve ever done.”

These students could be in your classroom, your Bible school, your conference, or part of the church-planting leadership team you assembled. Do you know how

they really prefer to receive and process what you want them to know, feel, or do, and how they might most naturally demonstrate their competencies? Will they naturally and virally pass on important truths that transform? Take the test. Give the test. Assess them on their terms. Adapt to *them*.

¹Notice that in this chapter and several others that we moved away from comparing an oral perspective to a *literate* perspective. *Orality is NOT about literacy, pre-literacy*, or the need to teach literacy. It is about how most of the world receives, processes, remembers, and passes on information whether or not they can read or write. Literacy is a learnable skill. Textuality is an orientation—a hardwired framework.

²Lynne spent years working among oral cultures in North Africa. Jay spent ten years in Ghana, West Africa, and since then has taught in U.S. seminaries.

³If we claim to measure “learning preference,” we must somehow provide evidence that learning actually takes place by contrasting oral or textual ways and means. The questions asked should also measure the specific characteristics of orality and ask only one preference.

⁴The Orality Preference Scale can be taken online through the University of Kentucky College of Communication access to a Qualtrics survey. You may obtain a full electronic version by request (c.madinger@uky.edu) or at www.globalimpactmissions.org. If administering the survey to a group of people or even for personal edification, please scan your complete hard-copy document and send it to the same address to expand the data set.

Chapter 12

A Case Study of Women and Widows as It Relates to Orality and How to Work with Them

Beatrice Kadangs

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Abstract

This chapter is an Assessment of Orality Preference as it relates to women and widows and how to work with them. The changes being witnessed in global Christianity today have brought about the necessity to evaluate the effectiveness of the ways we do theological education among women. Theological education in Africa is currently facing a number of challenges and those tasked to develop its curricula, programs, institutions, and methodologies are compelled to critically reflect on the relevance of the language and models used.

A brief historical background about the introduction of a Western form of education in Nigeria would help put into perspective the topic of our discussion.

The Western style of education was introduced into the country by Christian missionaries just before the middle of the 19th century. For about four decades after that initial date, both the nature and main thrust of education, and especially language education in the country, were completely left to missionaries (Taiwo, 1980; Fafunwa, 1974). The missionaries then believed that for good understanding, comprehension, and propagation of the Christian faith to take place, first, the African child was best taught in his native language (Hair, 1967), and, second, the interests of Christianity would best be served by actually propagating the Christian religion in indigenous languages. Thus, the teaching and learning of indigenous languages received much genuine attention in those early days of Western type education in the country.

But not everybody liked the results of such a system of education because they were not quite suited for the job market. The need back then was for people with training in English rather than in the indigenous languages (Taiwo, 1980). From the early 1980s the government began to gradually intervene in education

with the goal to accord English a lot more prominence. Over time, that policy succeeded so well that interest in language education shifted substantially away from the indigenous languages towards English.

After the attainment of political independence in 1960, the wisdom of giving English so much importance in government and education also gradually began to be questioned. Some were concerned that most people in the country did not understand English well enough—nor could they communicate effectively in English. Therefore, more effort was put into teaching the major indigenous languages in order to enable these languages to serve as an alternative to English as official means of communication in government and business (Osaji, 1979).

Purpose of Education and the Preference for Orality

Education is meant to encourage wholesome development of an individual through active participation in the activities of a social group. Education should be viewed as a lifelong process through which individuals acquire relevant skills and knowledge that enable them to be useful to themselves and their society (Fordham, 1993). Therefore, education should be seen as:

The aggregate of all the processes by which an individual develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he or she lives . . . it is a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge, either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both. When evaluating any educational system, one must determine the extent to which it is meeting the needs of a particular group or society at any given time. (Fafunwa, 1971)

Thus, the language and methods used in education are very critical in achieving the expected, desired outcome. Linguists and anthropologists believe that a language is a vehicle for a people's culture and a means of maintaining and indefinitely preserving that culture. Indigenous languages are also a veritable and practical means of communication which is needed for effective integration.

However, there is one major problem that oral or language education has had is due in part to the misunderstanding of the whole concept:

For example, *orality* is not the opposite of *literacy*, and yet many debates about orality are rooted in oppositional values . . . In addition, orality

was not “replaced” by literacy: Orality is permanent—we have always and will continue to always use human speech arts in our various forms of communication . . . (Middleton, 2009)

Oral education is also not the absence of writing. “Writing is not necessarily the mirror-image and destroyer of orality, but reacts or interacts with oral communication in a variety of ways” (Rosalind Thomas, 1992).

With this misunderstanding, oral education was perceived as “primitive” in many sectors and thus discarded. But then, the adopted formal system was soon to realize that it was not meeting the desired needs of enabling women to contribute adequately to life because there was a disconnect between the content and context of the learners culturally.

Theological education has also followed the same system so that the “teaching of theology in Africa continues to be a perpetuation of Western theological models. The biggest problem is the hermeneutical gap—a gulf between orthodoxy and orthopraxis and a problem to integrate doctrines into the thought system of the African recipients” (Galgalo 2004).

There is a conflict between the formal system and the African cultural system and values in methodology and practical application. But it is of little comfort to possess the necessary theoretical knowledge regarding sound doctrine when such knowledge cannot be brought to bear on our worship, life, faith, and everyday living. Language barriers and methodology are among the biggest obstacles for women within this context.

The concept of God provides one area of great commonality in African life. An African theologian asserts that “there seems to be an inter-religious phenomenon at work which impinges upon the daily lives of Africans emanating from their culture, history, world views, and spiritual aspirations.” He argues that “though there is no written record (as in the case of the Jewish people), God’s dealings with the African people are recorded nevertheless in living form—oral communication, rituals, symbols, ceremonies, and community faith” (Mbitu, 1980). Consequently, this concept needs to be harnessed as the following proposals:

- **Use oral communication patterns which allow the whole community to hear clearly in their mother tongue, understand, respond, and reproduce the**

message of the gospel. Literate church leaders and their missionaries should master new ways of preaching and teaching. *Effective ministries among those with an oral learning preference will use communication forms already in place within their own culture.* If the gospel is to spread freely and rapidly within an unreached people group, strategists working in that group must do their best to avoid methodology that hinders oral peoples from winning and discipling their families, friends, and others. Training models will be most effective when they take orality into consideration. Churches will then begin to see training and new leaders emerge from within the oral peoples. These leaders will facilitate church-planting movements to rapidly disciple and equip leaders for the new churches as leaders are raised up by the Holy Spirit.

- **Avoid syncretism by making disciples of oral learners using oral means.** If the Church is going to avoid syncretism, then the gospel needs to be communicated in the mother tongue of the people we are trying to reach. Both evangelistic as well as discipleship materials cannot be generic but will need to be developed with the worldview of the target people. *The stories chosen and the manner in which they are communicated will have to transform the worldview of those who are seeing or hearing the stories.* A recorded oral Bible will help serve as a standard to ensure the transmission of the stories remains accurate. These methods will help ensure the Church remains true to the historic beliefs of Christianity and does not mix traditional beliefs in their doctrines or practices.

Interaction with Gweimen Centre Women and Widows

I met with 28 widows from the Gweimen Centre Kwoi. The meeting was very informal. During the interaction, we talked about their church life—what their thoughts are about Sunday school, Bible studies, fellowships, and Sunday services. Their responses are as follows:

- They understand the Bible better when the pastor reads and interprets than when they read it themselves.
- A drama or a play before the pastor preaches helps clarify and simplify the message.
- Bible study is better understood when it is done through storytelling.
- Question-and-answer methods help them to understand the lessons better.

- They understand preaching better when the pastor gives illustrations and/or stories that are familiar.
- They understand better when preaching is done in the local dialect.
- Home or zonal fellowships help them better because the groups are usually small and every member gets to contribute and share her story/experience(s).
- They enjoy and benefit from teachings that are based on practical spiritual work and prayer.

Observations

- There is a presupposed subservient role assigned to women by the culture, society, and the church that is inhibiting effective learning.
- Our theological schools admit very few women who are privileged to undergo the same training with their male counterparts. However, many are denied the opportunity to serve after their training.
- There is a perceived understanding that education is meant to encourage a wholesome development of an individual through participation in the activities of a social group (in this case, the church) and the adopted system has placed restrictions on women.
- Education (even theological) is often viewed only from the perspective of a formal setting and not from a non-formal one. This is evident from the curriculum of our Bible studies materials, which are “too factual and westernized.” Illustrations are too abstract and out of context.
- The perception of a woman being “only” a helpmate, a supportive arm to her husband in ministry, or as only being at home, bearing children, raising her family, cooking meals, and ministering to the needs of her husband must be discarded.
- The imbalance between men’s and women’s education is one of the causes of the present challenges being faced, but given the necessary orientation and incentives, women will contribute immensely to contextual theological

education in the church. This substantiates the principle that says, “If you educate a man, you are educating an individual, but if you educate a woman, you are educating a family, a nation.”

Challenges

- Women constitute more than half of the population in our churches, and among them are ever-increasing widows. Therefore, great emphasis must be placed on their spiritual formation.
- Are Bible study curriculums relevant to the needs of the women and widows in our congregations?
- Contextual realities that should receive urgent attention for proper integration are poverty, social inequality, injustice against women (and especially widows), hunger, and disease (especially HIV and AIDS).

Chapter 13

Leadership Development of Oral Learners: A Case Study of Operation Agape Using BILD Resources

Stephen Kemp

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Leadership development is still the desperate need of so many leaders of churches, church networks, and church-planting organizations. It has been nearly a decade since the publication of *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, and many efforts have been made in this regard, yet God still seems to be moving faster than we can keep up with our leadership development efforts, particularly in non-literate contexts.

BILD International is providing high-quality theological education for the leadership development of oral learners all over the world. This case study focuses on Operation Agape's use of BILD resources to support both formal leadership development with degree programs of the Antioch School of Church Planting and Leadership Development (AS) and informal leadership development with programs of the BILD Institute. Oral learning is a crucial dimension of all levels of OA training programs.

Operation Agape (OA) is a network of missions that, through strategic partnerships, aim to help finish the task of the Great Commission (operationagape.com). The main areas of ministry for OA are establishing churches, equipping leaders, and empowering the poor. It was birthed as a prayer movement, grew into a saturation evangelism initiative with an aim to reach the least reached, and now includes networking of established churches. OA facilitates leadership development for the leaders of these churches, church networks, and affiliated ministries.

BILD is a philosophy, curriculum, and network. The philosophy is summarized in the phrase "the Way of Christ and His Apostles," which means commitment

to the Pauline Cycle of mission work taught by Luke in Acts, recognition of Paul's letters as tools for establishing churches, devotion to the apostles' teaching (didache), and training leaders according to the Paul/Timothy model of entrusting sound doctrine to faithful men. The curriculum is a complete system with materials and processes for the development of all types of leaders (through programs of the BILD Institute and Antioch School). BILD's network includes thousands of churches, hundreds of church networks, and dozens of indigenous church-planting missions.

Formal Leadership Development with the Antioch School

We are using the term "formal" to describe the leadership development programs of the Antioch School because formal is a term often associated with degree programs. Technically, we think it is more accurate to use the term "academic" because although the Antioch School is accredited and degree-granting, its programs are designed to use non-formal, church-based theological education rather than the formal schooling paradigm. Non-formal puts the emphasis on the intentional design of the learning process and seriousness on assessment of outcomes.

Composition of Cohorts

Operation Agape has implemented its Antioch School program in a multi-level manner according to its own organizational structures. The executive and national leadership team of OA is enrolled together as a cohort in a Doctor of Ministry program. Each leader is actively involved in support of regional and local cohorts with students enrolled in Master of Ministry and Bachelor of Ministry programs. And each leader is actively involved in support of a local cohort using BILD Institute programs (see more below).

It is important to note that these cohorts are not formed primarily around the academic interests of students. It is not BILD or its Antioch School that forms the cohorts. Rather, the cohorts are recognized to exist already within the organizational structures of Operation Agape and its partners. Thus, leadership development is being integrated into community that already exists and is fully engaged in ministry together. Although enrolled in academic programs, the learning community is much more than merely academic.

Ordered Learning Process

The ordered learning process of Antioch School programs using BILD resources is fundamentally an oral learning process. Although BILD is known for the high

quality of its publications, they are not primarily designed for use as traditional training materials by literate people. It could be said that BILD publications help literate people in Antioch School degree programs to function as oral learners.

BILD's *Leadership Series* courses are the backbone of the Antioch School curriculum. The *Leadership Series* courses have extensive theological readers (relevant articles and chapters from experts), but the courses are not intended to transmit this content to students and students are not tested over the content. When a cohort meets, it is not to acquire the content of the theological reader, but to use the content to stimulate perspective and enrich participation in the learning processes of the course, namely the building of ministry strategy that is aligned with biblical teaching.

Each meeting of the cohort is guided by carefully-designed units and issues with discussion questions which allow the cohort to engage in a community-based experience led by someone who is already a leader in the community. The project assignments allow the cohort to learn by putting into practice what they are learning. Further, as members of the cohort are also teaching the course to their own cohorts, the learning process is transferred to the next level of the organization's structure.

If BILD's *Leadership Series* courses are the backbone, then BILD's *Personal Development Assessments* are the heart of the Antioch School curriculum. These assessment forms are designed to facilitate biblically comprehensive mentoring. Although presented as forms, they are really tools to give points of reference for personal mentoring. For instance, the *Becoming Established Assessment* provides a list of all the things that Paul writes in his letters about what it means for one to be established in his or her faith. The *Life and Ministry Assessment* provides a list of all the things that Paul writes in his letters about what it means to be qualified for ministry leadership. The forms are merely tools to stimulate mentoring and record assessment that primarily takes place in personal conversations.

Informal Leadership Development with the BILD Institute

We are using the term "informal" to describe the leadership development programs of the BILD Institute because informal is a term often associated with non-degree-granting programs. Technically, we think it is more accurate to use the term "grassroots" because the BILD Institute's programs are designed to use non-formal, church-based theological education on a large scale, but much more basic level.

Composition of Cohorts

Operation Agape has implemented its BILD Institute program again in a multilevel manner according to its own organizational structures. Specifically, OA has tried to implement basic training for all church planters, local church leaders, and emerging church planters and local church leaders. Cohorts of students in BILD Institute programs are the natural groupings of leaders and emerging leaders within churches, church networks, and church-planting organizations who partner with OA.

An illustration is provided by a member of the OA team who is also a student in the Antioch School. In addition to her own studies using BILD's *Leadership Series* courses, she uses BILD's *First Principles* to train women leaders of churches throughout Jammu, Kashmir, and Punjab (India). One of these is a leader of a slum church in Ludhiana (Punjab, India) who simply says, "Whatever I learn, I teach to illiterate sisters."

Ordered Learning Process

The ordered learning process of BILD Institute programs is fundamentally an oral learning process. BILD's *First Principles* courses are the backbone of the BILD Institute curriculum. Again, although BILD is known for the high quality of its publications, they are not primarily designed for use as traditional training materials by literate people. The *First Principles* courses help both literate and non-literate people in BILD Institute programs to function as oral learners.

The *First Principles* courses, like *Leadership Series* courses, have a "Consult the Scholars" section where written contributions of experts are provided. However, these written contributions are not accessible only to literate people. If a member of the cohort or friend of the learner can read, then these sections can be read. Or a recording can be made so that the written material can be provided to non-literate people. This process allows for explanation or addition of other relevant material to be added. Further, it often allows for translation and contextualization for the members of a particular cohort.

Again, like *Leadership Series* courses, the *First Principles* courses are not intended to be transmission of content, but engagement in processes that God intended for the development of leadership teams. The content of the "Consult the Scholars" section is not necessarily content to be transmitted, but content to stimulate perspective and enrich participation in the learning processes of the course, namely the establishing of believers and the equipping of leaders to establish believers and build strong churches.

Each meeting of the cohort is guided by carefully-designed sessions with discussion questions related to foundational biblical passages and issues regarding the significance of the teaching of those passages. Again, the discussions and the “Apply the Principles” exercises are the essence of a community-based learning process led by someone who is already a leader in the community.

It is possible for the entire learning process to be conducted in an oral manner. The *First Principles* as a leadership development tool are transferable by nature if leaders are not just trained in the content, but also trained and expected to use the tool to train others. To illustrate, let us return to the woman in Ludhiana. After she is interviewed about her learning, she interviews one of the 20 women she has trained. Both provide biblically accurate statements of the proclamation of the gospel, but they are not identical. It is clear that both women understand the content of the gospel, but are able to articulate it in their own words.

Even assessment of accomplishment of the objectives of the *First Principles* course can be done in a non-literate manner. Evidence of accomplishment can be recognized by the cohort leader during the cohort discussions or through specific oral review intended to assess competencies of the learner. Once the leader is familiar with the material and objectives (as listed in the BILD Institute portfolio), it is a fairly simple process to take learners through the learning process and to assess their accomplishments.

Changes in Methodology

Important changes in methodology are necessary to provide Antioch School and BILD Institute programs. For instance, non-formal approaches to education need to be designed carefully with the development of learners and assessment of competencies in mind. It is not sufficient for learners merely to “go through courses,” but they need to go through developmental processes. Further, it cannot be assumed that someone has learned just because he or she has attended classes or even repeated the correct content, but he or she must be given rigorous assessment of actual evidence of competencies.

Portfolio assessment is uncommon to most learners (and teachers). It takes care in development of resources and implementation of processes so that reliance may be given to actual artifacts and attestations of competency. Portfolio transcripts may be used to capture the content of the assessment and help organizational leaders see the current status of the development of their leaders. In non-literate

contexts, when assessment is being made by non-literate leaders of non-literate learners, a literate member of the organization may need to help record the assessment for purposes of organizational tracking.

Most importantly, though, is the composition of the cohorts. Rather than starting with the educational institution and gathering those who are interested into cohorts or classes, Antioch School and BILD Institute cohorts are formed according to the natural organizational structure of the churches, church networks, and church-planting organizations. This positions the authority and responsibility for development within ecclesiastical, not just educational structures.

Future Plans

Many of the plans for the future simply relate to the ongoing implementation and support of the exponential growth of non-formal, church-based theological education. For instance, as the programs grow in scale, they are likely to increase the most in the areas with the most non-literate learners.

Thus, systems need to be established for training and tracking learning of non-literates at an even larger scale, such as the creation of centers where non-literate leaders can provide their assessment of non-literate learners so that the information can be tracked by the leaders of the church network or church-planting organization. Further, we envision granting Antioch School degrees to non-literate learners who are able to function at a high academic level, but whose work will all be done orally. This may be accomplished by the transcription of oral demonstrations and/or extensive attestation of their competencies.

Questions to Explore

Although not necessarily directly related to this case study, there are several questions that we would do well to explore:

1. **Story vs. discussion.** Most of the efforts to train oral learners have focused on the use of stories. To oversimplify, one person helping one or more other people to be able to tell the right stories. However, it seems that community discussion about the meaning of the stories is crucial in oral culture. How sufficiently are community-based discussions being used alongside the transmission of stories?
2. **Curriculum base.** Practically, how are the stories being selected for the curriculum? How do we know when we have enough? How do we know

if we are picking the correct stories? At a deeper level, what guides in the selection of stories (or anything) for the curriculum? Are we being careful to fit particular doctrinal statements or church traditions? Who has done the fresh, careful analysis of the New Testament to provide the biblical base so that we can be sure that our curriculum fits “the teaching” (didache) that the apostles mention? Are we making too many assumptions that certain categorization of theology and Christian living is sufficient?

3. **Epistles vs. narrative.** The story emphasis tends to lead us to narrative texts like the Gospels and away from the letters, even away from the narrative portions of the letters. How does this fit with the fact that the early church meetings were essentially gatherings to hear and implement what was written in the letters and Gospels (which themselves probably were written with the letters in mind)? How can we make better use of the letters in our curriculum for oral learners?

Chapter 14

Fruitful Labor: Assessment and Global Implications for Theological Education in Oral Contexts

Mark M. Overstreet

Mark M. Overstreet serves Fourth-World cultures in leadership development and community transformation. From graduate and undergraduate campuses to unreached villages, he teaches worldview analysis, contextualization, and receptor-oriented strategies for leadership, evangelism, and multiplication. Additionally, he consults with global organizations in areas including healthy partnerships, orality, mission, ministry architecture, strategy, and evaluation.

Through oral cultures programs, I serve oral communities through local partnerships that provide indigenous leaders an orality-based platform for existing church leadership development, discipleship, outreach and evangelism, and planting new churches. In every program, we share with the local partners a common vision for incarnational shepherds who are biblically sound and are planting/serving oral-culture communities engaged in whole person ministry. The following considerations flow from observations and experiences from assessed programs.

Informed by biblical stewardship, we seek the wise use of resources—social, personal, and financial. Consistent with kingdom values, the discipline of assessment in each of our oral learner programs yields ongoing transformation at every level.

Third-party assessment serves each partnership, measuring impact in three domains: cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitudes), and behavior (practices). Every program seeks life-changing transformation. Evaluations provide the data each partner seeks to confirm areas of progress and correct areas where more attention may be needed. Each third-party assessment measures a program's impact in areas of ministry and humanitarian content.

Requiring third-party assessment means someone from the outside analyzes each project executed at the local level. Before continuing subsequent phases of partnership, the third-party assessor analyzes local data from indigenous interviews conducted with the oral learners and the communities in which they

work and minister. Like no other tool, this discipline consistently serves as one of the most effective learning tools for ministry among oral preference cultures.

As we work among oral communities, we continue to reform and refine our methods of assessment. From earlier empirical models delivered from Western evaluators, we are journeying into new domains of oral methods of evaluation. Our evaluation methods have learned from the following evaluation resources: Participatory Narrative Inquiry, Anecdote Circles, Contribution Analysis, Performance Story Reporting, Grounded Theory, Outcome Mapping, Collaborative Outcomes Reporting, Participatory Action Research, Rapid Rural Appraisal, and Most Significant Change.

Third-party assessment helps us improve ministry to oral learners. Like an external audit, assessment lends objectivity to partnership and its development. In this way, the partners implement mutual transparency and accountability. Third-party assessment provides structure to program execution, offering ongoing recommended course corrections for ongoing program improvement. As we continue to serve oral cultures, we learn from the following models of assessment in our programs. Each assessment approach captures different data, and the instruments included below may be adapted or shaped, as each provides diverse feedback for program partners and key stakeholders.

1. Participatory Narrative Inquiry

- 1.1. Summary: Participatory Narrative Inquiry is an approach to helping groups of people gather and work with stories to make sense of complex situations for better decision making. PNI emphasizes raw stories of personal experience, a diversity of perspectives and experiences, the interpretation of stories by those who told them, catalytic pattern exploration, and narrative group sense making (Kurtz).
- 1.2. Website: <http://www.storycoloredglasses.com/pparticipatory-narrative-inquiry.html>
- 1.3. Assessment Example:
 - 1.3.1. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2001.01719.x/abstract>
 - 1.3.2. Aranda, Sanchia and Annette Street, "From individual to group: use of narratives in a participatory research process", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Volume 33, Issue 6, pages 791–797, March 2001

2. Anecdote Circles

- 2.1. Summary: An Anecdote Circle is a group of people (no more than ten) who share common experiences. They might have performed the same role, worked on projects together, or formed part of a larger cohort within the organization. These people are peers of one another. An anecdote circle creates one important dynamic—through hearing the stories of colleagues, others remember their own stories. This creates an environment conducive to storytelling (Callahan).
- 2.2. Website: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2001.01719.x/pdf>
- 2.3. Pavlish, C. 'Narrative inquiry into life experiences of refugee women and men', *International Nursing Review*, Volume 54, Issue 1, pages 28–34, March 2007

3. Contribution Analysis

- 3.1. Summary: Contribution Analysis is an approach for assessing causal questions and inferring causality in program assessment. It offers a step-by-step approach designed to help managers, researchers, and policymakers arrive at conclusions about the contribution their program has made (or is currently making) to particular outcomes. The essential value of contribution analysis is that it offers an approach designed to reduce uncertainty about the contribution the intervention is making to the observed results through an increased understanding of why the observed results have occurred (or not!) and the roles played by the intervention and other internal and external factors (Mayne).
- 3.2. Website:
http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/contribution_analysis
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/175356/0116687.pdf>
- 3.3. Assessment Sample:
www.dww.cz/docs/attribution_through_contribution.pdf

4. Performance Story Reporting

- 4.1. Summary: Performance Story Reporting process provides a structured approach to outcomes evaluation and consists of a five-part participatory process, and a six-part report structure. The process steps used to develop the report are as follows:

planning workshop, data trawl, social inquiry process, outcomes panel, and evaluation summit workshop. During the planning workshop, stakeholders created a program logic model, which diagrammatically represents the hierarchy of the program's activities, outputs and outcomes and the links between them (O'Connor).

4.2. Website and Assessment Sample:

<http://www.conservation.sa.org.au/files/emuwren/Performance%20Story%20%20MLRSEW%20and%20FPS%20RP.pdf>

5. **Grounded Theory**

5.1. Summary: Grounded Theory is a general research design in which the assessor creates from local data (quantitative or qualitative) a general theory of change, which arises from the local program data. The research design details strict data analysis protocols for the Grounded Theory process from participants who have experienced the program (Creswell).

5.2. Website: <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/59612/2/S05-05.pdf>

5.3. Assessment Sample:

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=jMfVyU8ida4C&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=participatory+Narrative+Inquiry&ots=kSPRDkdMw9&sig=mgk175enbM2rM74I9NifcblgPM#v=onepage&q=Participatory%20narrative%20inquiry&f=false>

6. **Outcome Mapping**

6.1. Summary: A process-oriented methodology, Outcome Mapping uses graduated Progress Markers in order to determine how close program intervention came to achieving the desired outcome. These Progress Markers then form the basis for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation; they are developed in collaboration with partners and collaboratively monitored.

6.2. Website: www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/index.php?theme=3&action=search

www.dmeforpeace.org/discuss/dme-tip-when-use-outcome-mapping; betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome_mapping

6.3. Assessment Sample: www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/index.php?theme=3&action=search

7. Collaborative Outcomes Reporting

- 7.1. Summary: Collaborative Outcomes Reporting (COR) is a participatory approach to impact evaluation based around a performance story that presents evidence of how a program has contributed to outcomes and impacts that is then reviewed by both technical experts and program stakeholders, which may include community members (Mayne).
- 7.2. Website: <http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/cort>
- 7.3. Assessment Sample:
<https://contextinternationalcooperation.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/evaluationrevisitedconferencereport.pdf>

8. Participatory Action Research

- 8.1. Summary: Participatory Action Research (PAR) focuses on research and assessment that enables action at the local program level. A broad genre of assessment, PAR employs collective, self-reflective inquiry from local program participants who collect data and analyze data, thus determining appropriate corrective actions. The process utilizes an iterative reflective cycle of data collection, reflection, discussion, and community action—all at the local (indigenous) level (Jason).
- 8.2. Website and Assessment Sample:
<http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2003-88379-000>

9. Rapid Rural Appraisal

- 9.1. Summary: Rapid Rural Appraisal is an empowerment survey methodology used in the developing world to formulate solutions and identify opportunities in existing program development. The assessment enables local participants to develop their own appraisal, analysis, and plans for program progress. Local participants discuss and develop context-appropriate program adjustment to reach mutually agreed upon outcomes and impact.
- 9.2. Website: www.fao.org/docrep/006/w2352e/W2352E03.htm
- 9.3. Assessment Sample:
www.cabdirect.org/abstracts/19896708163.html
pubs.e-contentmanagement.com/doi/abs/10.5172/rsj.4.3-4.30

10. Most Significant Change

- 10.1. Summary: The most significant change (MSC) technique

is a means of “monitoring without indicators,” a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of changes to be recorded and in analyzing the data collected. It is a form of assessment because it occurs throughout the program cycle and provides information to help people manage the program. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the program as a whole. Essentially, the process involves the collection of Significant Change (SC) stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The designated staff and stakeholders are initially involved by “searching” for project impact. Once changes have been captured, selected groups of people sit down together, read the stories aloud and have regular and often in-depth discussions about the value of these reported changes, and which they think is most significant of all. In large programs there may multiple levels at which SC stories are pooled and then selected. When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on program impact (Davies).

- 10.2. Website: www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf
- 10.3. Assessment Sample: www.mande.co.uk/special-issues/most-significant-change-msc/

Assessment affirms oral cultures through Christ-centered accountability and the pursuit of more fruitful ministry. As a manifestation of the Body of Christ, assessment in theological education should reveal God’s character and attributes through his body. Assessment serves the Church when it includes incarnate and contextual strategies and methods that improve outcomes and impact in program communities. As we continue to serve oral cultures, may we follow Christ through pursuing the discipline of reflective, receptor-oriented assessment.

Chapter 15

Assessing Oral Preference Learners: A Review of the Process and Articles

Charles Madinger

Chuck Madinger served 27 years in vocational ministry, and now works with missions, universities, and seminaries around the world. He launched three organizations for reaching the Oral Majority, and is completing a Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky to lead a post-baccalaureate program in Oral Instructional Communication.

A Midwest seminary professor develops a heart for Uganda through one of his M.Div. students from Kampala. Prior to graduation, the student arranges for his U.S. teacher to visit the following summer to teach a short-term summer session (or dry season). A key pastor from Oregon leads several professionals within his flock in an early morning discipleship group. A physician in his group talks with the medical mission organization that he volunteers with in Honduras. They recognize the tremendous need for leadership development and the pastor's extraordinary gift of teaching and ask him to simultaneously lead a pastors' training during their up-coming clinic.

A ministry to Congolese refugees in a large southern city persuades the regional Christian university to enroll some of the most qualified leaders to ensure the quality and growth of the movement. Finally, a student from the Appalachians in eastern Kentucky earns a scholarship to his denominational seminary. His dream includes returning to those humble roots to encourage more biblically sound teaching to the people of the mountains.

These scenarios should sound familiar to many of us. What do they have in common? At the least, they all require understanding how orality impacts the degree of learning among those they hope to teach or lead. Like publishers of print materials, we in the instructional and communication fields tend to make one size (ours) fit all.

By now, we are beginning to realize that our pedagogy and andragogy draw nearly exclusively from a Western textuality framework in "original languages" in

contrast to “heart languages,” as Kadangs reflects in her paper. The Renaissance gave birth to a culture of learning centered on text and the printed word, and the evolution of seminaries and universities only deepened the divide between the oral masses (not simply the non-literate) and the text-oriented intelligentsia. This also greatly influenced the ways in which we assessed and evaluated those *worthy* of graduation and credentials. Beatrice Kadangs also points out that the “primitive” nature of oral education contributed to much of our current oversight of how most of the world learns.

Assessment and Evaluation: Closing the Loop

Before we look at the themes of our contributing authors, we need to narrow our focus on their ministry and the kinds of things they motivate us to do, assess, or evaluate. In some circles, those two words are synonymous, so we first need to get some definition of what we mean. The bottom line is that we understand our audience, design, and implement appropriate instruction, and ask if we accomplished that or not.

Assessment looks at a set of processes designed to *improve, demonstrate, and inquire* about student learning" (Mentkowski 1999). When it comes to our particular challenge in the orality movement, how do oral-preference learners use different parts of the mind, process information in different ways and means, and package it differently than do textual-preference learners and teachers? Can this student integrate the content of the course and adapt it in oral forms for people he or she works with in an oral culture? Where is the culture on the social continuum of interacting with important truths and information (individual to collective preferences)? How do they best archive that information, remember it, or even package it (from lists and principles to narratives and “proverbs”).

This process leads us as teachers, pastors, and leaders to *design* instruction with a view to the challenges and establish realistic learning goals. Every *learner characteristic* that creates a bridge or barrier to a learner must be identified and strategically planned if we are to maximize learning (Kemp 2010). Historically, we assumed that all learners must be able to “technologize” their learning by translating it from and into textual expressions.

Assessment also guides our instruction in its formative stages. By this, we normally mean that throughout the duration of the course or training we ask difficult questions: *Why is this student learning—or not learning—this content*

through this particular instructional design or method? Are the instructional methods helping the student make connections to the learning objectives, or would something else work better? Are students integrating and applying this lesson in a way that would help others in their context outside the classroom apply the same thing with relevance? How could I connect this lesson at a deeper level for this student?

Evaluation, on the other hand, is a systematic process of determining the *merit, value, and worth* of someone (our students) or something (the program or process of instruction) (Evaluation Glossary, n.d.). How did our student or program perform? To what level was there mastery of the knowledge or skills? Did attitudes change? Were there new emerging behaviors? In other words, did we really do what we said we were going to do?

Types of Assessment:

- **Diagnostic Assessment** looks at a student's strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills prior to instruction. Our Orality Preference Survey is one example.
- **Criterion-Referenced Assessment** measures a student's performance against a goal, specific objective, or standard.
- **Norm-Referenced Assessment** compares a student's performance against some larger group (norm group) of which the student is representative.
- **Process Assessment** identifies project milestones to be reached, activities to perform, or products to be delivered. Here we determine whether the project has been on schedule, deliverables produced, and cost estimates met. The degree of difference from the expected process is used to evaluate success.
- **Formative Assessments** measure performance during instruction and usually occurs regularly throughout the instruction process. It also measures achievement during instruction for possible immediate revision for the success of student learning.
- **Summative Assessment** measures achievement at the end of instruction.
- **Interim/Benchmark Assessment** evaluates performance at periodic intervals, normally close to the end a segment that might predict the summative success.

Two of our articles come from those who themselves grew up in an oral tradition culture. They transitioned into a textuality framework to produce such scholarly work and have great insight into how those developing with a textuality framework can better meet the education and training needs of oral preference learners. It should be noted that they both present a message concerning orality and the preferences in an oral tradition culture, then apply it to either interpretation or application. Again, their oral roots serve us well as we attempt to better ground the “oaks” that we plant as we teach and train.

Kadangs’ application for assessment of oral learners at the Gweimen Centre Kwoi suggests that oral communication patterns allow the whole community to hear in their mother tongue. This in turn also helps preclude the pitfalls of syncretism. These are extremely important issues in the orality discussion. The responses of the widows also give great insight, but at the same time raise questions on how we assess these learners and evaluate their accomplishments. The biggest question is the one we began with: “How do we know?” How do we know that they understand the Bible better when the pastor reads and interprets for them, when a drama is used, or when preaching is done in the local dialect?

We simply need more definitive research that compares and contrasts learning among this kind of audience when we use a range of oral or textual methods. In one way, this seems a bit superfluous, because the conclusions appear to be so obvious. When they say, “They enjoy and benefit from teachings,” what do they really mean?

Herein lies a major problem in all research—self-reporting. Just because someone says he or she believes something—or even does something—that does not mean the claim is accurate or complete. For example, I may say that I remember something when it comes to me in the form of a song rather than sermon. However, I may actually remember it better from the sermon that used a more textual tool of alliteration. The only way to really know is to test someone using both methods.

Stephen Baba leads us into the life experiences of southern Nigerian cultures that draw heavily and predominantly from an orality framework. His first observation regarding hermeneutics calls us to reevaluate our approach to biblical scholarship among oral tradition cultures. Scholars from both textuality and orality frameworks must harmonize their approach to Bible study and interpretation using the best of both worlds for both audiences. How do we bring a “grammatical” methodology

of Bible study to oral preference learners? How do we take the four major questions asked of a biblical text (What does it say? What does it mean? How does it apply? What will I do?) when literacy is already a probable challenge? What does Bible study and healthy exegesis sound like among oral preference learners?

Baba gives us great insight into the world of orality framed learning with the metaphor of the hen. As he notes, for those coming from a Western urban context, the hen metaphor would not glean the richness of the metaphor, but interpret it as “hen pecked,” or a woman with too many children. However, in citing this particular literary tool, he calls to attention the priority incorporating the use of metaphor and other literary devices appropriate to oral tradition cultures to explain and apply the word.

In doing so, we expand the flow of our message through using the descriptive disciplines of orality to a greater level: culture (a relevant connection with the audience), literacy (using words and concepts that make sense), mnemonics (a peg on which to hang our point for recall), and even the arts by using numerous forms. The Bible also uses symbols, rituals, icons, and other culturally related reinforcements for the message.

How might we find a use for these tools in the design of our training? In assessing the needs of our learners, what could work better than outlining our course by the logical and progressive points we attempt to teach? What metaphor, parable, object, or lesson might convey the lessons better than just presenting our thought in PowerPoint? A real power point makes the point powerful to the audience at hand by the ways and means that connect with the audience rather than the speaker.

This chapter is really a call for taking the abstract and making it accessible through the use of concrete life experiences and expressions. So how do we determine what life experiences to draw from or apply towards? What expressions do we need to use for the oral learners we engage with truths that can transform?

The next three chapters come from experts in specific strategies and approaches to training and education. All write from the vantage point of working with the grassroots. We selected them because they are exemplars that do what they do as well as anyone on the planet. Their fruit speaks for them, and the papers do not begin to reveal the depth of their experience and lessons to be learned.

At the same time, what they do not say is what I want us to focus on with regard to assessment of oral-preference learners. They make me ask questions beyond those of assessing orality preference or the how to connect with oral learners. On these articles, I want us all to begin asking, “How do I know the students ‘got it’ from our training?”

Daniel Runyon gives a great example of how to assess and evaluate the performance of our students and other target groups. He helped students move “beyond recitative storytelling and to create narrative poetry” or even to dance gracefully and spontaneously harmonizing the message in process with one another. Here we know that they “got it.” That act of integration takes our learning goals, objectives, and outcomes to a whole new level. Can they use appropriate applications in designing and telling narratives related to the biblical text as we taught it? Does the poetry and genealogy strike the heart of the matter that makes sense in their context?

Phillip Walker asks us to consider spiritual transformation as we deploy oral strategies and instruction, and to look at it in terms of “real-life context.” I agree completely that transformation is a matter and property of the heart, but the heart cannot change without a change in the mind.

That transformation of the mind (new thoughts to replace old ones – Phil. 4) puts things in motion toward transformation. There must first be awareness in understandable and relevant terms before repentance is possible. Paul told King Agrippa that God sent him to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light—to prove their repentance by their deeds (Acts 26:17-20). All of that is observable, and to some degree measureable. Can this be assessed and evaluated? The answer is yes, but to what degree? Walker gives several examples of the ways and means of finding the praxis for change in the ministry of ATS. Now in assessing and evaluating these creative things, can we bring some degree of objective evaluation? Students washing their own dishes as symbol of servanthood demonstrates an immediate behavior. Now how do we tell if the form (washing dishes) followed or taught function (heart of servanthood)? Are there ways of going deeper to find out? How do we assess and evaluate at that level of mind and heart? Does it spill over into other areas as a direct or even indirect correlation?

Steve Kemp may have the most difficult assessment task of all. How do we know when a leader is developed? The programs of BILD International bear fruit

in very practical and tangible ways, and we need to hear more from them in the design of orality-based strategies and instructional methods. Again, how do we assess and evaluate some of those things? When a lesson lists “all of the things that Paul writes in his letters about what it means to be established in your faith,” how do we know those things have happened?

If we have students who can reiterate those things, and “what it means to be qualified for ministry,” have we succeeded in our instructional goals? Kemp would answer that with a resounding “no”! The proof is in the pudding, but how do we really assess where these students are when we begin, and evaluate their progress toward mastering those things we’ve taught?

Another innovational approach to learning is the BILD emphasis on learning processes rather than specific content. Process assessment requires identifying specific milestones or markers that we expect learners to reach, and the kind of “product” that we’re looking for from that process. So what are those, and how do we get there?

My father worked in the construction trade his whole life, mostly as a superintendent. I remember he spent time with the blueprints spread out on our kitchen table smoking his Lucky Strikes before breaking ground on any job. He made sure he knew the details of the building each step along the way, and hawkishly watched over his crew from dawn to dusk to ensure every wall was plumbed, every electrical outlet followed construction codes, and the painters left no roller lines. Before he turned over the keys to the owner, the punch list (details that needed to be completed or corrected) had to guarantee the building lived up to every detail of the plans. Can we, or will we, do the same with the construction project for which we receive our commission?

Chapter 16

A Selected Annotated Bibliography Concerning Honor and Shame and Orality Preference Assessment

William Coppedge

Billy Coppedge and his wife, Joanna, have been serving as missionaries with World Gospel Mission in northern Uganda since 2007. They were using oral methods, specifically biblical storytelling, to train pastors in Uganda and South Sudan. They are transitioning to St. Andrews, Scotland, to pursue further studies related to orality.

Living in northern Uganda the last seven years, my wife and I, like many missionaries, have had the privilege of hosting numerous teams and volunteers. As we have continued to be convinced of the power of narrative and specifically the fruitfulness of using biblical storytelling in training pastors, we naturally sought to pass on our growing passion to our visitors.

Many of them were curious that storytelling serves as an effective tool for communicating not only with children but across generations and in various cultural circumstances. With several, however, there was more than curiosity; storying had stirred a hunger in them. It was with these fellow story enthusiasts that, in the course of friendly conversation, more than once a storying challenge was submitted. One of us would propose a hypothetical unique situation whereby each of us has to select a biblical narrative and defend why they believe it would most aptly fit the circumstances.

Considering now what scriptural narrative I would select that relates to an annotated bibliography, I suddenly feel again the discomfort that we often witnessed among ourselves. Yet the one that comes to my mind is from the end of 2 Timothy, where Paul, writing from prison to Timothy, says “and bring . . . the books, especially the parchments.” Granted that may not be an entire narrative, but those few words do represent a larger narrative of an imprisoned church leader longing to get his hands on resources he does not have immediately accessible.

How many among the Church today wrestle with similar problems? There is no lack of ministry opportunities. Yet like Paul, we only wish we could get our

hands on the right resources so that we could more fruitfully engage those many opportunities, whether in our home cultures, in distant lands or even in prison.

This limited bibliography on oral assessment, and honor and shame seeks to serve as one of “the parchments.” Desiring to enable contemporary “Pauls” to locate other “parchments,” the ultimate design remains to more effectively and fruitfully engage today’s communities with the Word of God, both the person of Jesus and the Scriptures.

Limitations

Naturally, limitations arise. One, the area of honor and shame research is completely new to me. Over the last few years, I have wrestled with assessment issues related to the oral pastoral training program we sought to implement in Uganda and South Sudan. At least I was aware of some of those issues even if I still have many questions.

Regarding honor and shame, however, it has been to my own shame that in preparation for this bibliography I have realized the large gap in my own missiology. Consequently, there are many others who, drawing on their experiences, could provide additional references and annotations. Those are most welcome and it is recommended to consider carefully the bibliography websites listed below, specifically related to honor/shame. Let it be suggested that this bibliography then is not an end goal, but an initial starting point from which further development among these issues can be pursued.

Two, gaining accessibility to resources to review was limited. I was able to take advantage of two theological libraries, but even then many resources remained difficult to locate—specifically and regrettably the works coming out of Nigeria. This was telling in itself, as even the scarce resources available are actually difficult to acquire. While many of the journal articles were online, some were only available with subscription or by permission from a participating institution. Currently not associated with a theological institution, I was limited in gaining such access.

Third, time played a factor in that some works deserve a proper annotation and for various reasons, I was not able to give them the deserved attention. Carruthers’ work on memory and Neyrey’s work on honor and shame in Matthew would be two examples that deserve more complete review and annotation.

Methodology

The methodology employed for gleaning resources for this bibliography was multifaceted. Selected references related to assessment and honor/shame from the broad annotated bibliography found at the end of the *Orality Journal* (volume 3, no. 1 2014: 61-89) were the initial foundation. Those references led to other helpful material. Then, as the various articles submitted for the consultation were completed, those bibliographies were also included.

Regarding the annotations themselves, certainly many more are needed. As one may note, at times, one author's work might be readily available for review while another's might remain largely elusive. Furthermore, several works received a more thorough notice while many are a passing summation, a mere signpost to provide direction of the author's thought.

Observations

Several observations did emerge from intentionally living with these topics over the last several months. These are not intended as original ideas, just offered as a means to generate fresh thought for those preparing to attend the ION consultation.

First, the reminder: orality is multi-disciplined, as is honor/shame. What becomes apparent in this bibliography is the breadth of disciplines from which resources are coming. If the Church today is going to be fruitful in proclaiming the gospel, then there must be an increased willingness to engage authors and material coming from many unique directions.

Furthermore, the Church is in need of men and women who are not afraid to read and think outside their own discipline as they seek to effectively reach their communities with Christ. I am reminded of the saying, "When hunting truth, one must be very careful, for its tracks are everywhere." As the Church seeks to create space for issues like orality and honor/shame within theological education, courage is necessary to actively search out research even if it requires considering unexpected sources.

Similarly, the second observation relates to the changing nature of education. I have grown up largely under a print-preferenced lecture style presentation of education. That is still what I witness in many theological environments in East Africa. Yet through a supervisor with a passion for holistic development,

I was introduced to authors like Paolo Friere and Jane Vella, who challenged all my educational assumptions.

It was thus my delight to find authors like Clark and Rossiter, Cranton, and others following Friere and Vella's footsteps. These educators are no longer satisfied with learners (oral or print-preferenced) who can regurgitate information only but with those who, having been changed or transformed by the learning process, have now actualized the material into thought and practice. Ellen Marmon and others are beginning to connect the use of educational theories like Mezirow's Transformative Learning theory with orality, unflinchingly borrowing from multiple disciplines in pursuit of not just figuring out how to grade oral learners but how to cultivate actualized learning. Grounded-yet-innovative thought practices like that need not only our appreciation but our encouragement.

Third, the story of Christian thought includes the ever present battle to balance emphasis within the gospel so that nothing is lost or over-stressed. Many within the Church would agree something is limited or weakened when one element of scripture receives exclusive attention. This agreement serves as the foundation for the questions regarding both foci at the ION consultation: *How does the Church once again give proper attention to the spoken word, and how does the Church consider alternative paradigms to the guilt conscience orientation?*

Reviewing the material, there is no question that much work remains regarding oral assessment. Consider that only one actual assessment tool is included in the bibliography. Furthermore, whether reading Georges on Romans or Stansell on the David narratives, an awakening stirs with the realization that honor and shame deserve not just a cursory moment of attention for those involved in missiology, but these are biblical categories that have been passed over for far too long. Who will accept the challenge to explore honor and shame within the life narratives of Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and even Jesus? Thus, the entire bibliography serves as an invitation for further research and experiential reflection.

As a continuation of that thought, however, it is helpful to remind ourselves even as we gather for concentration on these underdeveloped issues that our goal is not to highlight the limitations of print-preferenced learning, nor to dismiss guilt-oriented penal theories of atonement within Muslim evangelism. We do not gather even to promote oral methodologies or the reconsideration of the honor/shame paradigms.

The underlying assumption behind this consultation flows from a conviction that God wants to be known. Furthermore, he has revealed himself in multiple ways, enabling our knowing of him in a greater capacity. The familiar danger worth reviewing yet again centers on any over-emphasis on only one aspect of God's personal revelation which can result not only in an incomplete, or even false, understanding of God, but also an incomplete or false gospel.

Therefore, instead of arguing for oral methods over and against print or honor and shame over and against guilt, what is being suggested is an integrated paradigm, a holistic approach. Initially, the question begins with how the Church relates to people where they are, utilizing the roles, metaphors, and practices that will most naturally enable them to engage the gospel. We must consult together, raising awareness of issues like orality and honor/shame; to continue neglecting them diminishes something of the nature of God and his revelation to us. Yet ultimately in our pursuit of knowing God as revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we would be remiss if we set as our end objective acceptance of oral methodologies, or even an honor/shame interpretation of Romans.

Continuing the "either/or" mentality only opens the Church up to justified accusations of imbalance. Therefore, the Church actually seeks an integrated perspective, a paradigm that incorporates oral and print preferences as well as shame and guilt realities. An explanation finds its source in the nature of a God, who integrates both oral and literate methods within his own communication patterns, as well as reveals himself as the Savior from both guilt and shame. While this integration remains a thin line to walk, the world needs the Church to give continued consideration to how we can navigate such intricacies with grace.

Part One: Honor and Shame

Anselm. 1969. *Why God Became Man and the Virgin Conception and Original Sin by Anselm of Canterbury*. Translated by Joseph Colleran. Albany: Maji.

Anselm's satisfaction theory of atonement places the role of God's honor squarely in the middle of Christ's atoning work. As the Church gives fresh reflection to elements of honor/shame in scripture, theology, and anthropology, Anselm's work deserves reconsideration.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2011. *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen*. New York: W. Norton & Company.

Relating directly to Aristotle's Ethics, Appiah addresses honor within moral revolutions (as compared to scientific ones) such as dueling and slavery.

Aristotle. 2011. *The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle*. Translated by William D. Ross. CreateSpace.

Aristotle's discussion of eudaimonia includes multiple elements, but includes the nature of honor.

Augsburger, David W. 1992. *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Augsburger's work couples academic research with powerful illustrations taken from all over the world that give credibility to his voice. In chapter three, "The Power of Honor, Dignity, and Face," he specifically discusses issues of honor/shame within the context of cross-cultural conflict, giving attention to contemporary theory differentiating honor and dignity. His discussion strengthens the call for better understanding of the importance of "face work" (as Augsburger calls it) within so many cultures. Naturally, implications abound for conflict management and resolution as well as for those involved in assessing learners in "high-context" or honor/shame cultures.

Baker, M. D. and Green, J. B. 2011. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Bammann, Heinrich. 1990. *Koinonia in Afrika: Koinonia bei Bruno Gutmann (Tanzania) und bei den Herrmannsbürger Missionaren im südlichen Afrika*. Bad Liebenzell: VLM.

Barnett, Milton L. 1966. "Hiya, Shame and Guilt: Preliminary Consideration of the Concepts as Analytical Tools for Philippine Social Science." *Philippine Sociological Review* 14(4): 271-282.

Beale, Gregory K. 2004. *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Bechtel, Lyn. 1994. "The Perception of Shame within the Divine-Human Relationship in Biblical Israel." In *Uncovering Ancient Stones*. Ed. Lewis M. Hopfe, 79-92. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns.

Beyerhaus, Peter. 1996. "Er sandte sein Wort: Die Bibel in der Mission." Bd. 1. Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag.

Bird, Michael F, and Preston M. Sprinkle, eds. 2009. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

Bosch, D. J. 1992. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

Clinton, J. Robert. 1989. "Cross-Cultural Use of Leadership Concepts." In *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*. Ed. Dean S. Gilliland, 183-198. Dallas: Word Publishing.

Codrington, R.H. 1891. *The Melanesians: Studies in Their Anthropology and Folklore*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coppedge, Allan. 2001. *Portraits of God: A Biblical Theology of Holiness*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Coppedge's chapters on God as King and Implications discuss Anselm's satisfaction theory as well as provide an interpretative grid from which one can identify scriptural roles or metaphors (e.g., honor due a King) that might most naturally communicate the gospel cross-culturally.

Costas, Orlando. 1974. *The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale.

Creighton, Millie R. 1990. "Revisiting Shame and Guilt Cultures: A Forty-Year Pilgrimage." *Ethos* 18: 279-307.

DeSilva, David. 2000. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

_____. 1999. *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press.

Dickson, John. 2005. "Gospel as News: Ευαγγέλ- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul." *New Testament Studies* 51: 212–230.

Donahue, John R. 2002. *The Gospel of Mark*. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press.

Elliott, John H. 1994. "Disgraced yet Graced. The Gospel According to 1 Peter in the Key of Honor and Shame." *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 24:166-178. Accessed February 20, 2015, www.pas.rochester.edu/~tim/study/Honor%20and%20Shame.pdf

Elliott's article provides a helpful introduction into honor and shame both within anthropology and biblical studies arenas. He references extensively as he initially discusses four significant elements of honor and shame within the biblical world before interpreting 1 Peter through the hermeneutical lens of honor/shame. While not specifically considering orality, this resource could be valuable for those learning to consider honor/shame within their own biblical hermeneutical framework.

Flanders, Christopher. 2011. *About Face: Rethinking Face for 21st Century Mission*. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

Garrison, David. 2014. *A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is Drawing Muslims Around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ*. Monument, Wash.: WIGTake Resources.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*. New York: Basic Books.

Georges, Jayson. 2010. "From Shame to Honor: A Theological Reading of Romans for Honor-Shame Contexts." *Missiology* 38: 295-307. Accessed February 20, 2015, <http://mis.sagepub.com/content/38/3/295.full.pdf>

Georges' article deserves careful reading as he discusses theology through an honor/shame paradigm, but also boldly offers a reinterpretation of the book of Romans, generally considered the cornerstone for the Western guilt-oriented interpretation of the gospel. Standing on the shoulders of others like Anselm, DeSilva, Jewett, Malina, Neyrey, and Tennent, Georges articulates the gospel as an honorable God dishonored by shameful man who lacks his glory and needs Jesus, a benefactor who can bestow honor, remove shame, and welcome man into God's community. The power behind Georges' work lies in his experience applying this theology within a Central Asian honor/shame culture, and his examples demand thought provoking consideration for the Church seeking to "do theology" within honor/shame cultures.

Green, Daniel and Mel Lawrenz. 1994. *Encountering Shame and Guilt: Resources for Strategic Pastoral Counseling*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Green, J. B. 1997. "Jesus Cures the Gerasene Demoniac (Luke 8:26-39)." In *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke*. Ed. Gordon D. Fee, 334-342. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Griffith, Henry. 1985. "We Can Teach Better Using African Methods." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 21: 249-253.

Hamilton Jr., James M. 2014. *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway.

Hesselgrave, David J. 1983. "Missionary Elenctics and Guilt and Shame." *Missiology* 11(4): 461-83. Accessed February 20, 2015, <http://mis.sagepub.com/content/11/4/461.refs?patientinform-links=yes&legid=spmis;11/4/461>

Hiebert, Paul. 2010. "The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization." In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*. Ed. Ed Stetzer and David J. Hesselgrave, 93. Nashville: B&H Publishing.

_____. 2008. *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

_____. 1985. *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

_____. 1976. *Cultural Anthropology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Hiebert provides a solid Christian approach to anthropology that has endured as a reference work.

Hiebert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou. 1999. *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Hill, Andrew E. and John F. Walton. 2009. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Jewett, Robert. 2007. *Romans: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Kraus, C. Norman. 1990. *Jesus Christ Our Lord: Christology from a Disciple's Perspective*. Rev. ed. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1987, 1990.

Lane, W. L. 1974. "The Gerasene Demoniac: the Subduing of the Demonic (Mark 5:1-20)." In *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark*. Ed. Gordon D. Fee, 179-189. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Laniak, Timothy. 1998. *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*. Society for Biblical Languages Dissertation Series 165. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Written from an academic biblical studies perspective with an appreciation for both anthropological and psychological contributions, Laniak's work argues for interpretation of Esther through an honor/shame hermeneutic, recasting a familiar Bible narrative within the context of what he argues to be a biblical pattern: honor granted, challenged, vindicated, and enhanced. The introduction to this book provides an insightful overview of the biblical paradigms related to both categories of honor and shame, specifically drawing on biblical Hebrew language. Furthermore, Laniak's bibliography, while only through 1993, provides extensive references with an emphasis on biblical studies materials.

Lebra, Takie Sugiyama. 1983. "Shame and Guilt: A Psychocultural View of the Japanese Self." *Ethos* 11(3): 192-209.

Lendon, J. E. 1997. *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lienhard, Ruth. 2001. *Restoring Relationships: Theological Reflections on Shame and Honor among the Daba and Bana of Cameroon*. Ph.D. Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI.

Lingenfelter, Sherwood G. and Marvin K. Mayers. 1986. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

While the authors do not use honor/shame categories specifically within their book, chapter seven discusses the various interpretations of self-worth. Specifically, the authors compare prestige as being attained through status or achievement with a biblical understanding of self-worth. These similar but alternative terms deserve consideration in the pursuit of a broader appreciation and understanding of honor/shame both within culture as well as scripture.

Loewen, Jacob A. 1969. "Confession, Catharsis and Healing." *Practical Anthropology* 16: 63-74. Rev. ed. (1975) in *Culture and Human Values: Christian Intervention in Anthropological Perspective*. Jacob Loewen, 287-298. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.

Lynd, Helen Merrell. 1958. *On Shame and the Search for Identity*. New York: Science Editions, Inc.

Malina, Bruce. 1993. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

This work appears consistently on others' "works cited" page throughout this bibliography.

_____. 1979. "The Individual and the Community: Personality in the Social World of Early Christianity." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 9(3): 126-138.

Malina's article serves as a reference point for many honor/shame resources related to scripture and the New Testament world. Comparing the individualistic personality, more or less absent from NT culture, and dyadic personality, which arguably dominated the New Testament world, Malina suggests the usefulness of a three-pronged Semitic approach to interpreting the first-century person.

Mattison, Mark. 2009. "A Summary of the New Perspective on Paul." *The Paul Page*. Accessed February 20, 2015, www.thepaulpage.com/a-summary-of-the-new-perspective-on-paul/

Mayers, Marvin. 1982. *A Look at Latin American Lifestyles*. Dallas, TX: Summer Institutes of Linguistics.

McCord Adams, Marilyn. 1999. *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

McIlwain, Trevor. 1991. *Building on Firm Foundations*. Rev. ed. Sanford: New Tribes Mission.

McKnight, Scot. 2011. *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Mischke, Werner. 2010. *Honor & Shame in Cross-Cultural Relationships*. Scottsdale: Mission ONE.

Moxnes, Halvor. 1993. "Honor and Shame." *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 23:167-76. Accessed February 20, 2015, <http://g.christianbook.com/g/pdf/hp/1565634101-ch01.pdf>

_____. 1988. "Honour and Righteousness in Romans." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 10(32): 61-78.

Moxnes' unique approach to understanding Romans, while without the benefit of Georges' Asian experience, offers a valuable scholarly overview of honor and shame within the cultural context of Christians in Rome.

Müller, Klaus W. 1994. *Peacemaker. Missionary Practice of Georg Friedrich Vicedom in New Guinea (1929-1939): A Presentation Based Mainly on his own Writings*. Ph.D. Thesis, vol. 3. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI.

Muller, Roland. 2012. *The Messenger, The Message, The Community*. Saskatchewan: CanBooks.

Muller updates his work on honor and shame, but with more of an emphasis on Muslim culture.

_____. 2001. *Honor and Shame: Unlocking the Door*. Bloomington: Xlibris.

Muller consistently appears in other “works cited” pages in this bibliography.

Musk, Bill A. 1988, 1995. *Touching the Soul of Islam*. East Sussex, U.K.: MARC.

Naugle, David. 2002. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Netland, Harold A. 2006. “Introduction: Globalization and Theology Today.” In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*. Eds. C. Ott and H. A. Netland, 27. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic & Brazos Press.

Newbigin, Leslie. 1989. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Newbigin does not directly discuss honor and shame either in culture or scripture, but his thoughts on contextualization of the gospel have far-reaching implications. Jackson Wu believes Newbigin is accurate in declaring that there is no gospel without culture. If this premise, contended strongly for by these men and others like Tennant, is true, then that should validate reconsideration of the gospel within honor/shame cultures, including its presentation, actualization, and dissemination.

Neyrey, Jerome H. 2005. "God, Benefactor and Patron: The Major Cultural Model for Interpreting the Deity in Greco-Roman Antiquity." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27(4): 465-492.

_____. 1998. *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

_____. 1994. "Despising the Shame of the Cross: Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative." *Semeia* 68:113-137.

Neyrey suggests an ancient enculturation hermeneutic based on honor/shame. His understanding demands reconsideration of Christ's passion as well presents an exhortation for the Church to continue reconsidering traditional interpretations from within honor/shame paradigms.

Nicholls, Bruce. 2001. "The Role of Shame and Guilt in a Theology of Cross-Cultural Mission." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 25(3): 231-241.

This article calls for re-evaluation of cross-cultural mission. Specifically, Nicholls recognizes the difference between guilt conscious and shame conscious cultures and suggests the need for ongoing training to appropriately offer a gospel of integrated salvation including deliverance from both shame and guilt.

Nida, Eugene. 1974. *Understanding Latin Americans*. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.

Noll, Mark. 2009. *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Nyeste, Istvan S. 2001. "Shame, Guilt, and the Heidelberg Catechism: Proposal for a Fresh Reading." M.Th. Thesis, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus.

Payne, D., A. Hall, and B. Burns. 2006. "Redemptive Themes and Story Selection." Unpublished manuscript.

Peristiany, J.G., and J. Pitt-Rivers. 1992. *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Piers, Gerhart and Milton B. Singer. 1971. *Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytical and a Cultural Study*. Rev. ed. New York: Norton.

- Pitt-Rivers, Julian. 1996. "Honour and Shame." In *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*. Ed. J.G. Peristiany, 21-77. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.
- Plevnik, Joseph. 1993. "Honor/Shame." In *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning*. Eds. Bruce Malina and John J. Pilch, 94-104. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Ritual Purity in Islam. Accessed February 20, 2015, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual_purity_in_Islam
- Riesner, Rainer. 1981. *Jesus als Lehrer*. Tübingen: Mohr.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Z. 1984. "Does the Concept of the Person Vary Cross-Culturally?" In *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*. Eds. Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine, 137-157. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sa'a, Yehia. 2000. *All That the Prophets Have Spoken*. Gatineau: Goodseed.
- Schirmacher, Thomas. 2013. *Culture of Shame/Culture of Guilt*. Translated by Richard McClary. Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft. Accessed February 20, 2015, http://www.bucer.de/uploads/tx_org/WoT_6_-_Thomas_Schirmacher_-_Culture_of_Shame_or_Guilt.pdf

Drawing on a breadth of disciplines, including cultural anthropology, missiology, and psychology, Schirmacher delves right into the heart of the question: Is the gospel message oriented towards guilt or shame? His history of the development of honor and shame studies offers an invaluable initial understanding as well as identifies key players and their works. Schirmacher's in-depth treatment of the biblical material raises noteworthy questions regarding the need for a holistic orientation that incorporates both guilt and shame as the human persons seeks to glorify (honor) his God and Creator. Furthermore, compared with other bibliographies, even those listed presently, Schirmacher's extensive reference list serves as a reminder of the number of non-English resources awaiting further exploration.

Simkins, Ronald. 2005. "Honor and Shame in Genesis 34 and 1 Samuel 25." In *Teaching the Bible*. Eds. Mark Roncace and Patrick Gray, 104-106. Leiden: Brill.

_____. 1994. "Return to Yahweh: Honor and Shame in Joel." *Semeia* 68: 41-54.

Simms, S. "Demon Possessed Man." *Reaching the Oral Majority* (blog). *E3 Partners. Orality News Blog*. Accessed February 20, 2015, www.e3partners.org/orality#!/orality/news/news-reader/article/demon-possessed-man

Singih, E.G. 1995. "Let Me Not Be Put to Shame: Towards an Indonesian Hermeneutics." *Asia Journal of Theology* 9(1): 71-85.

Spiro, Melford E. 1961. "Social Systems, Personality, and Functional Analysis." In *Studying Personality Cross-Culturally*. Ed. Bert Kaplan, 93-128. New York: Harper & Row.

_____. 1958. *Children of the Kibbutz*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Stansell, Gary. 1994. "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives." *Semeia* 68: 55-79.

The honor/shame paradigm suggested by Stansell not only enlarges one's understanding for David and his relationships, but it also fosters a curiosity to consider what other biblical narratives need reconsideration from within that ancient cultural context.

Stendahl, Krister. 1963. "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscious of the West." *Harvard Theological Review* 56(3): 199-215. Accessed February 20, 2015, www.dburnett.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/The-Apostle-Paul-and-the-Introspective-Conscience-of-the-West.pdf

Stendahl's article stands as a substantial, albeit indirect, reference point for other resources related to issues of honor and shame in the New Testament. Stendahl raises substantial questions about approaching Pauline writing with a Western introspective conscious framework as exemplified by Luther and Bultmann.

Tarnopolsky, Christina H. 2010. *Prudes, Perverts and Tyrants: Plato and the Politics of Shame*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Taylor, Gabriele. 1985. *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Tennant, Timothy. 2007. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

While Tennant's treatment in chapter four, "Anthropology: Human Identity in Shame Based Cultures of the Far East," is not as exhaustive as say Laniak or Wu, his overview of honor and shame within Old and New Testaments is in some ways more practical. Like Wu, Tennant voices concern regarding the emphasis on guilt within the West's traditional judicial understanding of salvation. This, while valid, does not leave room for the significant elements of honor and shame within scripture. While careful to appreciate the Western tradition, Tennant is both inviting and prodding the global church to continue to explore how honor and shame can impact both the church's understanding of human identity as well as theology.

Thomas, Bruce. 1994. "The Gospel for Shame Cultures." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 30(3):284-90.

Thomas' article, set within a Muslim evangelism framework, raises fascinating questions for conceptualizing the gospel to include Christ's assuming not only human depravity, but also human defilement. Such a gospel presentation penetrates felt needs within Muslims that typical conversations on guilt over sin do not address.

Toorman, Alex. 2011. "Selfless Love: The Missing Middle in Honor/Shame Cultures." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 47(2): 160-167.

Thornton, W. Philip. 1980. *Roman Catholics Becoming Protestants in Latin America*. Doctoral dissertation. Dallas: Southern Methodist University.

Upkong, Justin S. 1996. "The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Lk 16:1-13): An Essay in the Intercultural Biblical Hermeneutics." *Semeia* 73: 189-210.

This article seeks to seriously engage a difficult parable of Jesus from an inculturated biblical hermeneutic, approaching the story from the view of exploited peasant farmers of West Africa.

Walls, Andrew. 2006. "Globalization and the Study of Christian History." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*. Eds. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, 75-76. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic & Brazos Press.

Walton, John H. 2009. *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic.

Wan, Enoch. 2003. "Practical Contextualization: A Case Study of Evangelizing Contemporary Chinese." *Global Missiology* 1(1). Accessed February 20, 2015, <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/viewFile/441/1136>

Whiteman, Darrell L. 2006. "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*. Eds. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, 65. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic & Brazos Press.

Wiher, Hannes. 2013. "Worldview and Identity across Conversion." *Evangelical Review of Theology*. French version is: Wiher, Hannes, « Toucher les êtres humains en profondeur », *Théologie Évangélique* 12(1): 69-85 and 12(3): 61-88.

_____. 2013. "Worldview and Oral Preferred Learners and Leaders." Paper delivered at ION Consultation on Theological Education and Orality in Hong Kong, June 7-10, 2013.

In line with Spiro and Stendahl, Wiher's offers a valuable discussion of worldview, specifically discussing guilt-oriented and shame-oriented consciences.

_____. 2003. *Shame and Guilt: A Key to Cross-Cultural Ministry*. Germany: Culture and Science Publication. Accessed February 20, 2015, www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/rfiles/res3_234_link_1292694440.pdf

Wikipedia contributors. "Purity in Buddhism." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed February 20, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purity_in_Buddhism

Wikipedia contributors. "Ritual Purity in Islam." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed February 20, 2015, www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual_purity_in_Islam

Wright, N.T. 1992. *The New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Wu, Jackson. 2013. *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey International University Press.

Wu's Chinese approach to issues of honor and shame provide not only a credible perspective, but being his published dissertation, he reviews much of the available honor/shame material as well as provides valuable critique. Thus his bibliography, spanning multiple disciplines including anthropology, biblical studies, missiology, and theology, is an extensive 40-page gold mine of resources related to honor/shame. Furthermore, his concerns on the over emphasis of legal metaphors, the necessity of proper contextualized theology, and the need to reconsider the role of honor/shame in soteriology are valid and well-argued considerations.

_____. 2013. "We Compromise the Gospel When We Settle for Truth: How 'Right' Interpretations Lead to 'Wrong' Contextualization." *Global Missiology* 2(10). Accessed February 20, 2015, www.ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/1130/2614

_____. 2011. "Authority in a Collectivist Church: Identifying Crucial Concerns for a Chinese Ecclesiology." *Global Missiology* 1(9). Accessed February 20, 2015, <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/viewFile/679/1688>

Wu, establishing himself as a credible voice on honor/shame, specifically addresses the issues of authority and the church from within an understanding of the Chinese cultural "web of relationships."

Yinger, Kent L. 2010. *The New Perspective on Paul: An Introduction*. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books.

You, Young Gweon. 1997. "Shame and Guilt Mechanisms in East Asian Culture." *Journal for Pastoral Care* 51(1): 57-64. Accessed February 20, 2015, <http://jafriedrich.de/pdf/Shame%20and%20Guilt%20Mechanisms%20in%20East%20Asian%20Culture.pdf>

This succinct article introduces basics theories on shame cultures, but argues that differentiating between a shame or guilt culture oversimplifies issues. You's strongest contribution comes in the conclusion when calling for the church to intentionally help people recover from shame.

Bibliographies Websites:

Georges, Jayson. www.honorshame.com

Georges' blog seeks to create a conversation related to issues of honor and shame. Well categorized and easily navigable, those interested in honor and shame who do not consult Georges' extensive bibliography neglect a buried treasure.

Mischke, Werner. wernermischke.org/resources/

Mischke's bibliography on honor and shame, while much shorter than Georges', provides helpful book annotations as well as several other alternative resources like an inductive Bible study, a "quick study," a quick reference guide to reading the Bible in the language of honor and shame, and even a honor shame skit.

Pilch, John. "Honor and Shame." *Oxford Bibliography*.
<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393361/obo-9780195393361-0077.xml>

Brief, but very well written, this annotated bibliography gives a clear introduction to several of the major academic works related to shame and honor.

Part Two: Oral Assessment

Abney, Lynne L. "Orality Assessment Tool Worksheet." Accessed February 20, 2015, www.oralty.net/media/420

This worksheet, standing as one of the only readily available assessment tool currently represented in this bibliography, serves as a desperate plea for the development of practical oral assessment tools.

Abogunrin, S. O. 2004. "Biblical Healing in African Context." In *Biblical Healing in African Context: Biblical Studies Series Number 3*. Eds. S.O. Abogunrin, J.O. Akao, D.O. Akintunde, G.M. Toryough, and P.A. Oguntoye. Ibadan: The Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies.

_____. 2003. "Christology and the Contemporary Church in Africa." In *Christology in African Context: Biblical Studies Series Number 2*. Eds. S.O. Abogunrin, J.O. Akao, D.O. Akintunde, and G.M. Toryough. Ibadan: The Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies.

Adamo, David Tuesday. 2012. "Evolving a Biblical Hermeneutics for Social Change." In *Biblical Studies and Social Transformation in Africa*. Gen. ed. S.O. Abogunrin. Ibadan: Nigerian Association of Biblical Studies.

_____. 2008. "Reading Psalm 109 in African Christianity." *Old Testament Essays*. Ed. G.F. Snyman. New Series 21(3): 575-592.

_____. 2005. *Reading and Understanding the Bible in African Indigenous Churches*. Benin City: Justice Jeco Press & Publishers.

_____. 2005. "The Distinctive Use of Psalms in African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria." In *Reading and Understanding the Bible in African Indigenous Churches*. Benin City: Justice Jeco Press & Publishers.

_____. 2005. "The Use of Psalms in African Indigenous Churches." In *Reading and Interpreting the Bible in African Indigenous Churches*. Benin City: Justice Jeco Press & Publishers.

_____. 2001. *Reading and Interpreting the Bible in African Indigenous Churches*. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

_____. 2000. "The Use of Psalms in African Indigenous Churches." In *The Bible in Africa*. Eds. Gerald West and Musa Dube. Leiden: Brill.

_____. 1999. "African Cultural Hermeneutics." In *Vernacular Hermeneutics*. Ed. Sugirtharajah. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Ademiluka, Solomon. 1995. "The Use of Therapeutic Psalms in Inculcating Christianity in Africa." *Africa Ecclesia Review* 37(4): 221-227.

_____. n.d. "The Use of Psalms in African Context." M.A. Thesis, University of Ilorin.

Alter, Robert 1981. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books.

Alter's academic work explores the category of biblical narrative from within a literary analysis.

Ango, Samuel P. 2010. "Towards An African Theology of Christian Education." *African Journal of Transformational Scholarship* 2(1):23.

Aranda, Sanchia and Annette Street, "From Individual to Group: Use of Narratives in a Participatory Research Process," *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Volume 33, Issue 6, pages 791–797, March 2001

Aristotle. 1997. *Poetics*. Translated by S.H. Butcher. Mineola: Dover Publications.

Awobuluyi, Oladele. 1979. *The New National Policy on Education in Linguistic Perspective*. Ilorin: The University of Ilorin Press.

Bamgbose, A. 1976. "Language in National Integration: Nigeria as a Case Study." A paper read at the 12th West African Languages Congress, University of Ife, Ife, Nigeria, March 15 – 20, 1976.

Bennett, Christine. 2002. *Comprehensive Multicultural Education, Theory and Practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Berryman, Jerome. 1991. *Godly Play: A Way of Religious Education*. San Francisco: Harper.

Berryman's experience is primarily with children within a Christian educational environment, yet his understanding of education, pedagogy, psychology, and theology begs a wider audience. Chapter four on the "Spoken Lesson" reminds all theological educators that their goal is not mere transference of facts. His tracing a history of media and religion provides an accessible overview of oral and literary tools within Judeo-Christian communication. Godly play may not immediately relate with the sophistication of oral assessment within formal theological education yet there is a challenge latent in Berryman's work: How will Jesus' invitation to become like little children inform the Church's assessment of adults? According to Berryman, consideration of elements such as play, imagination, space, and the spoken word all create an environment for knowing the Creator.

Bessette, Guy. 2004. *Involving the Community: A Guide to Participatory Development Communication*. International Research Development Center. Accessed February 20, 2015, <http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/31476/33/IDL-31476.pdf>

Bessette's introduction to Participatory Development Communication (PDC) deserves consideration (see also Dagon), specifically relating to evaluation (assessment). The PDC approach to evaluation reminds everyone involved that the assessment should benefit not just external researchers (or educators) but the community (or learners). A reexamination of basic assumptions related to the purpose and goals behind assessment could open up fertile fields for rethinking assessment procedures.

Best, Gerald. 2008. *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

_____. 1993. *Contextual Bible Study*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Bowen, Earle and Dorothy Bowen. 1989. "Contextualizing Teaching Methods in Africa." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 25: 270-275.

The Bowens' experience provides tangible, practical consideration to the discussion of contextualization although the assumption that left-brain thinking is necessary to properly understand scripture deserves further consideration.

- _____. 1988. "Contextualization of Teaching Methodology in Theological Education in Africa." A paper presented at the Accrediting Council for Theological Education Conference of Theological Educators. Kenya, June 16-19, 1988. Accessed February 20, 2015, http://thinkagainnow.com/uploads/Field_Dependency_-Teaching_Style-Bowen.pdf

While this researched perspective on African learning styles is over 25 years old, it provides a very accessible summary of the difference between field-dependent and field-independent learners. The Bowens challenge the stereotypical Western lecture model in theological education, and provide 18 suggestions for alternating teaching strategies. While today's terms like oral-preferenced and print-preferenced learners would sharpen their findings, their suggestions of strategies—specifically their caution of using competition within assessment for field dependent learners—remain valid today.

- Branch, Robert M. 2009. *Instructional Design: The ADDIE Approach*. New York: Springer.

- Brown, Rick. 2004. "Communicating God's Message in an Oral Culture." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21(3): 122-128.

Brown's article, a highly accessible introduction to the nature of orality, provides practical "implications" of what an awareness of oral-preferenced learning would mean for presentations of the gospel. This would be an ideal piece for discussion within a university or seminary course.

- Campbell, Joseph. 1968. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Carr, Nicholas. 2011. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Carr's book regarding the influence of the "Net" in reshaping the way people think is worth the time, particularly his tracing the history of writing and reading, which puts the digital era in a longer perspective. In chapter three, his treatment of orality verses literacy as represented by Socrates and Plato provides helpful background for

anyone seeking analysis on how the ancient oral world transitioned into the literate world with Carr giving particular interest to how print fostered individualization and influenced the development of linear thought. If institutions are going to discuss oral assessment accurately, Carr's work reminds the Church that it will be oral assessment but within a digital context; thus, the Church needs to be ready to grapple with the reality that pure oral assessment may no longer be a viable working category.

Carruthers, Mary. 2008. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cavalletti, Sofia. 1992. *The Religious Potential of the Child*. Mt. Ranier: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association.

Chiang, Samuel. 2010. "The Passion for Orality." In *Orality Breakouts: Using Heart Language to Transform Hearts*. Eds. S. Chiang, S. Evans, R. Gillchrest, M. Lawson, L. F. Nichols, and J. White, 3-8. Hong Kong: ION and LCWE.

Clark, M. Carolyn and Marsha Rossiter. 2008. "Narrative Learning in Adulthood." In *Third Update on Adult Learning Theory*. Ed. Sharan B. Merriam. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

While the authors do not specifically approach oral assessment, their appreciation of narrative as a learning strategy is worth understanding for those listening to the broader orality conversation. Regarding theological education, this introduction to narrative learning for adults provides extra-biblical affirmation that stories heard, told, and recognized are powerful pedagogical tools.

Cranton, Patricia. 2006. *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

While this book, specifically chapter eight, "Fostering Critical Self-Reflection and Self-Knowledge," does not draw an immediate discernible relationship to oral assessment, its concepts regarding transformational learning (see also Marmon, Clark and Rossiter, Merizow, and Vella) call for a reconsideration of assessment by both educators and learners.

While Cranton's suggestions, including crafting questions, creating intentional experiences, discussing critical incidents, and utilizing art, are intended towards self-evaluation and self-knowledge, they naturally invite educators of oral-preferenced learners to creatively utilize and adapt these concepts to think afresh regarding oral assessment.

_____. 1992. *Working with Adult Learners*. Toronto: Wall & Emerson.

Cron, Lisa. 2012. *Wired for Story: A Writer's Guide to Using Brain Science to Hook Readers from the Very First Sentence*. New York: Ten Speed Press.

Cron's work argues recent neurological discoveries regarding the human brain's innate love of story have direct relevance for writers of stories today.

Dagron, Gumucio. 2001. "Making Waves: Participatory Communication for Social Change." New York: The Rockefeller Foundation. Accessed February 20, 2015, http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/making_waves.pdf

Due to the inter-disciplinary nature of orality, articles such as Dagron's well-researched chronicle of case studies involving participatory communication often fertilize fresh ideas of how to implement oral assessment strategies more fruitfully. Dagron's introduction includes a very accurate critique of common mistakes made in evaluation methods as well as a stirring argument for utilizing participatory communication for community development. The continued opportunity for the Global Church will be to create synthesized dialogue between supposedly secularized theories like participatory communication and orality for the growth of the kingdom. For example, see Jay Moon's "Ritual and Symbols in Community Development" online at www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/making_waves.pdf

Dahood, Mitchell. 1996. *Psalms 1-50, vol. 1: The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday and Company.

Dalkir, Kimiz. and Erica. Wiseman. 2004. "Organizational Storytelling and Knowledge Management: A Survey." *Storytelling, Self, Society* 1(1): 57-73.

- DeNeui, Paul H, ed. 2013. "You Think in Lines, We Think in Circles: Oral Communication Implications in the Training of Indigenous Leaders." *Developing Indigenous Leaders: Lessons in Mission from Buddhist Asia*, 21-37. Pasadena, Calif.: William Cary Library.
- _____. 2008. *Communicating Christ through Story and Song: Orality in Buddhist Contexts*. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.
- Dillon, Christine. 2012. *Telling the Gospel through Story*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.
- Drivers, Pius. 1965. *The Psalms: Their Structure and Meaning*. New York: Harder and Harder.
- Edwards, Kent. 2005. *Effective First-person Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Fafunwa, A.B. 1974. *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Fassett, Deanna L. and John T. Warren, eds. 2010. *The Sage Handbook of Communication and Instruction*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1981. "National Policy on Education." Revised. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Folarin, George A., Olusegun O. Oladosu, and Stephen O.Y. Baba. 2012. "Re-Interpreting the ὕδωρ Ζαω (Living Water) Metaphor in John 4 & in the Context of the South Western Yoruba in Nigeria." *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 2(2).
- This article helpfully reviews other authors discussing inculturated and intercultural hermeneutics, including Manus, Upkong, and West, before seeking to apply such hermeneutical method to John's concept of "living water." Its relevance to oral assessment lies in the consideration of whose hermeneutical method will be taught and evaluated.
- Furniss, Graham. 2004. *Orality. The Power of the Spoken Word*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Frye, Northrop. 1982. *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature*. Orlando: Harcourt Inc.

Gardner, Howard. 2006. *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice*. New York: Basic Books.

_____. 1993. *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*. New York: Basic Books.

_____. 1983. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Persevering through Gardner's highly academic work pays dividends in his implications and application section. Chapter 13 is worth reading as he is raising very good observations about the education of intelligences, specifically he analyzes the development of skills in non-literate societies, including the education of initiation rites, bush schools, and apprenticeship systems. Chapter 14 is also fruitful as Gardner's discussion of the assessment and education of persons from within a multiple intelligence framework reminds educators of the advantage of assessment prior to the construction of an education strategy so learners' "intelligence preferences and limitations" can be considered.

Gazzaniga, Michael. 2012. *Who's in Charge?* New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Gladwell, Malcolm. 2008. *Outliers*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Glonek, Katie L. and Paul E. King. 2014. "Listening to Narratives: An Experimental Examination of Storytelling in the Classroom." *The International Journal of Listening* 28: 32-46.

Glonek and King investigate the results of presenting educational material either in an expository outline (semantically organized) or a narrative (episodically organized). Drawing from the constructionist theory of narrative comprehension and the "search for meaning" principle, they argue narrative invites listeners to make inferences in seeking understanding whereas expository presentation does not in the same manner. Their overall findings suggest that instead of apologizing for telling stories, educators should present material in a narrative format to improve memory retention.

Gunkel, Herman. 1927. "Psalmen." In *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 4. Rev. ed.

Hair, P.E.H. 1967. *The Early Study of Nigeria Languages: Essays and Bibliographies*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Hesselgrave, David. 1978. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*. Grand Rapids,
MI: Zondervan.

Hofstede, Geert. 1983. "Dimensions of National Culture in Fifty Countries and Three
Regions." In Eds. J.B. Deregowski, S.Dziurawiec and R.C. Annis, 335-355.
Excursions in cross-cultural psychology, Swets and Zeitlinger: Lisse, Netherlands.

Holding, Esther. rivercrossorg.org/holding-esther

Hubbard, Douglas W. 2010. *How to Measure Anything: Finding the Value of
"Intangibles" in Business*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

While both the business nature and highly analytical approach of this book might cause initial questions regarding its relevancy on assessment in theological education of oral-preferenced learners, it deserves consideration. While Hubbard is not wrestling with the difficulties of measuring say, spiritual maturity, he is having a hard look at common misunderstandings to measurement as well as reconsidering quantifying assumptions and observations. Hubbard's challenge is to write down what defies measurement in one's world and then see if quantification does not become more plausible as one works through the book; it seems a worthy challenge for those willing to consider any avenue in search of better assessment of oral methodologies.

Jagerson, Jennifer J. 2013. "Hermeneutics and the Methods of Oral Bible Storytelling for the Evangelization and Discipleship of Oral Learners." *Great Commission Research Journal* 4(2): 251-261.

James, Maria. 2009. "Developing a Living Theory of Theopraxis." *Educational Journal of Living Theories*. Accessed February 20, 2015, [http://ejolts.net/files/journal/2/2/James2\(2\).pdf](http://ejolts.net/files/journal/2/2/James2(2).pdf)

While the journey of development is still evident in this paper, James provides testimony of the need for a relational approach to education.

Reminiscent of Feire and Vella, yet from a distinctly Christian stance, she is seeking to break out of the “one-dimensional transmission of propositional knowledge” to create relational space for education through interaction and dialogue. The first-person transparency within the article, as well as her discussion of education as a dance between teacher and students, does not specifically mention oral-preferred learners, yet is worth reading as a reminder of the power of relationality within education.

Jensen, Robin. 2011. *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual and Theological Dimensions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Johnson, Maxwell. 1989. *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

Jonker, Louis C. 2010. “The Global Context and Its Consequences for Old Testament Interpretation.” In *Global Hermeneutics? Reflections and Consequences*. Eds. Knut Holter and Louis C. Jonker, 53. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

Kafang, B. Zamani. 2002. *The Psalms: An Introduction to their Poetry*. Jos: Sele Computer Centre.

Keathley, H. I. “Guarding the Heart.” *Bible.org*. Accessed February 20, 2015, <https://bible.org/article/guarding-heart>

Kegan, Robert. 2000. “What ‘Form’ Transforms? A Constructive-Developmental Perspective on Transformational Learning.” In *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*. Eds. J. Mezirow and Associates, 35-69. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Klem, Herbert. 1982. *Oral Communication of Scripture*. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.

Knowles, Malcolm. 1980. *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Regents.

Knowles, Malcolm and Associates. 1984. *Andragogy in Action*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Lawrence, Randee Lipson. 2012. "Storytelling and Transformative Learning." In *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Eds. Edward W. Taylor, Patricia Cranton, and Associates, 471-484. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Lawrence, Randee Lipson, and Craig A. Mealman. 1999. "Collaborative Ways of Knowing: Storytelling, Metaphor and the Emergence of the Collaborative Self." In *Proceedings of the 40th Annual Adult Education Research Conference*. Accessed February 20, 2015, www.thenext.ca/files/read-collaborative-ways-of-knowing-storytelling-metaphor.pdf

This article, set within a secular educational context, serves as a good reminder for the role of storytelling and metaphor within collaborative learning.

LeFever, Marlene D. 1995. *Learning Styles: Reaching Everyone God Gave You to Teach*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook.

Lingenfelter, Judith, and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. 2003. *Teaching Cross-culturally: An Incarnational Model*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Lunsford, Andrea A., Kirt H. Wilson, and Rosa A. Eberly, eds. 2009. *The SAGE Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*. New York: Sage.

Madinger, Charles. Forthcoming. "Oral Preference Scale." University of Kentucky.

Madinger seeks to improve on Abney's assessment tool.

_____. Forthcoming. "Orality Framework Theory: Designing Messages for the Oral Majority." Unpublished article.

_____. 2013. "A Literate's Guide to the Oral Galaxy." *Orality Journal* 2(2):11-41.

_____. 2010. "Coming to Terms with Orality: A Holistic Model." *Missiology* 32(2): 213-240.

Mangalwadi, Vishal. 2011. *The Book that Made your World*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Mangalwadi's work provides a fascinating evaluation of the influence of the Bible on the Western world.

Manus, U.C. 2003. *Intercultural Hermeneutics in Africa: Methods and Approaches*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers.

_____. 2002. "Towards an African Methodology for Biblical Research." *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* xxxiv(1-2): 51.

_____. 1993. *Christ the African King*. Frankfurt am main: Peter Lang.

Marmon, Ellen L. and Susangelina Patrick. 2014. "Speaking of Orality . . . Experimenting with Oral Approaches to Learning in Highly Print Based Classrooms." Paper presented at an ION Forum hosted by Asbury Theological Seminary April 2-4, 2014.

This engaging article, building on scripture, tradition, Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory, and personal experience suggests the need to reevaluate and affirm oral methodologies within graduate education. Specifically, it chronicles elements of both a professor and student's journey in learning how to extend hospitality within the classroom toward oral-preferenced learners. This practical article highlights the power of oral methodologies even for initially skeptical graduate students.

McEntyre, Marilyn. C. 2009. *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

McGilchrist, Iain. 2012. *The Divided Brain and the Search for Meaning*. Amazon Digital Services, Inc.: Yale University Press.

_____. 2009. *The Master and His Emissary*. Padstow: TJ International Ltd.

Merriam, Sharan B., Rosemary Caffarella S. and Lisa M. Baumgartner. 2007. *Learning in Adulthood*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Mentkowski, M. qtd. in Palomba, C. A., and T. W. Banta. 1999. *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Mezirow, Jack. 2009. "Transformative Learning Theory." In *Transformative Learning in Practice*. Eds. Jack Mezirow, Edward W. Taylor, and Associates, 18-31. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

_____. 2000. *Learning as Transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Moon, Jay. 2012. "Encouraging Ducks to Swim: Suggestions for Seminary Professors Teaching Oral Learners." *William Carey International Development Journal* 2(2): 3-10.

Using Abney's oral assessment within graduate community, this article offers a detailed case study of how to encourage a faculty to engage oral-preferenced learners. It is full of helpful websites and ideas to stimulate alternative approaches that are oral-preferenced friendly.

_____. 2012. *Integrative Discipleship: Multi-cultural and Multi-generational Pedagogies for Worldview Transformation*. ASM series. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

_____. 2012. *Ordinary Missionary: A Narrative Approach to Introducing World Missions*. Eugene, Ore.: Resource Publications.

_____. 2012. "Understanding Oral Learners." *Teaching Theology and Religion* 15(1): 29-39.

Moon seeks to create a more hospitable place for oral-preferenced learners, specifically citing examples from personal experiences in the classroom. The section regarding "Suggestions from Oral learners to Educators" is particularly helpful in understanding elements of education that a print-preferenced educator may overlook.

Moreau, Scott, Gary Corwin, and Gary McGee. 2004. *Introducing World Missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

- Morrison, Gary, Steven Ross, Jerold Kemp, and Howard Kalman. 2010. *Designing Effective Instruction*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.
- Mottet, Timothy P., Virginia P. Richmond, and James C. McCorske. 2005. *Handbook of Instructional Communication: Rhetorical and Relational Perspectives*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson.
- Mouton, Jane Srygley and Robert R. Blake. 1984. *Synergogy: A New Strategy for Education, Training and Development*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Mugambi, Jesse. 2001. "Africa and the Old Testament." In *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa*. Eds. Mary N. Getui, Knut Holter, and Victor Zinkaratire. Nairobi: Acton Publishers.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. 1986. *Foolishness to the Greeks*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind. The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Ntrel, Benjamin Abotchue. 1990. "Towards an African Biblical Hermeneutics." *African Theological Journal* 19: 247-254.
- Oduyoye, Modupe. 1995. *The Alphabetical Psalms: Systematic Instruction for a Life of Faith and Trust*. Sefer Commentaries. Binding Unknown.
- _____. 1994. *The Longest Psalms: The Prayers of a Student of Moral Instruction*. Ibadan: Sefer Books.
- Olowola, Cornelius A. 1993. *African Traditional Religion and the Christian Faith*. Achimota: African Christian Press.
- Ong, Walter J. 1982. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Methuen.

While this influential work is familiar to many, it is helpful to consider afresh Ong's premise regarding the nature of writing to restructure the human consciousness, specifically when considering oral assessment. Ong

discusses the paradox that the technologized word can only appeal to higher technology for critique, specifically using Plato's written critic of writing as an illustration. Furthermore, Ong raises substantial questions on the limitations of print-conditioned-consciousnesses to evaluate and represent oral assessment. Acknowledging literacy's influence in even raising the question of assessment, a potential question remains for theological educators within oral-preferenced communities: "Is there anything akin to assessment within the indigenous oral culture of the learners and could that in any way inform their educational philosophy, practice, and evaluation?"

Osaji, Bede. 1979. "Language Survey in Nigeria, Publication B 13 – 81." International Center for Research on Bilingualism. Quebec.

Osborne, Grant. 2006. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic.

Pagitt, Doug. 2005. *Preaching Re-Imagined*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Parker, William. 1980. "Cultural and Academic Stress Imposed on Afro-Americans: Implications for Educational Change." Princeton: E.R.I.C. #ED134646. www.eric.ed.gov

Pavlish, C. "Narrative Inquiry into Life Experiences of Refugee Women and Men," *International Nursing Review*, Volume 54, Issue 1, pages 28–34, March 2007

Plueddemann, James E. 2009. *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic.

This work brings experience and perspective to what is the future of missions.

Runyon, Daniel. V. 2014. *Tribal Bible: Stories of God from Oral Tradition*. Spring Arbor: Saltbox Press.

Runyon, Leilah. E. 1962. *I Learn to Read about Jesus*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co.

- Ryken, Leland. 1974. *The Literature of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Sabourin, Leopold. 1969. *The Psalms: Their Origins and Meaning*, vol. 1. New York: Albe House.
- Scarborough, Lynn W. 2009. *Talk Like Jesus*. Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House.
- Shaw, Daniel. 1988. *Transculturation*. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library.
- Siegel, Daniel. J. 2012. *The Developing Mind*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Smith, James K. 2009. *Desiring the Kingdom*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics.
- Snyder, Howard A. and Daniel V. Runyon. 2002. *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- So, Damon. 2013. "How Should a Theological Institution Prepare Students/ Leaders Who Will Go Out into the Field to Train Local People (Storytellers) to Tell Bible Stories Effectively?" In *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts*. Eds. Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy, 29-38. Hong Kong: International Orality Network.
- Sogaard, Viggo. 1986. *Applying Christian Communication*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Microfilms.
- Sternberg, Meir. 1987. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Sweet, Michael and Larry K. Michaelsen. 2012. *Team Based Learning in Social Sciences and Humanities: Group Work that Works to Generate Critical Thinking and Engagement*. Virginia: Stylus.
- Taiwo, Cornelius O. 1980. *The Nigeria Education System*. Lagos: Thomas Nelson (Nigeria) Limited.

Thomas, Rosalind. 1992. *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosalind is a substantial scholar working specifically in issues related to literacy and orality in the ancient world.

Tienou, Tite. 1970. *The Theological Task of the Church in Africa*. Ghana: African Christian Press.

Tyler, J. and A. Swarz. 2012. "Storytelling and Transformative Learning." In *The Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Eds. Edward W. Taylor, Patricia Cranton, and Associates, 455-469. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Ukpong, Justin S. 2006. *African Interpretation of the Bible: A Reader*. Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature.

_____. 2002. "Inculturation Hermeneutics: An African Approach to Biblical Interpretation." In *The Bible in a World Context, An Experiment in Contextual Hermeneutics*. Eds. Walter Dietrich and Ulrich Luz. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

_____. 2002. "The Story of Jesus' Birth (Luke 1-2): An African Reading." *The Bible in a World Context: An Experiment in Cultural Hermeneutics*. Eds. Walter Dietrich and Ulrich Luz. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

_____. 2000. *The Bible in Africa*. New York: E.J. Brill.

_____. 1995. "Rereading the Bible with African Eyes: Inculturation and Hermeneutics." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 91: 3-14.

Vella, Jane. 2001. *Taking Learning to Task, Creative Strategies for Teaching Adults*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Vella, Jane and Paula Berardinelli and Jim Burrow. 1998. *How Do They Know They Know*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Vella, Berardinelli, and Burrow's educational theory and practical steps incorporate evaluation into the learning process so learners *know that they*

know when they can do. Vella challenges the stereotypical conceptions of teaching which can feel threatening, and her whole dialogical education system requires substantial work on the part of the educator yet it respects the role of the learner, holds the educator accountable to actually teach, and can produce learners who are confident in their mastery of the material. Within the context of oral-preferenced education, such immediate and concrete learning has the potential to be highly effective.

Waltke, Bruce K. 2007. *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical and Thematic Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Weaver, John B. 2008. "Narratives of Reading in Luke-Acts." *Theological Librarianship* 1 (1): 22-37.

Wilken, Robert. 2004. "Christian Formation in the Early Church." In *Educating People of Faith: Exploring the History of Jewish and Christian Communities*. Ed. John Van Engen, 48-62. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Willard, Dallas. 2002. *Renovation of the Heart*. Colorado Springs: Navpress.

Willis, Avery T. Jr., and Mark Snowden. 2010. *Truth That Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World*. Colorado Springs: NavPress.

Yorkes, Gosnell. 1995. "Biblical Hermeneutics: An Afrocentric Perspective." *Journal of Religion and Theology* 2 (2): 145-158.

Zahniser, Mathias. 1997. *Symbol and Ceremony: Making Disciples across Cultures*. Monrovia, Calif.: MARC.

Ceremonies, rituals, and symbols are powerful tools within all cultures and Zahniser strongly urges the Church to consider how disciple-making could take advantage of such tools for God's redemptive purposes, specifically because God created culture and is still active in cultures today. While specifically recognizing the inherent danger of syncretism, he draws from Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. He offers suggestions on how to infuse other religious ceremonies and symbols with Christian meaning. Zahniser's ideas necessitate substantial investigation by educators within oral-preferenced communities as they consider the role of elements such as ritual and symbol within assessment.

EPILOGUE

The Gospel and the Gospels

Grant Lovejoy

If you want to stir up a group of evangelical seminary professors, pastors, and missionaries, just suggest, “You don’t have a biblical understanding of the gospel.” Panelists at the Beyond Literate Western Contexts consultation were careful not to say anything as stark as that (at least not publicly!). They were judicious in what they wrote and said.

But one panel of participants did conclude that typical Western, Protestant evangelical presentations of the gospel include far less than the total scope of the gospel as it is described in Scripture. What many Protestant evangelicals say about the gospel is not incorrect, they argued, as much as it is incomplete. In a sense, the participants at the Beyond Literate Western Contexts consultation were considering whether the gospel proclaimed by Western (and westernized) Christians is too small. Minimally, they argued, it must give much more attention to the themes of honor and shame.

Whether the gospel we present is too small hinges on how we understand the gospel. Jayson Georges, Werner Mischke, and Jackson Wu have addressed that question in their chapters 1, 3, and 5. Subsequent to the consultation, Andy Crouch, the Executive Editor of *Christianity Today* quoted each of them in the March 2015 *issue*, and each of them also published further on the subject. Jayson Georges authored *The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame and Fear Cultures* and created an assessment tool for people entering another culture called The Culture Test (available at theculturetest.com). Werner Mischke published *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World*. Jackson Wu has *One*

Gospel for All Nations: A Practical Approach for Biblical Contextualization in process with William Carey Library. In its January-February 2015 issue, *Mission Frontiers* focused on the topic of “The Power of Honor,” publishing articles by consultation panelists Georges, Mischke, Wu, and Phil Thornton, plus others.

Western Christians in the Protestant evangelical stream have emphasized the aspects of the biblical gospel that speak most meaningfully to Western culture. It is a natural thing to do. The Bible describes God’s redemptive work by using a variety of different images and metaphors. Christians are adopted, born again, cleansed, purified, made holy, delivered from evil, incorporated into the Body of Christ, redeemed, saved, forgiven of sin, released from shame, restored to honor, made a new creation, made conquerors, declared and made righteous, made citizens of a new spiritual kingdom, and much more.

Jesus is declared to be the Messiah, the promised descendant of David, the righteous Son who will return to judge the world, and the king who will reign righteously over a peaceable new kingdom. Creation’s groaning under the burden of sin will come to an end and the whole creation will feel the effects of Jesus’ cosmic victory over Satan, demons, sin, and suffering. The good news about God’s saving work is so far-reaching in its scope that no single way of describing it is capable of adequately conveying the totality of the gospel.

That said, communication has to start somewhere. Different cultural groups find certain biblical images easier to understand and more meaningful. Christians introducing the Bible’s message to non-Christians naturally use those biblical images and metaphors for the gospel that resonate most deeply with their audience.

Good communicators use the familiar to explain the less familiar. Several contributors to this volume assert that much of the world will find the Bible’s language and metaphors drawn from the realms of honor and shame much more understandable and meaningful than other language that Western Christians tend to use. What’s more, references to honor and shame (and related concepts like purity and impurity, inclusion and exclusion, and more) are found throughout the Bible.

Describing the gospel in terms of honor and shame is thoroughly scriptural and may make more sense to a majority of the world’s cultures. Stories, songs, dramas, dance, poetry, and proverbs that convey these themes may connect better with honor/shame cultures that prefer oral forms of communication.

Christian workers who provide leadership training and theological education in cultures where honor and shame are predominant themes need to reconsider whether their approach does justice to the prominence of honor and shame in scripture and in culture. This may involve reworking a single presentation, training modules or courses, or even a curriculum. Assessing oral preference, the second major theme of the consultation, has a major role to play in that decision.

If theological education is designed to ground students in the gospel as understood in this wider biblical sense, then a fresh reconsideration of the nature of the gospel can also call for a review of the structure, content, and delivery systems for theological education. Our contributors have offered a number of case studies and descriptions of assessment models that can help with this process. Theological education that is contextualized for oral, honor/shame-oriented cultures needs to be rooted in a solidly biblical grasp of the gospel understood in its fullness.

The Gospels

New Testament scholar Jonathan T. Pennington may offer timely suggestions for theological educators looking for ways to include these themes in theological training provided to people serving in honor and shame-based oral cultures. In *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (2012), Pennington argues that Western Christians in the Protestant, Reformed, evangelical stream need to rediscover the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

In chapter 3, titled “Why Do We Need the Gospels? (Or Why Saint Paul Is Not Enough),” he describes this stream of evangelical Christianity that for a variety of reasons has gravitated more toward the letters of Paul and given the four Gospels short shrift.

This neglect of the Gospels, Pennington says, can be traced in part to a focus on salvation as the forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus. That is a particularly Pauline way of putting it, Pennington observes, so it is easier to teach that summary of the gospel from Paul’s writings. In his own situation, the church in which he grew up did not teach and preach from the Gospels frequently, so his appreciation for them was not cultivated.

Later, when he learned to study scripture in detail, the exegetical methods that he learned did not generate a lot of insight when applied to the Gospels. (My own

experience was similar. The exegetical processes that I honed in seminary worked well on epistles but did not work as well on narrative. They were the wrong tools for the task. I suppose that it is my fault, since I took electives on the epistles, but not on the Gospels.)

Pennington thinks the primary reason for the neglect of the Gospels among Protestant Reformed Christians is that the Gospels are untidy and hard to handle. The Gospels include parables that are open to multiple interpretations. They have a large measure of descriptive material that leaves us wondering how much of the descriptive is prescriptive for Christian living and how much is just, well, description.

Even when it is clear that Jesus is giving instructions that he expects his disciples to follow, applying them to contemporary life is sometimes confusing. Turn the other cheek? To everyone? What about defending my family or friends? So much of what one finds in the Gospels is not the straightforward, closely-reasoned, explicitly doctrinal content that certain churches prefer. The Gospels do not stay in the relative safety of lofty abstract ideas like justification, sanctification, and glorification. Pennington admits that his description of the challenges includes some hyperbole, and so it does. But there is also more than a little truth in it.

Despite the challenges that the four Gospels pose for interpretation and Christian living, however, Pennington argues that Christianity needs to give a close attention to them. He gives nine reasons:

1. The Gospels “have been central to the church throughout its history” (2012, 38). This is evident in many branches of Christianity, which still read from the Gospels every week as part of their liturgy. The Gospels are neglected in worship primarily in churches that still reflect the Protestant Reformation’s need to nail down the doctrine of justification clearly.
2. Churches need the Gospels because Paul and the other New Testament writers build on the Gospels. The story of Jesus and his teachings formed the core of early Christian worship. The theology of Paul presupposes the story of Jesus, even though Paul does not make many explicit references to specific events of Jesus’ life. One does not make explicit those understandings that are deeply shared and beyond need for explicit mention.

3. The Gospels circulated for decades before the epistles were written, so it is incorrect to give the epistles priority on the grounds that they were written before the Gospel accounts were written. The oral traditions containing the stories of and about Jesus were powerful influences long before the canonical epistles were written.
4. In the Gospels, Christians see more clearly and explicitly the overarching story line of the Bible. In them, the stories from the Old Testament are tied explicitly to New Testament institutions and events, and to the significance of Jesus' birth, death, resurrection, and ascension. They articulate much of the culmination of the Great Story of the Bible.
5. The Gospels "offer a concentrated exposure to the biblical emphasis on the coming kingdom of God" (44). Jesus' miracles were a demonstration that the promised Kingdom of God had been begun with Jesus' coming. Although the epistles talk about the already/not yet aspect of the Kingdom of God, it is the Gospels that discuss it most often and vividly. In the Gospels, we see the King in action, a foretaste of what awaits his disciples in the full arrival of the kingdom.
6. "We need the Gospels because there are different languages or discourses of truth. Propositional doctrine . . . is one crucial and necessary discourse of truth, but it is not the only one. Story or narrative is another equally valid way of presenting and approaching truth" (44-45). God has given us many types of discourse in scripture, including narrative, poetry, and songs, as well as didactic argument, and it is a mistake to privilege one discourse over the others. Each form of discourse has its God-intended contribution to make to the life of the church, and must be allowed to do it. None can substitute for the others.
7. The Gospels "are in many ways a more comprehensive and paradigmatic type of map" (46). That is not to exclude other forms of discourse, but to say that scriptural narrative is more inclusive and complete than some other forms of discourse. We need the Gospels because story is a uniquely powerful and transforming type of discourse. "The most powerful discourse of truth is not abstract doctrinal propositions but stories and images and art because these engage our whole person, not just our minds" (46). We are created for story and use story to make sense of our world. Stories fire our imaginations with

hope and inspire us. They enable us to imagine a reality that does not yet exist and begin shaping ourselves and our surroundings for it. Stories draw us into an experience of the reality of God; they do not just provide information about him or his truth.

8. The Gospels also enable us to experience Jesus in a more realistic way than we get when we think of him only in terms of theological summaries. Through narratives, we get a more complete and textured encounter with Jesus. We find him playful, but also capable of sharp rebuke. His gestures of solidarity with the poor and the oppressed startle us with his depth of mercy and compassion. His capacity to surprise us is especially evident in narratives from the Gospels. No mere summary can do justice to the particularity of the person whom we meet in the Gospels.
9. “In the Gospels alone we have a personal, up-front encounter with Jesus Christ” (48). The epistles’ descriptions of him are not enough by themselves. The vivid encounters with the living Jesus that the Gospels make possible were treasured from the early Church until now. That is why the four Gospels stand at the beginning of the New Testament. The truths about what Jesus said and did are not enough for us; we want to know the man who did and said such things, to encounter him as fully as possible. The Gospels alone provide that opportunity.

Pennington’s case for giving prominence to the Gospels is supported by the rest of his book, in which he lays out a hermeneutically and theologically-sensitive method for reading the Gospels rightly. His call to restore the Gospels to a more prominent place on Paul-dominated churches could also speak to theological education systems that also read scripture through a Pauline lens.

One possible way to shift a curriculum in a more oral direction is to give more prominence to the four Gospels. Narrative is well suited to oral cultures. Jesus had many, many encounters in which shame and honor were at work; the Gospels also provide many opportunities for us to make sure that the gospel, including those elements, is presented. It is something worth exploring.

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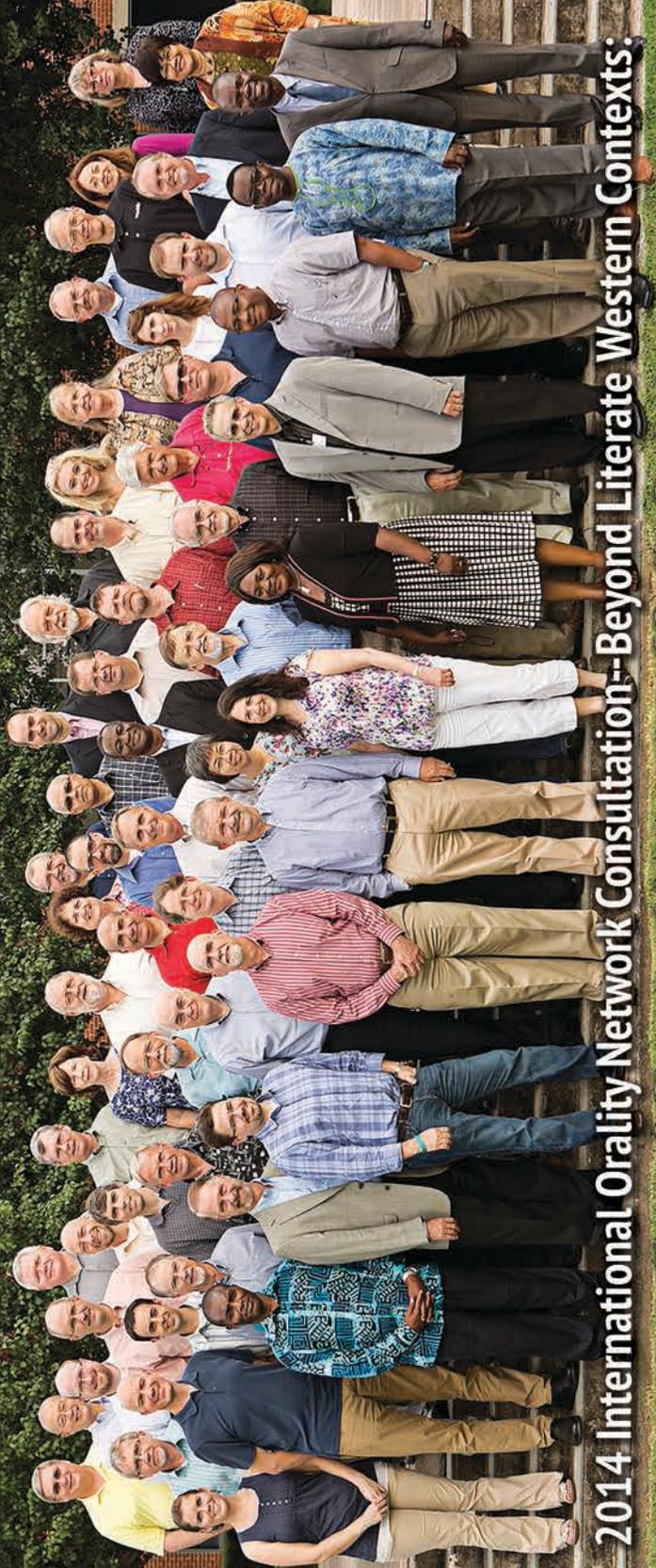
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Honor & Shame and Assessment of Orality Preference

Houston Baptist University

"Indigenous languages and oral cultures are precious people groups who are indelibly linked to their worldviews. The oral communication strategy is critical to the Gospel. I highly recommend your attention to *Beyond Literate Western Contexts*."

- Roy Peterson, President/CEO,
American Bible Society

"I highly recommend this book for all involved in theological training at institutional and organizational levels throughout Africa where a high percentage of its inhabitants learn and communicate effectively through oral preferences."

- Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Chemengich, Executive Director,
Association of Christian Theological Education in Africa

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