

Reflections on Scripture in an Oral Culture: Orality, Literacy, and Translation among the Yali (1971-2011)

John D. Wilson

In the last 40 years, thanks in particular to the seminal writings of Walter Ong,¹ there has been growing interest in and appreciation of the significance of orality. This is particularly understood in terms of its cultural value in juxtaposition to the role of literacy and literariness in post-enlightenment cultures. It took longer for this significance to be recognized in the world of missions with regard to cross-cultural communication and also Bible translation. It was not until the 1980s that translators and cross-cultural missionaries began to wake up to the role of orality—both in terms of cultural context and as a medium of communication.²

Out of these and subsequent studies, what has come to the fore is the practice known as “chronological storytelling” of the Biblical narrative. Taking this concept further the possibility of an “oral Bible” has been mooted.

In this article, I reflect on the role of Scripture in an oral culture through my personal involvement with the Yali people of Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) over the last 40 years. I will show how an appreciation of orality was married to a commitment to translation of Scripture for an oral people, and how that led to effective acceptance and engagement of Scripture within an oral culture. I conclude with some thoughts on the mutuality of oral storytelling of the Bible and the presence of written Scripture.

Background History

My wife and I worked among the Yali of Papua from 1971-1991, at which time the New Testament was completed and then published in 1992. After a short time in the UK we moved to Canada; but I continued to

make regular visits to Papua to assist Yali mother-tongue translators as they worked on finishing the translation of the Old Testament.

The complete Bible in Yali was published in 2000

In just ten years since its publication, that Bible is now not only sold out, but worn out by diligent usage in personal devotion and in the corporate life of the church. A reprint was

regularly used and is easily read or listened to; but that readers and listeners also understand and appreciate the appropriateness of the scriptural message for their daily lives. This engagement of scripture is not something automatic or that can be taken for granted. The availability of a good translation of the Bible or of scripture portions is neither a guarantee that people will read and use the translated material, nor that they will understand it

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requested in 2010. It is clear that the Yali community—though an oral culture—has welcomed and “engaged” the translated scriptures.

Scripture Engagement

The term “scripture engagement” means not only that scripture is reg-

and apply it to their personal and cultural context.

There are various reasons for the significant engagement of scripture by the Yali people which are similar to or identical with the eight conditions of scripture engagement identified by Wayne Dye.³

1. Appropriate language, dialect and orthography.

2. Acceptable translation (perceived as authoritative as the word of God; acceptable translation style, etc.)

3. Accessible forms of scripture (physically, culturally etc.)

4. Background knowledge of the hearers and readers which bridges their understanding of the differences of culture, geography and history of the Bible.

5. Availability of the translated scripture.

6. Spiritual hunger of the people—a desire to read or learn what the Bible teaches.

7. Freedom to commit to Christ and the church.

8. Partnership between the translators, the Bible Society, other agencies and the church.

There is no doubt that these conditions have held true in the Yali case. However, there are a few particularly significant reasons for the acceptance and effective use of the translated and printed Bible by the Yali as an oral people and these elaborate on the eight which Dye has identified.

Orality both as a Context and as a Cultural Skill Set

I became aware of the significance of working in an oral culture before the term “orality” became a buzz word in missions. While participating in some anthropology courses and workshops, I concentrated on ethnography and the religion (belief system); but I also compared and contrasted the perceived values of Yali culture with those of my own British culture. In doing so, I frequently noticed that difference was not necessarily a matter of quality; or of one way being right and another wrong. Instead, it was a difference of value, preference, or functional relevance. During this process of discovery, it dawned on me that one of the important differences was that the Yali were members of an oral culture while I belonged to a literate and literary culture. That meant that the Yali valued and preferred oral communication and that orality had functional relevance for them.

In my primary roles as a Bible teacher and translator, I realized that while part of my cultural context includes the value of books and writing

as a preferred way of communicating and learning, and writing and books had functional significance for me, the Yali traditionally learned and communicated *only in terms of orality*. Orality was (and still is to a considerable degree) a significant component of the *cultural context* into which I was communicating and for which I was translating scripture.

Secondly, just as I—as a literate person—have a *literary skill set*, so the oral person has his/her own *oral skill set* which I have described in my dissertation “Scripture in an Oral Culture.”

These two aspects of orality taken together emphasized to me the importance of understanding orality not only for my own role as a missionary, but also for the ongoing life of the church and for the Christian discipleship and spiritual development of its members. I found that, firstly, I needed to understand orality as the context into which I was ministering and translating written scripture.

Secondly, I needed to respect, understand, and attempt to learn to some degree the oral skills of the Yali, so that I could honour and utilize these skills

The *Occasional Bulletin* is published three times a year by The Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS). For more information about EMS, or to apply for membership, go to www.emsweb.org.

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and their oral media in translating and teaching the Bible.

I believe that this dual emphasis on orality and oral skills played a significant role in preparing the way for the Yali to embrace the translation and actively engage the Bible when it was eventually published. Perhaps this is the most fundamental reason why the Yali case study is still relevant today not only for the cultures of Papua and Papua New Guinea, but also in other similar oral cultures.

Context-Sensitive Literacy

In light of these thoughts on orality, I believed it would be wrong to expect everyone in this oral culture to want to read the Bible for themselves. Our original goal, therefore, was to have a cadre of really good readers who would be able to read aloud in the huts to the non-literate members of the community. This would be much as was the

grammar limitations. That is, the vocabulary and grammar were controlled according to pace of the introduction of letters, parts of speech, verbs and “functors” already taught. (“Functors” are parts of speech which in themselves have no independent meaning, and include conjunctions, tense suffixes and so forth).

The reading material in the literacy primers or lesson books was carefully graded, and not until the post primer stage⁵ did we introduce foreign stories—either native-authored stories about foreign experiences, or translated material such as scripture.

The literacy teachers were trained orally without a handbook.

This contradicted the way we had been taught. We saw this as necessary for potential teachers in an oral culture regardless of how fluent in reading and writing they had become. Not only was this natural to them, they had to be able

Translation that is sensitive to the needs of Oral Listeners

Attention to the nature of orality inevitably brings challenges to the assumptions about the nature and goals of the Bible translation and translation strategy.

During the translation process, I had come to understand more and more the importance of orality, oral skills and oral media. Because of this, before pressing on to publication of the New Testament, along with my translation team of native speakers, we reworked the translated text with listeners as well as readers in mind.

This meant that we paid greater attention to the kinds of things which would make the translation more appropriate, acceptable, and accessible for a person within an oral culture, in other words, easier to listen to.

Oral listeners need topic markers and “redundancies” not essential to lit-

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case among the Israelites of the Old Testament period, and within the early church when the apostolic teachings were passed on orally and the apostolic letters would be read aloud to the members of scattered Christian communities.

A literacy program had already been initiated among the Yali by other missionaries previous to our arrival. However, my wife and I soon observed that most people did not read fluently or with good understanding. We saw the need for a different kind of approach, so we participated in literacy workshops organized by SIL Indonesia⁴ and developed a new literacy program based on the Gudschinsky method.

All the stories for each lesson were composed by native speakers (both orally and in writing), while I guided the authors regarding vocabulary and

to teach in a way which was natural to oral learners. In this process we helped the trainee teachers to understand and think about the principles behind the process and method, with the goal of self-reproducing literacy and the ability to read fluently with understanding. This training and the literacy method helped to develop the critical reading and thinking skills necessary for reading the Bible for meaning.

Subsequently, we also trained some existing readers to develop fluency and understanding by using lessons and drills from the new literacy program. These included some church elders who had been barely able to read scripture in public worship, never mind understand it when reading it for themselves; but with these new strategies they became effective and fluent readers.

erate readers.

These include carefully reducing sentence length; retaining what is sometimes regarded as redundant by literates, such as reduplication and repetition; giving attention to conjunctions and tail-head linkages;⁶ as well as other aspects of oral style, genres and oral media.

Although we had observed that newly literate Yali writers were already dropping these redundancies from anything they wrote, we understood the importance of retaining these for listeners. The challenge was to make the translation suitable for both readers and listeners; with enough redundancy for listeners, and yet not so much as to bore or frustrate competent readers.

In addition, working with the Yali co-translators we paid attention to the oral genres (like legend, fairy tale and

poetry) and to apply these as appropriate in the context of narrative translation.

For example, whenever we translated Hebrew poetry we employed the poetic genre or style of parallelism which was similar in typical of Yali songs, and which in many ways approximated the Hebrew form. This proved exceedingly meaningful,⁷ and effectively gave permission to the Yali to use scripture in that way in their songs and in recounting of the Bible's narratives in their huts at night.

Ironically, the Yali people now have a very high level of literacy compared to the neighbouring Papuan peoples.⁸ At one time, a literacy survey conducted in four adjacent language groups, revealed that the Yali boasted about 50% adult literacy rate while the others ranged between 15 and 30%. In fact, there had been a resurgence of interest in literacy after the Bible had been published in 2000. This suggests that the appropriateness of the translation

usually accumulate narratives which enable them to build a picture or pictures in their hearts and minds; they don't have a systematic "theology". It is helpful for oral learners to hear the Scriptures and learn theology in this manner which is natural to them.

However, I think it was also significant that I was always teaching throughout the translation process—often teaching what was freshly translated; sometimes translating a passage to meet a teaching need. This brought about a double benefit: On the one hand, there was constant feedback into the perfection of the translation in terms of its acceptability to both readers and oral learners; on the other hand, it began to whet the appetite of the newly literate Yali people to have and to read small portions of the translated Scriptures.

When the Bible was eventually published, there was already the motivation and eagerness to buy and use it.

First of all, steps can be taken to help people read for understanding and then help them with exercises which train them to think about what they are reading.

Secondly, orality (as a culture) and oral communication skills and media need to be understood, honored and employed by missionaries, teachers and church leaders. On one occasion when I visited an African country I learned that seminary graduates who had learned "grammar English," subsequently despised use of the vernacular or pidgin of the grass roots believers. Imagine the consequent break down of effective communication.

Thirdly, people can be trained in public reading of Scripture for the benefit of listeners (something that is lost in our western society). Reading should be nuanced and intoned with the vitality and emotion of speech.

Fourthly, the Bible needs to be read contextually and made meaningful to

People in oral cultures learn about their cultural beliefs

through hearing and reciting myths, legends and stories over the passage of time.

in terms of language use and also in terms of sympathetic attention to orality had enhanced interest in the Bible and fostered motivation to become literate in order to read it.

Bible teaching foundations

As a westerner, when I started Bible teaching to the Yali, I used methods and structures familiar to me, with doctrine taught in systematic and topical forms. However, as I began to understand the Yali orality, I learned to employ their oral preferences as much as I could, developing a more narrative style, and teaching theology diachronically.⁹

People in oral cultures learn about their cultural beliefs through hearing and reciting myths, legends and stories over the passage of time. They even-

This interest and enthusiasm was also fostered by the Yali co-translators and other native leaders who made efforts to engage people in regular Scripture reading. Soon older people who had never learned to read and write, were asking to attend literacy classes, so in this way, the literacy rate and Scripture use has continued to rise.

Quite clearly, it is not a given that people will automatically read the Bible once it is printed and distributed. Missionaries still engaged in the translation process can ensure that some of these conditions can be promoted before the New Testament or Bible is published. But what of the situation where this kind of preparatory work has not been done? What can missionaries and national leaders do to foster Scripture engagement?

the present generation. Many creative steps can be taken to make Scripture more accessible and meaningful.

Fifthly, pastors and teachers need to develop interpretive skills in order to learn how to ask critical questions of the text, and of the culture in response to the text. Eventually, this leads to critical contextualization.

This is an important issue, one that in part is addressed by David Sills in *Reaching and Teaching*. He has an excellent chapter on orality; but the passion of his book is to get people instructed in and engaged with Scripture, and that should be the passion of every missionary and Bible teacher!¹⁰

The Yali celebrate their Jubilee

In May 2011, the Yali church celebrated the arrival of the first mission-

aries in their territory. It had been 50 years since May 1961, when the first missionaries Stan Dale and Bruno de Leeuw hiked into the Heluk valley—the first step in bringing the gospel to this part of the Jayawijaya Highlands of Papua.

May 2011 marked 40 years since I had arrived in Papua with my family. During the ensuing years, we witnessed, and in some small way participated in, a wonderful movement of God: We learned their language and delved into their culture; began translating the New Testament; and helped them learn to read and write, and to become literacy teachers. As hundreds of Yali people began to turn to Christ; it was our privilege to help them grow in their faith through oral narrative and teaching of God's written Word.

Twenty years ago (1990), the Yali New Testament¹¹ was published, followed 10 years later by the publication of the entire Bible. Many people had

“Oral Bible”?

And what is meant by the term “Oral Bible”?

In the Lausanne Occasional Paper #54, “Making Disciples of Oral Learners” it is stated:

A fourth key element in order to avoid syncretism is to provide a recorded “oral Bible” for each people group in their language. *This is a recorded set of stories*, biblically accurate and told in the worldview context. At this point the “oral Bible” may be the only scriptural resource available to oral learners. *At some future time* when written Bible translation is completed, *then it could be recorded* to provide a standard point of reference. (My emphases.)

From this statement, we see that there are actually two different concepts of an “oral Bible.” The one is really the equivalent of children's Bible story books; the other is a recording of the entire Bible as translated in writing.

As someone who has lived in an oral culture, studied orality, learned to communicate in that context, and also

the various portions of Scripture.

Moreover, an effective recording of translated Scripture is dependent on a good translation which is sensitive to the orality of the people in terms of genre and style. In fact, it may need to be modified first by reintroducing significant “redundancies” and parts of speech necessary for oral listeners which have been intentionally or incidentally dropped as the literary form of the language has been developed.

In other words, before there can be an “oral Bible” there must be an accurate and culturally appropriate translated biblical text, which will form the reference point and the basis of any form of oral text, whether the oral equivalent of a children's Bible story book,¹² or the audio recording of a literary translation.¹³

Symbiotic relationship of Oral and Written

Gordon Wenham in *The Psalms* as

The most effective Bible storying will only happen when the expatriate or national missionary has the translated Bible to work from.

been saving their money for that day, and when it was finally available, hundreds of copies of the Bible were immediately purchased. By 2011, when the Yali came to celebrate their Jubilee, their Bible was sold out, and many personal copies were worn out through habitual usage. It needed to be re-printed.

In a remarkable way, the written Scriptures had made their home in this oral culture.

Bible Storying and an Oral Bible

In light of this, is it correct for contemporary missionaries in oral cultures to focus their energies almost exclusively (as some do) on oral storying, with the often indistinct hope—not necessarily imperative—of translating the Bible at some future date? In other words, can we be satisfied with some kind of

translated Scripture, I want to affirm the importance of paying attention to orality and using the indigenous oral preferences and communications media. (Incidentally, that means doing as much homework as a diligent translator will do to understand the culture and to use appropriately the various oral genres.)

However, oral storying does not take the place of Bible translation. In fact, the most effective Bible storying will only happen when the expatriate or national missionary has the translated Bible to work from. In the mental and physical act of translating the Scriptures for publication, the issues of correct interpretation, verb tenses, key terms, appropriate idioms and cultural equivalents will be ironed out. In addition, a sensitive translation will pay attention to the appropriate genres of

Torah adduces evidence that the Psalter of the Old Testament is essentially an anthology to be memorized.¹⁴ He draws on the works of David Carr and Paul Griffiths who separately examine the way sacred texts were used in antiquity. Even the role of scribes was not simply to write manuscripts, but to learn and memorize them.

David Carr writes:

These written works used in education [in scribal schools] were part of the tip of an oral iceberg. The point of education was not mastery of written texts per se. Rather, these written texts served as crucial media to facilitate oral learning... and the memorization and performance of standard Sumerian and Akkadian works.¹⁵

This insight draws vital and significant connections between the role

of the oral recitation simultaneously with the presence of written sacred text.

“Thus, the main transmission and dissemination of these texts was oral; their written form was not used at recitals, but simply served as a check in the scribal schools that they were memorizing correctly.”¹⁶

The importance of this kind of connection between the oral recitation of Biblical narratives and the written Biblical text seems to be overlooked in the contemporary emphasis on oral storytelling of the Bible.

In some contexts, some form of “oral Bible” may very well be the correct way to go—especially in the initial phases of ministry in an oral culture. However, my case study from the Yali people of Papua demonstrates that it is possible to respect the orality of the culture and simultaneously introduce literacy and translate Scripture. However, it is indeed possible and acceptable—I would go further and say it is necessary—to translate Scripture for an oral culture.

First of all, the text for an “oral Bible” needs to be thoughtfully translated and prepared for oral transmission with the same degree of attention to exegesis of the Scripture and analysis of both the culture and the language, as is necessary for translation of the Bible for its written form. This will include attention to the oral genres, skills and media of the host culture

Secondly, the written text needs to be available to the oral culture. It is not necessary to think of written text as contrary to, or as an unwanted threat to orality. Oral and written forms are complementary, and we find that written Scriptures existed in the ancient world, and continued to exist in a symbiotic relationship with orality, right up until the invention of the printing press. Written or printed forms of scripture are not necessarily incompatible with nor a threat to orality. Oral transmission of sacred texts depended on having people trained to read and reproduce the base text and as a means

of facilitating faithful memorization.

Moreover, the precedent was already set in Old Testament times by preserving written texts, and expecting that kings and priests copy and preserve these (Deut 17:18-19); that the priests and scribes would be trained not simply to write and preserve texts, but memorize them for recitation, and read them aloud for hearers (e.g. Neh 8:1-8); and that some portions (such as Psalms) while evidently created for memorization were also carefully compiled from other sources and preserved in the forms we currently have to ensure faithful transmission and recitation.

For Scripture to be enthusiastically accepted, transmitted and meaningfully engaged in any culture, there needs to be a written text which has been carefully translated. This will enable accurate and effective oral storytelling, and it will remain as a base text to which some (appropriately trained) may and indeed necessarily will return to refresh their memories; to expand their repertoire; and allow for meaningful performance.

Endnotes

1. Ong, Walter J. *The Presence of the Word*. Yale University Press, New Haven. 1967; and *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Methuen, London and New York. 1982.

2. Euan Fry, “An Oral Approach to Translation” in *The Bible Translator* Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 214-217. 1979; Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of Scripture*. William Carey Library, Pasadena. 1982; Trevor McIlwain, *Building on Firm Foundations: Guidelines for Evangelism and Teaching Believers*, New Tribes Mission, Sanford, Florida, 1987; and John D Wilson, “Scripture in an Oral Culture: The Yali of Irian Jaya”, Dissertation presented to University of Edinburgh, 1988.

3. T. Wayne Dye, “The Eight Conditions of Scripture Engagement: Social and Cultural Factors Necessary for Vernacular Bible Translation to Achieve Maximum Effect” in *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 2009. Also see T. Wayne Dye, “The Scripture in an accessible form: The Most Common Avenue to Increased Scripture Engagement” in *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, Vol. 26, no. 3, Fall 2009.

4. The Summer Institute of Linguistics, also known as Wycliffe Bible Translators.

5. The post primer stage was when we fo-

cussed on developing the competence of literates once they had grasped the basics of literacy and were able to read and write.

6. Tail-head linkage refers to a common practice in Papuan languages where the last verb in a sentence is repeated in a linking phrase in the beginning of the subsequent sentence. This kind of device helps the listener keep track of who is doing what, and note the changes of subject and object. Repetition and redundancy may be tedious to the literate reader; but it is absolutely necessary to the person who listens when the Bible is read aloud.

7. By this stage, my Yali co-translators understood and could read the Indonesian Bible. Because the Indonesian translation Kabar Baik (Good News) had restructured the Hebrew poetry in a form appropriate to Indonesian, sometimes the parallelism was not obvious. Moreover, if we had followed the Indonesian form, not only was it less like the Hebrew; it would have been less like Yali poetry.

8. According to Herbert Klem from his research in Africa, a high percentage of literacy is not normally attained in oral cultures. See Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of Scripture*. William Carey Library, Pasadena. 1982.

9. The unfolding of the theology as revealed through the passage of time in the scriptures.

10. M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience*. Moody, 2010.

11. This refers to the Southern Yali translation. New Testament translations in Abenaho Yali and Angguruk Yali had been published earlier.

12. Note that most children’s Bibles are not only highly interpretive, but also selective. One must ask why certain selections are made, and who does the selecting? Is it the outsider, and on what basis?

13. Audio recordings of course require technology and everything that goes with that. Is the “technologizing of the word”, to borrow Walter Ong’s phrase, with electronic media more valid than print and literacy?

14. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2012, particularly pages 41-56.

15. David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablets of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*, Oxford University Press, New York 2005:21 quoted by Wenham on page 42.

16. *Ibid.*, 38, quoted by Wenham on page 43. Carr’s use of “simply” is an unfortunate diminution.

John Wilson is a veteran missionary with World Team. He and his wife Gloria were resident among the Yali people of Papua, Indonesia. from 1971-1991, and continue to help there periodically with Bible teaching and leadership training

Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology and Practice

Enoch Wan, ed. Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora Studies-USA. (Western Seminary, 5511 SE Hawthorne Blvd. Portland, OR. 97215.) 2011. 364 pps.

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It is a pleasure to review this work edited by Dr. Enoch Wan who for years has been a part of what today we may call “the diaspora missions movement.” Enoch is well known through his leadership of the Evangelical Missiological Society, and similar study groups. He is himself a product and participant of the Chinese diaspora, an experience involving both the positive and negative polarities of this phenomenon. He has participated, inspired and written extensively for consultations on the missional implications of the accelerated and expanding movement of peoples across the globe. Diaspora missions have become the focus of significant gatherings since the Lausanne, consultation at Pattaya, 2004; Edmonton, Alberta in 2006, and at Lausanne, Cape Town 2010.

In 2006, I spent a week with Enoch at the Overseas Missionary Study Center in New Haven CT. Both of us were on sabbatical. I realized that what I was researching as “Migratory Missions,” was the same as Enoch’s devoted interest in *Diaspora Missiology*, the focus of this volume. The latter term has become the accepted term for the interdisciplinary study of the missionary implications of this incredibly significant movement of peoples. *Diaspora Missiology* is the first full-length exposition of the discipline. It represents exactly what missiology is all about, the integration of insights from the social studies with the biblical and theological foundations behind the practice of mission. But it goes beyond traditional missiology pointing the way to

a missiology more suited to the contemporary global reality

Enoch Wan is the editor of *Diaspora Missiology*, which is intended to be the first of three volumes on the issue. In addition to serving as editor, Enoch is the author of ten chapters, with extremely well researched and written studies of the diasporic movement of the peoples in extra biblical contexts. Narry Santos explains the biblical terms relating to diaspora in Old and New Testaments. Ted Rubesh, veteran church planter and professor based in Sri Lanka expounds diaspora movements in the Old Testament; Craig Ott in the New Testament. The conclusion of all three is inescapable: God is orchestrating both the movement of Israel and the Church to bring his people and his blessing to the peoples of the world. God does this either through placing his people into the context of unreached peoples or to draw hitherto unreached peoples into the orbit of God’s people, Israel and the Church. This was the very point made by the Apostle Paul in his Areopagus speech (Acts 17), and which Joseph had made centuries earlier in his address to his brothers in Egypt (Gen. 45:4-9).

Diaspora Missiology is divided into three major divisions: Theory, Methodology and Practice. The last division contains twelve chapters. Eight are case studies of ministry by Majority World writers covering ministry in diaspora movements to and from Asia, The Middle East, Latin America, Africa, Europe and North America.

The point of this work is to lay a basis for and show how diaspora missiology differs from traditional missiology. It sets the stage for further focus on the ways ministry in the context of particular eth-

nic or regional movements will require an approach to missions that differs from traditional mission practice and preparation. The present and future reality of accelerated human movement through international business, labor, study, and as refugees from persecution and instability means that we are truly now engaging in missions without borders.

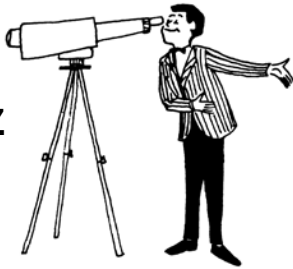
The vastly increased missionary potential and engagement of churches in what Philip Jenkins has termed “the Global South,” can probably only be fully realized through appropriate biblical, spiritual and intercultural preparation. The Filipino reality treated by Araujo, Wan and Tira in *Scattered: The International Filipino Diaspora Movement* (2004) was followed up by a practical manual for Filipinos planning on overseas employment entitled *Worker to Witness: Becoming an Overseas Filipino Worker*. (Manzano and Solina, 2007) These works, coupled with *Diaspora Missiology* show the necessity of networking, encouraging and giving pastoral care to Christian workers within the various diasporas. This is the only way to maximize the presence of so many Christians among the international labor force. In 2011 this movement involves some 215 million people, including more than 80% of the peoples present in the Gulf States of the Middle East. About 10 million Filipinos live or work outside their country and millions from other countries have migrated within their own countries or abroad in search of employment. Those who take overseas employment leave behind families with one or both parents absent and children cared for by grandparents, aunts and uncles, all of whom need a new kind of pastoral care.

In addition to the theoretical and methodological components of *Diaspora Missiology*, the case studies make a valuable contribution. The Jewish diaspora, a reality since the inter-testamental period remains a globally challenging phenomenon, addressed by Tuvia Zaretski.

The global Chinese diaspora, also

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As seen
through
the **LENZ**



In addition to John Wilson's very insightful article on oral literacy, and Mike Pocock's excellent review of Enoch Wan's latest book, I want to add my words of tribute to a dear brother in Christ, Dr. Paul Beals. Dr. Hesselgrave has given us the background of Paul's involvement with EMS, (originally known as the Association of Evangelical Professors for Missions (AEPM)). Before knowing much about

EMS, I had Dr. Beals as my professor at Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary on one of our home assignments. I was immediately drawn to him because of his gracious and humble manner of teaching, and the way he related so personally to students. Although a scholar in his own right as well as a student of missions, Paul came across as a friend wanting to share his knowledge with his students, and in many ways considered us as peers. What an example for professors shaping the lives of students! You were naturally attracted to this genuinely godly brother.

Paul encouraged me to press on to get my D. Miss. when I thought that I would not be able to do so. I took his advice and counsel and pursued the degree at TEDS. In the process I was blessed

to have Dr. Dave Hesselgrave as one of my project readers :-). I have been doubly blessed!

Paul's book "A People For His Name" is still a basic text for missions strategy. I have referred to that many times in my lesson preparations. My copy of the book is special because he signed his name in the book for me with the verses Acts 15:14, and Prov. 3:5-6. I will treasure that. Thanks Paul for the privilege of learning from you, and knowing you as a dear friend, esteemed brother, and faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. The missions world is richer because of your many contributions. I am the richer for having the Lord bring you into my life!

—Bob Lenz, editor

Paul Beals—in Memoriam

My colleague and friend, Dr. Paul Beals, played an important part in the formation and progress of the new Evangelical Missiological Society back in the late 1980s and early 90s. With the encouragement of Dr. Donald McGavran and the expressed support of over 700 mission leaders, teachers and practitioners, we were ready to organize in 1990. However, it was felt that the new Society would require more time and attention than could be given by most leaders and professors who were already committed to fulltime employment. Due to a unique and generous sabbatical arrangement in vogue at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School at that time, it was possible for me to respond favorably to the suggestion that I serve as executive director for the time being. That decision necessitated and inaugurated the search for a president.

Of many committed and able candidates, it did not take long to settle on Paul Beals for that position. Paul was a recognized missions scholar and professor of missions in a frontrunning seminary. He had been a faithful supporter

and leader in the Association of Evangelical Professors of Mission. He was not only a gifted leader, he was an accomplished workman and a trustworthy man of God. Paul was the unanimous choice to serve the new Society as its first President—a role he filled with great distinction and universal admiration.

I was privileged visit Paul shortly after he suffered a debilitating stroke. His body was partly paralyzed but his faith was still radiantly strong. After that, though our partnership in the gospel continued our fellowship was sharply curtailed. Now word has come of his promotion to Glory. And I am saddened, but I want to say "Thanks, my good friend. You served our Lord and all of us so very long and so very well. Gratefully wear the Crown of Life that in His goodness and grace our Lord Christ bestows on all who believe. And gracefully wear those stars that accrue to all who serve. We have been and remain forever blessed to have you as a faithful friend in Christ and fellow-soldier of the Cross.

—David J. Hesselgrave

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a reality in North America, is an eye-opener from Kim-Kong Chan, Moussa Bongoyok explains the Muslim diaspora, and Yaw Attah Edu-Bekoe the presence of Ghanaians in the USA and Than Trung Le shows how Vietnamese are faring in North American communities and Geoff Hart the massive Hispanic presence and possibilities in this country. Cody Lorence and Randy Mitchell explain local church ministries in Illinois and Minnesota, proving that ministry today can be nothing less than "global" in nature.

Diaspora Missiology is a great text for what must surely be new courses in seminaries and institutions preparing workers not simply for foreign missions, but global ministry in the contemporary reality where multicultural and multi-faith communities are the rule in both urban and rural communities world-wide.

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