

## **The Orality Movement: Historical Development and Present Practices**

### **Introduction**

This article aims at answering questions like, How did the Orality Movement start and develop in history? Who are the major players in the movement? What is happening today, and what are the models and practices used in the world? It is interesting to see how the church has grown in the knowledge of the oral cultures, how Christians have gradually discovered the importance of serving the oral learners using oral strategies, and how they have developed through time oral methods of evangelism and discipleship.

The article will deal with the following main topics:

- Historical development of the Orality Movement
- Two significant contributions to the Orality Movement
- Models and practices used worldwide

### **1. Historical Development of the Orality Movement**

Steffen Tom and Terry James (2007) in their article, *The Sweeping Story of Scripture Taught Through Time* show how, during the history starting from Jesus, Christians saw the need to present the "panoramic story of God" told in chronological order, and laid on a strong Old Testament foundation, in order to build a "comprehensive Christianity" in their communities. Steffen and Terry call "sweeping story" a panoramic, comprehensive story of the Bible (p. 115). Much of the information in the first two sections below comes from this article.

#### **1.1 Church Era to Middle Ages**

It is clear that, according to Mark 4:33-34, Jesus' ministry of proclaiming the Good News was based on a storytelling approach to teaching. But one time Luke (ch. 24) mentions that Jesus presented a 'sweeping' story of the Scripture, after his resurrection, to two disciples during their three-hour journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Luke (24:27, ESV) says that "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" which resulted in hope restored in the hearts of the two disciples. In Acts 7 Stephen presents another panorama of the Scripture which touched the hearts of the listeners so much that they could not hear any more, and had him killed. Then Paul also presented a sweeping story of the Scripture in Acts 13:16-41. Again, the writer of Hebrews in chapter 11 gives a sweeping story including "19 carefully chosen characters" (Steffen and Terry 2007:317).

The early Church leaders also believed in a "coherent" narration to instruct new believers. Augustine (354-430), for instance, believed that his Bible teachers should teach a full narration and prepare "a comprehensive statement of all things, summarily and generally..." to be put in the memory of the people (p. 317). Caedmon (d. 680) had a divine gift of

composing songs. His colleagues of the monastery taught him the entire story of the Scripture and he turned it into poetic songs which helped people to convert. He even translated his songs in Latin Vulgate to "help illiterates better understand the sacred Story" (Steffen and Terry 2007:318).

From the fifth century liturgical dramas with singing started to develop. By the eleventh century Bible stories were performed in churches in Latin. During the thirteen to sixteen centuries they were performed outside by guilds in England and the Low Countries which, unlike the Catholic Church, used vernacular to ensure understanding of the Bible. "The Medieval cycle plays dramatized Bible stories from creation to consummation to teach their illiterate parishioners the stories of the Bible." Often this method motivated the audience to turn to God. But by the year 1560 the Catholic Church decided to stop these plays "due to their secular and anti-Catholic nature." Towards the end of the 16th century, the Protestant Church was also against such plays because of their Catholic influences (Steffen and Terry 2007:318-319).

## 1.2 Post-Middle Ages

In the 1730s, *Moravian missionaries* were sent to St. Thomas Island to serve the slaves on the fields according to their needs, both physically and spiritually, and they used Bible stories. Unfortunately, Zinzendorf, their leader, thought they should start with Jesus Christ since the slaves already believed in God the creator. What he failed to see was the distorted ideas the slaves had about God which affected their understanding about Christ (Steffen and Terry 2007:320).

Father *Francis Blanchet* of Quebec started work in 1839 among the Nisqually Indians. He had an interesting idea of presenting the Christian story through symbols, by making markings on ladder (a long flat stick). These ladders could easily be transported from place to place.

Father Blanchet presented many of the "Catholic Ladders" to the chiefs among the Northwest Indians as gifts, assuring that the Christian story would spread throughout the 100,000 Indians living in the territory (Steffen and Terry 2007:320).

*Johannes Gustav Warneck* worked in New Guinea in the 1860s and testified that Bible stories "are all listened to with keen interest and are cherished..." He affirms that Bible stories about God's deeds are the best way to communicate Scripture to animists, because they "speak most loudly to the needs of the people" and have great impact in their hearts (Steffen and Terry 2007:321).

*Christian Keysser* emphasised "tribal conversion" over individual decisions in Papua New Guinea. He asked his baptism candidates to learn 40 Bible stories as a "basic understanding of the Word of God" and based on these stories they had to decide which local customs and practices were in conflict with the Bible (Steffen and Terry 2007:321-322).

... research showed that Papuans who had made group decisions for Christ made more radical breaks from past tradition than those who made individual decisions (Steffen and Terry 2007:322).

Papuan evangelist started telling stories of biblical characters in "conversational fashion" using images and drama. This resulted in a church planting movement which "consisted of some 200,000 baptized Papuans among whom were 1,200 national evangelists" (Steffen and Terry 2007:322).

*George and May Ingram* worked among the tribes in North India during the early 1900s. In the beginning they were frustrated, because the Indians "found it difficult to profit from the common method of Christian teaching." Then they started using Bible stories, as Jesus did, and "spiritual eyes began to open." They used 30 Bible stories during a two-year programme. This programme used tools like memorisation, personal application, and song composition to help people remember the message. At the beginning of the month, the teachers would come together to learn the story and song for that month, and then go back to teach them in their districts. This model teaches topical study through telling Bible stories (Steffen and Terry 2007:322-323).

*Hans-Rurdi Weber* a Dutch missionary and theologian arrived in Indonesia in 1950. The synod of Luwuk-Banggai asked him to find a local way to disciple their workers (most of them non-literate). He realized that these non-literate people were very gifted, thinking and speaking "in colourful, glowing pictures, actions and symbols" and needed to be liberated from the "abstract ideas of our catechism and doctrines." He also pointed out that, "We must proclaim picturesquely and dramatically rather than intellectually and verbally." Weber wrote a book called *Communicating the Gospel to Illiterates* (1957) where he emphasises that missionaries must change the way they teach the tribes, to use group interaction with storytelling and drawings model, which he calls "chalk and talk." He affirms that illiterates, better than western intellectuals, can see the "complete redemptive history." Therefore, we should give them a Bible story that presents "the whole history of redemption" (Steffen and Terry 2007:323-324). According to Weber,

We can only confront mythological thinking with redemptive history if our proclamation comprises the whole of the Bible, the message of the Old and the New Testaments. It is therefore fundamentally wrong to tell illiterates only stories from the New Testament, as is so frequently done. It is wrong to translate only the New Testament, or portions of it, as is the general practice (Steffen and Terry 2007:325).

Weber gave us the "first real emphasis on orality" explaining how oral communicators learn and how we should use their own style of communication through storytelling to share the Gospel with them (Terry 2012:44).

During the 1950s and 1960s *Jacob Loewen* used Bible stories in Panama. He wrote that narrative is an excellent form of sharing the Gospel because it is popular, cultural relevant, flexible, powerful, reproducible, and can be dramatized. He also realized that "sequence was

as important as the truths contained in the stories." After years of ministry with little success evangelizing the Choco of Panama, F. Glenn and Billie Prunty (New Tribes missionaries) became discouraged. But then they tried Loewen's narrative model and the result was that the whole village decided to follow Christ. The Choco believers then used this approach to plant four other churches. "The stories sparked interest, capturing their hearts..." (Steffen and Terry 2007:325-327).

I will close this section with a case from East Africa, from the Masai people of Tanzania. *Father Vincent Donovan* worked among these people from 1955 until 1973. When he came, he realized that after seven years of work, there were "no adult Masai practising Christians from Loiondo mission." This was caused by two existing policies: "(1) missionaries bought slaves to Christianize them, and (2) schools forced the missionaries to focus their attention on children ..." He started telling Bible stories to tease truth out rather than force it upon people, because he believed that "no other method could better serve our purpose." So he sat around with "pagans" telling stories, using memorization and discussion methods. Unfortunately, he had a wrong principle of totally separating evangelism from discipleship which resulted in very little impact on the group even today (Steffen and Terry 2007:327-328).

### 1.3 Recent History

Trevor McIlwain is a NTM missionary, who worked with the Palawa nominal Christians in Philippines in the 1870s. He realized that he had to start teaching them from the beginning, from Genesis, going chronologically through the Old Testament in order to "give a firm foundation for the Gospel" (Terry 2012:45). The method he used finally resulted in the development of the Chronological Bible Teaching (CBT) model which later gave birth to the Chronological Bible Storying (CBS) used today by the International Mission Board (IMB) and by many other agencies (Steffen and Terry 2007:315).

The NTM started using the CBT in many of their projects and offering training opportunities to their missionaries in the use of it (p.330). In 1987 McIlwain developed a teaching material called *"Building on Firm Foundations: Guidelines for Evangelism and Church Planting."* The first part, which focuses on evangelism, "consists of 68 lessons (42 OT and 26 NT)." McIlwain also developed a model for the USA in 1991, and one for children in 1993. "CBT materials have been published in over 30 major languages with 25 more in preparation, and in over 200 tribal languages" (Steffen and Terry 2007:331-332).

Jim Slack from the IMB asked his colleague J.O. Terry, a media specialist working in Asia-Pacific, to help develop the CBT method. After trying different variations in many places, Terry realized that CBT was still too expositional and literate based for oral learners. He "preferred telling the Bible story, not just talking about it," and taking the risk of facing "the power of the story," and the people's understanding of it. He believed that the discussion time would better give the feedback of the group than the top-down exposition. So, in 1992 Terry renamed this model and called it "Chronological Bible Storying" (CBS) (Steffen 2011).

Terry then saw the need to produce a "fast-track" Bible story for limited time contacts. He also developed short story sets on various topics like, hope, food, death, water, and grief, and

a story set for short term mission teams (See: [www.churchstarting.net/biblestorying/Books.htm](http://www.churchstarting.net/biblestorying/Books.htm)). Therefore, in 1994 Terry dropped the word chronological from CBS and simply called it "Bible Storying." Slack and Terry approached the preaching department of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas in 1994, to introduce CBS. That is how Grant Lovejoy joined the orality ministry. In 2005 Lovejoy became the International Director for Orality Strategies for IMB (SBC). Regular courses on orality are now offered at Southwestern, Southeastern, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries (Steffen 2011).

In 1995, Tom Steffen developed the course *Narrative as an Educational Philosophy* for the Biola University. In 1996 he published "*Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Crosscultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad*", and in 1999 he also published *Business as Usual in the Missions Enterprise*, a textbook for short-term missions (Steffen 2011).

In 1998, Dorothy Miller developed The God's Story Project (TGSP), which produced an 80-minute video using paintings. It summarizes the Bible from creation to eternity. It is now available in over 250 languages and it is extending to other languages (Steffen 2011). In 2006 Miller also introduced Simply the Story (STS).

Fifty-three stories and passages are used in the STS workshops with an additional 158 stories suggested for use in Oral Bible Schools ... STS stresses the supracultural power of a told story to address the needs of all cultures without an extensive study of a receptor's worldview... (Steffen 2011).

In addition, they instituted the Oral Bible Schools (OBS) where they teach 200 Bible stories over a period of "two weeks on, two weeks off school schedule" (Steffen 2011).

*Bridges Global Training Network* was formed in 1998 and included "50 countries within South Asia, Islamic Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia with the goal of starting church planting movements among unreached peoples through systematic oral communication of the Scriptures in the mother tongue." There are two such networks, one in South Asia and the other in Africa. They have trained "over 60,000 grass roots church planters resulting in more than 10,000 oral Bible churches in just the last three years" (Steffen 2011).

In the same year, "1998, Jim and Carla Bowman founded *Bridges Training Network*" through their organization, Scripture In Use (SIU). The programme has three training modules "for nationals to become Bible storytellers capable of starting church planting movements." The training course is available in 17 languages. Carla produced *Bridges for Women* which "includes 120 Bible stories of women in Bible times." In 2002 they also produced *The Ancient Path*, a 3-hour video available in 12 languages to accompany their training programme. SIU further developed a training programme for newly planted oral churches, towards a holistic transformation of the community through Scripture. Since 2010, in partnership with Belhaven University, SIU provides certificates for grass roots church planters, and for Master Trainers (Steffen 2011).

I briefly mention here the formation of the International Orality Network (ION) in 2004-2005, which plays a significant role in the Orality Movement (more information in section 2.2). In 2009 "The Mission Exchange presented ION the Innovation in Mission Award based on the values of excellence, innovation, partnership, and finishing well." ION has produced two significant publications; one is *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* published in 2005, and a follow-up publication in 2010 called *Orality Breakouts*. Regarding secondary orality, Avery Willis and Mark Snowden have published, "*Truth that Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World*" (2010) "for the use of oral communication in a postmodern world" (Steffen 2011).

"It is very difficult to keep abreast of the players and new innovations" that are developing in the world today through the Orality Movement. Fortunately, Bryan Thompson the founder of "Story4all" tries to keep people updated and make products available "through podcasts, show notes, resources, and links," such as <[www.story4all.com/index.shtml](http://www.story4all.com/index.shtml)> (Steffen 2011).

I can only convey here briefly the major recent developments in orality. For more details please read the document by Steffen Tom 2011 (see bibliography).

## **2. Two Significant Contributions to the Orality Movement**

In presenting the history of the Orality Movement I find it necessary to give special attention to the contribution brought by Professor Ong, who has been an incontestable authority in this field. Also the International Orality Network (ION) is a more recent force in this movement which brings together the contemporary major players of orality.

### **2.1 Professor Walter Jackson Ong - Leading Scholar in Orality**

Professor Walter Jackson Ong was born in 1912 in Kansas City, Missouri, and died in 2003, after 91 years of hard work. He became a Jesuit Father in 1935. He did his masters in English at Saint Louis University and his PhD at Harvard University. Then Ong joined the faculty of St. Louis University and was Professor Emeritus of English, and Professor Emeritus of Humanities in Psychiatry. He was recognized by St. Louis University with its highest honour, the Sword of Ignatius Loyola. Author of 450 publications, Ong was "[k]nown for his work in Renaissance literature, intellectual history, and the evolution of consciousness." And "he was among the first to treat so-called 'primitive' societies as complex organizations with sophisticated oral modes of culture" (Saint Louis University 2012). He also wrote on "language and memory, media consciousness, communication theory, print culture, and literary theory." He studied the "differences between Aristotelian logic, oral rhetoric, and the arts of memory, and he showed how ... print culture absorbed memory into a new organization of knowledge." One of his main starting points was that "writing restructures consciousness" (van den Berg 2005).

The most popular work of Prof. Ong is "*Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*" which was translated in twelve languages in Europe and Asia (Saint Louis University 2012). Here he presents the fundamental differences of thought process and verbal expression between the primary oral cultures (with no writing system) and the print cultures (with a

writing system). He affirms that the thought process of oral cultures is strange to the literate cultures. The main focus of the book is "how the shift from primary orality to literacy dramatically changes the way humans think." According to Ong, the Western cultures moved away from hearing to a sight dominated world, thus documents "were no longer necessarily written in order to be read out loud," which gave the document "a feeling of finality" unlike the oral storytelling. He also came up with the term "secondary orality" to describe Western societies that are "dominated by electronic modes of communication (e.g., television and telephones) ..." Like primary orality, second orality "gives a sense of belonging to a group". Ong concludes that orality and literacy are not superior to each other (Bingham 2012).

## 2.2 International Orality Network (ION)

There was a growing awareness in the 1990s among mission organisations like CCCI, IMB, SIL, and UBS of the extent of oral cultures in the world and their communicational preferences. But it was at the Billy Graham's conference for evangelism in the year 2000 in Amsterdam, at the "Table 71" that the seed was planted for the movement that was going to become the International Orality Network (ION). With the new discovery that "70% of the unreached peoples of the world being oral preferred communicators" Marcus Vegh of Progressing Vision approached Table 71, where many mission leaders were exploring ways to reach the unreached peoples, and he asked Avery Willis, the Senior VP of Overseas Operations for the IMB, "How do you make disciples of oral learners?" This question motivated these mission leaders to hold subsequent meetings to explore oral strategies for discipleship (History of ION 2012).

At the initiative of Dr. Avery Willis, representatives from 15 organizations met in 2001 in California to further explore how to serve oral communicators effectively, and they established the "Oral Bible Network" (OBN). The movement grew fast and in 2002 and 2004 the meetings included members from 50 organizations. Under the leadership of Avery Willis and Steve Evans the group participated in the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) in 2004 in Thailand, where they came up with the book called, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* (History of ION 2012).

The group that met in 2004 merged together with the OBN member organizations in 2005 to become the International Orality Network (ION). ION's mission is to:

... radically influence the way oral preferred communicators are evangelized and discipled in every people group. It serves to bring awareness and understanding of orality and oral preferred communicators and connects mission organizations, churches, people who are reaching oral communicators, especially unreached people groups, to training resources as well as strategies that incorporate oral communication art forms, including various ways to implement storying programs (History of ION 2012).

The next section gives more information about the models and practices used in the world today.

### **3. Models and Practices Used Worldwide**

As understanding about the relevance of orality in missions spreads wider, there are various programmes developed today trying to reach out to the oral learners in the world. All of these programmes have both strong and weak points; therefore, it would be beneficial to share their experiences with each other (Greer 2011:57).

#### **3.1 Verbal Approaches**

- **Chronological Bible Storying (CBS)**

As introduced earlier, the CBS model has been endorsed by the International Mission Board and used by many other organizations (Lovejoy 2000:4). This model emphasises “telling the stories of the Bible, in the order they happened”, from creation to the early church, for a better understanding of God's plan of salvation. It also uses participatory learning that generates new storytellers and story groups or churches (Evans 2004:39-40). CBS does not provide a generic set of stories but assists local evangelists to develop a set that is relevant to the worldview of the people (Greer 2011:59).

The following is a short introduction of partnering organizations with ION that use Bible story methods (ION 2009). For more details see the full document at: [http://oralbible.com/workspace/resources/docs/ION\\_TrainCurrMatrixR-1333955941.pdf](http://oralbible.com/workspace/resources/docs/ION_TrainCurrMatrixR-1333955941.pdf).

- **OneStory Partnership**

OneStory focuses on the 2,251 oral people groups that are unreached, least-reached, or without a Bible. It develops sets of stories, and songs (optional), with redemptive themes that are relevant to the local cultures. They provide advanced consultants that check all the stories and songs via email and hold at least two training workshops onsite. It offers training to both local and cross-cultural evangelists, and based on that, the project takes between 24-36 months (ION 2009). See more at: [onestory.org](http://onestory.org).

- **Scripture in Use (SIU)**

SIU offers an Oral Bible to the unreached groups with the church planting movement in mind. Their strategy is: every believer a storyteller, every storyteller a church planter, every church planter a trainer. They use a training manual called *Communication Bridges to Oral Cultures* in three modules, and tell 50-60 stories over a period of 2-3 years. They select worldview specific stories but do not craft stories. They have 15 church planting movements and 26 training hubs in South Asia and Islamic Africa (ION 2009). See more at: [Siutrain.org](http://Siutrain.org).

- **StoryRunners**

StoryRunners train indigenous people to develop story sets for the unreached groups in 24 countries in Asia, Africa and Middle East. The organization offers specific training for church planters, women's teams and Jesus film teams. They do consultant checks of recorded stories crafted according to the worldview (ION 2009). See more at: [Storyrunners.com](http://Storyrunners.com).



- **Simply the Story (STS)**

STS trains both literate and non-literate in oral inductive Bible study, giving them the capacity to train others. They have training teams in Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia and Central America. The story set remains the same worldwide, trying to keep the stories as they are in the Bible without crafting them. It takes 3 days to become a practitioner and 10-20 days to become an instructor. They check and test the recordings (ION 2009). See more at: [SimplyTheStory.org](http://SimplyTheStory.org).

- **Storying Training for Trainers (ST4T)**

ST4T merges church planting with cross-cultural communication to train trainers to make disciples and plant churches. They have projects in 11 countries and training teams in 18, most of them in south Asia. The training programme is divided into two parts over a period of 2-3 years. The first part equips in the use of stories and the second in developing the story set. They use 21 initial stories, then 22 stories from Acts (ION 2009). See more at: [st4t.org](http://st4t.org).

- **Finishing the Task (FTT)**

FTT introduces believers to storying with the purpose of developing interest for long-term involvement. The model is worldview sensitive and reproducible. Training is accomplished in one week when they practise 12-15 stories (ION 2009). See more at: [finishingthetask.com](http://finishingthetask.com).

### 3.2 Audio Approaches

Both primary and secondary oral learners can be reached by non-print means like, electronic, audio and visual communication (Brown 2004:123). Prof. Ansre from Ghana points out that at the end of the 20th century a new era has set in, which he calls the "Post-Literacy Age" or others call it "the Multi-Media Era." He claims that audio-Scripture has the highest potential to reach both the literate and the majority of oral learners in Africa (Ansre 1995:68). In the same year, Klem (1995:63) was also convinced that Bible on tape "can reach all the people of the world with a solid understanding of the Word of God..." Brown (2004:126) advises that,

The use of conversation, dialogue, and drama in recorded Scripture portions can draw listeners, keep their attention, and help them remember what they heard.

Lovejoy affirms that the new technology makes "production and delivery of audio and video products easier, faster, and cheaper." He indicates that the rapid spread of mobile phones in the developing countries is an opportunity for audio and video Scripture engagement (Lovejoy 2009:12).

- **Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH)**

Snowden and Willis (2010:19-20) advise that, according to Romans 10:17, we should respect the oral preference of learners "to bring them faith by hearing..." FCBH is a very effective programme developed by Hosanna (Sogaard 1995:74), which has recorded dramatised "New Testaments in 150 languages, with 50 more in progress" (Greer 2011:63). Training is offered

to local church leaders to form and lead listening groups. They have 12 recording centres with 25 national recording teams in the world, using portable recording and editing equipment (Greer 2011:63). Reports from Ghana indicate that both Christians and non-Christians benefit from this programme. "Some church leaders claim that they themselves have improved their reading by listening to the tapes and following the text in Scripture." Others testified that they heard some New Testament portions for the first time. Also itinerant Christian groups found the recordings very useful. Even some interested Muslims gather near the listening groups before their prayer time begins (Ansre 1995:67).

- **The Radio Bible Project**

This project reaches both literates and non-literates with 365 fifteen-minute broadcasts in an interesting dramatized story format from the Old and the New Testaments. It is a "global partnership between Hosanna/Faith Comes By Hearing, the International Bible Society, Trans World Radio, and the United Bible Societies..." (Greer 2011:64).

- **Trans World Radio (TWR)**

"TWR has identified orality as one of five top strategic initiatives" (Greer 2011:63). One of their programmes in Cambodia is to bring hope through Bible story broadcasts to many children who are suffering. Many children are being sold by their own mothers to casinos into sexual slavery because of poverty. Since much of the population is not literate, literate materials do not help, but mass media can transform lives and worldviews (Sundar 2010:81-82).

They produce 15-minute chronological Bible stories to broadcast on twelve radio stations throughout Cambodia. More than 12,000 children respond to these programmes every year. They draw pictures based on the stories heard and send them to TWR through church volunteers. TWR partners have more than 500 churches in Cambodia, and have 51 local believers, who coordinate the children clubs listening to the radio stories. In 2008, more than 300 children gave their life to Christ in these clubs. TWR Cambodia also has a programme for women called *Women of Hope* to address the issue of child trade, and another programme for youth. "Mass media is one of God's solutions to reach beyond barriers and boundaries ... people who sometimes cannot be reached by traditional methods" (Sundar 2010:82-83).

- **The Global Recordings Network (GRN)**

"GRN has produced audio and audio-visual Bible-based evangelism and discipling resources in more than 5500 languages designed specifically for non- and minimally-literate people groups." They use Bible stories crafted by native speakers in their own languages (Greer 2011:63).

### 3.3 Visual Approaches

"As Christians and communicators of the Good News, we must constantly seek to utilize all forms of technology, and take advantage of new innovations to ensure wider and more efficient communication of our message worldwide" (Conkey 2010:55).

- **Visual Arts**

Paula Dubill, an artist and lecturer, instructs us regarding the use of arts in communicating the Gospel. We often think of communication to be verbal, but remember the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." God and Jesus communicated through visual and metaphoric images like: the burning bush, vine, bread, mustard seed or wind (Dubill 2010:39).

By seeing, hearing and doing, visual arts enable people to remember God's word and character. Dubill shares an experience she had with children in a South African prison. These children are victims of alcohol, abuse, neglect and drugs. Duhill's purpose was to share with them that "there was a 'Daddy God' who loved them and wanted them to belong to Him" (Dubill 2010:40-41).

An artist missionary friend painted a large image on the wall, of God's huge hands holding a little boy. While painting he told them how God met him and changed his life, how he forgave his abuser and led him to Christ. Then they talked about Isaiah 49:16 which says that our names are engraved on God's palms. The children were invited to place themselves in God's hands by writing their names and sticking them on God's palms on the wall. They all decided to do that. One week after, the children were able to retell the stories heard on that occasion (Dubill 2010:40-41). Dubill (p. 42) concludes by saying that:

[T]he act of storytelling (hearing), and the visual and sensory stimulation of utilizing art materials in the memory-building process will engage the mind and enter the heart, bypassing the ingrained defense mechanisms. In a fun, delightful context, God's truth is shared and remembered. Hearts are changed as the story of God's love becomes real to them.

- **Jesus Film Media**

Jesus Film Media is a project of Campus Crusade for Christ and "exists to digitally help The JESUS Film Project® accomplish the goal of creating and providing media tools that share Jesus with everyone in his or her own heart language." The film is "based on the Gospel of Luke" and has been produced in more than 1,150 languages. Based on the Jesus Film they produced other resources like *Jesus for Children* in 149 languages, *Magdalena* for women in 100 languages, *Christ's Crucifixion* in 40 languages, *My Last Day* a Japanese anime film, and the discipleship series of films, like *Walking with Jesus* created by Africans for Africans, and *Following Jesus* made for Indians by Indians. Jesus Film Media provides free, easy and fast access to all their resources online and on the smart phone (Jesus Film Media 2012).

- **Create International**

Create International is a media ministry of Youth With A Mission (YWAM) that started in 1989. They use effective media strategies and technology to disciple especially the "194 unreached people groups with a population over one million." As part of the process, they start work in a group at the invitation of local leadership to ensure the use of the programme.

They also focus on prayer and on the leading of the Holy Spirit, while doing research to decide which group to reach and what media to use (Conkey 2010:49-56).

It "addresses community issues such as revenge killings, ancestor worship, and stealing. The salvation message is interwoven in a drama of conflict and resolution." The team chooses local cultural advisors to ensure cultural and linguistic accuracy of the film. Some of the media forms they use are: arts, film, radio, internet, satellite, mobile phones and microchip players. "In many countries, Internet usage is doubling every one hundred days, and even in impoverished countries many people go online in various ways..." (Conkey 2010:49-56).

Here are two testimonies, one from Turkey, and the other from Indonesia (Conkey 2010:52, 55):

Because our film was very Turkish and adapted to the culture, the local media and Muslim leaders were open to receiving the presentation into their society (p. 52).

After viewing the film, one of the Muslim leaders said, "I believe in *Isa al Masih* [Jesus the anointed Savior]. How can I become a believer and be baptized?" (p. 55)

Willis and Snowden (2010:27) draw attention to the fact that today the population that prefers to learn through non-print forms is increasing rapidly. "It took thirty-eight years for radio to reach an audience of 50 million, television only thirteen years, and the computer four years," Apple's iPod in three and Facebook in two (p. 25). Today, the entertainment industry is the greatest influential factor on our worldview (p. 28). Therefore, Christians should learn to use it in their ministry.

## **Conclusion**

Historically, orality has existed from the beginning of time to the present, and the church had gradually discovered and learned how to use the oral strategies of evangelising and discipling the unreached, following the model of Jesus and of the early church.

The article also made it clear that orality is not just storytelling, but a wide variety of verbal, audio, visual and electronic means of communication, which has the potential of reaching many people and cultures all over the world. Orality becomes increasingly relevant today, since secondary orality is a growing phenomenon in both the developed and developing countries.

A secondary aim of this article is to raise awareness in the Church of the existing oral strategies of communicating Scripture and their contribution to missions. Even though a growing number of mission organizations are embracing oral strategies today, they still form a minority. Therefore, there is a great need for awareness and scholarship in the new field of orality.

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