

Volume 6, Number 2, 2017

ISSN 2324-6375

Orality Journal

The Word Became Fresh

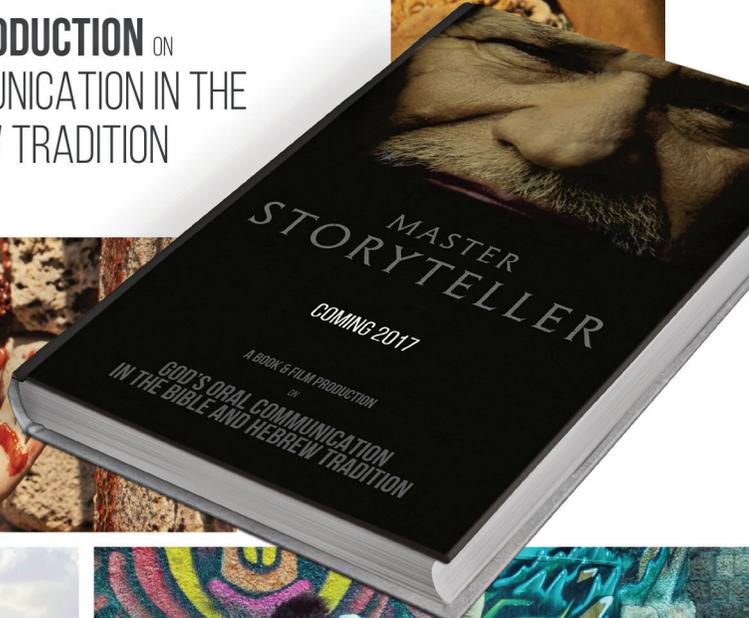
"Reformation: Five Hundred Years of Orality, Media and Memory"

**Konstanski • Araujo • Gidoomal • Kroneman • Blackwell •
Randolph • McClure • Handley • Parro • Foer • Mahendra •
Brown • Roediger • McDaniel • Kabete**

ON SALE - SEPTEMBER 2017

MASTER STORYTELLER

A BOOK & FILM PRODUCTION ON
GOD'S ORAL COMMUNICATION IN THE
BIBLE AND HEBREW TRADITION



HOW DOES GOD SPEAK?

MASTER-STORYTELLER.NET



Orality Journal

The Word Became Fresh

Volume 6, Number 2, 2017

ISBN 978-962-7673-38-5

ISSN 2324-6375

Cover Photo

All Saints' Church, (also called Schlosskirche or Castle Church), Wittenberg, Germany. Photo by Samuel E. Chiang.

It is on the door of this church where Martin Luther nailed his famous ninety-five theses.

¹⁶"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 1:16-17

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Rev 1:3

"On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance."

Revelation 1:10-16

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.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Co-Editors - Samuel E. Chiang and William Coppedge

Associate Editor - Laurie Fortunak Nichols

Assistant Editor - Joni A. Chiang

INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL/ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Amos Aderonmu

Calvin Chong

Gilles Gravelle

Geoffrey W. Hahn

Mary Verghese

Hannes Wiher

Graphic Design: Cindy B. Morris

Cover Photo: Courtesy of Samuel E. Chiang

Editorial Email: oralityjournal@gmail.com

Website: www.oralty.net

Your Feedback is Very Important!

We welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions! Let us hear from you. Send your feedback to: oralityjournal@gmail.com

Please include your name and organization. Any letters or emails used may be edited and excerpted. Please keep all letters and emails to three hundred words or less.

Wish to Contribute

National Christian Foundation
A/C 429666
1311 Tijeras Ave. NW
Albuquerque, NM
USA 87102

Orality Journal Disclaimer: Articles published in Orality Journal are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors, or the International Orality Network.

ISBN 978-962-7673-38-5

ISSN 2324-6375

Copyright © 2017 International Orality Network
In cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd., Hong Kong

PRINTED IN HONG KONG

CONTENTS

Co-Editors' Note: Memory and Media in Revelation, the Reformation and Digital Orality..... 7
Samuel E. Chiang and William Coppedge

Digital Orality: How to connect your digital footprint to the world's five billion oral learners..... 13
Paul Konstanski

This exploration investigates how to communicate in today's "Conceptual Age," employing digital media to connect with a predominately oral world.

How Will We Speak? On Film, Memory, and Mimicking God's Communication Style..... 27
Psalm Araujo and Ricki Gidoomal

A film director and producer recount their pursuit of seeking to understand how God speaks and how He, as the Master Storyteller, invites us to speak.

Translation, Literacy, and Orality: Reflections from the Domain of Bible Translation..... 41
Dick Kroneman

A senior translator probes the multi-layered nature of orality and its relationship with Bible translation.

The Art of Natural Translations..... 61
Matilda Blackwell and Justin Randolph

This article explores how incorporating local artistic forms into a Bible translation project enhances the naturalness of a biblical passage.

Creating Indigenous Films..... 67

Ben McClure

A cross-cultural filmmaker offers an inside perspective on the process of creating audio-visual media projects in Asia.

Back to the Future Pedagogy..... 75

Joe Handley and Craig Parro

Asian church leaders discuss the tradition of experiential learning set in their culture and its potential effectiveness for seeking Christian transformation.

Book Review: Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything..... 81

by Joshua Foer

Reviewed by Shivraj K. Mahendra

Book Review: Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning..... 83

by Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel

Reviewed by Irene M. Kabete

Co-Editors' Note

Samuel E. Chiang and William Coppedge

Memory and Media in Revelation, the Reformation and Digital Orality

The Church is having a great rummage sale. Phillis Tickle in her seminal book¹ suggests that every 500 years or so, there is a moving out of the old from the attic, decisions as to what to store, and movements towards embracing the new. This edition of the *Orality Journal* seeks to identify the nexus of relationships amongst orality, memory, and media. These articles, exploring topics like filmmaking, Bible translation, and digital orality, expose among other things the issue of integrating different modes of communication, whether oral, print, visual, or digital.

Written late in the same century that Jesus had sojourned, and in a "hearing dominant" culture where textuality was part of orality, the opening chapters of Revelation provide a fascinating example of integrated modes of communication. The Apostle John encounters "One like the Son of Man" (v. 13) and falls to the ground in worship. He is commanded to not fear but instead to write letters to the seven churches of Asia. At one level, this appears to be a straightforward literate method of communication as the Son of Man instructs, "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this." Furthermore, the refrain, "to the angel of the church of ... write..." appears no less than seven times and not incidentally, in the letter to the church of Sardis, the divine *Book of Life* is referenced (3:5 italics added).

However, the significant oral dimension to these early chapters deserves attention. John's encounter with the Son of Man does not happen via the medium of writing, but through the spoken voice. "Then I turned to see the *voice* that *spoke* with me... and His *voice* [was] as the *sound* of many waters" (1:12,15) Furthermore, after being commanded to write, every letter begins, "These *are the words of Him...*" The words are being written down as remembered, and to be remembered. The written letters

represent words that were originally spoken and to be disseminated to the appropriate audiences, and the entire prophecy is to be "read aloud...and bless are those who hear and obey..." (1:3)

The Apostle John found himself at the nexus of orality, memory, and media, as was the time of the Greco—Roman era, as he encounters the spoken word (orality) and is being entrusted with the task of remembering (memory), and consequently, delivering these sacred messages (media). Central to every culture's unique understanding of memory and media is this central question of reliability—is the memory of this information true (or accurate), and has its delivery, in whatever mode, been faithful to the intention of its originator?

In light of such inquiry, one of the Son of Man's self-designations within his discourse with John stands out in bold relief: "These things says[1] the Amen, *the Faithful and True Witness...*" (Rev. 3:14, italics added). This Son of Man, who is called holy, who has the seven Spirits of God, who calls God Father—He is faithful and He is true.

It is worth considering these familiar words in the context of communication. Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God, through the incarnation not only declares the message of God but also is Himself the message of God. Jesus, who speaks orally with John, is the embodied message of God. Being the faithful and true witness means, among other things, that the information communicated through Jesus is true or reliable and it is faithful or trustworthy according to the intentions of the Father as the original communicator. Therefore, an argument is made that issues of memory and media, far from being peripheral concerns, are actually theological categories as much as practical ones.ⁱⁱ

The history of the Christian Church is in many ways a history of people trying to navigate the theological and also practical issues of communicating God's personal message—Jesus Christ. A timely reminder of one such individual comes this year as 2017 is the 500th year anniversary of Martin Luther's nailing his 95 theses to the Wittenberg church door and thus, the traditional beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

For Luther, the Bible was the written word of God, the gospel was the spoken word of God, and Jesus was the personal word of God.ⁱⁱⁱ For Luther, Christ Himself was present or "re-presented" through scripture. Thus, when a person or persons encounter the Bible, they are encountering the presence of Christ Jesus Himself. However, receiving and understanding the communication of Jesus Christ through scripture is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luther's affirmation of the role of the Holy Spirit in the communication of Jesus Christ through the Bible is no more clearly seen than in the previously discussed early portion of Revelation. John is speaking with the Son of Man, Jesus Himself, but the final exhortation in all seven letters is not, "He who has an ear, let him hear me (Jesus)." Instead, Jesus points to the Spirit: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the *Spirit* says to the churches." To hear Jesus is to hear what the Spirit has to say.

To frame this from a different perspective, the Spirit takes the spoken words of Jesus, heard and then written by John, and translates them from written words into the spoken words of Jesus to be delivered and heard by the seven churches. Thus, the Spirit re-oralizes the written word so that it can be heard as the spoken word of Jesus. Furthermore, the same Spirit who enabled Jesus' words to be heard by the seven churches is the same Spirit who has enabled people down through the centuries (such as Luther) to have ears to hear.

Therefore, if the Holy Spirit is essential for the remembering and delivering of Jesus' spoken words through the written words of scripture, then one can suggest that the Holy Spirit is intimately concerned with our present-day understanding of the role of memory and media for sharing the good news. It is the Spirit who truthfully and faithfully translates the written biblical text, bringing it to life so that people today have to opportunity to choose to have ears to hear Jesus' offer of salvation.

Such integration requires fresh theological consideration regarding the dynamics between the spoken, the written, and the visual word even as pragmatic concerns regarding social media and the digitalized word beg for more attention and resources. In light of this tension, between

theology and practice, a tension at least as old as the Apostle John and experienced by none other than Luther, we offer this edition of the *Orality Journal*.

Sitting in the Wittenberg Cathedral where Luther nailed the 95 theses for the intellectuals and nobles of that time, and listening to the preacher exegeting Romans 1:16, my mind multi-threaded into what might we recover from the Gutenberg Galaxy so that we can live in the Zuckerberg Galaxy? For example, when we quote

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. (Hebrews 4:12)

We use this favorite verse about why people and cultures need the *printed* Bible. But do we think about the original context that when the New Testament writers referred to *the word* — the Greek term is *logos* — they *weren't talking about ink on a page*, nor digital pixels on a screen?

They were talking about a message that was spoken and understood. Even the phrase word of God, which Christians today use interchangeably for the Bible, literally means the orally proclaimed message of God. And, when John used *logos* to mean Jesus Himself, he was referring to the personification of that message.

As Luther experienced a changing of epochs with the Reformation, so mission communication today has witnessed the changing of epochs with the digitalization of the globe. The relevance of the relationship between orality and digital media is as near as our decision of what to post next on social media: a printed text, an image, or an oral recording. Perhaps in seeking to navigate such a complex communication environment, returning to Jesus' self-designation in Revelation can be a helpful fixed reference point, "These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True..."

Change happens, and here in the *Orality Journal* I wish to thank Billy Coppedge as co-editor. It has been a wonderful partnership where we both

learned and grew together. I want to extend my deepest appreciation to Billy Coppedge as it has been a deep privilege to put issues together. May the same Spirit who re-oralized Jesus' words for the first-century Christians and for Martin Luther continue to prick our own ears.

“Whoever has ears to hear,
let him or her hear
what the Spirit has to say..”



Samuel E. Chiang
Wittenberg, Germany



William Coppedge
Kampala, Uganda

ⁱPhillis Tickle, “The Great Emergence How Christianity Is Changing and Why. Baker, 2008

ⁱⁱWe tend to forget that even during the manuscript period, prior to the Gutenberg printing press, and especially in First and Second Century AD, the trust of memory was a way of life in the "hearing dominant society." Orality was the way of life, and textuality supplemented communications. In our current era where textuality is dominant, we tend to think orality is accommodated within the text. And we superimpose our frame and worldview of textuality back to First and Second Century AD. We should have a better understanding of the "setting"—which is orality is dominant and textuality is accommodated within the oral culture. See robust and deep research from John Walton and Brent Sandy, "The Lost World of Scripture," IVP Academia 2013.

ⁱⁱⁱDavid W. Lotz, “Sola Scriptura: Luther on Biblical Authority,” *Union Seminary Review* 35, no. 3 (1981): 262–63. While some may disagree with Luther’s theological differentiating of the word of God, one can appreciate his effort in trying to establish the necessity of the word of God for salvation.

The Art of Natural Translations

Matilda Blackwell and Justin Randolph

Matilda Blackwell was born in the U.S., but grew up in the Middle East. She completed her M.A. in World Arts in 2015 at the Center for Excellence in World Arts at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics. Serving with Pioneer Bible Translators, she is passionate about helping cultures learn how to use their artistic forms for evangelism and community development, with a specific focus on trauma healing.

Justin Randolph serves as an Arts Specialist and Arts Coordinator for SIL Eurasia. A member of the International Council of Ethnodoxologists, Lausanne Arts network, and Lausanne Younger Leaders network, he also has an M.A. in World Arts from the Center for Excellence in World Arts at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics.

The Story

Prince Salim and Anarkali were working with the Sumrit on their oral translation project. Each held distinctly different ideas concerning the role of the arts in the process of translation and about the artistic structures of poetry in particular. Anarkali thought that the Sumrit, like many other groups, did not value a distinct poetic style, so she planned to translate the Book of Psalms as prose. By contrast, Prince Salim knew that the neighboring language utilized its own poetic style that required rhyming. In testing whether the Sumrit used the same feature, Salim discovered that they particularly valued the distinct rhyming feature at the ends of lines. As a result, they

decided to translate the psalms as poetry, using the indigenous poetic style.

Since then, all members of the translation team (translators, checkers, tech, and others) each contributed to the work of the poetic sections. The village checkers found that comprehension greatly improved and interest was heightened due to the poetic additions. More people gathered to listen, and everyone, including children, laughed at the funny parts.

The Question

Was Anarkali right? Did it really matter one way or the other? Prince Salim and Anarkali were debating a common question. Translators, arts workers, literacy

specialists, and orality workers at any given time and place all strive for a common goal—namely, to convey the gospel message in the most appropriate means relative to their area of expertise. While the benefits of engaging with literacy or orality may seem clear, the advantages of incorporating local artistic forms of communication early in the translation process rather than later might be a little less obvious. Dick Kroneman's article in the current issue of the *Orality Journal* describes issues, principles, and values of those in the translation domain. In response, we present this article as dialogue regarding how local forms of communication, both written and oral, might be used in tackling translation issues while still achieving the four principles of translation, thus resulting in a better product over a shorter period. To address the debate that occurred between Prince Salim and Anarkali, we must first briefly review the relationship between the oral and written backgrounds of the Bible.

Oral and Written Elements of the Bible

Andrew Hill describes the first stage of the canonization of the Old Testament: "authoritative utterances,"ⁱ as divine revelation

both delivered and passed on in oral form. Phrases such as "hear the Word of the Lord" or "this is what the Sovereign Lord says," quite prevalent in the Old Testament, provide clear indications of God orally conveying His word. Centuries passed before these utterances were preserved in written form, and still more time passed before they were considered holy and inspired. Furthermore, during the passing of centuries prior to canonization, we should not assume that all parts of the written Bible were read in synagogues and churches.

As late as the Westminster Confession of 1647, the debate among Christian denominations surrounding the canon of scripture still unfolded. Thus, Kroneman's statement that "oral communication in the Bible was supported and complemented by written communication" is true; writing enabled the canonization of scripture. Had the whole of scripture not been written and published in centuries past, the world would not have access to a Bible today. Kroneman accurately states that we know the Bible as a written book; however, stylistically, the finished product contains countless oral elements and influences from the original cultural

context. The written aspect of the Bible, although vital, is writing's only major contribution to the text. Oral transmission remains an essential means of communicating the scriptural message.

Natural Communication

Inevitably, humans seek to apply meaning to new information they encounter—how much more so the gospel message! Whether received by sight or sound, humans process new information by many more filters than just language before assigning meaning. Consider tone and pitch, for example. Non-verbals comprise a larger part of an overall message given communication, but in fact can often be overlookedⁱⁱ. Features like intonation play just as strong of a role in assigning meaning. Brian Schrag notesⁱⁱⁱ that using art forms involves more parts of the brain and increases the chances of deep-seated understanding. Therefore, the gospel is far too broad to be constrained to spoken language. Rather, artistic expression and spoken languages converge to convey the message of the gospel, and the significance of their combined synergy cannot be overstated.

The synergy of varying components aids effective translations in

achieving a balance of accuracy, naturalness, acceptability, and clarity. However, achieving naturalness simultaneously with the other principles remains one of the biggest challenges facing translators. In the Sumrit illustration above, Prince Salim correctly assumed that elements related to other modes of communication, such as poetry, should be considered languages in their own right. Expanding this concept to include artistic forms means that stories, riddles, parables, and proverbs also represent distinct forms of communication. Considering art forms as languages leads to the belief that translating the artistic elements of scripture in addition to translating the words of the language offers the potential to greatly improve the naturalness of a passage without sacrificing the principles of accuracy, acceptability, and clarity.

The arts, specifically singing, offer the potential to aid naturalness in translation if used as a means of checking scripture (e.g., in the psalms or other song portions^{iv}). Traditionally, the approach to translating biblical poetry took one of two forms: either a literal translation still featuring the Hebrew forms, not considered natural in the new language, or

a translation in prose featuring poetic-looking lines with no poetic features. However, many cultures ascribe high regard to poetry, and failing to translate these sections as such severely hampers scriptural understanding and engagement.

As Murray Salisbury puts it, “The medium is an essential part of the message”^v; the message becomes much harder to engage if divorced from the medium. Conveying the message through the appropriate artistic form allows the reader to capture the essence of the message in addition to magnifying the power of the message. Just as simply reading a script instead of watching the play would divorce the message from the medium of theater, so translating the singable portions of scripture as prose would divorce the message from the medium of song and poetry. Checking the singable portions of the Bible for naturalness by first singing them in poetic form ensures that all components of the message remain intact, together preserving the power of the message.

Salisbury discusses designating a team member for research into a culture’s artistic forms as a component of his approach. It should be noted that although important, this is not vital. Rather,

anyone asking the proper questions of local artists can discover the necessary information. The local artists deeply understand their traditional arts, so asking ethnographic questions that probe their knowledge can guide them toward redeeming their traditional arts. Questions such as, “What kind of things do you do when someone has died?” will likely include descriptions of artistic forms used in funeral rites. The most appropriate ethnographic questions are familiar to anyone with basic anthropological training.

In addition to aiding naturalness, translating the biblical artistic form into a meaningful form in the local culture may also encourage broader community involvement. In the Sumrit’s orally-run translation project, only one member of the team needed to be literate. Allowing for translators’ oral preference significantly expands the pool of potential translators and greatly increases community participation.

Using arts also helps to impart the background knowledge necessary for conducting a translation project. Depending upon the parameters of a given project, the translator, the exegete, or both will need to know enough of the Bible’s cultural context to explain necessary

concepts as the translation unfolds. Whether translators are literate or not, muddling through an academic article or theological commentary might prove quite challenging. In the case of the Sumrit, they used the Jesus Film as a base of understanding while translating the gospels. A potential caveat with this method is that sometimes the non-verbal elements of the film need to be translated as well, not just the language. Either way, the arts significantly contribute toward painting much of the original Biblical picture.

Conclusion

In closing, this discussion shows that arts should be viewed as

integral to the translation process itself (oral or otherwise) and not just reserved for later scripture engagement activities. Translators focus on conveying the gospel message in the most culturally appropriate form, and rightly so. As the above discussion shows, arts offer the potential to enhance this goal because using local artistic forms of communication results in a naturalness hard to achieve otherwise. The use of the local arts serves both translators and orality workers' goal of conveying the message in a lasting and powerful way. In order to capitalize on this potential, we suggest integrating the arts into the translation process from the very beginning.

ⁱAndrew E. Hill, and John Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. Loc 7923, 7942, 7957, 8033, 8049.

ⁱⁱWalker, Michael B., and Antonietta Trimboli. “Communicating Affect: The Role of Verbal and Nonverbal Content.” *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* Vol 8, Issue 3-4 (2016): 229-248.

ⁱⁱⁱSchrag, Brian. *Creating Local Arts Together: A Manual to Help Communities Reach Their Kingdom Goals*. Edited by James Krabill. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013.

^{iv}Murray Salisbury. “Translating the Psalms by Singing Them: Promoting Heart-Engagement and Poetic Power.” Paper presented at the Bible Translation Conference, Dallas, Texas, October 16-20 2015, p. 2-4.

^vIbid, p. 7-10, 20-21.



ORALITY: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK

Sept 11 - 13, 2017



Colorado Springs, CO, Focus on the Family Campus

Southeast Asia Conference
Nov 28 - 30, 2017
Manila, Philippines



www.orality.net



OPERATION WORLD



THE DEFINITIVE PRAYER GUIDE TO EVERY NATION

JASON MANDRYK



ION

INTERNATIONAL ORALITY NETWORK

www.orality.net



ISBN 978-962-7673-38-5