

Orality Comes of Age: The Maturation of a Movement

by Tom Steffen

“There’s truths you have to grow into.” H. G. Wells

Not everyone has the opportunity to live during the birth and maturation of a movement. Fewer still have the opportunity to participate in one. This article¹ considers the present-day orality movement within the missions world, one in which I have had the privilege to participate over the years. It’s a movement that continues to offer opportunities for immediate participation at home and abroad in the majority of the world’s peoples. So, to set the stage, I will begin with a brief overview of its origins. Since I have already developed the details of the orality movement elsewhere (Steffen 2007; 2013), this article will focus primarily on documenting the pertinent directional changes and innovations within its almost 40-year history.

The Orality Movement is Birthed

In 1975, Dick Sollis of New Tribes Mission (NTM) organized the first South East Asian (SEA) Leadership Conference to be held in Manila. Since syncretism was a major issue found in NTM tribal ministries in Brazil and Colombia,² Sollis sought someone who could provide a more effective evangelism model. Bob Gustafson, then NTM Field Chairman of the Philippines, suggested Trevor McIlwain as someone who had been reflecting on the gospel message and the syncretism that had emerged among the Palawanos of the Philippines.

In 1975, McIlwain spoke to these SEA field leaders on “The Gospel,” a presentation of his quiet experimentation with the Palawanos that would later provide a critical foundation for a chronological approach to tribal evangelism and church planting. McIlwain eventually returned to a NTM training center in Australia from 1976-1979 where he taught and continued to develop the chronological model before returning to the Philippines in late 1980. It was then that I spoke with McIlwain in Manila and learned about the chronological model. Seeing its potential for the SEA Leadership Conference in Thailand just weeks away, I immediately talked to the Field Chairman, Dell Schultze, about getting McIlwain on the agenda. Before heading to Thailand,

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McIlwain presented an overview of his model to the Philippine field at the annual conference in January of 1981.

At the SEA Leadership Conference held in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1981, McIlwain again presented his model. He introduced his ideas daily for four hours from mimeographed notes, and was tape recorded and videoed. His seven-phase story model was driven by biblical theology and emphasized, among other things, that

- the Bible is history (His Story);
- the Bible is one story—the story of Jesus Christ;
- the gospel requires a firm Old Testament (OT) foundation;
- we should tell Bible stories and define the nature and character of the God conveyed in the stories;
- the Bible not only tells us what to teach, but by example, shows us how to teach it—chronologically;
- we should not talk about Jesus (the solution) until listeners understand their separation from a holy God.

The assumption at the time was that these steps (and others) would help preserve an objective gospel, thereby resulting in a movement of authentic followers of Christ.

The SEA Leadership conference held in Thailand in 1981 became the seminal moment when McIlwain's chronological model began to spread within NTM beyond the shores of the Philippine Islands. Field leaders returned to their respective fields of ministries with materials to disseminate with a singular goal in mind: multiplying tribal churches that would remain true to the Bible.

Eventually, McIlwain entitled his model "Chronological Bible Teaching" (CBT), and while no one had anticipated or expected it, a modern-day movement had just been born. But this did not go unnoticed. In *Scripture and Strategy* (1994), David Hesselgrave identified CBT as one of the major contributions to missions in the twentieth century.

A New Movement Pioneers in the Philippines

McIlwain returned to the Philippines and taught seminars on his chronological model to foreign and national NTM missionaries on the various islands. It should be noted that his model assumed extensive culture and language acquisition, and was designed for long-term, incarnational, church planting driven by an exit strategy.

McIlwain's ever-expanding mimeographed notes eventually resulted in a nine-volume series entitled *Firm Foundations*. The first volume, published in 1987, provided the philosophy for the CBT. It claimed that this was "God's way," "follows divine guide-



lines," and had a "divinely revealed order of teaching."

The remaining volumes were Bible lessons designed specifically for tribal peoples. The evangelism phase (Phase 1) consisted of 68 lessons, 42 from the OT, and 26 from the New Testament (NT). Five other CBT phases followed the evangelism phase. Phase 2 reviewed Phase 1, this time focusing on security rather than separation from a holy God. Phase 3 covered Acts, setting the foundation for the Epistles. Phase 4 surveyed the Epistles, culminating with Revelation. In a rather short period of time, the listeners were exposed to the metanarrative of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

Phases 5-7 repeated the cycle focused on issues of sanctification for maturing believers. Few storytellers, however, have ventured into the final three phases. See Figure 1 on the next page.

Jim Slack, church growth consultant for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (IMB), formerly known as the Foreign Mission Board, served in the Philippines as a church growth consultant. He had read Hans Weber's book *The Communication of the Gospel to Illiterates* in a doctoral seminar with Cal Guy at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in the early 60s. He and his wife Mary, along with Susan Stokeld, had used both Weber's ideas and George and Mary Ingram's *30 Bible Stories for Church Planters* (from India) at the Southern Baptist College in Mindanao in the early 70s.

As friends of NTM's Dell Schultze, Slack soon heard about McIlwain's chronological Bible story model in the early 80s. Impressed, he invited McIlwain to teach seminars for the IMB in Luzon (Baguio, 1983) and Mindanao (Davao, 1984). Some 600 IMB missionaries and nationals attended one of the two one-week seminars. So, CBT had now moved beyond NTM to the IMB, who re-labeled it Chronological Bible Storying (CBS). And it did not stop with the IMB.

Changes Within the Orality Movement

Far from being monolithic, these types of movements tend to find themselves morphing in multiple directions at the same time, often to the consternation of the initial founder(s). The innovators, however, usually feel that their adaptations can increase the breadth and health of movements. One can't expect all to be in agreement or on board with the new directions, and this was certainly the case with the fledging orality movement. I offer below some reflective observations on significant developments along this movement's journey

Figure 1. McIlwain's Seven Phases of Chronological Bible Teaching

Old Testament		Gospels	Acts	Epistles-Revelation
Phase I	Unbelievers Mixed groups Believers	Separation Solution		
Phase II	New believers	Security		
			Phase III New believers Preparation for Epistles	
				Phase IV New believers Function of NT church Christian walk
Phase V	Maturing believers God's work in OT individuals Training of disciples	Sanctification		
			Phase VI Maturing believers Expository teaching	
				Phase VII Maturing believers Expository teaching

Source: Adapted from McIlwain, 1981:12a-12c, 1987:131

(they are introduced chronologically although their development overlapped).

Observation 1: It's More Than Systematic Theology

Biblical theology drives McIlwain's CBT, and the same could be said of Chronological Bible Storying (CBS). While a number of versions of biblical theology exist (see: Klink and Lockett, 2012), McIlwain relied on the historical events presented in "successive installments" in Scripture to frame the story of redemption. The parts (individual stories) were embedded in concrete events that built the whole (big story).³

Systematic theology begins with our questions. Biblical theology and narrative theology begin with the biblical author's questions. The orality movement

recognizes that starting points matter because of the assumptions that drive the different theologies. They also recognize that the sequence matters in which the theologies are used. Rather than stamping systematic theology as superior and beginning there, they prefer to see its value when it makes summaries from the concrete character and events of Scripture. The biblical author's questions should lead to our questions. Sequence matters.

Observation 2: It's More Than the New Testament

CBT does not begin in John;⁴ it begins in the beginning, Genesis. This meant most evangelists and church planters had no local-language Scripture from which to teach. To meet this need, Bible translators who normally

would have begun translating the book of Mark⁵ now began with Genesis instead. Influenced by CBT, translators recognized that just as Jesus required a forerunner, John the Baptist, so the NT required a forerunner, the OT.

The New Testament was never intended to introduce Jesus Christ to the world; too much of the gospel story ends up on the cutting floor (Is. 40:90). CBT has been instrumental in changing the Bible translation culture from starting in the New Testament to starting in the Old Testament.

Observation 3: It's More Than Chronology

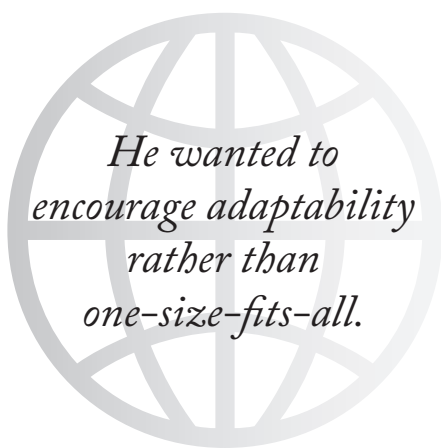
Jim Slack enlisted J. O. Terry, a media specialist for the Asia-Pacific region with IMB, to help develop NTM's

CBT. Terry had been experimenting with using stories in various countries beginning in early 1988. He joined Slack in 1991, and they traveled the world co-teaching CBT. Terry then went out on his own to East, South-east, and South Asian countries, though he was heavily focused in Bangladesh, Orissa (India), Pakistan and Myanmar, and in the process became the quintessential Bible storyteller. He continued to update his materials from what he had learned on his own and from information that began streaming in from his many contacts around the world. From all this first hand field experience and this feedback Terry was ready to announce a major change.

Over time Terry had become less and less comfortable with McIlwain's highly expositional stories and the rigidity of CBT. He also felt McIlwain's model was too geared to the literate person. Terry preferred telling the Bible story, not just talking about it. He preferred to risk the power of the story and let the listeners discover the meaning. Interactive dialogue rather than top-down exposition would provide the necessary feedback. For Terry, providing guidelines with options would offset CBT's rigidity. All of this led him to conclude that a name change was necessary. In 1992 Terry renamed CBT "Chronological Bible Storying" (CBS).

Within two years, Terry made another name change—to Bible Storying. While he agreed that a strong foundation to the gospel was necessary, he felt that this could be accomplished through shorter story sets that fit the more limited contact times experienced with some people groups, and would work better for short-term mission trips. Terry was also exploring what he called "fast-tracking," i.e., covering Genesis all the way through to the cross in just a few minutes or over a few days by the telling of a sequence of stories without stopping for dialogue or exposition.

Terry also wanted the storying to become less dependent on chronology and more conversational, situational, and topical for those specific ministry opportunities and contexts with time constraints (such as short-term missions). He wanted to encourage the flexibility and adaptability of Bible Storying to fit different strategic situations and ministry needs rather than having one-size that fits all (see Terry, *Basic Bible Storying*, 2008). He also wanted to give one-on-one storying opportunities the same attention that one-on-group had received. And he wanted the evangelistic theme to be initially more subtle, with more focus given to a relationship with God, but then becoming increasingly more pronounced toward the latter stories.



To meet these various felt needs, Terry wrote *Hope Stories from the Bible* (32 stories), *Food Stories from the Bible* (44 stories), *Death Stories from the Bible* (42 stories), *Water Stories from the Bible* (22), *Grief Stories from the Bible* (39 stories), *Bible Storying Handbook for Short-Term Mission Teams*, *Mission Volunteers* (32 stories), *Oralizing Bible Stories for Telling*, and *The Holy Rosary Gospel Stories of Jesus* (20 meditations).⁶

Sometime around 2005, another name change occurred. Some within the NTM training schools were dissatisfied with the original title CBT. So, they replaced it with Foundational Bible Teaching (FBT) for the following reasons:

1. chronological (CBT) represents only one aspect of the way the model was being taught (see Phases 1-3)
2. Phases 4-7 are laid out in a more logical sequence, as it pertains to the believer's spiritual growth and development, rather than telling Bible stories in historical sequence
3. many only think of Phase 1 (evangelism) when they hear the term CBT
4. the title FBT better reflects an entire program premised on providing a strong OT foundation for the gospel

McIlwain's concern, however, was that dropping out the term "chronology" would cause many to interpret FBT to mean a topical teaching of foundational doctrines (rather than Bible stories that were told chronologically). He preferred, therefore, to reference the program as "Foundational Chronological Bible Teaching" or "Chronological Expositional Bible Teaching" (personal communication, July 11, 2011). Today it is simply called Foundational Teaching.

Fragmented topical teaching has dominated the evangelical world and its mission arm for decades. McIlwain has helped Christian workers consider the need for grasping and communicating the big picture of Scripture, sketched out over the landscapes of both Old and New Testaments.

Observation 4: It's More Than Story

In the beginning of the orality movement, "story" received the greatest attention from most contributors and advocates. Being able to embed abstract doctrinal concepts and ideas into concrete events and characters (stories) was so liberating that often other genres were unintentionally overlooked.

Even as Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy* educated the emerging movement about the distinctives of a continuum covering both primary orality (those who communicate through verbal and visual means because they

Figure 2. A Holistic Model of Orality



cannot read) and secondary orality (literate people who prefer oral and visual means to learn, imagine, and communicate), many understood orality to refer solely to stories. Scriptures such as, “Listen to the village musicians gathered at the watering holes” (Judg. 5:11, NLT), or biblical insights into ethnodoxology, would have to wait. Story drove and defined everything for most within the movement in the early beginnings. But then that began to change.

Charles Madinger (2010), a key strategist within the orality movement, designed a chart to capture the breadth and complexity of orality, helping to advance the movement beyond simply

story. He concluded that seven disciplines converge to define orality: culture (interpret), literacy (understand), networks (relate), memory (learn), language (receive), media (deliver), arts (feel) (see Figure 2). The latter discipline of the arts alone could include drama, song, symbols, visual literacy, testimonies, proverbs, folktales, poems, and so forth.

Observation 5: It’s More Than Individual Bible Stories

Following a linear biblical theology, McIlwain’s evangelism phase called for teachers to present one lesson after the other until the 68 lessons were covered. No introductory lesson provided a brief overview or anchored the

cosmic drama being fought between the protagonist and an antagonist. A metanarrative lesson at the beginning that introduced the series helped create an overarching mystery and give direction to the question, “Who is the promised mystery man?”⁷ The same lack of a metanarrative was true of CBS, and the resulting problem was that unanchored stories often ended up misinterpreted.⁸

A growing number within the orality movement have recognized this shortcoming on at least two levels: pedagogical and theological. On the pedagogical level, many people from around the world seem to prefer to learn from whole to part to whole,⁹ a

learning style that is the exact antithesis of the way most Westerners learn, which is part-to-whole. When CBT and CBS are taught in this Western pedagogical style (part-to-whole), it makes author-intended meanings in the Sacred Storybook difficult for many to understand, opening the door for misinterpretation. Jerome Bruner (1996) captured the overall problem when he said that, “Pedagogy is never innocent. It is a medium that carries its own message” (p. 63). Mixing different pedagogical styles can result in cultural noise¹⁰ and the hijacking of intended meanings of the biblical metanarrative.

Teaching a series of Bible stories, therefore, does not necessarily tie the individual stories to the intended metanarrative of Scripture. To illustrate, if each lesson heard by an audience represented a piece of clothing, how would the listeners be expected to hold all the clothes without dropping them? We might suggest a linear or circular clothesline to remedy the situation. Metaphorically, this illustrates the need for a metanarrative of the Sacred Storybook. Offering listeners a clothesline provides not only a place to hang the individual stories, but also a means to bring more informed definition to them (different types of clothes representing different segments of the sacred story). Each single story finds meaning in the overall arrangement of the big story. This is the preferred pedagogy of many, i.e., whole-to-part.

On the theological level, the entire metanarrative of Scripture, not just the New Testament story (Gal 3:8; Is. 40:9; 52:7; 61:1), provides the framework for the gospel story. Both Testaments help guard the gospel against either detrimental abbreviations or “cultural and doctrinal biases” (Fleming, 2005:301), even as the gospel story drives the entire metanarrative from creation to consummation.

The metanarrative serves to set direction from start to finish while the individual Bible stories spiral around

the metanarrative, offering choices and consequences through concrete human and spiritual characters as it advances, sometimes even backtracking to a previously telegraphed conclusion or vague mystery. This “big story” becomes the rival metanarrative that challenges deeply held worldview allegiances.

Where is the use of the metanarrative applicable? A growing number within the orality movement would argue that the metanarrative of the Sacred Storybook is central not only for those “where the name of Christ has never been heard” (Rom. 15:20, NLT), but also for a post-Christian world. So, “metanarrative evangelism” is central to global outreach.



Observation 6: It’s More Than Country Folk

The Orality Movement has done much more than just go global; it has also migrated from country dwellers to city residents. It has accomplished this by reaching both primary and secondary oral communicators. When NTM missionaries returned on home assignment, many used CBT in small groups and Sunday Schools and a problem arose: more focused lessons for a North American audience were needed.

To meet this growing demand, McIlwain, along with the tireless efforts of Nancy Everson (who was burdened to reach the U.S. churches as well as tribal peoples), published a fifty-lesson

volume, *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ* (1991) to be taught over a year. CBT had officially shifted its focus from the country to the city within NTM.

Building upon the shoulders of NTM, the IMB personnel have played a major role in the expansion and depth of the Orality Movement both in the country and the city through research, training, conferences, consulting, and curricula. It was the IMB’s focus on lowland Filipinos that took them almost immediately into cities. Reaching oral learners in the orality movement slowly but steadily found the distinction between country and city beginning to blur. The challenge of primary orality morphed into secondary orality, and vice versa, across both rural and urban worlds.

Observation 7: It’s More Than Non-Formal Education

The orality movement has moved beyond non-formal seminars, conferences, and Oral Bible Schools to formal courses and concentrations offered for credit through the academy. In 1995, I introduced the course “Narrative as an Educational Philosophy” at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University, to help (primarily) graduates to recapture the power of story in ministry. In 2011, Cook added a graduate concentration of 8 courses (24 units)¹¹ on oral communication for those preparing to serve among “oral-preferenced” peoples (this concentration addresses both primary and secondary orality). Roberta King introduced the course “Communicating Christ through Oral Performance: Storytelling & Song” at the School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary, in 2004. And through the assistance of Avery Willis and Grant Lovejoy, Bob Dawson set up an orality minor at Oklahoma Baptist University in 2007 (the minor includes two courses on CBS, plus a practicum).¹² The different Southern Baptist seminaries¹³ now offer courses on storytelling, and a growing number of

dissertations addressing various aspects of orality are now available.¹⁴ One can expect the academy to continue to contribute theory-based application to the orality movement.

Observation 8: It's More Than Church Multiplication

Over the decades the orality movement has formed multiple tributaries beyond the planting, maturing, and multiplying of churches. It has moved into the arts, home schooling, community development, TESOL, business, and so forth. As noted above, it is used in non-formal education, such as Oral Bible School, and courses and concentrations in formal education. In the summer of 2012, Samuel Chiang, Executive Director of the International Orality Network (ION), launched a related field that focused on theological education in formal as well as non-formal institutions. ION plans to investigate every area: curricula, textbooks, facilities, seating arrangements, pedagogy, andragogy, and hermeneutics.

One area of investigation focused on helping faculty (who had been trained through literate means) to interact with oral-preferenced students, those who Jonah Sachs identifies as “digitorals.”¹⁵ These students prefer watching over reading, screens over paper, interacting over writing, dialoguing over listening to lectures, group activities over individual activities. Knowing something was amiss, but not having the vocabulary or categories to identify and articulate it (much less fix it), an uneasiness began to grow among the more observant faculty. How can orality impact theological education to minimize this pedagogical divide so that spiritual transformation has opportunity to advance?¹⁶

Three consultations to date have been held to discuss these interrelated issues: Wheaton (2012), Hong Kong (2013), and Houston (2014). Two books compiled from papers that were given, resulted: *Beyond Literate Western*

They normally have a good understanding of the host culture's worldview, but they often fail to consider how locals actually tell stories.

Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts (2013) and *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education* (2014).

Observation 9: It's More Than Guilt-Innocence

Part of the ION consultation's focus held in Houston in July of 2014 was the role of honor-shame (H-S) in formal and non-formal theological education. While anthropological studies address all sorts of cultural dynamics, what became immediately crystal clear was the strong and unconscious emphasis in storying that was given to guilt-innocence (G-I) and all the accompanying legal language which typically dominates a Western mindset.

Westerners tend to:

- read the Bible through G-I eyes
- teach the metanarrative of the Sacred Story book, the Bible books and topics, and even theology through G-I eyes
- evangelize, disciple, and develop leaders through G-I eyes
- use G-I oriented review and application questions
- conduct community development through G-I eyes.

Somehow most westerners have missed the strong emphasis given to H-S where relational language dominates in Scripture. This is true for them even when they teach it and demonstrate it through “good works” in countries that are driven by H-S moral values. Participants in the ION consultation also noted how the U.S. itself is fast changing from G-I to an H-S culture.

Participants also discussed a third leg to H-S and G-I: fear-power (F-P). Those engaged in cultures where

power language dominates, such as animists daily in touch with the spirit world, will connect strongly with F-P. The participants called for evaluation of all non-formal and formal theological education in relation to this trilogy of G-I, H-S, and F-P at every level.

Observation 10: It's More Than the Storyteller's Worldview

Some within the orality movement began to ask questions related to worldview studies: Is there more than simply telling Bible stories? Should there be some worldview studies conducted *before* beginning to tell Bible stories? Would such research improve the selection, development, and communication of appropriate story sets? Would it help to understand the local pedagogy? Would it help minimize syncretism or legalism? How much worldview study is too much or too little? What cultural noise disrupts and distracts?

McIlwain's CBT assumes that the Christian workers have conducted extensive anthropological studies before beginning to teach. They normally have a pretty good understanding of the host culture's worldview,¹⁷ and have identified bridges and barriers to Christianity by the time they begin evangelism. What they often failed to consider, though, was how locals themselves actually told stories.

The IMB eventually introduced worldview studies to their personnel in 1995. While some in leadership pushed to plant more churches, Terry noted their lack of success was in part due to the use of imported story sets. He concluded that their missionaries needed at least the worldview perspective to assist them in story selection and to instill the means for discovering evangelism bridges and barriers. While storytelling does not require a lot of

interesting and extraneous cultural detail, it did need some.

To call attention to the need to understand the host's culture, Terry designed a tool, labeled the Lome Y (after being introduced in 1995 in Lome, Togo). The dual flow of worldview information enters at the top of the "Y" and results in insights that inform the curriculum development process (as they siphon through the base of the Y). Missiological and theological themes, however, still take precedence over the cultural data discovered. The diagram is presently entitled "Worldview Informing and Instructing Bible Storying." IMB continues to produce other simplified worldview study aids.

At this writing, there are some within IMB that feel that CBS takes way too long to story through the 40 to 60 lessons in CBS. They feel that worldview studies of the host cultures can help select the Bible stories and make them more relevant. Besides, the effectiveness of CBS was not always the drip, drip, drip of one story after another!

This view raises a number of strategic questions. What do the locals consider too long? How do the locals view chronology? What are the local's pedagogical preferences? David Garrison responded to the last question this way: "This question presupposes that expatriates are the driving force of what is happening. That is an unfortunate 'old paradigm' misunderstanding" (Schattner 2014:108).

Kevin Pittle, an anthropologist at the School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University, teaches a course in the orality concentration entitled "Traditional Oral Narrative: Analysis and Interpretation." This class challenges the assumption that all peoples tell stories the same way. He considers various models to analyze stories¹⁸ so that the storyteller can story in a way that sounds natural to the hearers, making reproduction normal. This helps minimize noise.

What about worldview research? Again, Garrison interestingly gives the same answer to worldview studies as he did to pedagogical studies: "This question presupposes that expatriates are the driving force of what is happening. That is an unfortunate 'old paradigm' misunderstanding."¹⁹

How important are pedagogical and worldview studies in helping to reduce cultural noise?²⁰ Will minimal research produce noise that results in nominalism, legalism or syncretism? Are pedagogical and worldview studies part of an "old paradigm" that is no longer necessary for today's cross-cultural worker? Many within the



orality movement today would argue that storying is much more than the storyteller's worldview.

Concluding Reflections

In an evolving movement, not every traveler is in the same place on the path. Some recognize certain of these observations and others do not. For example, a speaker in an orality session at Lausanne 2010 in South Africa apologized for using ppt (powerpoint) in his presentation, as if story was the only thing that mattered. Many have moved on from fundamental observations, encouraging and incorporating other observations like those I introduce above. The orality movement is a work in progress, and must remain so if the disciple-making process is to improve in its journey cross-culturally

at home and abroad. The legacy of this movement attests to H. G. Wells' adage that, "There's truths you have to grow into."

What might be some of those future growth areas? I believe we can expect new development and interaction with narrative theology, a theological orientation that Gabriel Fackre defines as "discourse about God in the setting of story."²¹ I've noticed that while Christian workers may be well-versed in systematic theology, fewer are familiar with biblical theology, and even fewer with narrative theology. Since the Bible is a Sacred Storybook, a Sacred Drama, with narrative as the predominant genre of choice by the Holy Spirit (approximately 55% of scripture), I fully expect new observations in narrative theology to impact the orality movement in the next decade. But this is just one example. We can expect other new research to emerge in the near future that will influence and mature this orality movement. Yes, there is more to the story. **IJFM**

Endnotes

¹ This chapter comes from a forthcoming book entitled *Making the Case for Symbol-Based Storying* in the series *There is More to the Story*.

² View this story of syncretism and the solution experienced by Tim and Bunny Cain, who serve among the Puinave that reside along the frontier borders of Colombia and Venezuela, through New Tribe Mission's DVD *Now We See Clearly*.

³ C. S. Song's perspective on story is appropriate for orality and theology: "Who says theology has to be ideas and concepts? Who has decided that theology has to be doctrines, axioms, propositions? ... God is not concept; God is story. God is not idea; God is presence. God is not hypothesis; God is experience. God is not principle; God is life... For in the beginning were stories, not texts... Story is the matrix of theology." (in C. S. Song, *In the Beginning Were Stories, Not Texts*. (Cambridge: United Kingdom. James Clark & Co) 2011, pp. 6, 7, 17, 18.

⁴ In 20-20 hindsight the problem is obvious. If one starts in John there is no

Old Testament background which a quick reading of John 1 would demonstrate.

⁵ Translators chose the book of Mark to begin translation, because it was the New Testament, was the shortest book, and was written in simple Greek. This strategy was translator centric, not host-society centric.

⁶ Forthcoming ministry-themed story sets include: *Heaven is for Women; God's Gift of Forgiveness; Peace for Hindu Women; Ebenezer Stories; HIV Hope; Let's Just Talk*. The books are available through www.churchstarting.net/biblestorying/Books.htm. Digital downloads can be requested at jot2@sbcglobal.net.

⁷ A metanarrative is "a trans-historical, all-encompassing, culture-specific, informally learned, tenaciously held (T.A.C.I.T.) story of reality, that provides a present-tense grid whereby individuals of a culture interpret and interact with all aspects of life." (Matthews, Michael Vern, *Is there a Reader in this Text? The Place of Metanarrative in the Problem of Meaning*. PhD. Dissertation presented to Canterbury Christ Church University and Trinity Theological Seminary, 2013, p. 230)

⁸ One wonders how the lack of an Old Testament foundation creates noise in the understanding of *The Jesus Film*. See: Steffen 1993.

⁹ For Whole-Part-Whole Learning Theory from a western perspective see *The Adult Learner*, by Malcolm Knowles, Elwood Holton III, and Richard Swanson (1973/2014). What adaptation could be made to make this useful in cross-cultural contexts?

¹⁰ "Noise can be external, internal, or semantic. External noises are sights, sounds, and other stimuli that draw people's attention away from the message... Internal noises are thoughts and feelings that draw people's attention away from the message... Semantic noises are emotional distractions aroused by specific word choices." Verderber, et. al., *Communicate!* (Wadsworth Cengage Learning: Boston, 14th Edition) 2014, p. 12.

¹¹ The Cook orality concentration includes the courses: Narrative as an Educational Philosophy, Sign, Symbol, and Structure, Comparative Mythology and Folklore, Learning the Story, Telling the Story, Narrative and Song, Scripture-In-Use, Oral Literature.

¹² www.okbu.edu/go/academic/oralmirror.html.

¹³ Southeastern, Southwestern and Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries

¹⁴ One can expect continual contributions of theory-based studies related to

orality. But it goes further, and includes dissertations with a number of chapters written in narrative style: Jay Moon, *African Proverbs Reveal Christianity in Culture: A Narrative Portrayal of Builsa Proverbs Contextualizing Christianity in Ghana*, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2005; and Aminta Arrington, *Hymns of the Everlasting Hills: The Written Word in an Oral Culture in Southwest China*, Biola University, 2014. One can expect more dissertations to follow these pioneers.

¹⁵ Sachs, Jonathan 2012.

¹⁶ Werner Mischke asks this provocative question: "Could it be that the days of colonialism in mission methods may be largely behind us—while colonialism in theology is still an issue?" (2014, p. 169).

¹⁷ Paul Hiebert defines (cultural) worldview as the, "fundamental cognitive, affective, and evaluative presuppositions a group of people make about the nature of things, and which they use to order their lives." (2008, p. 15)

¹⁸ Levi-Straussian and Proppian structural approaches, Jungian psychological approaches, Campbellian literary approaches, to suggest a few.

¹⁹ Schattner 2014, p. 108.

²⁰ "Cultural noise refers to impediments to successful communication between people of different cultures... (of) differences in language (e.g., the same words have different meanings), values (e.g., importance of being on time or setting work schedule times in a culture), non-verbal cues (e.g., interpretation of body language), and many others." (O'Connell, 2004, p. 86).

²¹ Fackre, (1983:343).

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