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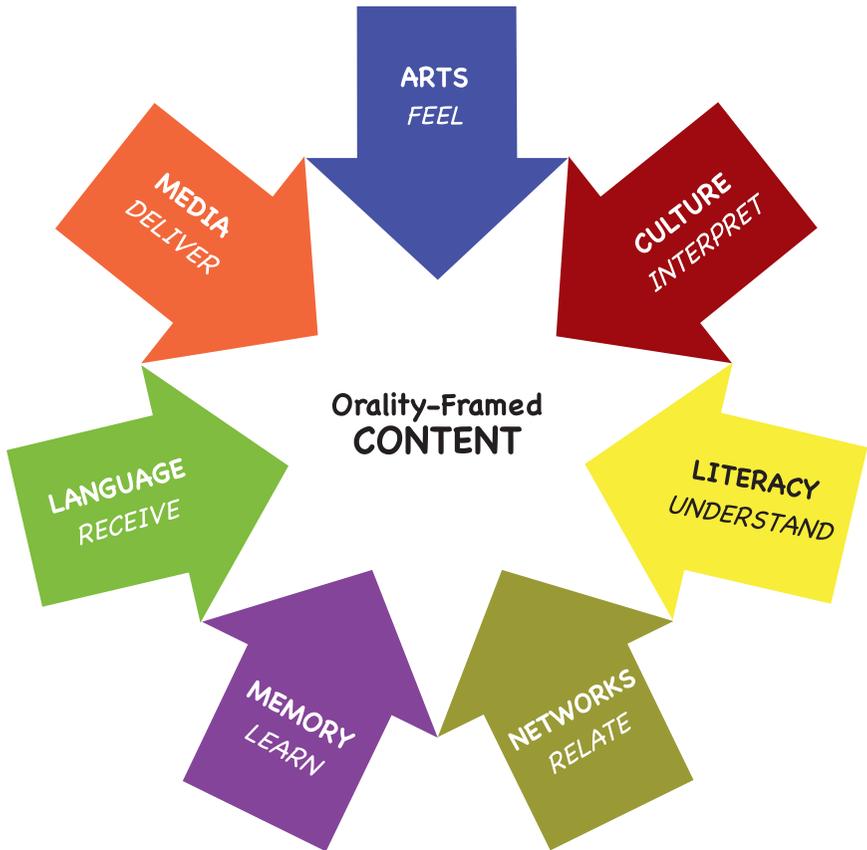
# Orality Journal

*The Word Became Fresh*

## **Arts & Orality Part 1: Foundations and Applications**

**Piper • Kreider • Hawn • Lim • Oswald • Pierce  
Rowe • Carson • Rayl • Ferguson • Unseth  
Hoogerheide • Krabill • Bowman • Lowther • Atkins**

# The Seven Disciplines of Orality



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



**ION**

INTERNATIONAL ORALITY NETWORK

# Orality Journal

*The Word Became Fresh*

Volume 5, Number 1, 2016

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## Cover Photo

A group of women who are part of a choir react with delight as they hear a story told by pastor Elasi, in their mother tongue—Nyanga.

## Additional Photos

All photos not otherwise credited have been contributed by members of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE).

## Word Art

The word art at the beginning of each article was created using Wordle.net with the font *Loved by the King*.

## Articles

All of the articles in this issue—aside from those by authors Atkins, Hoogerheide, and Unseth—have been adapted or directly reprinted with permission from William Carey Library from the volume *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*, edited by James R. Krabill, gen. ed., and Frank Fortunato, Robin P. Harris, and Brian Schrag (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013).

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.’”

Exodus 31:1-5 (ESV)

“You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!”

Psalms 30:11-12 (ESV)

# Orality Journal

*The Word Became Fresh*

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

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# Co-Editors' Note

*Samuel E. Chiang and William Coppedge*

*"In the beginning God created..."* Genesis 1:1

*"In the beginning was the Word..."* John 1:1

The International Orality Network and the International Council of Ethnodoxologists are excited to collaborate in both 2016 editions of the Orality Journal. The two networks, through this publication, are exploring the relationship between orality and the arts.

The beginnings of both Genesis and the Gospel of John offer a natural starting point for a consideration of this unique relationship. God Himself is a creative God, creating not from impulse nor for mere utilitarian purposes, but *creatio ex nihilo*: he creates out of the overflow of his creative being. This Creator God is the Triune God - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus far from being an individualized activity, divine creation maintains an inherent communal component as each member of the Trinity participates (Genesis 1:1-2; Isaiah 42:5; Proverbs 8:22-31; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-4, 11:6) in bringing creation into existence.

This Triune God creates by communicating though: *"All things came into being through the Word."*<sup>1</sup> Creation and communication are inextricably bound together in the nature of the Triune God. Naturally, every human person, made in the image of a Triune Creator, is inherently creative and communicative. The articles offered in this edition of the Orality Journal provide an array of opportunities to consider such creativity and artistic communication from various cultures around the world.

What needs to not be missed, though, is the Trinitarian component that threads its way through these case studies. Whether discussing henna art or music, these stories describe individual artists and their artistic expressions, yet every one of them creates and communicates within a communal network of relationships. Herein lies a subtle witness to Trinitarian nature of the creative God who made all human persons like himself.

The authors and participants within these case studies are seeking to probe the depths of the creative arts and oral communication as both a means to discovering echoes of the Triune Creator but also as a means to understand specific human cultures. Far from extracting human persons from their cultural context, they believe the Incarnation is a testimony to God's commitment to enter into human culture. Like Jesus, they are not mere observers of culture only. These writers and artists desire people from all cultures to be in communion with their Triune Creator which ultimately makes possible the restoration of human creativity (the arts) and human communication. For when one enters into communion with the Triune God, transformation becomes possible, not only for an individual person but for one's cultural community. As editors, we gladly commend these articles to you in the hope that they may stimulate godly artistic creativity in your current cultural context as well as deeper communion with the Triune Creator.

On the journey together,



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<sup>1</sup>John 1.3.

# Note from Guest Editors

*Katie Hoogerheide and James R. Krabill*

*Katie Hoogerheide serves as Associate Director of the Center for Excellence in World Arts at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics in Dallas, Texas. Her work and graduate-level studies include experience in the areas of organ performance, ethnoarts, linguistics, and education. She also works as Associate Editor for the Global Forum on Arts and Christian Faith ([artsandchristianfaith.org](http://artsandchristianfaith.org)).*

*James R. Krabill served from 1978–1996 as a Mennonite mission worker teaching Bible and church history in oral culture settings among African-initiated churches in West Africa. Currently serving as Senior Executive for Global Ministries with the Mennonite Mission Network, Krabill has authored or edited various works, including *Music in the Life of the African Church* (with Roberta King and others, 2008) and *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook* (2013).*

**R**esonate. All of us who have a message we want to share with other people want that communication to resonate in their hearts. When the message is the greatest news ever to come to earth, the story of a Savior, the stakes seem particularly high. And so we seek knowledge, pursuing the wisdom of others who have reported some measure of success in their quest for sharing the message across boundaries.

In that quest for shared knowledge, the International Council of Ethnodoxologists has been asked to guest edit this volume of the Orality Journal. We have been tasked with sharing with you just how much impact the arts can have in cross-cultural communication. Their absence impoverishes communication; their distortion disrupts communication; their genuine presence enriches communication. As you read the articles in this edition, you will see over and over again how the arts help messages with brand-new content to be perceived as more familiar, less foreign. The arts form one critical component for making our messages resonate.

The three articles in the FOUNDATIONS section provide a grounding in biblical, historical, and cultural perspectives on engaging the arts. As Piper explains, the inclusion of indigenous artistic expressions in

worship emerges naturally from biblical principles. Looking at the Early Church, Kreider gives us a view of the timelessness of incorporating artistic expressions into worship. In order to introduce us to the range of physical senses that can be involved in worship through the arts, Hawn & Lim draw from various symbols used across cultural boundaries.

The arts have been identified by the International Orality Network as one of at least seven aspects influencing orality-framed content (see “The Seven Disciplines of Orality” graphic on the inside front cover). Although these seven aspects appear as discrete arrows, in reality each of the seven is inextricably woven through the others. None can carry a message independently. All join together to create effective oral communication.

The arts are no exception. This volume highlights the arts, but even a cursory glance through the articles in the APPLICATIONS section shows the great extent to which the arts play an indispensable role in strengthening the other six disciplines in the act of communication. As just a few examples:

- **MEDIA:** Oswald shares how “vivid indigenous arts” in Tibet have brought the story of Jesus to life through film. Authentic arts content makes even the best delivered media resonate more deeply with the local people.
- **LANGUAGE:** Hoogerheide and Unseth address the importance of using language with the nuances of form familiar to an audience. Relevant artistic structures, discourse markers, and storytelling conventions make even the most accurate pronunciation, vocabulary, and word order seem more familiar and less foreign.
- **MEMORY:** Both Unseth and Bowman tap into the arts as ways of internalizing biblical stories and their messages. Familiar artistic expressions provide vehicles for more rapid and satisfying retention of new content.
- **LITERACY:** Unseth mentions the value of written collections of proverbs for understanding how to communicate more naturally within a culture. Only locally-recognized forms and expressions will serve to inform connecting effectively with the oral traditions.
- **NETWORKS:** Pierce, Rowe, Carson, and Rayl (“Sharing Faith”) each illustrate natural relationship building around the arts. Well-loved art

forms draw people to connect with others through their hearts rather than only through their minds or their physical presence.

- **CULTURE:** Krabill and Krabill depict the power of interpreting biblical concepts through the lens of local cultural rituals. Everyday artistic elements speak into local people's lives organically from the rhythms in the place they call home.

In each scenario, we see how arts are part and parcel of communities, inseparable from so many contexts of communication. Our attempts at sharing about Christ in a way that resonates with any group of people will not ring true without the natural colors, gestures, sounds, and communication frameworks familiar to those people. Without them, any incarnation of the gospel remains incomplete, a robotic, lifeless framework, rather than a living creation.

Just as the arts saturate their communication contexts, so the different elements within the realm we call "the arts" also blend together. We often speak of artistic domains such as music, dance, or drama. In reality, any artistic element is nearly always accompanied by several more, blurring our attempts at drawing boundaries between types of artistic expression. Consider the Balinese paintings inspired by another form of visual art, carved masks, and also by traditional dance postures and shadow puppet figures (Rayl, "A Balinese Painter"). Consider the tendency towards multi-arts descriptions such as "dance drama" (Rowe), or the account in which people hearing music spontaneously break into dance (Lowther). We can neither extract the arts from their communicative contexts nor specify one kind of artistic expression as consistently distinct from another.

Terminology changes. Arts research around the world continues to uncover new ways of talking about arts within different societies. The ancient Greeks used to indicate music, dance, lyrics, and poetry all with the one word *mousikē*.<sup>1</sup> English speakers might refer to both lyrics and melody by the term "song" but may or may not think of lyrics when they speak about "music." The point is not to separate and label artistic expressions, but rather to become aware of those elements of artistic expression that make communication contexts authentic for the people in a given culture.

That's why we chose a few artistic keywords from each APPLICATION article for listing in the Table of Contents—as you scan the list, you'll get just a taste of the rich array of artistic combinations within the cultures of the world. For example, through her description of trauma healing, Atkins introduces us to carving, wood burning, hat weaving, wall decorations, songs, laments, and dances. Likewise, Ferguson's journey with storytelling taps into drama, dance, song, painting, henna, and music videos. As you read the articles, you'll discover just how much these different artistic elements interact with each other. The Wordles at the top of each article also provide a sense of how all artistic expressions are connected through the commonality of their communicative effect, although some rise to the surface more in certain contexts compared to others.

It is our hope and prayer that the articles found in these pages will encourage you to new levels of finding and appreciating the power of artistic expression in your own communication contexts. We think you'll start noticing artistic elements in places you might not have thought to look before—in the materials, sounds, sights, and body movements around you. And, as with all the other disciplines of orality, our best results will come from encouraging the people of the culture to share the good news with others around them. They embody communication in a way no outsider ever can.

### ICE and ION Collaborate

It has been a special privilege as guest editors of this journal and as representatives of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE) to partner with ION in this important collaborative effort. ICE began in 2003 as a small group of people working in cross-cultural arts ministries with a shared vision “to see Christ-followers from every culture express their faith through the own heart music and other arts.”<sup>2</sup> In its first decade the ICE network grew to over three hundred associates, some of whom launched their own national and regional initiatives in Latin America, the Philippines, and the Korean diaspora.

Several charter members of ICE (Tom Ferguson, Frank Fortunato, Robin Harris, Roberta King, Paul Neeley, Brian Schrag, and others) were involved in the orality movement in its early years, giving papers at ION gatherings on the ways in which music and arts connected to storying and orality. In 2007, Avery Willis approached ICE leaders to launch a Music and Arts Task Force in ION, and the foundational meetings that took place were energized by the vision of promoting a global movement for the use of all culturally-appropriate arts in making disciples of oral learners.

In addition, the Task Force was committed to the idea that storytelling, singing, dancing, dramatizing, drawing, sculpting, and other local arts are fundamentally interrelated means of telling God’s story. They affirmed that music and arts support other strategies to evangelize, disciple, and empower oral people, but that they can also stand on their own in communicating God’s story. Robin Harris served as the first Task Force coordinator, eventually passing the baton to Frank Fortunato, who served for several years and was succeeded by Erica Logan.

The arts presence grew steadily at ION with Task Force participants teaching and learning about ethnodoxology approaches, and bringing multicultural worship to ION gatherings. Collaboration between the ethnodoxology movement and its orality counterpart also grew, resulting in regular participation in one another’s events, publications,<sup>3</sup> and other initiatives. Arts was recognized within ION as one of the “Seven Disciplines within Orality”<sup>4</sup> and storytelling, once the primary

concern of the orality movement, came to be considered as only one of many effective forms of communicative art forms to be employed in the complex task of discipling oral learners.

The ION and ICE networks thus have much in common in our desire to see God's kingdom grow and mature through every form and means of communication God has graciously put at our disposal. May the collaboration illustrated in this issue of the *Orality Journal* be a sign pointing to even more such efforts between us in the days and years to come!

With special thanks to Samuel Chiang, who first invited us to consider this project, and to Robin Harris, President of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists, who offered invaluable counsel and logistical support as the project took shape and moved toward completion.

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Mike Cartwright's article on "Greek Music" in the *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, online at [www.ancient.eu/Greek\\_Music/](http://www.ancient.eu/Greek_Music/) (accessed November 6, 2015).

<sup>2</sup>From the ICE website at [www.worldofworship.org](http://www.worldofworship.org).

<sup>3</sup>There were several chapters which specifically focused on Bible-storying methods and case studies in ICE's large volume edited by James R. Krabill, Frank Fortunato, Robin P. Harris, and Brian Schrag—*Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook* (William Carey Library, 2013), [www.ethnodoxologyhandbook.com](http://www.ethnodoxologyhandbook.com).

<sup>4</sup>Samuel E. Chiang, "Learning from my own mistakes," *Mission Frontiers* 36 (2014):3-4.

## Music Brings Comfort in Disaster Relief

Roger W. Lowther

*Roger Lowther is the Founder and Director of Community Arts Tokyo ([www.communityarts.jp](http://www.communityarts.jp)), as well as the Director of Faith and Art at Grace City Church Tokyo ([www.gracecitychurch.jp](http://www.gracecitychurch.jp)). Roger received his Master of Music in Organ Performance from The Juilliard School and his Bachelor of Science in Applied Physics from Columbia University's School of Engineering and Applied Science. Roger and his wife Abi helped start Grace City Relief and Tsukuda Loves Tohoku after the trifold disasters of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear radiation and have since been very involved in relief efforts. Roger has been serving with Mission to the World since 2005. He lives in downtown Tokyo, Japan with his wife Abi and four small boys. More information can be found on their blog: [rogerlowther.blogspot.com](http://rogerlowther.blogspot.com).*

Flute keyboard  
shakuhachi dance  
instruments

It was hard not to stare at the devastation surrounding us or shrink at the stench of decaying fish and squid washed in by the tsunami that struck Japan on March 11, 2011. Our group of twenty-two volunteers—pastors, missionaries, church members, and others—drove two trucks and two vans into a gravel lot, recently cleared of debris, and started unloading supplies. Others started making meat and veggie stew on large propane burners. A little over a month after the earthquake, we were doing our

best to help the survivors of a community in Ishinomaki.

The pleasant aromas of the cooking soup drifted through the air, a smell almost forgotten by those who began to line up. It awakened a hunger, an appetite, not only for delicious, hot food, but also for life. Hope itself was wafting through the air.

Bruce Huebner, graduate of Tokyo University of the Arts, walked up and down the lines of waiting people playing his *shakuhachi*

(bamboo flute). The traditional melodies gently carried familiar stories of both pain and peace, awakening a joy for life that had been forgotten. Bruce played not to distract people from the boredom of waiting in line or as mere entertainment. His music brought a delicious aroma of a different kind, one just as real and meaningful, pointing to something that will always satisfy and can never be lost. Workers and survivors alike heard it and remembered.

*What part does music play in disaster relief?* was not a question on my mind at the time, as I and everyone else were overwhelmed by the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters. But at the very first shelter I brought supplies to, I spied an old electronic keyboard in the corner. When I mentioned to the shelter manager that I was a musician, everyone started to set up chairs and gather around. Once I started playing, they did not want me to stop.

Hundreds of thousands of people resided in shelters after the earthquake, grief-stricken and unable to move forward with their lives. People need love, and music opened doors for us to remain in the shelters and share that love

long after the need for material supplies had ended. In the scores of relief concerts that first year after the disaster, building relationships was paramount. After hearing us play, people willingly opened their lives to us and shared their stories.

We have witnessed dramatic changes in the mood of a shelter during a concert. “Bravo!” and “Wonderful!” ring through the air in a festive way. Children come up to play with us. People repeatedly break down in tears as some deal with their grief for the very first time. As a thank you to us, one energetic 84-year-old gentleman sang songs from his youth, bringing cheers from everyone in the shelter. One damaged community center was transformed for a little while into an elegant concert hall as the music transcended the surroundings.

The most dramatic response occurred at Onagawa Nuclear Power Plant’s shelter following a moment of silence for the two-month anniversary of the tsunami. The mood was incredibly somber, and we realized the usual upbeat opening to a concert was far from appropriate. Bruce came

up with the brilliant idea to call out a melody on his *shakuhachi* from one side of the gymnasium. Steve Sacks echoed a varied response from the other side of the room on his flute. Calls and responses of comforting melodies crisscrossed the room, mesmerizing us with their healing power. As we were leaving, one of the junior high girls got up the courage to play her flute. Bruce and Steve quickly joined in, and before long a whole group of adults were joyfully dancing in their celebration of life!

I have played with other Tokyo-based professionals in schools, hotels, sports complexes, community centers, and even outdoors. Setting up my portable digital organ never fails to draw crowds and comments, but nothing compares to the reactions when I start to play. “Wow! You’ve turned our gymnasium into a beautiful cathedral,” one shelter manager told me. People always send us away with, “Please come back, and play longer next time!”

Ten Christians from The Juilliard School came with me to the Watanoha Elementary School shelter to help in musical relief work (one of fourteen concerts

they gave in twelve days) three months after the tsunami struck. As the afternoon light began to wane, refugees pulled out their flashlights and lanterns so we could all see the music. The howling winds of a typhoon raging outside had knocked out the power and created an eerie atmosphere inside the gymnasium full of people. Torrential downpours created lakes of standing water surrounding the building. Yet the music allowed us all to relax and feel like everything was going to be okay.

At an International Arts Movement conference in New York City years ago, Jeremy Begbie encapsulated the importance of music in disaster relief. He said:

In a world that is so obviously not as it ought to be, it is the calling of artists to be agents of a new world, a redeemed world. Whenever we start to believe that nothing can ever be different, that our homes, relationships, careers are basically stuck in a groove and can never change and never will change, whenever we start to believe that the horrors of the world just have to be, the emaciated child compelled to beg at a

road side, or the prostitute forced to the streets to feed her drug addiction, whenever we start to believe that there can never be anything new under the sun, *it's the artist's calling to make us believe things can be different, that life can be new, that a new world is possible*, a world that ought to be.<sup>1</sup>

Neither my training in conservatory nor my job as a church musician could have prepared me for that first year after the earthquake. However, my role as an artist in disaster relief fit as clearly and naturally as if we had planned for it all along. The aroma of beauty plays a powerful part in the healing of individuals and community reformation.

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<sup>1</sup>International Arts Movement Conference, "Redemptive Culture: Creating the World that Ought To Be," February 23, 2007. New York City.







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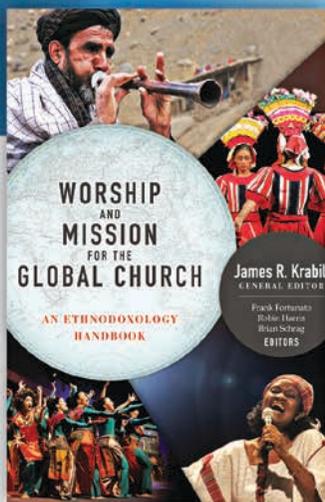
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