

MISSION™ FRONTIERS

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A MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. CENTER FOR WORLD MISSION

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/ **21** ORALITY IN PIONEER BUSINESS PLANTING

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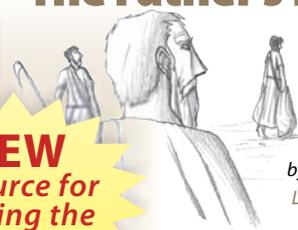
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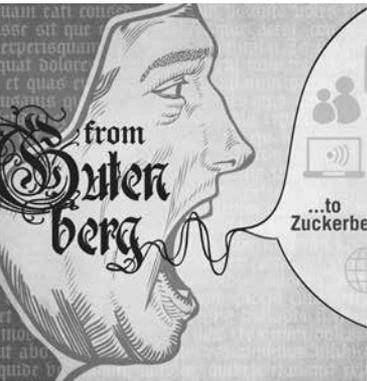
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06 Applied Orality

MORE THAN METHODS

/ CHARLES MADINGER

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LEARNING FROM MY OWN MISTAKES



SAMUEL E. CHIANG /

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THEY WERE NOT HEARING

Over a decade ago, I was traveling through Mozambique speaking to an audience that had traveled some distance. While preaching through a portion of Nehemiah, I noticed many were falling asleep during point one of my expository preaching. So I changed my mode of delivery and also leaned into the microphone. There was a momentary jolt, but most managed to fall asleep again prior to point two in the exposition! My conceptual—linear—textual Gutenberg methodology shattered at the brick wall of oral cultures. My communication method was ineffective.

After the trip, I was determined to find out why the audience was not listening. This sojourn of discovery radically altered my thinking and sent me on a journey of exploring the world of oral preference learners and oral communicators; I became convinced that we were missing the mark of reaching oral learners and unreached people groups.

In the middle of the last decade, we witnessed the embryonic releases of social media and networks, and we are now participating in the maturing digital social networks. The Zuckerberg generation and its apps have cajoled, encouraged, and tethered us into a narcissistic, instantaneous, conversational environment.

From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg, the global resurgence of orality has arrived with vigor, and has tectonic implications for our stewardship of the gospel for this century.

THE SEVEN DISCIPLINES OF ORALITY

Orality is defined in Webster's New World College Dictionary (2009) as:

- a reliance on spoken, rather than written, language for communication
- the fact or quality of being communicated orally

For our purposes in missions, orality, as described by Charles Madinger, is “a complex of how oral cultures best receive, process, remember and replicate (pass on) news, important information, and truths.”¹ Approximately 80%² of the world's population cannot or will not hear our message when we communicate it to them in literate ways and means.³ The phrase “ways and means” denotes that there are resources (ways) we have of packaging our message, and methods (means) of delivering it.⁴

Madinger further elucidates:

Our resources (ways) for our programs come in the content we develop to reach people with the good news or help them grow in it. That content must connect with the real needs of the audience and how the Word applies to those needs from their perspective. The seven descriptive disciplines of orality lead us to package the message better with cultural sensitivities, put it in terms to which the audience can relate and understand, and use mnemonic tools to make sure the truth sticks. We deliver the message through locally practiced arts, by networks of trusted

relationships, and media forms that reach as far as we can and as deeply as possible.⁵

Many people equate “storytelling” with “orality”, but this is just one of the disciplines—that of the Arts—within the Seven Disciplines of Orality. Or erroneously, some people tend to think orality is for people who are illiterate, but we have discovered through solid academic research that 80% of the world's populations are oral preference learners! Now with the pull towards oral-visual media, our framing of the content of our message must change, and our distribution and application of messages must



be tailored accordingly for the digital generation.

ORALITY APPLIED ACROSS MULTIPLE DOMAINS AND SECTORS ACROSS THE GLOBE

All of the writers of articles in this issue of *Missions Frontiers* are seasoned practitioners of orality, influencers within their own organizations, and collaborators across ministry and cultural boundaries. There are two bookends for this issue of *MF* (with intentional pun and imagination on bookends as we move from textual transmission societies into digital relationally rooted cultures). Chuck Madinger anchors one bookend with a fresh look at what orality is and is not, and its application into different countries; Bauta Motty and Sung Bauta complement the article with an examination of how orality works in the context of HIV/AIDS and amongst widows.

Mark Overstreet provides an overview of how orality works in church planting; Laura Macias looks at how the arts are appreciated within oral cultures. God is blowing a new wind among Muslims. David Garrison's new, insightful book, *A Wind in the House of Islam*,⁶ talks about giving voice to those who have stepped away from Islam and became followers of Christ. John B provides that voice through a case study on how orality is applied to establishing a community of Christian witness, and how they are spreading the Word into other groups.

Organizations and denominations that have embraced orality are generally highly relational. They seldom go it alone and they value collaboration highly. Joe Handley provides a look at how collaboration works among indigenous leaders. Marlene Lefever looks at how collaboration works within her large organization and how it works cross-culturally with other

organizations. Jim Rosene and Brian Rhodes talk about how two Western agencies came together with a focus on orality strategies and projects to serve the Church in DR Congo. Vicky Marie writes on how orality is used in pioneering business planting.

This century is paced by an oral-visual speed that numbs the mind. New generations are reading less and “listening” more through devices, and they are consuming visual media as if it were a regular food group. Lori Koch and David Swarr provide color on a previously published declaration that had foresight for this new generation, and this is complemented with an article on how to reach the Bible-less peoples. Carol and Calvin Conkey look at how visual media is both necessary and impacting nations. And with a continuation on both collaboration and visual media, we add David Palusky's article on technology and distribution. Mr. Palusky and I are dreaming of using drones for distribution of content in difficult to reach areas.

The other bookend anchor is Bill Bjoraker's significant review of an important book, *Saving God's Face*, by Jackson Wu. Since orality has to do with framing of the content, then, how do cultures frame the Bible and how does the supremacy of the Bible interact with cultures? With the post-modern societies vacating a guilt-innocence framework and fully embracing an honor-shame worldview, we see this generation, and indeed this century, returning to the worldview of the time of Christ, which was and still is anchored in an honor-shame worldview, a context in which the Bible was given in both oral and written form.

A LITTLE PEERING

Seemingly, God is allowing the orality movement to gain both traction and momentum. Among Bible Translation

organizations, some have declared that every new translation shall commence with oral stories from the Bible in the heart language of the people. Theological educators and institutions are embracing orality. The outlines of dreams, visions, and directions are taking shape for this decade and century. People are deeply passionate about the causes of orality! As of this writing, Ed Weaver of T4Global is planning to ride his bicycle 4,000 miles diagonally across the USA to bring awareness to orality, oral culture, and oral learners. Also as of this writing, plans are underway to establish the Center for Oral Scripture in the Middle East.

The task of world mission is not about numbers, triumphalism, and checklists. The task of world mission involves this generation, a generation of “exiles” seeking the welfare of the cities and communities, to bring forth the gospel with reflection, care, and love to reach the least, the last and the lost! Come and join the orality movement! 

¹ Madinger, Charles 2010 “Coming to Terms with Orality” *Misiology* 38:2, 204.

² Marmon, Ellen L. 2013 “Teaching Through the Lenses of Orality and Literacy: One Professor's Journey” *Religious Education: The Official Journal of the Religious Education Association* 108:3, 312-327. Grant Lovejoy, “The Extent of Orality 2012 Update”, *Orality Journal* 1, no. 1 (2012): 11—39.

³ Orality as a complex involves seven disciplines; principles and conclusions are drawn from researchers provided by Emory University, Ohio University, University of Kentucky, and Calvin Edwards and Associates. Chuck Madinger further elucidates ‘orality as a complex’ in 2013 “A Literate Guide to the Oral Galaxy” *Orality Journal* 2:2, 13-40.

⁴ Charles Madinger, ‘A Literate's Guide to the Oral Galaxy’, *Orality Journal* 2, no. 2 (2013): 15.

⁵ Madinger “A Literate's Guide” 20.

⁶ Garrison, David 2014 *A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is Drawing Muslims Around the Word to Faith in Jesus Christ*. Monument, CO: Wigtake Resources, 34, 231. This is an important read. My comments refer to page 34, 231.

Applied Orality:

MORE THAN METHODS



CHARLES
MADINGER

Chuck, president of Global Impact Missions, is empowering the global church and NGOs to design, implement and evaluate oral strategies and instruction. He teaches oral instructional communication at the University of Kentucky and schools and seminaries around the world based on his work and research in more than 30 countries. You may contact the author at c.madinger@uky.edu.

You hear about this thing called *orality* from every corner of the planet. In India, leaders teach 100 key stories of the Bible to be able to recite to others as they spread the good news, and those leaders teach hundreds who teach thousands the same stories. A Bible school in Sudan adopted new training modules teaching Bible narratives that create a new expectation for discipleship. Whole churches in Mexico and the U.S. come alive teaching their members not just to learn about the Word, but to learn and live the stories to share with others.

For many today the term *orality* is equated with Bible storying, but orality is rather a framework for what makes Bible storying and other such methods effective.¹ It is a fundamental principle of creation design reflecting our dependence on the spoken word for communicating with God and one another. In one sense it's simple: before writing we spoke. God spoke things into existence. Adam verbally named the animals. God simply hardwired humanity for oral ways and means of communication, but things get more complicated when we begin asking, "why does 80% of the world not hear or understand our message when we communicate through literate ways and means?"²

Applying orality means building any program, message, or strategy with a *framework* that fits oral tradition cultures and oral preference learners.³ I live in Lexington, Kentucky and the fencing we put around our horse farms is generally made of five oak planks built high enough to keep the horses in while at the same time keeping them from injury. Cattle farmers in my home state of Indiana also needed fencing to contain their cows. It had similar posts dug in the ground, but instead of planks, the sides were barbed wire. You would never use barbed wire with thoroughbreds. The framework principle is at work with both wood and wire fences that fit their context.

The framework for our communication strategies must take on everything you think of when "oral" comes to mind: cultural traditions, language, the commonly used words, how a message travels through social networks, the types of art people use to express themselves (music, dance, proverbs, story, etc.), how people best store information for recall, and even what channels of communication function best. Every message, lesson, curriculum program and strategy will succeed partly to the degree it takes this framework into account.

Jesus clarifies this further: "For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it." (John 12:49 NIV) We can do no better than that. He taught us "what to say." The biblical record contains that content. He modeled for us "how to say it" with His use of stories, word pictures, symbols, proverbs, parables, and rituals. Perceptive missionaries and aid workers have been doing it ever since, even during our print dominant era from Gutenberg to the internet.

Dr. Bauta Motty⁴ applied orality to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Nigeria, and his son, Sung Bauta applied it to economically empower 70 widows in a predominantly Muslim area. Here are a few other applications and examples of how orality works simply by the way God designed us.

POVERTY AND NUTRITION

A friend and former USAID senior AIDS advisor, Shelagh O'Rourke, started her life's work of serving the poor by empowering women in Haiti, but faced a monumental challenge created by American baby formula companies. Regardless of communication strategies, mothers resisted breastfeeding their babies but preferred baby formulas like that which was used by women in the United States. Consequently the babies suffered partly due to contaminated water, and partly due to diluting the expensive formulas. Then a co-worker composed a song about the benefits of nursing, and soon women started singing it while working or shopping in local markets. Another woman channeled the power of drama and crafted one that connected with mothers who dumped the formula and nursed their babies, and the community health picture took a giant step forward. The lesson? Connect with oral cultures by oral ways and means.

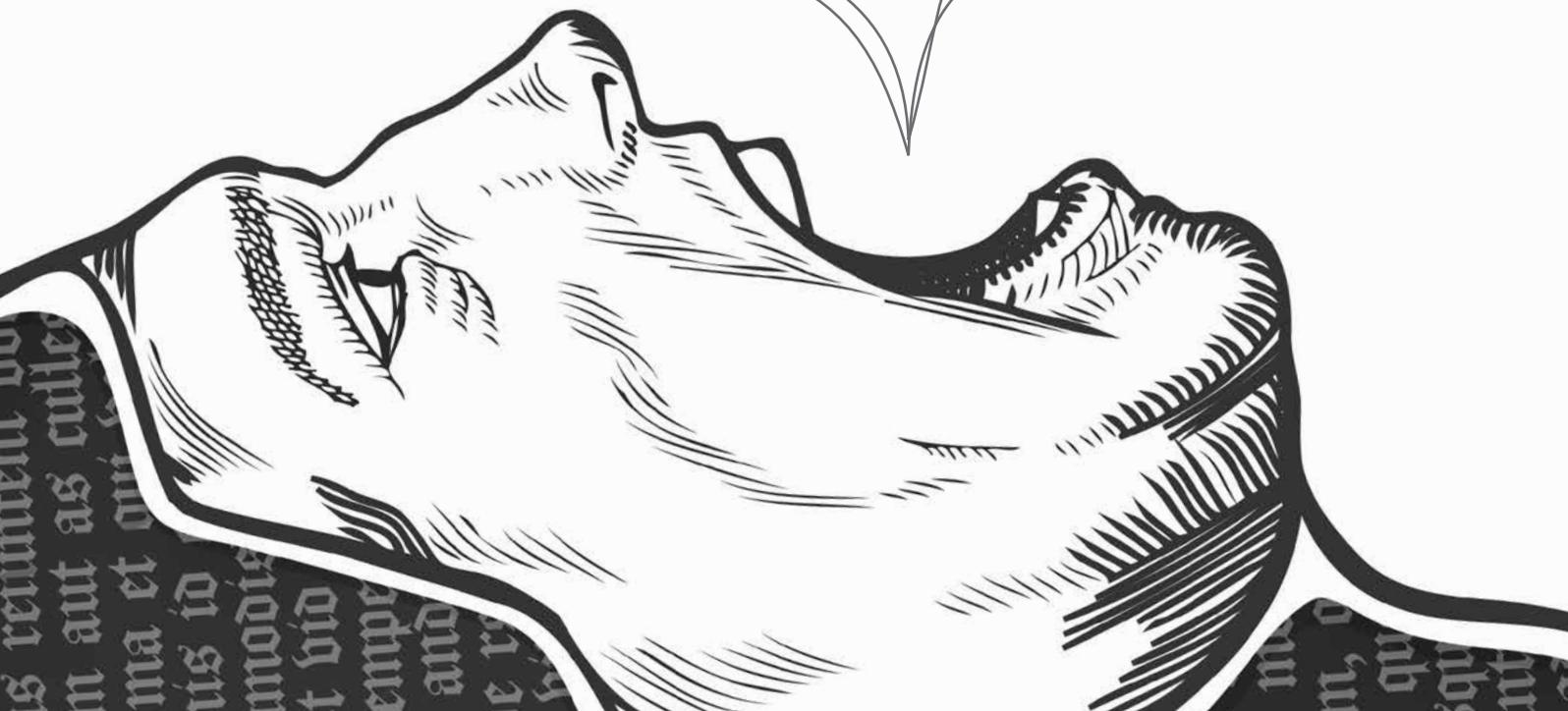
ORALITY IS RATHER A
FRAMEWORK FOR WHAT
MAKES THOSE METHODS
EFFECTIVE.¹

INJUSTICE

The Shah of Iran banished the Ayatollah Khomeini to exile in the mid-1960s hoping to silence the cleric's revolution and liberation speeches by taking away his audience. From Paris, the Ayatollah recorded weekly messages and had smuggled them into Iran on cassette tapes.⁵ Families huddled together listening in secret to messages of hope. The tapes diffused seeds of revolution, and opposition to the Shah erupted with his exile and the overthrow of the U.S. embassy in Teheran. The Ayatollah harnessed key elements of the orality framework: the spoken word, accepted media (cassettes), and social networks. Now bold Iranian pastors deploy those same oral ways and means to bring kingdom leadership training, discipleship and evangelism tools to the Persian peoples.

LEADERSHIP

My seminary mentor, Dr. Lewis Foster, mused that theological education "takes the notes of the professor, transfers them to the notebooks of students, without ever having gone through the mind of either." That pretty much describes what we do around the world. Bible schools and seminaries bring in new



crops of students, give them reading and writing assignments, and then assess their progress using pen and paper tests, theses and dissertations. We pride ourselves on using these methods to train oral tradition leaders in our Western seminaries or replicas of them in other lands, and then return them to their home cultures where proverbs, folk tales, music, dance and narrative are the means of communicating and storing information, not lectures and PowerPoint presentations. Is it any wonder that our message fails to transform cultures?

Now a wind of change blows, awakening teachers to principles and methods of orality while bridging their students into the world of textuality. Many African seminary professors now require students to include ethnic proverbs in sermons and class assignments. Others dedicate class time to collective learning and decision-making in their oral context. Instead of term papers, students produce songs and dramas, and in doing so stoke the fires of grassroot transformation.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2004 Afghan leaders invited us to assist with communications concerning their new constitution, and in doing so we were able to help validate and promote the work of a sister Christian non-profit. Several believers who worked with us on the project hoped to see a new day ushered in for the region where women would have the right to vote and go to school, where fathers would stop selling their daughters to pay off a debt, where women would be seen as people and not property and where taking on a new religion would not mean receiving the death penalty. In this oral culture where 98% of the women are illiterate, we helped introduce basic truths of human rights, embedding biblical truths in recorded music, drama, interviews with key leaders, roundtable discussions, and even a comedian via a small media player to nearly 5 million people.⁶

The world of the oral majority groans for good news.

Earthquakes reduce their homes and schools to graveyard rubble; floods, hurricanes and cyclones wash away their hope; Islamic fundamentalists terrorize even those of their own faith; disease swiftly infects and kills their young and elderly; regional ethnic and political brutality silence their voice; human traffickers prey on them; and we have the answers. We know what to say. Now, will we learn how to say it so they can hear, understand and be transformed?



- ¹ The term "orality" is used across numerous disciplines from psychology to ancient literature, but was rekindled in the 20th century through the works of Eric Havelock, Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong who recognized numerous distinctions between oral and literate cultures. While some of their original observations needed further explanation or revision, they uncovered some realities masked by a few hundred years of valuing textuality to the exclusion of orality.
- ² Lovejoy, Grant. 2012 "The extent of orality." *The Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*. 5(1), 121-134. The complication is that while human hardwiring gives us oral capacity, a dominant preference for orality is developmentally learned by living in an oral tradition society as contrasted with lettered cultures having a high textuality dominance. For more, see William Parker 1980. "Cultural and Academic Stress Imposed on Afro-Americans: Implications for Educational Change" Princeton: E.R.I.C. #ED134646. www.eric.ed.gov.; and Charles Madinger 2013 "A Literate's Guide to the Oral Universe" *Orality Journal*, 2:2, 13-40.
- ³ Oral tradition cultures cling to pre-literate ways of receiving, processing, remembering and passing on important information often through music, dance and story. Oral preference learners may develop and live in highly textual cultures, but learn best in non-textual ways and means. The use of internet, music, video and other limited print media serve them best.
- ⁴ Dr. Bauta Motty considers himself a "bushman" from the small village of Ambam in Kaduna State, Nigeria, West Africa. After serving two terms as the General Secretary of ECWA he completed his PhD at Asbury Theological Seminary, but soon realized that his Western training gave him only the "what to say," and he would have to make a conscious effort of returning to his oral roots. In doing so, he taught his son and hundreds of Nigerian seminary students a new old way of communicating the good news. His son, Sung Bauta, emulated his father (that's how it works in an oral tradition culture) and began helping on the widow empowerment project. Their back-to-back articles is in itself an application of orality at best.
- ⁵ Sreberny-Mohammadi, Annabelle and Ali Mohammadi 1994 *Small Media Big Revolution: Communication, Culture and the Iranian Revolution*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- ⁶ Sengupta, Ami, Esther Long, Arvind Singhal, and Corrine Sheffner-Rogers 2007 "The Sada Says 'We Women Have Our Rights': A Gender Analysis of an ICT Initiative in Afghanistan" *International Communication Gazette* 69:4, 335-353.

SPREADING THE WORD TO KNOW THE TRUTH



BAUTA MOTTY

Bauta Motty resides in Jos, Nigeria and currently serves as Provost of the Jos ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS), earning his PhD in Intercultural Studies from Asbury Theological Seminary. He has been pastoring ECWA churches since 1976, has served as denominational General Secretary and the Nigerian National Director of Voice for Humanity. He and his wife Deborah have four biological and two adopted children. You may contact him at bmotty51@gmail.com.

I came from a small village in Kaduna State of Nigeria. Orality is a part of who I am, even though I received literate training from Western educators. I “un-learned” my orality in attaining a formal education, but rediscovered it whilst leading a large effort to spread the word about HIV prevention and stigma reduction in Nigeria. When I was working with a non-governmental agency in trying to connect a life-saving message with my people living in the grassroots of the country, orality all came back to me; I remembered how we got important information to oral people in a way that they were willing to listen to and remember it, and then pass it on to others.

Our challenge was to reach a completely Muslim-dominated portion of the country (Kano State) with the truth about HIV and also sow the seeds of The Truth. The principles of orality with which I grew up suddenly made sense. We designed an outreach in Kano State that captured the truth about HIV in a series of recorded messages that could be listened to and discussed in small groups. Here are just a few of the orality principles that made this the most successful HIV/AIDS outreach in my country.

First, we involved local Muslim leaders even in the messages, because for oral people the person who says something is often more important than what is said. We hired a well-known Muslim media personality to be the narrator and even used parts of the Quran that were consistent with the Scriptures to reach Muslims who would normally resist the gospel.

Second, we had to be very sensitive to the cultural traditions, and did so by producing several dramas about a young man and his fiancée who were going through the steps for marriage in that region. We also interviewed and recorded several Christian pastors and imams who agreed with the Bible’s command to love our neighbors.

Third, the language and words we used matched the dialect and diction of the region. We recorded all messages in the Hausa language, but with a northern accent that made the messages easier to trust. We spoke often of “Jesus, the Lord,” but never used the term “Son of God” since we had no time to get into that discussion. Seeds were sown.

Fourth, people in villages love to listen to the radio so we employed the use of MP3 type audio players so that the same consistent message would reach everyone. The media players and contents were shared and discussed with family and friends, but the message quickly spread to the neighboring States. Each player was heard by an average of 20 people, for a minimum total listening audience of over 120,000 people.

Finally, relationships are everything in an oral context and in sharing good news. Our project succeeded beyond our wildest dreams partly because of seeking to reach out with some Muslim friends who shared a common interest—the threat of HIV. Our co-manager of the project was the niece of the Emir. She got his blessing. He called in and commissioned the District Heads, who called the village chiefs, who called the village elders, who called the people of the villages to listen to and discuss the messages. When our team visited the site to evaluate the progress, the children of these Muslim villages came out singing the song from our message about HIV prevention that included “Jesus is Lord.”

If spreading the news of HIV prevention (good news) is enhanced and multiplied by observing biblical principles of orality, how much more the spreading of the Word and His good news! 

EMPOWERING WIDOWS

with *Orality-Framed Training*



SUNG BAUTA

Sung Bauta is from Kaduna State, Nigeria and is currently pursuing a PhD from Asbury Theological Seminary, with the widow initiative being his focus for research. During his undergraduate and graduate programs, Sung served U.S. churches with preaching ministries in Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee. He also serves as a visiting professor at the Jos ECWA Theological Seminary where he will return to teach full time. You can contact him at: sbauta@yahoo.com

A few years ago, a not-for-profit group conducted research on the village of Ambam in order to understand some of our major problems. In the process they found that in this village of 1200 people, there were over 100 widows, 90% of whom were illiterate! Their husbands had died of various causes (e.g. snakebites, violence and disease), and in most cases, the widows' in-laws confiscated their property, leaving the widows to care for their children alone with little or no income. So how do we increase economic opportunities for them and empower them through skills acquisition and a cooperative? Using the holistic model,¹ we set out to empower widows with their own cooperative farms raising coffee, chickens, pigs, goats, and other income-producing crops.

1. Promoting Dialogue: Widowhood dons a veil of silence. The stigma marginalizes you so that no one talks with you anymore. Social boundaries inhibit direct interaction between the common people, especially widows, and their leaders. The isolation intensifies your pain. A faithful application of Jesus' model² calls for a different approach. First, our initial investigation of the widows' needs enabled us to build some rapport with them that led to a forum where each widow expressed her needs to plead for community change. In order for this ministry to succeed, the head chief needed to embrace the vision. When we visited him in his chambers and shared the vision, he not only embraced the vision, but gave some of his own land to aid the widows and now attends some of the forums. In sum, orality demands collective dialogue to empower community change.
2. Telling their Story: We encourage widows to tell their stories. For most of them, it is one of the few times they get to share their grief with others. Talata tells her story of when the snake bit her husband on the farm and the nightmare of how he died on arrival at the hospital. She tells about the unbearable burden of providing for her children. She has no education and just gathers firewood to sell in the market. As she tells her story, tears of hopelessness stream down her cheeks. Soon, she is surrounded by people comforting her by drying her tears and assuring her of their support from now on and this becomes her new story. By sharing their stories, each widow is empowered by getting a chance to be heard. The only way to (re)create a new story in an oral culture is to tell the old one, and verbally dream the new one.
3. Replacing Rituals: Prior to this initiative the widows had only one perspective of their status: abject poverty. Their rituals were based on community memories that recalled the lack of resources versus the creation of resources, and being a burden versus an asset to society. Our goal is to reverse such mindsets. Esther, a widow and a trained schoolteacher, fully grasped the value of the cooperative and since the other women held her in high esteem. Her instruction changed the widows' perception of widowhood. Her participation is a major reason why after planting trees last year, we now embark on poultry farming this year.

Through promoting dialogue and storytelling, and replacing rituals, we empower these widows as we journey alongside them. The widows' ministry has benefitted tremendously through the oral model as it empowers these women to rise above their sense of powerlessness. 

¹ See Madinger, Charles. 2010 "Coming to Terms with Orality: A Holistic Model." *Missiology: An International Review*, 38:2, 201-213. Also, Madinger, Charles. 2013 "A Literate's Guide to the Oral Universe". *Orality Journal*, 2:2, 13-40.

² Widow of Nain—Jesus stopped to talk with her and discern her grief more fully (Luk. 7:11-17), Mary and John—Jesus entrusted the care of his mother to John (Joh. 19:26-27), importunate widow—seen as unimportant, but makes her voice and needs heard (Luk. 18:1-8).



GOD

WITH US.



MARK M. OVERSTREET, PHD

Mark M. Overstreet serves as vice president of T4Global. He partners among oral cultures in leadership and community development. He leads programs in effective multiplication, discipleship, worldview analysis, and contextualization. Additionally, he consults with global organizations in orality, mission, program architecture/evaluation, and strategy. moverstreet@t4global.org

CHANGING THE WAY WE TRAIN PASTORS AND PLANT CHURCHES AMONG THE UNREACHED

I'll never forget the day I watched my mission professor weep as he told of his first years among the unreached. He explained how billions who have no access to the gospel would remain broken unless more in this generation would respond in obedience and go. With tears streaming down his face, he looked around the room and asked why so few were willing to leave the comforts of this land to serve the unreached. I drove home weeping and praying, resolved that no comfort in this life would ever be exchanged for following Christ to the ends of the earth.

After serving churches and completing seminary, I accepted the call as a professor, teaching biblical and theological studies to pastors and missionaries on seminary and Bible college campuses. As a theological educator, I watched how worldview and culture shaped theology and ministry.

As I traveled with churches and students, my eyes were opened to the vast world of oral cultures, peoples who communicate entirely through speech, song, drama, epic, poetry, and other forms of oral genre. I learned that of the entire global population (now over 7 billion), only 1.3 billion prefer to learn through literate means.

As I spent time between semesters with missionaries among the unreached, I remembered the tears from my first mission course, only I wondered—once reached, how could new followers of Jesus grow without access to the Scriptures? How could pastors be trained among cultures where literacy is not practiced, let alone preferred?

What could theological education look like among oral cultures? How could pastors learn if they have no access to biblical tools in their language; how could they be taught in a way that an oral learner could listen, understand, and apply the teaching to ministry in oral communities?

How could pastors without library and Book grow in faith, plant more churches, and reach the lost of their lands?

Theological education is incarnational. Just as Jesus revealed himself in human flesh, theological education for the Church could dwell among the locals, proclaiming truth

through local culture, custom, language, and principle—and all without a single printed page.

After serving Christ through theological education for over a decade, I answered His call and followed Christ to the ends of the earth—to the billions without useful access to, or preference for, the printed page. I followed Him to the billions who live among oral cultures.

Today, I serve leaders among the poorest, hardest to reach people groups on earth, who live with limited access to the written Scriptures. From the seminary classroom to mud huts in the tribal interior, I train pastors in fourth-world cultures in leadership development and community transformation—all with no books.

Through worldview analysis, communication strategies, and contextualization, we co-labor with local partners to train pastors and plant churches that reproduce disciples using local oral content, recorded and distributed by oral culture leaders.

Today, our partnerships spread the Word of God throughout unreached oral communities around the world, penetrating darkness with the Light of the world.

God is changing communities by giving pastors and churches access to the Word of God through local gatherings of leaders who spread spiritual and physical Good News in culturally appropriate ways. Let me share a recent example of transformation in Africa.

GOD HAS A NAME

Hours away from the nearest community, this small tribe of unreached and unengaged people had been considered outcasts, separated by a tribal rift that alienated them from family and friends. Four months before, this tribe had never heard the name of Jesus—they believed in one great god, but they had no idea He had a Name. Men, women, and children prayed to the heavens and shared a common hope that some day someone would come and tell them how God would deliver them from their suffering and pain.

Several years back, in a neighboring tribe, a young man named Thuo heard the Word from God for the first time in his own language. In our program, an indigenous movement of messengers shared life-saving health and humanitarian content alongside of the Great Story of God and how He worked among the nations. Through our pastor training partnership, Thuo's life, family and village were changed forever. Jesus had transformed his community.

One day this summer, Thuo became burdened. He knew the tribe “next door” shared the same heart language. He knew they shared the same lineage. He knew they came from the same father. He understood the reasons the tribe had been excommunicated. What he couldn't comprehend was why no one had made the short walk over to explain that things had changed.

Then, one day Thuo awakened to realize that his neighbors had not been changed. Their children were dying from preventable disease. They had not seen. They had not heard. In a word, he saw they were lost, and he knew he had the Word that could set them free.

When he arrived, he explained his desire for them to see and hear what God had done to heal his tribe. He patiently described the new health they had enjoyed from the news they had heard. Principles on herd management, disease prevention, and new health and hygiene practices changed life in their village. He told them stories of planting crops

and harvesting grain. He showed the results of how this news had changed their lives. Then, they heard the songs of creation. He told them the epic Story of God and the covenants. He told them about the prophets. And finally, they heard the story of the Promised One.

Four months ago, the tribe next door had no hope. Four months ago, they sang and danced to a god with no name. Four months ago, one brave soul walked across a boundary established by racism, hatred and scorn. Then, love replaced contempt; boldness replaced complacency.

Today, they gather together under a tree in a new church plant to hear songs and share narratives of how He spoke and the stars and planets took their shape. They tell one another the stories of how God chose Adam and Noah and Abraham and Joseph and the fathers. Most of all, they tell their children of how God chose them. Today, they worship the Creator, and He knows them all by name.

God transformed Thuo's community by changing the way we deliver the Word. Thuo didn't need to move to the city, or leave his village, but the Word came to him in a language he understood.

God is changing lives by changing the way we think about training pastors. Today, Thuo leads a movement of church planters across barren unreached villages with the Word of God in a language each listener can hear and understand. He trains pastors among oral cultures by delivering Life—one spoken word at a time. 

**ONLY 1.3
BILLION PEOPLE
PREFER TO LEARN
THROUGH LITERATE
MEANS...**

MAKING ROOM for Music & Dance



LAURA MACIAS

Laura was born in Cuba, grew up in Spain and spent 35 years in the United States before moving overseas with her family to serve as an Orality Specialist in Latin America with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). Laura and her husband Tony have three children and currently live in Costa Rica. Laura can be reached at lmacias@maf.org

“Consider this, you who ride on fine donkeys, You who sit on fancy saddle blankets, And you who walk along the road. Listen to the village musicians gathered on the watering holes. They recount the righteous victories of the Lord And the victories of his villagers in Israel. Then the people of the Lord marched down to the city gates.” “Wake up, Deborah, wake up! Wake up, wake up, and sing a song!”

—Jud. 5:10-12, NLT

As Deborah burst forth in a song of praise after Israel’s miraculous deliverance from the hands of their enemy, so we find indigenous peoples today seeking similar ways to express themselves to the Creator through music and song and holistic bodily expression. In many churches of tribal background, the impulse for spontaneous oral expression in song and poetry is latent in the community. No one is expected to be an expert and everyone is expected to contribute. The pressure of having to be a gifted singer or artist is not the crucial element; rather, worship is the focus and not the individual.

CONNECTING AT A HEART LEVEL

It was at a rural church where Simon and Juanita came to hear about Bible storytelling for the first time. Their friend and Ngobe evangelist, Eliodoro, had invited the couple to participate in a weeklong *seminario* (seminar) at Iglesia Misionera Restauración de Almas in Laurel, Costa Rica. Spanish would be the language in which my colleague, Regina Manley, and I would be teaching Bible stories while allowing the heart language, Ngabare, to be used among the indigenous men and women during the seminar. Although a year earlier we had trained them in some basic Bible storytelling skills, Pastor Carlos Espinoza had asked us back in order to include others in the church community who had not previously attended.

Like many other Ngobes, reading and writing in Spanish or Ngabare posed a challenge to both Simon and Juanita. As a result, we used oral methods of communication during the five days of instruction. The couple listened and paid close attention to the stories and small group discussions but when I invited them to participate, they smiled and declined the invitation. Their shy disposition told me it would be better to give them space and time to process all the things they were learning.

On the fifth and final morning, an unusual turn of events began to take shape. Simon, sporting his bright fuchsia Chacara bag, and Juanita, wearing her beautiful native dress composed of richly colored hues, were waiting for Regina and me when we arrived early at the church. With a big grin on his face, Simon approached me and said how much he



and his wife had loved listening to the Bible stories during the seminar. “I have never attended anything like this. It’s been different but it’s also been good. The Bible stories have gripped our hearts and we want to know if we can sing a song unto the Lord for all the things he has done for his people,” commented Simon on that sunny April morning.

As usual for that week, we prayed for everyone in attendance and asked the Holy Spirit to dwell in our midst. Simon and Juanita then got up from the wooden pew and walked over to the front of the church where they confessed they had never held a microphone, let alone spoken in public. Simon effortlessly took out a handkerchief from his back pocket, and Juanita, who had previously not said a single word during the week, began singing a most powerful song as if she had prepared for this moment all her life.

And this was Juanita’s song:

*The one who walked over the water
Is also here with me*

*And I feel his presence
I feel it in my hands, feet, and soul and all over me*

*Let him move
Let him move about 3x*

*You are still walking
You are still here with me*

*And I feel him all over me
I feel him in my hands, feet, and soul, and all over my being*

*Let him move
Let him move about 3x*

While the indigenous men and women clapped during Juanita’s song, Simon wept, swayed and danced as his wife sang a cappella to the Lord. When she finished, he uttered, “We don’t deserve you, Lord; we don’t deserve the miracles you do for your people.” Their worshipful praise song was a response from their hearts. It reminded me of the Song of Deborah as well as the Psalms of King David. After all, the people of Israel were also a tribal, communal people who responded with their whole beings to God together with their people.

Afterward the couple quietly sat down. The presence of the Holy Spirit had indeed filled the small church. The soft-spoken, gentle couple that at first appeared timid and reserved had blessed everyone in attendance that morning. Watching Simon and Juanita connect with God through music and dance expanded my understanding that storytelling is only one form of expression and communication. By making room for music and dance, Simon and Juanita pointed others back to God. They were stirred to join in with the “village musicians gathering at the watering holes” (Jud. 5:11) like the Israelites in Deborah’s day.

Having witnessed how the Ngobes demonstrated a passion for God and His Word through this one small form of music and dance means that I’ve only begun to understand the vast range of oral and physical expression rising to the heart of the Father from remote and rural places.

Glory to God for people like Deborah and Juanita who lift their hearts and voices in hymns of testimony and praise to our King.

Praise the Lord!

Sing to the Lord a new song.

Sing his praises in the assembly of the faithful.
(Psa. 149:1, NLT) 

To view a video recording of Juanita’s song, visit www.maciasinmissions.blogspot.com/2012_05_01_archive.html

I’VE ONLY BEGUN TO
UNDERSTAND THE VAST
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RISING TO THE HEART OF
THE FATHER FROM REMOTE
AND RURAL PLACES.

THE STORY-TELLER THE DHOW AND THE FISHERS OF MEN

ORALITY IN RELATION TO MUSLIM
COMMUNITIES COMING TO FAITH

JOHN B

John is the Director of Ministries for AIM International as well as the international coordinator for a global network of 135 organizations focused on Muslim peoples. He has had the privilege of leading the Fruitful Practice Research Team since 2010. John currently lives in California with his wife and four children. You may contact John at outreach.io@aimint.net. For more information about Fruitful Practice Research, write to info@fruitfulpractice.org.

“Can I tell you a story about *Isa al Masih*¹ and some fishermen?” I asked my Muslim friends as we set a lee-ward sail in a handcrafted *dhow*² off the coast of East Africa. The sun sent prisms of light off the rolling turquoise surface as we sat with our backs to the wind and the expanse of the Indian Ocean was before us as far as the eye could see. These local fisherman had a modest catch in the nets they had set the night before. They were eager to hear this story that was unfamiliar to them, and so I went on to tell them, “One day when Isa had been teaching the masses, he sat in Simon Peter’s *dhow* and asked him to put out a little from the shore. After he finished speaking to the people he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’”³ As the story went on smiles lit the faces of my fishermen companions when they realized the miracle of the net-ripping, boat-sinking catch that resulted from Simon’s obedience to Isa’s command. “‘Depart from me for I am a sinful man,’ Simon said as he fell at Isa’s feet. Isa replied, ‘Do not fear, for from now on you will be fishers of men!’”

Jesus took this opportunity to call his first disciples to be “fishers of men.” How wonderful that this same story is being told and received as thousands of Muslims are choosing to follow *Isa al Masih*. It is estimated that there are over 10 million believers from a Muslim background spanning every region of the Muslim world.⁴ Over the past decade we have had the privilege to gain a deeper understanding of how the gospel has been received and churches birthed among hundreds of Muslim people groups.⁵ As the Fruitful Practice Research team⁶ we have personally interviewed dozens of cross cultural and indigenous teams who have seen God grow His church among Muslim peoples.

Jesus called fishermen from the inside of their *dhow*. He communicated to them in words and metaphors that spoke to their hearts. He taught the most profound truth through simple stories that are easy to remember and that never lose their impact. It is no surprise that a significant theme we have discovered in establishing fruitful teams is that of using storytelling to communicate the gospel. The vast majority of Muslim people groups are functionally oral societies. These fruitful teams have made it their practice to value the learning preference of the society and adapt their ministry appropriately. According to our research, teams who incorporate these fruitful practices saw over four times as many churches emerge than those that ignore them. One survey found that 82% of teams who adopt practices consistent with the learning preference of the people and combine that with fluency in the peoples’ heart language, reported fruit in terms of churches planted.⁷

Oral story telling is proving to be one of the most effective means of communicating the gospel, and specifically the biblical narrative. Though fruitful teams are using a variety of

approaches to “storying,” the common fruitful thread is that they create a highly interactive and relational atmosphere where effective communication takes place.⁸ L. Burke pulled this example from one interview, “[Teams] often used thematic stories that responded to felt needs as they arose. The Lord would bring up felt needs, then there would be a story from scripture. . . [about] who is Jesus and who is God, what is His character, what is His nature...” They found that using stories was “a real freeing approach” with people who would never have accepted a printed copy of the Bible, but who enjoyed the stories.⁹

For many Muslims the Bible is considered *haram* (i.e. forbidden) because it is believed that Christians have changed it and therefore corrupted it.¹⁰ Appreciating these realities, fruitful teams make a bridge using Islamic terms (e.g. *Injil* for gospel; *Isa* for Jesus; etc.) and thought patterns. This is not so much about using the content of the Quran, but rather it is about reflecting the value of sharing the gospel using terms, symbols, and forms of thought that are familiar to peoples with an Islamic heritage.¹¹ Though they typically avoid the printed Bible, millions of Muslims are eagerly engaging Bible stories told by these “fishers of men” as well as radio, film and the internet. The Quranic verses about biblical characters such as Abraham, Mary and Jesus are incomplete and confused. Yet for Muslims who hear the full accounts and in their proper context—it often leads them to understanding, revelation and ultimately, faith.

A team of first generation BMBs¹² from one Island community found that celebrating the Muslim festival of *Idd-ul-adha* would advance the gospel among their people. They described it as “a fishing ground” since many of their fellow Muslims would attend. One young man from this movement concluded, “we do a lot of things to move closer to [our people].” On this day, they teach about Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac using drama to demonstrate how God intervened by sending the lamb. They then move from this straight to the crucifixion demonstrating Christ as the ultimate lamb that was shadowed by this incident to take away the sin of the world. This celebration has drawn many of their people to listen to the gospel. It is estimated that there are now 6,000 believers and 100 churches in this movement. And it doesn’t stop there—this movement has now engaged its two Muslim neighbor tribes as well with plans for a third.¹³

We praise God that the *dhows* of believers from a Muslim background are reaching the shores of other Muslim people groups. These Jesus followers are now “fishers of men” as they take the stories that are near and dear to their hearts to their neighbors. Let us consider how we might encourage

them, and even more importantly, join them until all the remaining unengaged and unreached Muslim people groups are given a chance to also choose *Isa* and follow him. 

¹ *Isa al Massih* – Jesus the Messiah in Arabic. One of the titles given to Jesus in the Islamic faith.

² *Dhow* – The Arabic word for boat. Used for any of the various types of sailing vessels on the East African, Arabian, and Indian coasts. www.dictionnaire.reference.com/browse/dhow

³ Luke 5:1-11 – The calling of the first disciples according to Luke.

⁴ Johnstone, Patrick, 2013. Power Point presented at Diaspora Peoples in Europe consultation 2013. Taken from *The Future of the Global Church*.

⁵ There are currently 2,025 Muslim Unreached People groups (MUPGs), with a total population of 1,578,065,540. Of these MUPGs, 1,108 of them currently have no church planting engagement among them. December report, *Global Status of Evangelical Christianity*, Global Research, IMB. www.peoplegroups.org

⁶ Since 2006, Fruitful Practices Research has studied practices across many dimensions of ministry in the Muslim world. One of the major results of that research was a list of 68 Fruitful Practices defined as “activities that promote the emergence, vitality, and multiplication of fellowships of Jesus followers in a Muslim context.” These can be found in publications such as *From Seed To Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices and Emerging Issues relating to Muslims*, edited by Dudley Woodberry and *Where There Was No Church: Post Cards from Followers of Jesus in the Muslim World* by EJ Martin.

⁷ Adams, E., Don Allen and Bob Fish, 2009 “Seven Themes of Fruitfulness” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 26:2, 77.

⁸ Burke, L. R. 2010 “Describing Fruitful Practices: Communication Methods” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, 27:3, 153.



⁹ Martin, EJ 2010 *Where There Was No Church: Postcards From Followers of Jesus in the Muslim World* Learning Together Press, 178.

¹⁰ www.ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?301458-The-Bible-and-torah-haram

¹¹ Daniels, Gene 2013 *Fruitful Practices in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Mixed-Methods Study*, 6.

¹² Believers from a Muslim Background.

¹³ For security purposes the name and location of this people group has been omitted. This information has come from three survey trips conducted between 2005-2012 in this region of East Africa.



LEADER DEVELOPMENT AND ORALITY



**REV. JOSEPH W.
HANDLEY, JR.**

Rev. Joseph W. Handley, Jr. serves as the president of Asian Access (www.asianaccess.org). Previously, he served as the founding director of Azusa Pacific University's Office of World Mission and the lead mission pastor at Rolling Hills Covenant Church. Joe has traveled to fifty countries, serving cross-culturally in most of them, and lived in Istanbul, Turkey with his family. You can reach Joe at jhandley@asianaccess.org

What does it take to train leaders when they cannot read and write? When most of the world's Christian resources are made for the literate world, how do we equip the majority? How do we come alongside the vastly growing Church of the world and empower them in the very thing they are most hungry for these days?

In the following pages, a few stories will be shared to illustrate ways that leaders are being equipped. These stories are straight from local indigenous leaders who have shared with me what they are doing to address the needs for leader development in their countries.

DESPERATE FOR TRAINING

Asian Access "A2" National Director from a SE Asian country was conducting leadership training long before he was introduced to A2.¹ He developed a simple and reproducible method for training potential leaders to start cell churches. The process included four days of training every month for two years and included things like: studying the Bible, preaching, evangelism, cell church multiplication, doctrine and discipleship. Following every session, they went out and practiced what they had learned immediately on the streets. It's quite powerful!

The training began in 1994 with 16 people and now boasts some 3,000 people currently in the program. They have 34 trainers conducting the training and are seeing fruit nationwide.

Seven years ago, an illiterate man was eager to join, and because of his persistence the leader of Asian Access allowed him to participate even though he couldn't read, write the simple papers, or take the final exam. Despite all of this, he became one of the most successful church planters to have ever gone through the process.

He listened intently to every session and immediately put into practice what he had learned. Within months he was leading a 60-member cell church in the mountains of this country, and today his church spreads virally across the region. Every night his daughter would read to him from the Bible and he would couple that with sermons he had memorized growing up in church. It was stunning to hear the report of this man's fruitfulness.

A few years ago, he was able to learn how to read and write at a basic level and is now able to read the Bible on his own. However, the power of his story is immense and the success of his church is due to the deep levels of influence he gained from being an oral learner throughout his entire life.

SPORT, FOOD AND DIALOG

Several years ago I attended one of our “Asian Access” leadership sessions in Cambodia.² It was an eye opening experience. The faculty member was impressive, sharing powerful principles with an amazing treasure trove of material for the pastors. He dazzled me from the inception of the session! He provided an array of lists and “how-to’s” that were sure to impress any leader.

However, there was a problem. I noticed that when he would try to break the lectures into interactive sharing times, very few would ask questions or engage the conversation. Given that I was new to the mission, I thought it best to address my questions to the National Director, Meng Aun Hour, later.

When I asked Pastor Meng why people were not engaging, his answer was illustrative. He said that the sessions were built on too many facts, lists and lectures rather than on stories, pictures, and conversational dialogues. The sessions were a blast through a ton of material with very little time given near the end of the lecture to actually have a conversation.

As I went to the streets during the break times, I noticed the pastors beginning to let their guards down. We would play table tennis every afternoon to rest our minds and our bodies as well as create an environment where people could learn from one another. It was here that the real learning was beginning to take place. I observed the interaction to be quite boisterous. Of course, part of that was the competitiveness of the sport! However, the sport also allowed these pastors to open up and begin processing what they were hearing.

It went even deeper late in the nights—long after I went to sleep. Due to jetlag, I usually went to my room around 10 or 11pm. The Cambodian pastors, however, would stay up until the wee hours of the morning. You have never heard such a ruckus. At the close of the week, I asked Pastor Meng what was happening in the evenings. He shared, “Joe, that is when we are deeply processing all that we are learning. It is a better venue for us since the actual sessions are not very interactive.” They would tell stories illustrating life lessons of leadership from their own experiences to process what they were being told. Over cups of tea and bowls of soup, they felt the freedom to share with one another and learn from each other.

A TREE OF LIFE

I learned of this example from a presentation given at the Lausanne Global Leadership Forum in Bangalore, India.³ VisionSynergy, Scriptures in Use and Bridges Training Network—South Asia worked together to empower 15 emerging oral Bible churches to work together and reach a region that included 100 villages.

Tree of Life, the course they developed, can be taught over three or four days.⁴ During the training participants interact with scripture stories selected to provide a biblical foundation for the importance of collaboration and to present practical partnership principles. The class learns these stories by creating dramas and songs and by retelling the stories. They discuss the stories using simple questions as they develop a model that can be followed in their home villages.

The training ends by challenging the leaders to use these principles to empower partnership among local churches for evangelism and church planting, economic development, community and social development (health, education) and social justice (religious/social persecution) projects.

During the last five years, more than 2,700 leaders have participated in Tree of Life training in India and Nepal. And today hundreds of oral Bible churches in these countries are working together to change their communities based on the partnership principles taught.

LEADER DEVELOPMENT AND ORALITY

These stories illustrate the importance of learning methodology for the development of leaders. Even in the Cambodian context mentioned above, where the leaders are able to read and write, the principles of oral learning are abundant. The reality is that most of us are oral preference learners, even when we are literate!

The process of learning in community, sharing life stories, and digging in deeper to uncover truths that are being shared is a key recipe for developing leaders. As one of the A2 faculty shares:

“Joe is the reason I teach with Asian Access, investing in only 12-16 leaders at a time rather than instructing hundreds and or thousands gives leverage and impact. I know that everyone in these trainings influences 30-50 other key churches and they will reproduce what they are learning. Because of the interactive nature of the training, the collaborative learning environment, and the use of stories, food and sport, these leaders will learn far more than several hundred or a few thousand listening to my lectures.”⁵ 

¹ Interview with a pastor from a restricted access country leads Asian Access leadership training—October 2013, Singapore.

² Asian Access/Cambodia session in Phnom Penh—summer 2008.

³ Karin Primuth. Strategic Evangelistic Partnerships Among Oral Learners - Lausanne Global Leadership Forum, Bangalore, India, 17-21 June 2013: www.conversation.lausanne.org/en/resources/detail/13102#.UrxTrWRDtwg

⁴ This report on the Tree of Life was originally written by Tim Brown from visionSynergy.

⁵ Interview with an A2 faculty member in 2008.



MARLENE LEFEVER

Marlene LeFever is Vice President of Educational Development for David C. Cook Global. She is the architect of the Children at Risk program. Recently Cook's Train-the-Trainers for the at-risk program took her to Senegal, Bangladesh, Kenya and Uganda. For free sample lessons, email her at Marlene.LeFever@DavidCCook.org.

Fill the Hole

*A Ministry Strategy for Developing New Programs
Among Semi-literates and Children*

This article follows the pattern used by David C. Cook in developing an at-risk children's program, starting in India and spreading around the world. Jyothi, 12, is the daughter of rag-pickers in India. Her grandparents took out a loan to build their hut, but when it came due, they couldn't repay it. Jyothi was pulled out of school to work long exhausting hours as a housemaid for pennies against the loan.

But after work three days a week, she attends a Christian program that the children have named "Happy Club." It's the only time in her week when she can be a child, when she can smile and know that in spite of what evil in the world does to her, she is cared for by her heavenly father. He is outrageously in love with her. Week after week, she learns the Bible stories. She listens as they are told. She acts them out. She draws and retells them. She understands them, and she begins to work with the Holy Spirit to make changes in her attitude and actions.

Today millions of children in India, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Mexico, Senegal, and ten other countries are learning about Jesus in programs like the one Jyothi attends. It started just three years ago. The process the developers at David C. Cook followed may guide others as they create ways to share the greatest story with others around the world.

RESEARCH AND FIND THE HOLE

Cook was looking for a hole in ministry, an area where nothing existed. They started the process by convening two groups of India's ministry leaders. They were asked: "What vacuum do you see in Christian ministry in India?" Both groups identified the same hole. "We have 18,000 Christian orphanages in India. Almost none have a program to help children fall in love with Jesus. The children age-out of the orphanages and return to their god-selves."

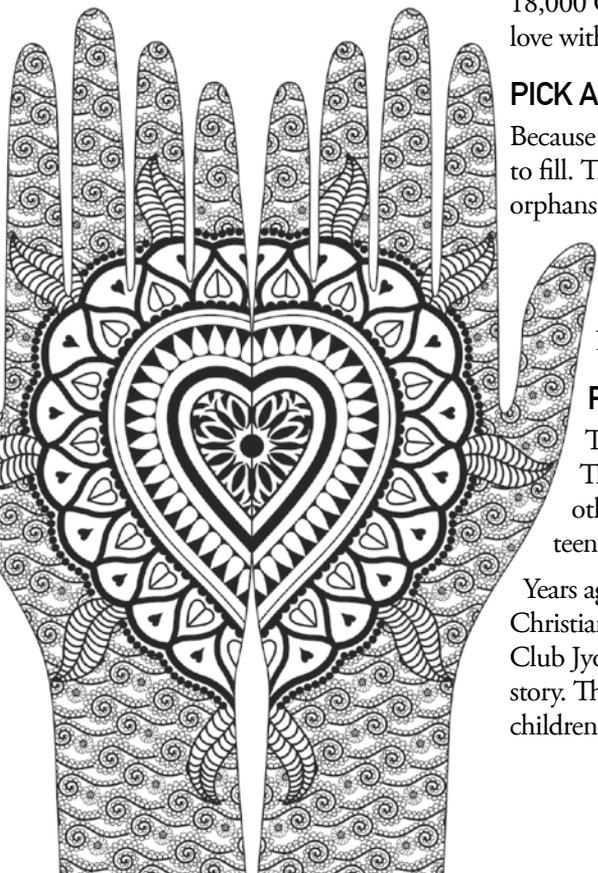
PICK A HOLE IN YOUR STRENGTH AREA AND FORM NATIONAL ALLIANCES

Because of Cook's 139 year history in children's programs this was an ideal hole for it to fill. This new program would teach Bible stories that would speak to the felt needs of orphans and other children at-risk. As they learned the stories, children would grow in their understanding of a loving Father who wants to adopt them into His family. So Cook had the basic content, but without alliances with people in India, Cook could not reach India's children. The India alliance actively revamped the program. No teacher and no child would doubt that this program was for them.

PURSUE LINE EXTENSIONS

This program provides three lessons a week for three years for children ages 9-11. That's 478 Bible stories, all with a Christian worldview. Cook is now asking, "Are there other holes an adaptation of this program might fill, like foster care, mentoring for teens, or even women at-risk?"

Years ago, seven-year-old Bindu was placed before a man who wanted to buy her. A Christian stepped in and stopped the sale. Today, as an adult, she is the teacher of the Joy Club Jyothi attends. The teacher said, "I see myself in every child. Everyone narrates my story. The Bible lessons I teach are the words of God. This program draws these wounded children into the heart of God's story." 





COLLABORATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL CHILDRENS MINISTRIES

JIM ROSENE

Jim Rosene has been the President of Kids Around the World, a faith-based, non-profit mission organization since it was founded in 1994 with the commitment to reach children worldwide for Jesus. Jim and his wife, Denise, live in Rockford, IL while their son Jeff lives in Southern California and their daughter Jenny lives in Minneapolis.

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BRIAN RHODES

Brian Rhodes has served Awana in various capacities the past 25 years. As the current vice president & chief ministry officer, with responsibility over both the U.S. and international side of the ministry. By combining efforts and moving to a more global focus, Awana is positioned to reach and influence more children and youth for Christ. Awana currently serves two million children and youth each week. Brian looks forward to celebrating the ten million milestone by 2020!

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After the great catch of fish, we read that the fishermen came ashore and left everything and followed Jesus... have you ever wondered what they actually left? Was it just the fish, nets, boats, their occupation... or did they leave behind those things that make it difficult to truly follow Jesus? Things like their pride, their programs, their materials, and their manuals—those things we often bring with us as we attempt to follow Him. I know that all of us who lead ministries, however big or small they are, often have things that make up who we are as an organization... I know they are important to us, but are there times we must leave them behind to follow Jesus?

Several years ago Brian Rhodes, the International Director of Awana, and Jim Rosene, President of Kids Around the World, met to see how they could work together as organizations. Being close personal friends, it was easy to meet; but how can organizations truly partner together to impact the lives of more children with the love, message and transformational hope of Jesus? At first the meeting was more of what each group does—in other words, the strengths: how many clubs, how many leaders, how many playgrounds. etc. But when they decided to ask the probing question (what is your weakness?) the tone of the meeting changed. We usually know the strengths of a ministry because our websites and marketing material will reveal that, but the weakness—this is only admitted in a closed environment and even then not necessarily with another organization. However it was during this discussion, when we were willing to be open and honest with each other, that God began to speak.

It became obvious to us that our weaknesses were the strengths of the other organizations, so instead of starting another program within our own ministries, we decided to strengthen our strengths and give our weaknesses to the other group. Awana clubs have been known around the world for their fun games, discipleship programs and commitment to the Word of God. Kids Around the World is known for impacting communities with playgrounds and emergency food relief as well as an oral strategy of Bible storying for children. Together they can accomplish so much more for the Kingdom.

A little over a year ago Kids Around the World was invited to share at a conference in the DRC by Reach Africa, a partner of Reach Global (the missions arm of EFCA). KIDS realized this was an opportunity to bring the strengths of Awana and Kids Around the World together to benefit the children of the DRC. After sharing at a conference this past year, a formal invitation was extended. Now the two organizations will be partnering with many different denominations and children's ministries in the DRC and guiding them in basic principles of working with children. The outcome will be the national churches developing their own programs to work with children that will include fun, a strong oral Bible foundation and a discipleship component—African style! It will not be Awana; it will not be Kids Around the World; it will be what the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo feel will help them to impact the lives of millions of children in their country.

Partner together to impact the lives of children with God's transforming hope! 



ORALITY

in Pioneer Business Planting

DR. VICKY MARIE

Global Strategic Innovations
Independent Business Leader

Dr. Vicky Marie spent 33 years working in innovative and creative environments including multimillion-dollar technology deployments, alliances with technical luminaries such as Steve Jobs, Nicholas Negroponte's MIT media lab, Stanford Research Institute (SRI) and The Walt Disney Studios and leading entrepreneurial startup businesses.

Today Vicky is focusing on consulting with businesses in emerging markets. She helps organizations innovate and develop new viable business approaches through orality, business model workshops, entrepreneurship methodologies and innovation projects focused in Asia and Africa.

What does orality have to do with business? As we begin to experience the economic impact business is having in emerging nations, we must stop and ask ourselves if business is having the social and spiritual impact in the world we had hoped to see.

As businessmen and women, we often look first to secular examples of success in the business community and yet, as followers of Christ, we have been provided a wealth of biblical examples and models for leadership, ethical behavior, success, economics, strategic planning and a plethora of other stories for establishing, building, and directing our businesses. So, why do we not turn to these stories as we establish businesses and seek social and spiritual impact in the world?

First and foremost, we are not equipped. We are not familiar with oral-based learning and we do not know Bible stories well enough to apply them accurately to situations and circumstances we are facing. Next, we have secularized business; therefore, we look to the world for examples. It's no surprise we often become discouraged because we have not experienced the social or spiritual impact for which we prayed and we are left wondering why.

According to the International Orality Network, more than 70% of the world's population (5.7 billion people) are oral learners, by necessity or by preference—people who can't, don't or won't read, who prefer to learn and communicate by means other than print-based media or written instruction. They communicate through methods such as storytelling, drama, songs, poetry, parables, proverbs and other oral arts. Ironically, an estimated 90% of the world's Christian workers present content using literate—not oral—communication styles. In order to reach and disciple oral learners, we must learn to use the strategies that are familiar and relevant to them in every environment, including business.

As pioneer business planters, we still need to recognize the strategic role of orality and the need to equip businessmen and women who are involved in pioneer business planting.

Why, you might ask? In regions where businesses are most needed, business has been conducted for centuries via oral communications and, therefore, it is important that we are prepared to operate accordingly.

The first step to incorporating orality into business is to identify those stories that align with the messages we are attempting to communicate. Maybe it's a message regarding caring for those in need and the purpose of business. Maybe it's a message about integrity and leadership. Whatever communication processes, tools, illustrations and methodologies we use in our business activities, they must be relevant to the culture where we are conducting business.

The next step is to identify biblical stories to draw upon and to replace the written cognitive secular examples. It is important to use memory and image-filled illustrations. We must learn these stories and begin to substitute them in place of the written-based materials we use on a regular basis. The focus should be to create an oral-based participatory and developmental approach to launching and running business based on biblical principles that reflect both social and spiritual influences.

IT WAS NOT A BILLBOARD ADVERTISING THEIR BUSINESS THAT CAUSED THE BUSINESS TO GROW, IT WAS THE JOINING OF THE FATHER WITH THE BUSINESS THROUGH FAITHFUL STORYTELLING.

The change does not happen overnight but with diligence and intentional practice we will begin to see a difference in our approach and the success of communicating business principles in oral-based communities will become evident. Success will be reflected through growth in viable, legitimate, profitable businesses actively impacting oral-based communities for the glory of God.

Here is an example of orality in pioneer business planting that speaks volumes. Phillip and Samuel are two pioneer businessmen with hopes of spreading the gospel in South Asia. These two entrepreneurs created something very astounding in a single, tiny room—a barbershop. In this tiny portal, they have been blessed to create an economic, social and spiritual impact.

At first their “customers” would come and go without fellowship. They would simply come and receive what seemed to be a secular service. Phillip and Samuel, however, had something else in mind. They then began to memorize Bible stories, as well as other stories reflecting Christian morals. These stories soon began to meet the spiritual needs of those around them and those they served. Their goal was to plant spiritual seeds of character and integrity from within their business while developing relationships with the local men. The customers were so attracted to the oral stories that Phillip and Samuel were sharing that they began to bring more and more clientele. Today many will go to the shop ONLY to fellowship and to receive the stories.

Phillip and Samuel have earned a tremendous amount of respect from their community and have brought much glory to the Father by further hallowing His name. What these two have accomplished is an extremely honorable feat, especially in a region with limited freedoms. Though it is an honor to spread the gospel it also takes courage and should not go unrecognized as obedience with considerable risk.

Both of these young men are not only businessmen but also church planters as they have begun small Bible studies with the customers who have shown interest in learning more. They have successfully de-secularized their business by bringing the gospel to their customers. In return, the Father has blessed them with a business that is thriving economically through increased revenues, socially through bringing the community together, and, spiritually through the audible Word. It was not a billboard advertising their business that caused the business to flourish, it was the joining of the Father with the business through faithful storytelling. Their human hearts were touched by the Father, ushering them to do something different, to go against the common misconception that business is just business and allowing the Father to be glorified in all of their endeavors. 





Collaborating to Reach Oral Learners

LORI KOCH AND
DAVID SWARR

Lori Koch and David Swarr serve as co-chairs of the International Orality Network's Audio Scripture Engagement Task Force.

Lori Koch is Manager of International Programs for Faith Comes By Hearing, a ministry which records Scriptures in hundreds of languages and provides them through a network of global partnerships for evangelization and discipleship. Lkoch@fcbhmail.org

Dr. David Swarr is President and CEO of Davar Partners International, an audio Scripture engagement organization currently serving over 500 partner organizations in 90 nations. David grew up in the Middle East and has lived and worked on five continents. His PhD is in intercultural organizational leadership. david.swarr@davarpartners.com

Global mission agencies, churches and individuals participating in the Finishing the Task initiative share a vision to see churches planted among all unreached and unengaged people groups (UUPGs). The majority of these UUPGs are oral learners. Foundational to making disciples and bringing about transformation among them is access to Scripture in a format they can understand and in a language close to their hearts. The International Orality Network's Declaration on Making Disciples of the World's 5.7 billion¹ Oral Learners through Audio Scripture Engagement calls upon the body of Christ "to devote energies, strategies, and resources to provide access for all oral learners to engage the entire Word of God through audio-digital means, so that every tribe, every tongue, and every people group may hear, understand, and have the opportunity to respond."

With this vision as impetus, collaboration among Bible translation agencies, audio Scripture providers and mission organizations has reached unprecedented levels in the past several years. Scripture recordings exist in some 900 languages, recorded gospel messages are available in over 6,000 languages, and Scripture-based films of various types have been completed in over 1,500 languages.

Much of this audio and visual Scripture content is produced in the languages of small and medium sized people groups for whom little other media content is available, secular or otherwise, because of the limited commercial viability of such a venture. In many cases, an audio Bible or Scripture-based film may be the only media available in their heart language, making it that much more attractive whether the audience is Christian or not. When exposed to Christian media for the first time in the heart language, typical responses include: "I didn't know Jesus could speak Konkomba!" and "Now we can pray to God in Cakchiquel because he can understand us! We don't have to pray in Spanish anymore."

Samuel Buya has never read a book, but he leads a Bible study of more than 60 people in his East African rural village. A farmer by trade, Samuel received an audio Bible in his language, and now he gathers with his neighbors to hear God's Word almost every evening. Samuel himself has listened through the gospel accounts several times and he now understands his life is a gift from Jesus. The people of his village had a reputation for violence, but Samuel and his neighbors have seen a difference since they starting listening to Scriptures two years ago. They have learned to live in peace with their neighbors and family.

As mission personnel learn the value—indeed the necessity—of an oral approach, collaboration in Scripture delivery and engagement methods is also taking place. In support of local church planting and discipleship efforts audio/video playback providers supply cutting-edge technologies to meet the needs of the world's most remote peoples. Currently, there are an estimated 6 billion mobile phone subscribers worldwide. This is a potentially enormous missionary task force, one that can access and share biblical content through an array of available technologies, including Wifi, Internet, Micro SD cards and Bluetooth.

Yet so long as there are over 2,000 UUPGs without a single verse of scripture in their heart language, the challenge of reaching all oral people remains. 

¹ When the Declaration was first made the number quoted was 4.35 billion, see: <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/1468/10-2011>. However, based on updated research the number is

actually revised upwards to 5.7 billion

I Refuse... to fear the darkness

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." (Eph 6:11)

THIS MAN IS
WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE

For a crime? No.
He is simply proclaiming Christ
in a closed country.

Bakhar and others like him, refuse to fear the darkness that entraps people when common sense says, "protect yourself." (From the Reach Beyond Manifesto)

Refuse to fear the darkness.
Sign the Manifesto now at
ReachBeyond.org

HCJB Global is now

reach
beyond 

HELP THEM FIND THEIR STORY IN HISTORY

HOST INSIGHT

Provide college students in your area with a year of integrative biblical education and discipleship. INSIGHT offers students the opportunity to earn **36 units of college credit** while studying the character and purposes of God throughout global history. Wrestling with deep life questions and different world views, students cultivate their ability to meaningfully interact with the world and understand their place in God's Kingdom purposes. INSIGHT is looking to develop host locations with a passion for mission and the academic capacity to run a college program.

Insight

Get more information at
www.yearofinsight.org/index.php/host
or email director@yearofinsight.org

U.S. CENTER
for World Mission

Advancing SCRIPTURE ACCESS FOR DISCIPLESHIP AMONG BIBLE-LESS ORAL PEOPLE



DAVID SWARR,
PHD

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foundational to making disciples in every people group is enabling access to and engagement with the Word of God in their own language. This awareness has fueled initiatives by some translation agencies to begin translation of the Bible into every language by the year 2025. A high percentage of Bible-less people groups are oral learners, yet the whole Bible in audio is only available in fewer than 130 of the world's 6800 languages. How are oral communities to be discipled, and how are movements of indigenous fellowships to be sustained among them without access to the whole Bible in a format they understand? In the words of Samuel Chiang, mission history has shown that "no church planting movement has been sustained long term without access to the whole Bible."

With this as a backdrop, consider the following three springboards for advancing scripture access and discipleship among Bible-less oral people.

COLLABORATION BEYOND OUR SILOS

Excellent work has been done historically by Bible translators, often at great personal sacrifice, to translate and print the Bible in new languages. Missionaries have labored to reach the most remote and isolated unreached people groups, and indigenous workers have accessed those who no foreigner could reach. Yet many times these efforts have taken place within either denominational/organizational or discipline-related silos and as a result, the outcomes, though both laudable and extensive, have not always attained their greatest potential. For example, at times translators have provided print Bibles to populations of oral learners who could not read them and where there were few believers and fewer laborers, while in a nearby people group there were numerous new believers and sufficient laborers but no Bible in the local language whether printed or recorded.

Additional factors to be given consideration are that the demographics of the global mission work force are rapidly shifting both south and east; while political doors are being closed to natives of traditional mission-sending nations, laborers from the global southeast are increasingly able to access these same places and often at a much lower cost. Yet according to sources at the National Christian Foundation, approximately 75% of the financial resources of the evangelical church globally are in the hands of North Americans. The combination of the realities mentioned above leads to the conclusion that what is necessary to maximize effectiveness in enabling Scripture engagement among unreached oral learners is intentional, cross-disciplinary, interagency, and international collaboration.

The Last Command Initiative is an example of this approach. Launched by a coalition of Indian agencies and denominational entities together with international organizations, foundations and donors, it has as one of its purposes the goal, through translation of the Bible, to provide access to and engagement with scripture to every language and

people group in India who are yet without the Word of God. Locally driven, this initiative has brought together prayer warriors, church planters, mother tongue translators, expert consultants, project managers, funding sources, and audio Scripture providers in a synergistic manner. This maximizes the strengths of each contributing party—local knowledge, language, access and leadership are combined with international resources and specialized expertise.

INTEGRATION OF STORYTELLING AND AUDIO SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

The orality movement has had at its core the practice of storytelling, one of the most accepted and practiced forms of learning in oral cultures. As in early times biblical truths are conveyed through the oral transmission of Bible stories. Yet even the most advanced Bible storytellers have only mastered 225 Bible stories to date. This amounts to approximately 10% of the Bible. If oral learners are to have access to the whole Bible then audio-digital formats must also be utilized. The Interactive Bible Discovery (IBD)¹ method of scripture engagement for oral learners, integrates storytelling and audio Scripture engagement, thus enabling a combined oral-audio discipleship process that is easily replicated. IBD intentionally merges the communication strengths of storytelling with the advantages of audio Scripture. This method enhances accuracy and enables both replication and scalability. Interactive Bible Discovery is gaining momentum with practitioners in oral communities.

ACCELERATION OF SCRIPTURE AVAILABILITY FOR ORAL LEARNERS

Recently, several Bible agencies have accelerated access to the Scripture among oral learners through the simultaneous release of print and audio formats of the Bible. By planning joint release of the Bible in both formats the agencies ensure access for literate and oral learners alike.

When combined with training in the Interactive Bible Discovery method and strategic planning with local leaders, approaches are put into place that target Scripture engagement for every segment of the community.

One of the challenges faced in providing Scripture access for oral learners is the length of time it takes to translate the whole Bible into a new language, which has historically taken in the vicinity of 25 years. Recent initiatives such as the use of mother tongue translation teams and translation from oral to oral, bypassing print, are shortening the time required, but a full Bible translation can still take a dozen

years. The traditional approach in translation has been to begin with a few Bible stories, progressing from there to a gospel, then to the New Testament, and finally the Old Testament. So how does a new fellowship of believers nurture itself while it waits ten or 12 years for the full Bible translation? A new initiative called Bible 3-6-5 aims to provide Bible-less oral peoples the “bread of life” daily for a year in audio format through translation and recording of 365 chronological Bible passages from Genesis to Revelation. This core or

golden thread of the Scripture amounts to approximately 20% of the Bible and can be translated and produced in approximately one fifth of the time. Part of the beauty of the approach is that it can be developed in several phases of story sets, each set being released as it is produced. Though there is a template of passages, the final selection is determined together with the local leadership and can be tailored to the context.

Bible-less oral people are among the least-reached peoples on the planet. Intentional collaboration across traditional boundaries combined with oral-audio Scripture engagement practices, and the acceleration of access to heart language audio Scriptures are keys to streamlining Scripture access and enabling discipleship among them.



¹ www.davarpartners.com

BIBLE AGENCIES HAVE
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FORMATS OF THE BIBLE.

M A K I N G *Jesus* F A M O U S A M O N G T H E N A T I O N S



CALVIN AND CAROL CONKEY

Calvin and Carol Conkey are the Founders and International Coordinators of Create International, a global ministry of Youth With A Mission (YWAM) focused on producing effective media resources for unreached people groups. Since 1979 they have served as full-time media missionaries, producing hundreds of audio-visual resources and ministering in over 50 nations. They serve on several YWAM leadership teams, including the University of the Nations College of Communication, International Frontier Missions, and Contextual Resources, as well as co-ordinate the Global Media Network with the Call2All campaigns.

The 7,000 distinct unreached people groups of the world reflect the incredible complexity, diversity, and greatness of our God. One media form will not reach them all. As we pursue the task of world evangelization, we must identify major priorities, ideally combining orality and indigenous media that will ensure that all the peoples of the world will have the opportunity to hear and see the gospel.

THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF INDIGENOUS MEDIA

Media especially accommodates the 70% of the unreached who are pre-literate and serves all who prefer “oral-visual” means of communication. From the interest stirred by new mobile technologies to the heart response generated by messages communicated through traditional art forms, the Spirit-led use of media to impact individuals and nations is an enormous factor in the effectiveness of fulfilling Jesus’s mandate to share His gospel with all peoples.

A strategy, message, and tool unique for each people group results in heart understanding and transformation. Greater contextualization of the gospel message leads to lasting fruit as the community embraces the message within their cultural context.

With Internet, mobile devices, and social networking usage exploding across the unreached world, we have an ideal platform for transmitting tailor-made indigenous audio-visual media to communicate the gospel. Through these inexpensive, dynamic distribution channels, mass media communications is no longer limited to traditional “broad-cast” strategies. We live in a new age where “narrow-cast” media can be transmitted to millions of people for very little cost.

APPLYING THE STRATEGY

Create International is committed to using all of these strategies and technologies to their fullest potential.

Launched from the campus of the U.S. Center for World Mission in 1988, Create International emerged from a time in recent mission history where great surges of innovative strategies were being initiated around the world. A ground swell of passion

sparked a vision to reach the unreached peoples “by all possible means.” From this context, the ministry of Create International grew to seven teams, in five countries, on three continents. “Declare God’s glory among the unreached peoples utilizing audio-visuals,” is the mandate of this ministry. After 25 years of proving God’s faithfulness in some of the most spiritually dark places on earth, over 65 unreached megapeople groups now have multiple “tailor-made” gospel media resources. For many of these groups, these are the first audio-visual presentations on the greatest story ever told in their heart language and culture!

Create International’s audio-visual productions traverse genres of film, animated art, cartooning and animation in partnership with numerous agencies and initiatives. Our animators and artists produce contextual artwork to assist orality teams and audio storying sets being developed for unreached peoples.

Our teams partner with field workers who already have built relationships among the peoples where they are serving. Oftentimes, actors are believers who want to help reach their own people, but other times, God leads us to people who just want to act in a film. Repeatedly, we have seen non-believing actors give their lives to Christ through exposure to the gospel as they act out the drama and memorize Scripture. The salvation message is woven naturally into a drama of conflict and resolution. Great care is taken to ensure biblical, cultural, and linguistic accuracy in all of our evangelistic presentations.

In addition to our evangelistic audio-visuals, our unique “Contextual Gathering” series of videos has proven to be an effective follow-up tool for new believers or seekers to learn about church or small group meetings within their own cultural context. Models are visualized for starting family gatherings, then inviting neighborhood friends for home fellowship, prayer and study of the Word responding to seekers’ questions, and eventually raising up other leaders.

The response to these contextual fellowship videos has been dramatic! The local actors, themselves believers from a Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist background, told us that these films would also be very effective for evangelism. This is confirmed by testimony after testimony of people who have given their lives to the Lord after viewing these presentations; a new believer was viewing the contextual worship video with his wife who was not yet a believer. After the presentation, his wife exclaimed, “If that is what you have been talking about, then yes, I am interested. I could worship Jesus like that!”

—Field worker in Indonesia 2010

Free downloads of our films are available at www.Indigitube.tv.

PEOPLE EMBRACE THE GOSPEL AS THEIR OWN

The evidence of effective media is souls entering the kingdom of God, unreached people disciplined in Christ, churches planted and communities transformed:

As a result of distributing over 4 million copies of the Mandarin evangelistic and discipleship film, we were told

REPEATEDLY, WE HAVE SEEN NON-BELIEVING ACTORS GIVE THEIR LIVES TO CHRIST THROUGH EXPOSURE TO THE GOSPEL.

that 10,000 new churches were established. “Among the Tujia of Southern China, the local people themselves raised the funds and duplicated over 100,000 copies of the evangelistic film to reach their own people.”

—IMB field worker 2009

After viewing Create International’s film Transformation—tailor-made for the 20 million Banjara people in India—my workers reported over 10,000 Banjara made commitments to Christ, and at least 500 new churches were started. These statistics were gathered just after the first few years of the movie release. Create International has made a significant contribution to our ministry and millions of people have come into the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

—Rev. Dr. Lazarus Lasingh, Ministry Director

ENGAGING WITH THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRIST

Rolled out initially at the Tokyo 2010 Global Mission Consultation, the “20/20 Vision” is an initiative of Create International to produce and distribute an indigenous evangelistic audio-visual tool for every one of the Least Evangelized Mega Peoples (LEMP) by the year 2020. With the LEMP list covering 75% of the total population of all unreached peoples, media practitioners, churches and ministries are challenged to make these people groups a priority for engagement and production. Partner with us to create new indigenous media that shares the gospel in a clear contextual way—so that all can see and understand the message and embrace it as their own.

As it is written, “Those who were not told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.”

(Rom. 15:20-21) 

OPPORTUNITY TO REACH THE LEAST OF THESE



DAVID PALUSKY

David Palusky is the founder of Renew Outreach. In 1998 he was faced with this question: “How can we present the gospel to remote people and empower their native leaders to disciple their own tribes?”

Drawing on his electrical engineering background, David created solar-powered audio/video systems for teaching groups both small and large without electricity or a cumbersome generator.

The impact of these tools inspired David and his brother to begin Renew Outreach, with the goal to equip God’s world-changers with continual advances in creative technology—helping to bring the gospel to the “ends of the earth!”

Have questions? Renew’s team can be reached at info@RenewOutreach.com.

Believers can spread the gospel to the ends of the earth with what is already in their hands—mobile phones. There are now more mobile phones in the world than there are people; Christians can impact the nations by turning mobile devices into audio Bibles, using them to play gospel films and spreading training materials—all in the heart language. Using an offline strategy, evangelists can spread gospel media virally from phone to phone without depending on electricity, cell reception or internet access. Also, new technology is being developed in order to implement this strategy on a larger scale.

OPPORTUNITY TO REACH THE LEAST OF THESE

Today evangelists have access to digital media in thousands of languages. Audio scripture from Faith Comes By Hearing, visual stories from Global Recordings Network and the *JESUS Film* are just a few options; but how can long or even short-term missionaries deliver this media to the ends of the earth?

Thankfully, there is an existing technology to which even remote and impoverished people already have access: mobile phones. However, the majority of people in developing nations do not have access to smart phones, 3G broadband or internet. How, then, can we transfer gospel media onto their low cost phones?

IMPACT THE NATIONS FROM YOUR PHONE

Offline distribution is a strategy used to get audio Bibles and gospel films onto the world’s 5.5 billion feature phones—without relying on internet. Most feature phones are already able to play audio and video files. These larger files can be transferred to feature phones by means of microSD cards and small portions can go viral from phone to phone with Bluetooth technology. Because smart phones and apps are scarce in the developing world, an offline strategy opens a huge opportunity for believers to spread the gospel virally on the phones of the world’s most remote and humble people.

GOSPEL GONE VIRAL

One example of the impact of mobile phones can be found off the coast of Australia, where an aboriginal woman named Wangaar lives. She taught herself how to use a computer and how to put text and audio on mobile phones. When JAARS visited her, they were able to show her how she can also get videos and photo books on phones. In a single afternoon, Wangaar translated an entire Bible story script and created a Bible story video.

Just days after sharing this content on phones with Bluetooth, the gospel videos had gone viral across the whole village!

Within weeks, she heard her neighbors’ children reciting the Bible stories. The children in Wangaar’s community love to listen to the video clips and watch Bible picture stories so



much that they will fight over who gets to watch. Yurranyil, another resident, emphasizes that even adults and parents cannot wait to get their hands on the gospel media.

More proof of the power of mobile technology is seen in Sub-Saharan Africa, where a missionary named Terry serves in Ghana. For years, Terry saw that the audio New Testament was being translated into new languages, but the content was not being distributed broadly to the masses of unreached people. Terry desperately wanted all the people to have access to these translated audio Bibles. Knowing that most feature phones can play audio and video, Terry saved the entire audio New Testament from his computer onto a microSD card and gave it to one of the local translators so that he could play it on his phone. The indigenous man gave an emotional “thank you” and joyfully exclaimed, “I finally have my own Bible in my language!”

WHAT IS IN YOUR HAND?

A major challenge for missionaries like Terry is that they work with multiple language groups and need unique media for each group. Traditional paper Bibles are limited to a certain number of people, are not very mobile, and can only be used by the literate. In addition to this, although there are many fantastic audio Bible players, the cost to provide them to 5.7 billion oral learners would be enormous.

The solution to this is now available to anyone around the world. Mobile devices are already in the hands of most of the world’s unreached; and there is an innovative device that can take offline distribution to a whole new level.

NEW SOLUTION COMING

In early 2014, Renew Outreach is launching the first generation of a device called the LightStream. It allows users to distribute gospel media to mobile devices in an “off-the-grid” environment with no access to internet, electricity, or cell phone reception. The LightStream uses three distinct distribution methods: Wi-Fi, Bluetooth,

and microSD card copying. First, it acts as a Wi-Fi access point, allowing mobile devices to connect and stream or download content from the LightStream itself rather than the Internet. Second, it transmits a Bluetooth “push” signal, notifying any active Bluetooth-enabled mobile devices in range that they can accept the media files via Bluetooth transfer. Third, simply insert a microSD card into one of the four available ports and the gospel media will be automatically copied onto the microSD card. All this is accessible through the user-friendly interface. Everything is visually based, allowing for intuitive use by people of all languages.

Once media is transferred to a single mobile phone, small files like the book of Mark can continue to be transmitted from phone to phone using Bluetooth technology, resulting in viral spread of the gospel. When the system is not being used to spread gospel media, the solar-powered battery may also be used to charge mobile phones.

There are many exciting ways LightStream can be used on the mission field by people of all ages. The types of media can vary from audio Bibles to films and training materials. A gospel movie can stream from LightStream to over 30 Wi-Fi-capable devices simultaneously. Also, LightStream can be left behind with indigenous leaders who can then go on to plant churches among other groups. Short term teams—while in the field—can help distribute media in the people’s heart language. Long after the team has returned home, the gospel will continue to spread.

Using existing technologies, all believers—men and women, young and old, urban and rural—can become active missionaries with the ability to target multiple people groups with life-changing gospel media in almost any setting. New disciples no longer have to rely on a single physical Bible and no longer have to learn another language to know God. With just a mobile phone loaded with gospel media, they can share the Treasure Map that leads to the ultimate Treasure—Jesus! 



WILLIAM BJORAKER

William Bjoraker is Associate Professor of Judeo-Christian Studies at William Carey International University. He holds a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.

His dissertation title is "Faith, Freedom and Radical Individualism in Late Modern America: A Missiological Evaluation." 2007.

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SAVING GOD'S FACE

A CHINESE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF SALVATION THROUGH HONOR AND SHAME

BOOK REVIEW BY WILLIAM BJORAKER

"There is no such thing as theology; there is only *contextualized* theology." (quoting Stephen Bevans, p.1)

"Imagine coming to the Bible with Eastern eyes." (p.55)

"HS [honor and shame] are not peripheral categories in Scripture. Rather, they and related concepts are central." (p.177)

The above quotes from Jackson Wu's work nicely set the table for the full feast—a unique contextualization process demonstrated, and superbly applied to the Chinese context.

Wu's book is in dissertation format and includes six chapters. Here is a summary:

I. INTRODUCTION

Helpfully introduces and summarizes each chapter.

II. THEOLOGICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION IN PRACTICE

This chapter establishes the need for a model of contextualization that is not simply translation, communication, or application, but an act of interpretation, or an interpretive process. Wu exposes the common fallacy that threatens the contextualization process—to assume the gospel and presume that our own formulation of the gospel is the pure culture-free one. Wu offers here a model of contextualization that uses culture to interpret Scripture, allowing culture to lead the conversation in a dialogical process, but one which gives final primacy to Scripture. Among the rich wealth of theological motifs of Scripture, some will more readily resonate in one culture, some in another.

Due to its worldview themes of individualism and individual rights, Western theology has emphasized the legal, forensic, judicial biblical motifs for atonement (the penal substitution theory). The Chinese worldview themes of reputation (saving or losing "face"), group identity (collectivism) and proper relationships (hierarchy, harmony,

roles) call for a theology that emphasizes honor and shame (“HS” hence in this article). Both the Western (law, guilt, penal substitution, justification) and the Eastern themes (preserving honor and removing shame, relational harmony) are in the biblical texts. However, the strong HS theme and many HS images are central in Scripture; the “glory” of God theme is the honor of God (Hebrew *kavod* is translated as both “glory” and “honor,” which are conceptual synonyms). Yet these themes are less visible to Western eyes and are underemphasized in Western theology.

Wu provides two figures that illustrate his model and map the contextualization process (p.53, 65).

III. THEOLOGIZING FOR CHINESE CULTURE

This chapter describes seven Chinese cultural values, what needs to be addressed in a Chinese context, and what has been attempted toward a Chinese theology. Wu then describes six approaches to contextualization that have been tried for the Chinese context: Situational, Sino, Synchronistic, Scriptural, Systematic, and Soterian. The various approaches of writers he cites “return to the question of how one can be both Chinese and Christian” (p.145). Many turn to the Pauline material but reaffirm the Western emphasis on the legal motif and the individual. Wu asks, “How might cultural factors take the lead and alter our reading of Scripture to provide new but legitimate interpretations?” (p.147) He highlights the importance of metaphors and the use of narrative. “Not only does story have a way of challenging people more holistically within their context, but it guards against ‘proof-texting’ one’s assumptions and fosters greater respect for the entire canon” (p.147).

IV. HONOR AND SHAME IN CONTEXT

In this chapter Wu discusses definitions of HS, in contrast to guilt, in relation to morality, and in terms of “face” (reputation, standing, status, dignity) in Chinese culture. He claims, “The concept of shame permeates every aspect of Chinese life” (p.153), and that “Collectivism, honor and shame have an inherently public nature” (p.154).

He expounds on HS in Scripture and demonstrates that the theme is far more integral in the whole canon than most Western theology usually sees. Humans have dishonored God, and so shamed themselves. This condition needs reversing, rescue and reconciliation. Christ bore the shame.

He affirms Enoch Wan’s proposal as consistent with a Chinese view of HS. Summarizing Wan, Wu writes, “Glory (pre-fall), Shame (post-fall), and Glorification (post-fall). Chinese values of family, honor, and harmony should produce a gospel message that corrects the overemphasis on the forensic nature of the Gospel...” (p.185). Wu cites Roland Muller’s book *Honor and Shame*, which focuses on reconciliation as the primary expression for an HS gospel presentation appropriate for the highly relational collectivist cultures (p.188). He cites Bill Musk who actually explains what sin is, using HS language, briefly calling it a “violation of honor” (p.189).

V. A SOTERIOLOGY OF HONOR AND SHAME

The goal of this chapter is to find out how Chinese culture adds to an understanding of salvation. Applying Wu’s contextualization process allowing Chinese culture to lead the conversation, the HS themes of the collectivist culture draw out different facts and veracities that are truly in the Scriptures (this is not *eisegesis*) but that Western theology has *not* emphasized. The biblical exegesis by Wu gives primacy to HS themes. He notes, “HS need not be relegated to rhetorical theory and anthropology, as if they were distinct from mainstream exegetically-based theology,” and that “law is every bit as much as an anthropological, culturally laden category as HS. Exegesis cannot *a priori* privilege any metaphor, regardless of interpretive precedent or the preponderance of a theme in other extra-biblical documents” (p.195).

Wu’s Chinese interpretations answer three basic questions. I will summarize his answers briefly after each question:

1. “What Does the Atonement Do for God?”

“If Christ did not die, God would lack honor. God is shameful.” (Recall that God made promises to Abraham that he would bless all nations through his offspring (cf.

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Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8); therefore, if Christ does not die, then the nations will not be saved. In that case, God would lie and lose face.) “The cross saves God’s ‘face.’” “Jesus died for God” (p.197). As he was about to go to the cross, Jesus said to God, “Father, glorify (honor) Your Name!” (John 12:28-29), showing that God honored Himself by Jesus dying on the cross. As the prayer in Psalm 79:9 says,

“Help us, Oh God of our salvation for the glory of your name: deliver us, and atone for our sins for your name’s sake!” (emphasis Wu’s) (p.198).

2. What Did Jesus Accomplish for People (Objectively)?

Christ’s atonement centrally concerns the honor of God and the shame of man. It is the story of how God has acted to bring reconciliation between humans and Himself, expunging human shame while saving God’s “face.”

God’s honor (glory) inheres in, or is a consequence, or accompaniment of his intrinsic worth. God’s honor (worth) was devalued, impugned, ignored, obscured by human sin. God’s dishonored (profaned, desecrated) worth must be compensated for, set right. God’s worth is so great, that the only object or entity that could satisfy, vindicate, and validate God’s vitiated honor is Christ’s death.

So Christ’s atoning death restores people who are in union with Christ into right relationship with God. This is possible due to the corporate solidarity and identification principles conveyed in Pauline thought in I Corinthians 15: 22-23, 45 and Romans 5:12-21. Fallen humans are “in Adam.” But those who are “in Christ... belong to Christ,” “are righteous, and share his glory” (honor) (p.202). Though Western individualists find this hard to comprehend, this is in accord with the collectivist thinking in the Chinese worldview and the Hebraic worldview,

where the community is more fundamental than the individual. The HS themes helpfully connect the Chinese context with the ancient biblical cultures. There is much overlap in the worldview themes of the two cultures.

Jesus’ sacrifice was a “compensatory payment” (Morris, p.208).

The cross preserves God’s honor (saves God’s “face”), and takes away human shame. Jesus’ substitutionary atonement is

not only a *penal* substitution (the traditional Protestant view), but is also an *honor* substitution. Jesus said to the Father, “The glory (honor) that you have given to me, I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one.” (John 17:22)

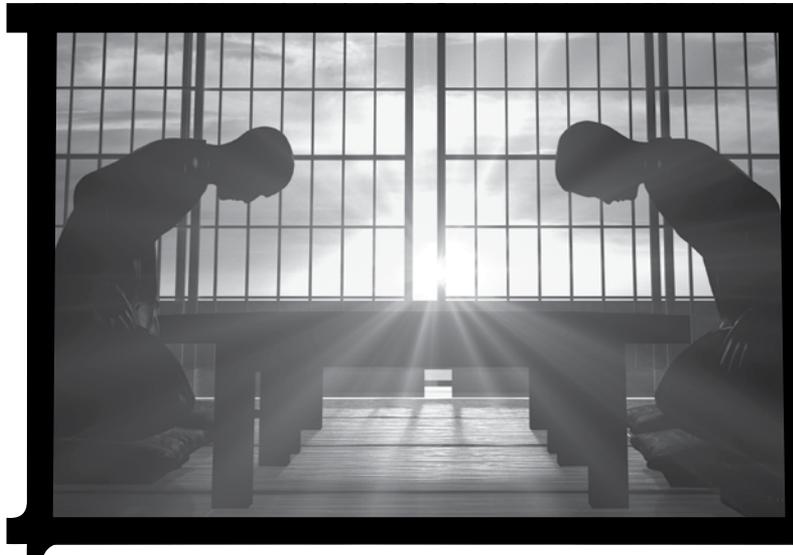
3. What Did Jesus Accomplish for People (Subjectively)?

The promises of the new covenant (which are communal as well as individual) enacted in Christ’s death and resurrection provide forgiveness and regenerative power by the Holy Spirit to actually

change human hearts and renovate the human self in this life. Wu states, “Reconciliation with God requires a subjective change of heart in his people, necessarily causing them to honor God with their lives.” (p.216)

VI. CONCLUSION

In this chapter Wu discusses the implications of his work for contextualization and Chinese theology. Wu interprets Scripture herein through “Chinese eyes,” using HS concepts. He does not reduce contextualization to simply translating or applying a Western theological version of the Gospel into a Chinese concept. He concludes, “theologian-missionaries can utilize an HS perspective to develop a soteriology that is faithful to the biblical narrative.” (p.295)



THE CONTEXTUALIZATION PROCESS
HE PROPOSES PLACES A PREMIUM
ON RECRUITING AND RETAINING
LONG-TERM WORKERS.

He recommends that “missionary strategy should reflect the dialogical and integrated nature of contextualization.” (p.296) The church must reevaluate how it trains missionaries. The contextualization process he proposes places a premium on recruiting and retaining long-term workers. It takes much time and deep identification with another culture to see through its eyes and for the cross-cultural workers to question their own theology and worldview assumptions.

He closes with some provocative questions, one of which we who are Western individualists should seriously consider—“what other doctrines [other than soteriology, my comment] might be amended if we change our fundamental point of reference from the individual to the collective? How might HS affect ecclesiology and church leadership?” (p.299).

Having summarized the book, I will now offer some concluding comments according to the order of logic in Wu’s work and as signaled by the three opening quotes in this review.

CONTEXTUALIZATION: GETTING IT RIGHT

Wu states “There is no such thing as ‘theology’; there is only contextualized theology.” (quoting S. Bevans, p.1) Naïve is the assumption that one can go directly from Scripture to application. We all bring our cultural assumptions to the text. So, Wu argues, when we prematurely assume the gospel, we are “begging the question,” assuming the conclusion within the premise of an argument. When we assume we have the pure formulation of the gospel (as though it is culture-free), the methods of contextualization we tend to use are mere communication and/or application. We have settled on the meaning of the gospel, so we assume we now must simply communicate it accurately—decode and encode, translate the concepts and encode them into another

language. Or we move directly to application. But the problem is that we are applying an already-contextualized (to us, by us) formulation into that other culture.

Traditionally, contextualizers have started with Scripture (what does the Bible say?). Next they analyze the receptor culture (what is this culture’s worldview and felt needs?).

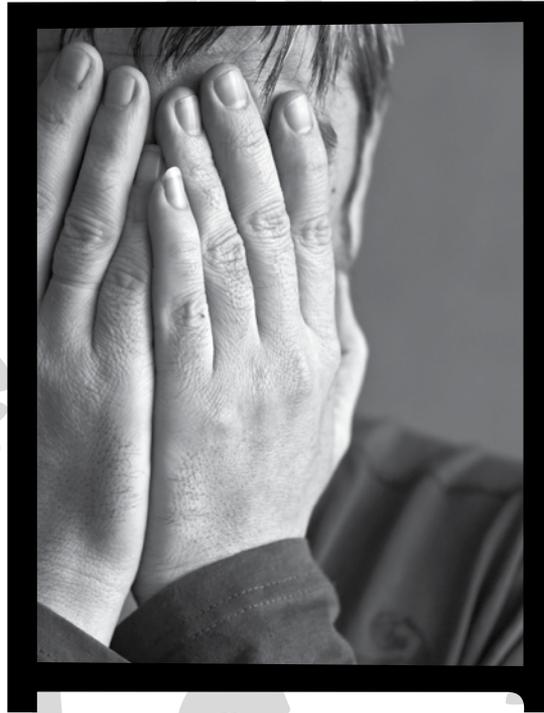
Then they encode the gospel (as they have formulated it) into the receptor culture’s language and to the worldview themes and culture forms as they have perceived them. It is essentially a one-way communication process, from source to receptor.

For example, consider the contrast of a Western (legal-judicial, individualistic) formulation of the gospel to the Chinese or Eastern worldview (honor/shame, relational harmony). Say we simply took the ideas of the modern “Four Spiritual Laws” and translated them into Mandarin, seeking to get our audience to apply them directly to the guilt of law-breaking

we assume the Chinese to be conscious of. The problem would be that the “Four Spiritual Laws” formulate the gospel in the Western favored themes. This is a Western worldview in Mandarin language. These themes do not speak to the hearts of Chinese like the HS themes do. Thus, Wu skillfully shows how “it is quite possible that our evangelistic bridges lead listeners to cross the cultural divide in the wrong direction” (p.24).

Converts are expected to accept the missionary’s own cultural thought forms. “If the contextualizers limit the relationship between Scripture and culture to a few select points, their ‘bridges’ may in fact act as a wedge between the gospel and the local culture” (p.24-25). Contextualization is then superficial.

Wu’s model reverses this traditional order. His method of contextualization avoids assuming the gospel and “begging



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the question.” Contextualization is foremost interpretation. Wu claims “culture must lead the conversation” (p.46). He makes a medical analogy: a physician starts by looking at a person’s body, not by looking at a medical textbook; the body is analogous to culture, and the anatomy textbook is analogous to Scripture (p.56).

So contextualizers start by looking at the culture. We must use culture to interpret the Bible. There is a saying, “We see the Bible not as it is, but as we are.” You start with understanding the receptor cultural context deeply, their ways of thinking, the questions they bring to the Bible due to their community’s narrative and the categories by which they read Scripture. So the culture sees in Scripture firstly what has meaning to it and its people. But the process is two-way, dialogical. Culture and theology are in constant conversation. In the end, those in the receptor culture interpret the Bible through their “eyes,” not having a foreign cultural version applied to them. Scripture conveys a diversity of gospel articulations, many motifs, themes, metaphors and images. Scriptural truth reaches culture with its embedded worldview themes and values. People will perceive in the Bible first what is most relevant to them in their socio-cultural existential condition.

Wu holds to the full inspiration and authority of the Bible. This is not liberalism or relativism. He states, “Finally, the ultimate question is never, ‘What does the culture want?’ Instead it is ‘What does the Bible say?’ Scripture has primacy” (p.56). In fact Wu has a very high view of the Bible—high enough to see that the Bible is so rich in meaning and supra-cultural in

message that it can be interpreted by any society, and they will find God’s truth speaking to them.

This method of dialogical interpretive contextualization has great potential for use in any other cross-cultural context.

THE BIBLE IS SO RICH IN MEANING AND SUPRA-CULTURAL IN MESSAGE SUCH THAT IT CAN BE INTERPRETED BY ANY SOCIETY, AND THEY WILL FIND GOD’S TRUTH SPEAKING TO THEM.

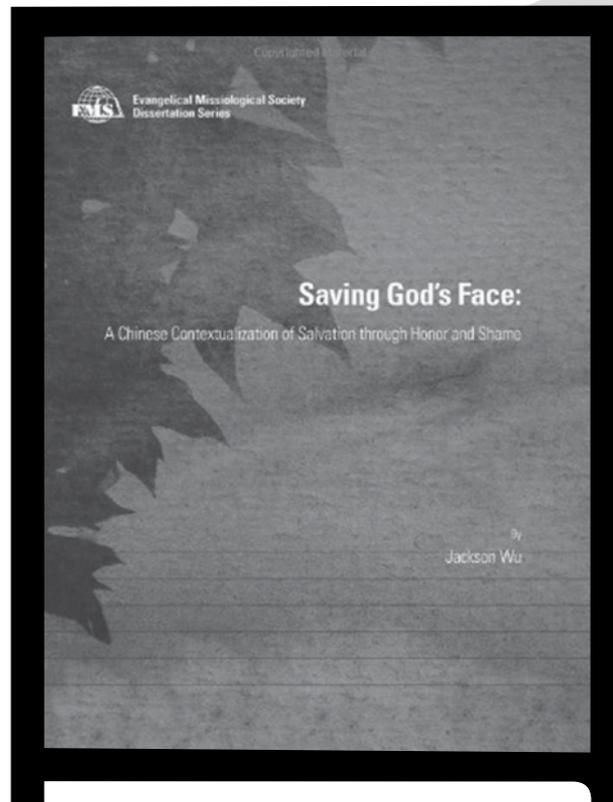
FOR CHINESE EYES ONLY?

Chinese eyes see “face,” relational harmony and hierarchy, and are oriented toward group identity and thus, honor and shame. Westerners need to realize that the majority of the world has more collectivist societies—Africa, the Middle East, nearly all of Asia, and Latin America. It is largely only the Western and Northern European societies that are individualistic. These majority world cultures that emphasize HS will find in the Bible truths and themes that speak to their concerns; the themes of HS are prevalent in the Bible. It is the story of God’s glory (honor).

China and much of the Eastern world values reputation, respect for rank and status (saving or losing “face”), group identity (collectivism), and proper relationships (hierarchy, harmony, roles). Thus, “coming to the Bible with Chinese eyes,” one tends to pick up the HS themes that are there.

However, as Wu observes, “HS is a human category, not merely an ‘Eastern way of thinking’” (p.299). Westerners use different terms than “face” and the cultural expressions are

different. Think of the European custom practiced until the last century of dueling to get satisfaction for impugned honor (We meet at dawn. Pistols or swords?). Humankind is *homo honorificus*. It is the case that some cultures more highly emphasize HS than others, but all have it. We would do well in the West to tap more deeply into this theological motif in Scripture.



HONOR AND SHAME: FOUNDATIONAL IN THE BIBLE

Western theology is theology that is contextualized to Western cultures. In the individualistic societies of the West, people are oriented toward individual identity, individual merit, individual rights and freedom, individual salvation. Thus Western theology tends to emphasize the guilt and law themes in Scripture. Western theology uses predominantly the legal motif and legal-forensic language in discussing sin, atonement and salvation, especially since Luther and Calvin (John Calvin was a trained lawyer). Group identity or corporate solidarity plays a small role in Western systematic theology.

Wu notes that some Western theologians have recognized the motif of God's glory as important in the Bible. But few Western theologians have developed the implications of HS as they influence the whole of Scripture. The glory of God is a major theme throughout the Bible. "All have sinned and come short of the glory (honor) of God" (Rom 3:23) is a central diagnosis of the human condition, calling for salvation. Humans have dishonored God and themselves and this condition needs redemption. Yet, Western theology tends to treat "HS as primarily a social-science issue, not a theological problem on the same level as law" (p.7). There is so much more in Scripture about HS than most Western eyes have seen. Though the legal/forensic motif is biblical, the Bible consistently demonstrates a predominance of the Honor/Shame motif. Wu claims, "HS is foundational to the entire biblical narrative" (p.7).

WHERE FROM HERE? POSSIBILITIES AND STORY

Wu focuses on contextualization for the formulation of doctrine from an HS perspective, specifically soteriology. Since the majority world is HS in cultural orientation, missiologists need to think beyond doctrine to more

effective communication strategy with these cultures. In chapter 3, Wu asks "How might cultural factors take the lead and alter our reading of Scripture to provide new but legitimate interpretations?" (p.147). He highlights the importance of metaphors and the use of narrative. "Not only does story have a way of challenging people more holistically within their context, but it guards against 'proof-texting' one's assumptions and fosters greater respect for the entire canon" (p.147).

I would have liked to see Wu develop this notion of story more. Yet perhaps it will be left to others to explore how story and oral strategies of communication will be most effectively used in HS cultures. Maintaining, losing and saving "face" expresses values stemming from one's worldview; therefore, the use of story is critical to engaging HS culture. Stories address HS themes as people identify with the honor or shame they see in the stories' characters; they are therefore very relevant to their HS worldview. Scripture is largely in the narrative genre (about 75%), and Jesus used stories as his primary way of teaching. The majority world is HS in worldview. This seems like a perfect storm convergence for major developments in oral strategies and Bible storytelling across the world.

There is a saying, "Story invites you into the room, but does not tell you where to sit." Not telling people where to sit can save a lot of face. The stories can do their work of transformation from within, giving people space enough to change while saving face. 



A PROFILE OF A MOVEMENT CATALYST

/ Steve Smith works with the International Mission Board (SBC) globally to catalyze learning lessons from and training for biblical Church-Planting Movements. He is the author of the book *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* with Ying Kai (WigTake Resources 2011). You can follow Steve's musings from his devotional thoughts and kingdom ministry on Twitter @kingreigncome and Kingdom Kernels on Facebook.

God seems to be increasing the pace with which Church-Planting Movements are starting globally—movements characterized by numerous streams of disciples and churches multiplying to the fourth generation and beyond. One thing I've learned in fifteen years of training individuals to cooperate with the Spirit in launching Church-Planting Movements (CPMs) and Discipleship Multiplication Movements is that I can never predict who the person is that will be used by God to launch such a movement. Just when I think, "this is the one," God surprises me by using someone I least expect. I hear similar testimonies from other CPM trainers and practitioners around the globe. God delights in raising up the men and women of His choosing, not ours.

Over the years, however, after studying dozens of case studies of CPMs, hindsight offers some lessons about the characteristics of

men and women God is using to catalyze movements. Personalities and temperaments of these co-laborers cover the whole spectrum, yet each of them possesses a healthy combination of a set of characteristics. Often we don't see these elements in the training context, but as they embark on trying to reach cities and people groups with the gospel, these characteristics demonstrate themselves.

Examining the lives of CPM catalysts leads each of us to ask the question: Am I the type of person through whom God would launch a movement? Though none of the CPM catalysts have all of these characteristics, most have a large portion of them. Looking at their lives can give us pause to examine characteristics lacking in our lives or be encouraged by similar traits present in our lives.

What follows are two lists of the characteristics of movement catalysts. The first is a continually-

updated compilation of common traits observed in CPM case studies as studied by dozens of CPM practitioners over the course of several years. The second is the personal perspective of a man who is probably acquainted personally with more CPMs than any other person on this earth.

If God has put on your heart to be a man or woman through whom He would launch a movement, read these lists prayerfully, asking the Father to affirm you and challenge you.

COMPILATION FROM MULTIPLE CPM CASE STUDIES OF A TYPICAL CPM CATALYST

HEAD—Knowing

- Understands a simple plan and process that gets to reproduction, a plan that includes lots of personal evangelism among those far from God as well as training all believers to witness to and train others. In the process they start reproducible churches that multiply.
- Understands the ways of kingdom life and multiplication. The catalyst tracks generational growth, knows what can drive or kill a movement and continues learning in this area.
- Knows God's Word and can point local believers to God's Word as the authority for life.
- Knows what is most important for catalyzing movements and doesn't get distracted from it.

HEART—Being

- Passionate for reaching all of the lost in his target group
 - Single-minded, works diligently, driven until all are reached
 - Tenacious—will not take “no” for an answer
 - Sacrificial work ethic; living with a pervading sense of urgency
- Spiritual authenticity
 - Hears God and obeys. This leads to a vision from God that is unquenchable—“God holds me responsible” or like John Knox, “Give me this people or I die.”
 - Lives in integrity before God and others
 - Exercises great faith that God will start a movement in his people group now
 - Lives by the Spirit leading to holiness
 - Love for God and others—shares his/her life with them
- Life-long learner—always learning in order to better fulfill the vision
- Perseverance—dogged tenacity doing the right things to complete the task, pressing through obstacles that come

HANDS—Doing

- Prays for the lost and mobilizes fervent prayer for the lost, especially by local believers
 - Expects God to demonstrate His power, often miraculously
- Boldly goes to share the gospel, disciple believers, start reproducible churches and mentor emerging leaders. Spends

very little time in the office!

- Trains the maximum number of disciples/trainers (new & old believers) when they are available, training them in a way that results in multiplication
- Develops upper level leaders as the movement grows and helps them multiply and guide the movement

A PASSION TO
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- Ruthlessly evaluates his/her own plans and adapts based on the fruit he/she sees

HOUSE—Relating

- Relates primarily to local believers/lost that are same or near culture to his/her target group, rather than people from his/her home culture
- Spends large amounts of time finding national partners, casting vision to them, and training them for reproduction; always trying to start new streams of movement through new local partners
- Exercises frequent loving accountability for obedience and reproduction with those he/she trains
- Mentors and trains the right

leaders; As it is evident who is bearing fruit, he filters those he trains and spends the majority of his time with those bearing the fruit of multiplication in several groups and several generations

- Protects the movement from DNA that would slow or halt the movement

OBSERVATIONS FROM A FATHER OF MODERN CPMS

I asked my friend Bill, a father of modern Church-planting movements, what characteristics he sees consistently in men and women that God is using to catalyze CPMs. This is a composite of what he has seen.

- A passion to see many saved throughout an area, people, or city—their focus is on the lost that have yet to hear the gospel. This results in an urgency to bring salvation to as many as possible as quickly as possible. Their highest priority is dealing with lostness because of their deep awareness of heaven and hell. The eternal state of people around them weighs heavy on their hearts.
- Perseverance to fulfill the vision of reaching all the lost—this often looks like a dogged tenacity—an unwillingness to take “no” for an answer. Such an attitude means that they fail often in their attempts, but they are failing forward, learning in each experience so that they can do better the next time.
- Not wedded to a single unchanging methodology—as learners seeking the best ways to reach all of the lost, they are ruthless in self-evaluation. They know that their plans and methods are simply ways to apply

biblical principles. Therefore they are ruthlessly willing to adapt methods and fix problems in order to more effectively reach the lost. Their methods and strategies are constantly being updated, not putting their trust in just one approach.

- Self-discipline to cease a multitude of unfruitful, distracting activities—the CPM practitioners are focused on doing the right things—they place the highest value on things that will get them to movements that reach all of the lost. Therefore their ministries are as about what they DO NOT DO as what they do.
- Action-focused not idea-engrossed—these are people of action. They are often impatient with the hypothetical but want to implement immediately what they are learning.
- Not man-pleasers—they live for One Person's agenda—God's. They do not let their plans or methods be dictated or restricted by what others think. In addition they are not agency or organization focused—looking only to or limited by what their organization initiates. This means they are uninterested in most activities and priorities of religious professionals in order to spend time with the lost and with new disciples, launching approaches appropriate to endless multiplication throughout their target groups.
- Experience the power of God in life and ministry—these are people abiding deeply in God, expecting God to demonstrate Himself in their personal lives and in their work. They live by faith and see God show up.
- Faith that God can and will save many, in this place, at this

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time, among these people—they believe the harvest is prepared around them and they work to find those ready to believe and multiply. They believe God is going to do it here and now!

- Extremely high work ethic—they often are driven people to the extent they make peers uncomfortable. Most have been successful in secular occupations. They've learned work ethic and the necessity of tailoring their efforts to bear fruit.
- Results-oriented, bottom-line thinkers—they are willing to do whatever it takes under God to evangelize their people. This results in a single-minded focus which is committed to effectiveness. If there is no fruit, they are asking “why” and making adjustments.
- Cognitive ability to oversee complex multi-dimensional processes—they know that movements are not simplistic, so they possess the ability to monitor the entire process from new disciples to mature leaders, generation by generation.
- People of prayer—they live in frequent, two-way communication with the Father. Their relationship with God is a close daily walk.
- Bold evangelists—they actively model what they expect others to do.
- Biblicists—the Bible is their standard to apply in every situation. The Bible is their handbook; whatever it says is what they believe and do.
- K.I.S.S.—in order for movements to start and continue, they recognize the necessity of keeping every step of the process simple. All things must be reproducible.
- Often mature believers who have been through hardship, suffering, internal and external challenges—they've been tested and found faithful.

- Hear God and obey—bottom line, they believe “God holds me responsible for these people.” So they live their lives in obedience to reap a harvest and present them to God as an acceptable offering.

Surely in these two lists are characteristics that each of us needs to emulate more so that we will be the type of person God will use to catalyze a move of His Spirit.

As I look at these precious co-laborers, I keep coming back to the thoughts from Jesus about the type of people that were coming into the kingdom in the time interval of Matthew 3 to 11 (from the days of John the Baptist until Jesus made this statement):

- Early disciples leave their nets and boats to follow Jesus.
- A leper defies protocols and kneels at Jesus’ feet.
- A man healed of a legion of demons hurries to tell ten cities his story.
- A tax-collector leaves a money-changing table and throws a party that day for Jesus.
- Four friends tear open a roof to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus.
- A woman bleeding for twelve

years shoves her way through a crowd to touch Jesus’ robe.

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- A ruler of a synagogue humbles himself to ask Jesus to raise his daughter from the dead.
- Two blind men follow the noise of Jesus’ arrival in town and grope their way through a crowd to gain their sight.
- People violently pushing past obstacles to gain the kingdom.

All while the religious leaders watched and scorned such behavior.

With that group of disciples in mind, Jesus made two amazing statements in Matthew and Luke:

- “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.” Matthew 11:12 (ESV)
 - o OR “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.” Matthew 11:12 (NIV)
- “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. Luke 16:16 (NASB95)

This group of desperate individuals had a vision of something greater and shoved their way past disbelief, ridicule and scorn to gain what was best. They refused to take “no” for an answer. Perhaps they are best described by Jesus’ one term: violent. Are you hungry enough for God and His kingdom coming to be described as violent? 

GIVING WITH DISCERNMENT

RALPH HANGER

/ Ralph Hanger was born in Bolivia, educated in UK and has spent most of his working life in East Africa. For 15 years he and his wife, Jane, served with Scripture Union in Malawi. Together they have spent 12 more years working with the African Pastors Fellowship in East Africa working in DR Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi. Ralph is currently a research Associate with the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, looking at the problems associated with unhealthy dependency between churches in Africa and those in the Materially Developed World.

“I have so much more than you have. Let me share some of my plenty with you.” How much aid, given from Christians and churches in the Materially Developed World (MDW) to the less well off in the Majority World starts from motivation similar to this. As followers of the One who included a generous lifestyle and care for the poor and needy as part of his manifesto, (Matthew 5:37-39 for instance), this is surely right.

What a nasty shock it can be to find out that the money we have sought to give from our plenty has actually caused harm instead of the good we had intended. This need not be the result of corruption or mismanagement. The money has gotten through to the person for whom it was intended, but instead of helping them it has caused real harm.

The following is just one example of what unfortunately can and does happen: through a mission trip, a holiday safari or maybe a business trip, a Christian or church from the MDW links up with a rural pastor in Africa. Seeing the poverty of the pastor and how his congregation

is unable to pay him adequately, a perfectly natural response is to want to pay his salary, which would be “small change” for many individual Christians in the MDW, let alone for a church congregation. Surely this will free him from worrying over food, clothes, shelter and education for his family and help him concentrate on his ministry for the Lord. This all sounds very plausible and worthwhile from our vantage point in the MDW, and sometimes it works out like that in the beginning.

Unfortunately, a number of other factors may kick in which in due course negatively affect the one we are seeking to help, as well as his ministry and church.

One of the first realities that occurs between the pastor and the local Christian community is jealousy. “Why should one pastor get a regular good salary, irrespective of the success of his ministry and not others who have the same problems of providing for their families alongside their congregations?” This can lead to many negative effects in the overall community leading to isolation of the pastor and his family and even worse.

Then consider the relationship between this pastor and his own congregation. Until the time of his sponsorship the pastor has been part of the community, relying on the same weather conditions and market concerns for his livelihood as everyone else, both through his family’s farming and through the church’s offerings.

Now, suddenly the pastor is getting funds from overseas and is no longer responsible to the congregation or to local conditions for his well-being. He no longer shares the realities, joys and sufferings of those he is serving. His ministry can be adversely affected as, in the important area of resources, he is no longer one of the community.

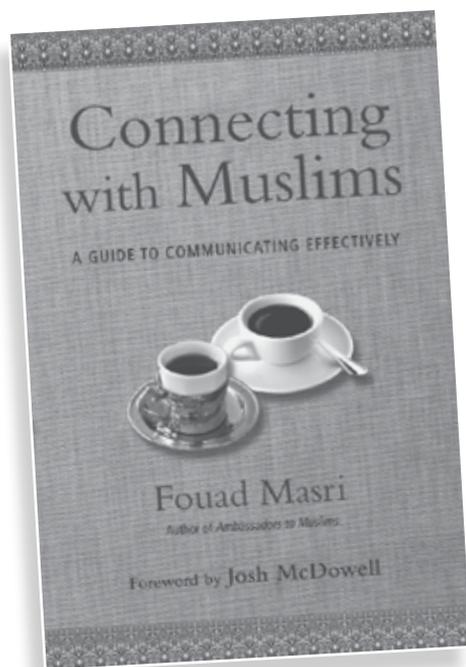
However, much he teaches folk to trust in God for their needs, they see his source of resources as very different. His relationship with his congregation as well as with his actual ministry has been severely strained by those who only wanted to help. Maybe the pastor will spend more effort in maintaining his relationship with his sponsors than with his congregation, after all they pay him.

Put as an extreme—he is now seen as a puppet of foreigners and may well attract folk to “His church,” not for the spiritual benefits which they may gain, but to share in his outside source of wealth.

It need not be that way. If potential sponsors will look into local conditions more carefully to find ways to help the community prosper in such a way that offerings in the congregation will increase to a level where the pastor can be supported at the level of the average community member, or perhaps help the pastor’s wife with an income-generating project, many of the problems can be overcome.

It is harder work to find schemes which will benefit a whole community and not just a single pastor, but in the long run the effect is likely to be positive and not harmful. We must give to help, but be discerning in the way we do it. 

How Can We Build Bridges?



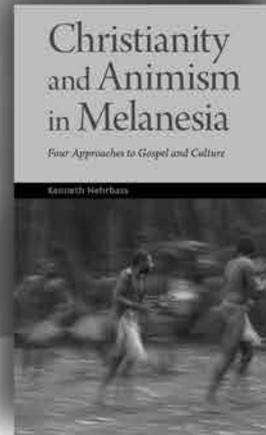
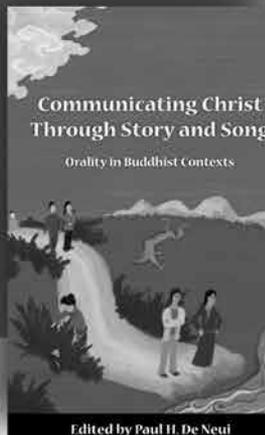
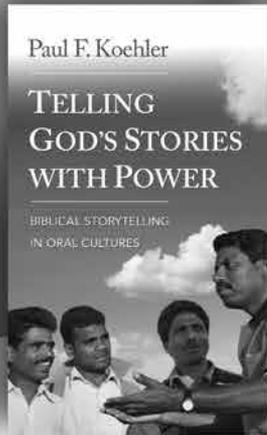
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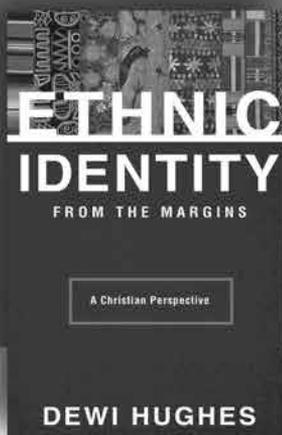
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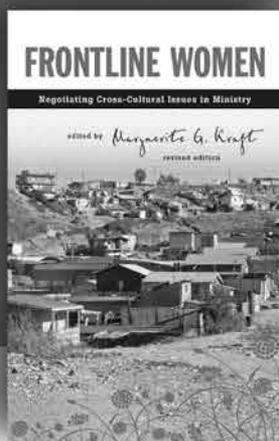
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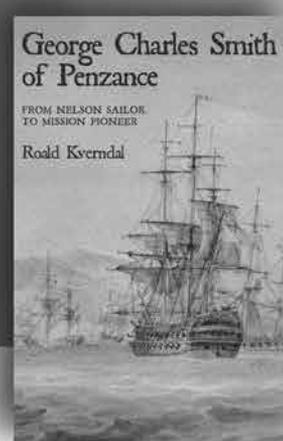
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ISBN 978-0-87808-394-7 Roald Kverndal
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THE GOSPEL IS GOOD NEWS



GREG PARSONS

/ GLOBAL DIRECTOR,
U.S. CENTER FOR
WORLD MISSION

I wonder how often the way we share the gospel ends up creating unnecessary offense.

Different believers share the gospel in different ways. Some who hear the message respond to one approach, others respond

to another approach, or not at all. While it is always the work of the Holy Spirit when one believes, we shouldn't forget the root idea behind the word "gospel" is that it is good news. The Greek word that is translated as gospel often includes the idea of joy—such as in an announcement of birth. For instance, in Luke 2:10, the Greek literally says, "I evangelize you to great joy."

Mat. 11:5-6 gives us a picture of what the Lord's Servant (from Isaiah) will do: "The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news proclaimed to them. Blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." That last phrase is key. It ties in with Gen. 12:1-3 and the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Shouldn't these ideas of blessing and good news more frequently guide our approach to sharing the gospel?

We read in 1 Pet. 2 that Jesus is a cornerstone; those who do not believe will stumble over him because of disobedience. Jesus tells us in

Mat. 18 that stumbling blocks will come... but woe to those through whom they come. Paul says that we should not "give anyone an occasion for taking offense at anything so that no fault may be found in our ministry" 2 Cor. 6:3. This is a sobering verse to any serious believer.

Paul also talks in 1 Cor. 10 about doing everything to the glory of God. In verses 32-33 he writes: "Do not give offense to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also try to please everyone in all things. I do not seek my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved." In 1 Cor. 1:18 we read that "the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." And in verse 23, that "Christ crucified is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks."

Only a few of my friends who believe in Jesus have had parents or friends reject them or their faith. Why do we so often *expect* family rejection when Jews, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists believe? A recent testimony from a former Muslim that was written up in a Christian magazine serves as an example. While I don't know the man's specific situation, the subtitle asked the wrong question: Would Jesus really ask me to forsake my Muslim family?

The answer to that question is "No!" It may be that family rejection will result. But Jesus asks us to believe by faith. Any individual might expect a certain reaction from their family and friends, but couldn't the gospel be good news to his parents also, even if they don't agree or understand him yet?

What if instead of expecting rejection, he had talked to his father like this: "I told my father that he was a good father, that he taught me how to live the best he knew how, that I knew he desired only the best for me. He helped me to see spiritual things, and now I've seen that, as the Qur'an says, we should highly regard Jesus, and read the Gospels. So that is what I am going to do. My father may not understand why faith in Jesus is so important, but I hope and pray that in time he will as he processes new ideas and sees my character radically change for the good."

For many people, the reaction to the good news will in part depend on how that news is viewed and explained. If we take the "clash of civilizations" or the "clash of religions" approach, rejection will certainly be the norm.

But we are not talking about religion when we talk about faith in Christ. Jesus did not come to set up "Christianity." In our polarized world, we often add an entire "religious system" to a confession of faith. Are we really interested in people trusting in Christ by faith through grace alone?

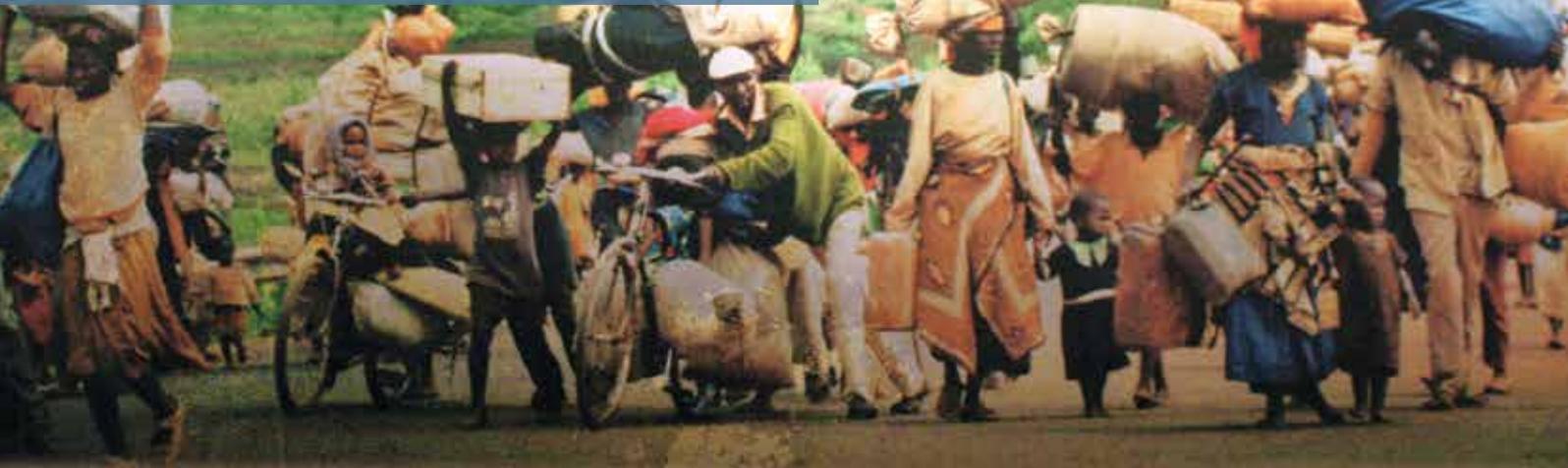
Every new believer will have to work through his or her faith biblically. It is my prayer that more often—whenever it is possible—the good news will be communicated and understood as good news to entire families—even as the promise of blessing in Genesis 12 was pronounced on all the families of the earth. 

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You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself... LEVITICUS 19:34

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