

Volume 5, Number 2, 2016

ISSN 2324-6375

Orality Journal

The Word Became Fresh



Arts & Orality Part 2: Equipping for Ministry

**Logan • Hall-Heimbecker • Rajendran • Harris • Sanha
Bauson • Goffe • Schrag • Hollingsworth • Negrão
Saurman • Neeley • Scheuermann • Rowe • Reggy
Bowman • Stahl**

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The Word Became Fresh

Volume 5, Number 2, 2016

ISBN 978-962-7673-36-1

ISSN 2324-6375

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).

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!

Psalm 90:17 (ESV)

One generation shall commend your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.

Psalm 145:4 (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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ISBN 978-962-7673-36-1

ISSN 2324-6375

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PRINTED IN HONG KONG

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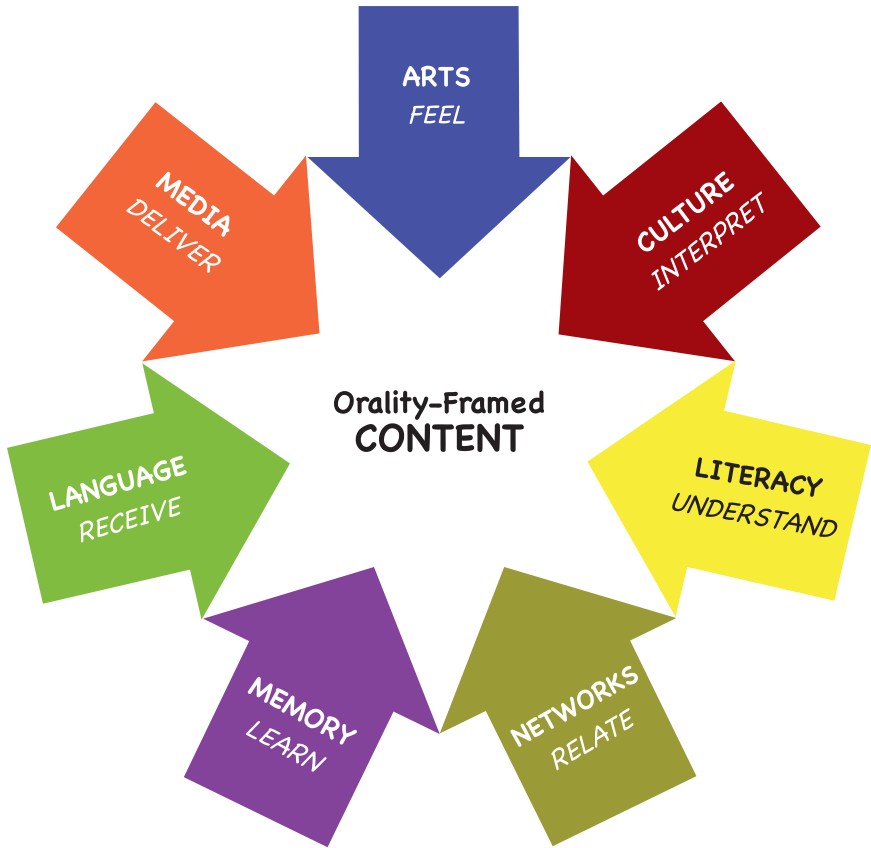
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Courtesy of Dr. Chuck Madinger who leads Global Impact Mission and serves on the International Orality Network's Leadership Team facilitating the Research Task Force.



ION

INTERNATIONAL ORALITY NETWORK

Co-Editors' Note

Samuel E. Chiang and William Coppedge

Orality and the Arts in the Early Church

The multi-faceted nature of communication, specifically orality, continues to surprise and delight us. One specific area inviting further exploration is that of the relationship between *orality* and *the arts* in the growth of the Early Church.

For many coming from cultures heavily influenced by print-based communication paradigms, consideration of orality and the arts among the Early Church feels counter-intuitive.¹ Often in light of the Reformation and the subsequent Evangelical emphasis on the sacred text of scripture, it becomes easy to project a printed mindset back onto previous generations' experience with God's word. This mentality ends up reflecting, usually unintentionally, a form of communication snobbery. But for us to better understand the relationship of orality, the arts and contemporary mission praxis, we need to better understand that orality and artistic expression—specifically creative elements like oral performance—would have been central to the Early Church's communication practice.²

For example an argument can be made that many of the New Testament writings were either transcripts collected from oral performances or they were composed orally through dictation and then written down but for the purpose of being orally performed.³ Therefore most of the Early Church (some argue as much as 95 percent) experienced the scriptures not by reading but through oral performance.⁴ Is oral performance exactly what Paul had in mind when he recommended that the churches of Colosse and Laodicea were to “read” each other's letters “in the church”?⁵ These “readings” would have been both an *oral* and an *artistic* communication experience involving a text but also a performer, the audience, and a shared communal space. Therefore while more needs to be investigated, our own interest in the interrelationships between oral, artistic, and textual discourse seems to have clear biblical precedent.

In the Spring 2016 edition of the *Orality Journal*, volume one in a two-part series on *Orality and the Arts*, we focused our attention on exploring the power of artistic expression for capturing and transforming people's lives. This first volume sought to demonstrate how twenty-first century Christians are allowing the arts, whether henna, dance, or visual art to "orally" speak, visualizing what are so often invisible spiritual realities. We saw that culturally adapted artistic expressions, many oral in nature, are creating liminal spaces—spiritual thresholds, through which people can encounter new understandings of salvation and restoration available through Jesus Christ.

While having established the power of the arts for transformation in volume one, the reality remains that many practitioners today need equipping for contemporary communication challenges. How does one integrate the arts, a strong commitment to the biblical text, worship of the Triune God and contextual mission praxis among oral-preferenced communicators? This Autumn 2016 edition of the *Orality Journal* provides a continuation of volume one, seeking to address this broader practical question from a variety of different perspectives.

The International Orality Network (ION) deeply appreciates the hard work of International Council for Ethnodoxologists (ICE) in their bringing together yet again a tremendous cache of resources, this time for *equipping* people for adopting and adapting the arts into their own ministry contexts. Like many first-century audiences, ICE recognizes many people today still prefer oral methodologies, even if they have been impacted by print. Communication practices like silent encounters with the biblical text or mono-tonal readings are limited in ways that can impact today's audiences. Therefore for those who are only tentatively experimenting with the arts for the first time or for those who are fully convinced of their transformative impact, these articles provide catalytic ideas as well as the practical nuts and bolts for equipping those interested in incorporating artistic expression into their own oral communication practices.

From its origins, Christianity has seen orality and the arts as integral for communication. Like the Early Church, we desire that people from

every tribe, tongue, people and nation will be able to hear, receive, believe and obey the good news of Jesus Christ.

May the Holy Spirit give us creativity and courage as we seek to follow the early Christians' example in communicating Jesus Christ in today's world.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William Cappedge".

William Cappedge

¹David Rhoads, “Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies--Part I,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 36, no. 3 (2006): 118–34; David Rhoads, “Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies--Part II,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 36, no. 4 (2006): 164–84.

²For another helpful introduction to communication practices in first-century Christianity, see P.J.J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, Biblical Performance Criticism (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012).

³Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

⁴Rhoads, “Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies--Part I,” 118.

⁵Colossians 4:16

Note from Guest Editors

Katie Hoogerheide and James R. Krabill

Katie Hoogerheide serves as associate director of the Center for Excellence in World Arts in Dallas, Texas. The overseas experiences particularly influencing her work include time spent living, working, and traveling in Europe, the Middle East, and South Africa. In addition, she draws from work and graduate studies in organ performance, ethnoarts, linguistics, and pedagogy. A member of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists, she also works as associate editor for the Global Forum on Arts and Christian Faith.

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).

And the things you have heard me say in the
presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable
people who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Tim. 2:2 NIV

Resilience! All of us who invest energy into people or projects like to see our work prosper. We love to see individuals, communities, and initiatives grow in strength and in their ability to weather times of hardship. When the cause involves the Kingdom of God, our hearts burn even hotter with the desire to see the gospel message not just firmly rooted, but also thriving within cultures around the world.

How can we encourage such resilience in the communities we serve? How can we support others in pursuing peace, justice, and God himself? The International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE) once again joins with the International Orality Network (ION) in seeking wisdom on these and similar questions. Earlier this year, ICE guest edited a first volume on arts and orality for the Orality Journal, where we explored just how significantly the arts impact communication.¹ In this second volume, we

pursue questions of longevity and durability by sharing current practices in equipping people to invigorate their ministries with the arts.

Drawing from her research on an oral storytelling genre, Robin Harris proposes two keys for promoting resilience in arts traditions: (1) ongoing *innovation* and (2) provision for *transmission*.² In other words, two of our top priorities include encouraging the creation of local arts and empowering others to carry out and pass on best practices for engaging the arts in ministry. The articles in this volume specifically highlight both of these intentions.

Whether you seek equipping for ministry for yourself or for others, we trust you will find a wealth of inspiration, ideas, and resources within these pages. Accompany Cornelius as he prepares artists for an oral arts festival in India (Bowman, “Celebrating the Word”). Get your creative juices flowing with practical ideas for integrating storytelling, songs, paintings, sculptures, drama, and other visuals into preaching (Scheuermann). Find out how participating in “Arts for a Better Future” can energize your ministry, no matter what your involvement with the arts (Schrag). Listen to Jeremias’ story and learn how he uses the arts to support the church in Guinea-Bissau (Sanha & Bauson). Join in a rich exploration of the mentoring relationship (Hall-Heimbecker).

Effective equipping for ministry involves a wide variety of facets. Logan and Hall-Heimbecker emphasize RELATING to those with whom we work, and, most importantly, to the One who gives us the strength and grace to invest in the Kingdom in the first place. We placed these articles first because establishing respectful and mutual relationships is the starting point for any work we do. In a similar vein, Rajendran & Harris, Sanha & Bauson, and Goffe & Harris highlight the importance of DIALOGUING, which includes listening to the stories, thoughts, and dreams of others. Schrag, Hollingsworth & Negrão, and Saurman present helpful tools and tips in the articles on TRAINING. Neeley, Scheuermann, and Rowe provide suggestions for INTEGRATING the arts into the fabric of community life. Reggy, Stahl, and both of Bowman’s articles share on-the-ground accounts of IMPLEMENTING the arts in orality ministries—equipping in action.

Cross-cultural work often comes fraught with tensions surrounding respect, perceived authority, control, power, and colonialism. Some months ago, a woman from a non-majority country expressed to us her frustration that the missionaries “first told us that we couldn’t use our arts, and now they tell us we should.” What a reproof! Logan provides a much-needed balance to this hegemonic posture with her thoughts on the art of silence. We are also glad to include a wide range of global voices in this volume. Our authors were born on five of the six populated continents, and they have also worked on five of the six. In addition to these direct voices, Stahl brings us a wealth of reported perspectives from an increasingly influential group of women in South Asia.

Read these contributions, study their main points, learn from new perspectives. Perhaps your next workshop could benefit from Hollingsworth & Negrão’s highly practical set of considerations for organization. Perhaps Rowe’s suggestions for creatively sharing scripture will infuse your next worship service with new life. Reggy’s account may inspire you to enrich scripture memory in your own context with the arts. Neeley’s ideas may increase your confidence in commissioning new artistic works. Saurman’s worship wheel may enhance your future discussions with others on the breadth of applications of their local arts in worship. Perhaps you never thought of the concept of “bringing our real selves” into worship (Goffe & Harris) or considered learning how to use the arts to help people recover from trauma (Rajendran & Harris).

Whatever your situation, we pray this volume will increase resilience in your ministry by sparking creativity (innovation) and by providing resources for engaging the arts with others (transmission). As in our first volume, we encourage you to maximize the influence of the people within the community you serve, whether that community represents your own culture or another. We repeat here the closing section of Bowman’s article (“Scripture Alive”), a paragraph that we believe encapsulates the collective desire of both ICE and ION:

I believe our greatest challenge is not how to train and equip, but to believe. We must recognize with complete and unwavering faith that those with whom we work in the field are more than capable of

doing anything they set their minds to. When they are inspired and fulfilled by their own God-given, culturally relevant talents, they will take that same vision to their peers, and this momentous progress toward indigenous, creative worship in the worldwide church will be unstoppable.

¹View this first volume at orality.net/library/journals/volume-5-number-1/.

²Read more about Harris' research and ideas on resilience in her book about the death and rebirth of the Siberian oral epic tradition, *olonkho* (University of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

Designing Arts Workshops

Kenneth R. Hollingsworth and Héber Negrão¹

Ken Hollingsworth, a graduate of Elon University with a double major in vocal music and English, studied ethnomusicology under Dr. Vida Chenoweth as part of an MA in linguistics at University of Texas–Arlington. He and his wife, Judy, oversaw the translation of the Mofu-Gudur New Testament in Cameroon. Ken has led numerous music workshops in Cameroon and Chad. He served as an adjunct professor of ethnomusicology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1997–2000.

Héber Negrão has an MA in ethnomusicology. He is a member of the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, International Council of Ethnodoxologists, and Asociación Latino Americana de Etno Artes. He and his wife, Sophia, are missionaries with Missão Evangélica aos Índios do Brasil and with Associação Linguística Evangélica Missionária where he works as Coordinator of Anthropology and Ethnoarts.

Getting Organized: What To Do before Inviting the Participants

Sometimes, an outside organization will ask you to organize an arts workshop. In other instances, you will be the one who is the initiator. In either case, there are certain things to determine even before you send out the invitations. This may require starting a year or more in advance.

Audience

You must define for whom the workshop is aimed. *Is the workshop for mission or church leaders in order to train others? Is it only for skilled musicians who are already actively “doing” art/music?*

Is it for mother-tongue speakers to compose in their own music and language? Once you decide your target audience, you can then better define your goals and participants to invite.

Goals

What is the ultimate goal of the workshop? Is it to produce hymns or other art? Or do you have more modest goals such as introducing the idea of using indigenous music and art in local worship, doing a survey of local arts, etc., perhaps as a first step towards inspiring the creation of local Christian art? Knowing your ultimate goal will help you determine the instruction

and activities and give you an idea of whom you should invite to the workshop.

Participants

Who should come to this workshop? Is it for one language group or for a number of language groups from a certain area? Who from a language group should attend? Determine who you want as participants and their qualifications. Do they need to be able to communicate in their mother tongue? Will you invite only believers, or can non-Christian artists attend? Do participants need to be recommended by a pastor or their church elders? Will you require that at least two people from a language attend so they can work as a team/group? Do they need to have already composed music, done storytelling, or created a drama?

Dates, Times, and Duration

When will the workshop be held and for how many days? The dates of the workshop should be determined by when the potential participants would be most free to come: dry season for people who are farmers, weekends or evenings for city people who work during the day, etc. The length of the workshop and the starting and ending days should consider how far the participants would need to travel.

You will need to determine how long the workshop should run. *Do you need to present several workshops, spaced out over a period of time?* That is, should you teach some principles, send the people home to work on what has been taught, then after several months or a year, bring them back to build on what they have done? Most groups find either a four-day or a two-week workshop adequate, especially if there can be a follow-up workshop several months to a year later. If you are conducting 8:00–5:00 sessions, you will need to decide whether evening or weekend sessions are also necessary.

The location of the workshop must also be determined. *Is the site located where it is convenient for the participants to get to, especially those coming by public transportation? Does the site have an adequate meeting room? Does it have adequate space for sleeping, eating, and washing? Are there places where groups can compose music or do other art without being disturbed?*

Staff

Who should help staff this workshop? Who can serve as teacher or mentor? What language or languages will be used for instruction in the workshop?

Are interpreters for one or more languages needed? Who will help with the practical needs such as workshop administration: to collect fees, pay bills, and otherwise see to people's needs, cooking, recording the songs produced, and duplicating cassettes or CDs for the participants to take home?

Funding

Where will the funding for the workshop come from? How much funding is available? How much should the participants pay? Should the participants pay in cash or provide food items? The funding available may be the major factor as to how long the workshop will run.

Pre-workshop Information

Decide what information, if any, needs to be obtained from the participants before the workshop and how to obtain it. A good thing to know for a hymn-composing workshop is what scripture, if any, exists in the language of the participants.

Decide what kinds of things the participants need to bring to the workshop—toilet items, towel, sheet, sleeping mat, Bible, pen, notebook, etc.—and also what other things participants might have available such as cassette recorders, cell phones with recorders, indigenous music instruments, etc.

Prayer Team

It is very helpful and necessary to have a team of people praying for you and the workshop, in addition to your own prayers.

Once you have established these things—goals, dates, places, participant information, etc.—you can invite participants to the event. Make sure you have given directions to the center where the workshop will be held and specify any costs to be borne by the participant. Now you are ready to begin planning the workshop content and timetable.

Determining the Workshop Content

Planning and Flexibility

If the main goal of the workshop is to create scripture hymns or some other artwork based on scripture, some leaders are happy to simply have a minimum of a start time, prayer time, meal times, etc., and leave the rest to the leading of the Holy Spirit. While this seems to work well for some—especially for those who have considerable previous experience in leading arts workshops—other workshop planners feel the need for a precise timetable of events.

This doesn't mean that lessons and times can't be changed as the workshop takes place. Flexibility

is essential. But for leaders and workshop participants who like to know what is happening and when, a timetable can give confidence to everyone that the workshop is organized and heading in a good direction.

Establishing a Daily Rhythm

We recommend structuring the content by charting a daily schedule. Much of the structure will depend upon the customs of the locale where you are holding the workshop. In hotter climates, this may mean beginning with an early breakfast (7:00–7:30 AM), followed by a devotional time of thirty minutes or more. Somewhere in midmorning there should be a break time for coffee or tea. Other time slots to fill are lunch at midday, a possible siesta and/or another break in the afternoon, followed by a meal at sundown or soon afterwards. The time periods in between the fixed time slots are times for teaching and creating.

Shaping the Content

If this is the first time for many of the participants to attend an arts workshop, participants need some biblical groundwork for using local arts in worship. Often, it is helpful for them to see or hear examples of how others

have created songs or drama or art for the Lord. This could also be done in evening sessions.

Participants may need guidance on to how to begin creating songs, dance, drama, etc. in their own style and language. Be careful not to do excessive lecturing at the beginning! Too much theory will dampen enthusiasm for creating and reduce the time needed to create. Remember that many adults come to workshops with considerable experience. The key is to draw out this experience and help participants use their expertise and knowledge in new ways. Many adults only need a few examples as models in order to move directly into the creation phase. Remember to leave plenty of time for creating new songs, dramas, etc. Creativity takes time!

For creating hymns, it is advisable to start small. Begin with a bit of teaching, followed by an effort to work with a short biblical text. If you are creating a drama, start with a simple idea and aim for a sketch of one or two minutes. With this simple beginning, you can expand with more extensive lectures, discovery times, and additional assignments to create more lengthy songs, dramatic productions, etc.

Discussion Times and Group Sharing

In structuring the class sessions, remember that people learn best when they can discuss among themselves the subject taught or otherwise apply what they have just learned. It is profitable therefore to take time to process what you are learning in small or large groups after each class presentation. If your audience consists of people of various ethnic groups, it is usually most advantageous to have members of the same group work together. It is also advantageous, however, to discuss as a whole group so that participants can share their experiences and learn from each other.



Preparing Summaries of Key Principles

Many groups appreciate having summaries of the principles taught and what they have learned. Sometimes, it is helpful to ask one or two of the participants to prepare a five- to ten-minute summary

of one or more topics covered in the previous day. In addition to serving as a group review, the summaries give the director an idea of what is important to students and also allow for catching any misconceptions of the material taught.

Giving Attention to Recording for Future Reference

It is helpful to the participants if they have a way to remember the tunes they are creating. During the

song creation time, they could use a cassette recorder, a cell phone with recorder, or some other digital recorder. Participants also find it helpful to be able to take home a copy of the final product.

For a permanent copy of the final product they could have a cassette

tape, CD, or DVD, depending on the media player they have at their disposal at home. The workshop staff should think of a way to provide a recording of the final product in either audio or video form.

Remembering the Closing Ceremony

An essential part of the workshop is the closing ceremony. This can be done only for participants or for outsiders invited by participants. At

the ceremony, different individuals or groups can perform the songs or dramas they've created. They can also do skits which teach some of the principles they have learned during the workshop. The workshop organizer generally gives a speech outlining the goals and hopes for the workshop and recognizes the contributions of the staff and others. In many instances it is customary to award "Certificates of Participation" to the participants.

¹This article is adapted from an article originally published in *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*, eds. James R. Krabill (managing editor), Frank Fortunato, Robin P. Harris, Brian Schrag (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013) and is used here with permission.

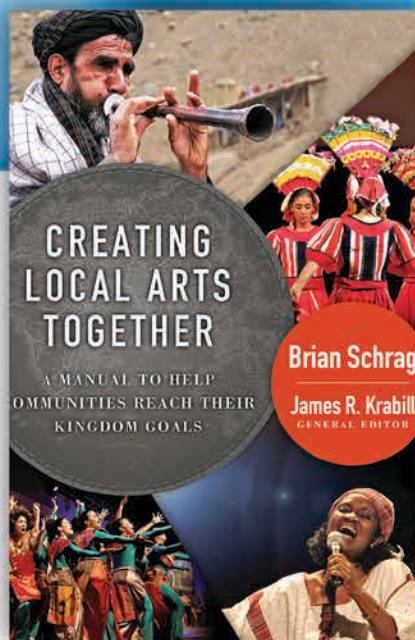




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Brian Schrag

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ISBN 978-962-7673-36-1