

Orality:

The Next Wave
of

MISSION

ADVANCE

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Chronological Bible Storying is changing Christian communication forever. Emphasis on oral learning preferences is the next wave of missions advance. Nearly 70% of the world's population—and 50% of the USA's population—desire a non-literate approach to learning and decision-making. Programming recorded and distributed by many Christian ministries should take note. They are not off the hook just because they do not use print. The overall approach can be ineffective if attention is not given to communicating content effectively. For instance, the beloved “three points and a poem” is dead; long live the chronological narrative!

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communicating with the lost, and discipling spiritually-reproducing believers, then “orality” will supercede relatively ineffective literate approaches. Just recording things in print is not good enough. An audio recording of

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desire a non-literate approach to learning and decision-making.

Literate preachers and educated media producers must give thought to their audiences. If Christians are serious about actually

something that was written for literates is different than an audio recording developed for an oral learner. To make the distinction, the word “oral” is used when stories are crafted for those in oral cultures.

Orality appeals to more than non-literates, but also to functionally illiterates, post-literates, and even post-moderns.

People who do not read regularly, have only a tenth grade education or less or have been taught by rote memo-

riziation are attracted to Chronological Bible Storying. Key advantages for oral learners are memorization, retention,

reproducibility, cultural appropriateness, and, well, they like it compared to exposition (including a non-linear frog-hop through Scripture).

Today it is possible for a non-literate to pastor, teach, minister, and plant churches effectively as a non-literate. Memorizing Bible stories is not enough. Oral learners must harvest the Bible truth from the presentations. Applications to real life emerge within the oral context. Often preachers complain about the disconnect between what they preach and their





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church members' lifestyles. Storying is based on Bible principles that address theology and practical, real-life issues, many of which are barriers to faith and righteous living. Storying can also reinforce positive

bridges to the gospel's acceptance and application. Dialogue, discussion, repetition, and even drama or singing the stories aid in retention and re-telling. Ten steps have been identified as critical to storying's effectiveness. (See the related article on this page.)

Chronological Bible Storying (CBS) is based on ancient storytelling principles. In modern times, New Tribes Mission and the International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention workers collaborated to help cultures have their own "oral Bibles." Dr. James Slack and J. O. Terry, Jr., refined the approach and brought it to the attention of the evangelical community. (See <http://chronologicalbiblestorying.com>.)

Nine evangelical missions organizations have embraced the approach so strongly they are conducting a Consultation on Orality in Ft. Worth, Texas January 20-22, 2004. World-class training professionals will be converging on Ft. Worth for introductory sessions and skills upgrading offered by the Oral Bible Network. The network's members include Campus Crusade for Christ International, International Mission Board (SBC), Wycliffe Bible Translators, Trans World Radio, the JESUS Film Project, Faith Comes By Hearing, Scriptures in Use, the Seed Company, and the God's Story Project. Registration is \$100. Details are online: <http://www.oralbible.com>. 



Storying in 10 Ten Steps

1. Select a biblical principle, and make sure it is clear and simple.
2. Consider the worldview issues of a chosen people group so that we know how to choose the correct stories and how to tell those stories.
3. Identify the pertinent bridges and barriers and gaps in the worldview of that chosen people group so we will know how to address them.
4. Select the biblical stories that need to be communicated to get this principle or concept across in their worldview.
5. Craft the story and plan the dialogue that is going to follow the story so that they learn how this biblical story addresses a critical worldview issue that they have.
6. Tell the story in a culturally-appropriate way (including narrative, dance, song or object lessons).
7. Facilitate the dialogue that will help them discover the truths and applications, usually by asking questions.
8. Guide the group to obey the biblical principle so that it can be lived out in their lives in practical ways.
9. Establish accountability within the group to help each other obey the biblical principle.
10. Encourage the group to reproduce all of this by modeling the principle in their own lives and then telling the stories to other people.

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