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BETHEL UNIVERSITY  
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THE USE OF ORAL TRAINING IN UGANDA  
TO DEVELOP BIBLICALLY TRAINED LEADERS

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE  
IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY  
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ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA  
MAY 2016

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## ABSTRACT

The researcher spent a year in rural Tanzania and found that the volunteer lay leaders had little training. These lay leaders had a love for Jesus and for his people, but the obstacles these men faced in order to get further training were overwhelming. Attending seminary meant paying tuition, leaving families, leaving farms, taking classes in English, and following a Western style of education. There were economic, emotional, and educational barriers these lay leaders faced. This caused this researcher to seek a new method to train people in God's Word.

This search led to the oral training method that was used through the Old Testament period and the parable training style that Jesus used with his disciples. The modern application of this oral training is the International Orality Network. This is a network of ministries that have joined together in order to meet the needs of primary oral learners.

The rural Africans need a training that is portable and adjustable. The training must not depend on expensive buildings or specific locations. It must be reproducible so that it can spread across Africa. It had to be simple enough to be taught by a variety of teachers and so that anyone could learn and lead it. It had to be deep enough so that the students would gain knowledge of the Bible that matched that of other theological training centers.

This project was a study of the use of oral training in Uganda to develop biblically trained leaders. This project evaluated the biblical oral traditions and the parables of Jesus in a Ugandan training setting. The goal was to develop disciples who knew the Bible personally, were changed by it, and put it into practice in their lives.

## CHAPTER ONE: BIBLICALLY TRAINED LEADERS NEEDED

### **A Needed Project**

After spending time in Tanzania and Uganda, the researcher recognized that there were pastors and leaders in rural settings that had been given the responsibility of spiritually caring for people but had no biblical training with which to do so. The challenge of making training available to them includes barriers that are as great as the need itself. The barriers of language, location, education, family, finances, and work are some of the things that can inhibit a potential leader from getting the training that they need to lead the people that they have been entrusted with. Yet these congregations need well-trained leaders so that their people “will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:14).<sup>1</sup>

### *Problem*

This project addressed the need for biblically trained leaders in Uganda. In response to this problem, the researcher studied the use of oral training as a method to train leaders. This included the role of the African oral tradition, the biblical oral history, and the goal of making disciples through biblical education. In order to understand discipleship, the knowledge, character, and ministry life of the students was closely evaluated. The results of this project can give insight for future training classes.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, citations of Scripture in this paper are from *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985).

### *Limitations*

The research was limited to the Ambassador Institute training that has been done in Uganda from 2009 to 2015. There are multiple organizations that have begun to use oral training and several of them will be referenced in the literature review. The new research will be focused on the unique two-year Ambassador Institute Oral Bible Curriculum and it will be specifically limited to the study of the graduating class of 2015.

The research will be limited to the study of ministries that are using oral curriculum for the development of their leaders, which includes a general application of the African oral tradition rather than specific applications of tribal oral history.

The research will be limited by the Ugandan teacher's understanding of the oral curriculum and their ability to instruct others. Yet, there is no limit to the power of God working through the Scriptures. The process of making disciples is a work of God. He gives understanding, changes lives and uses those lives to multiply his kingdom.

The research will be limited to the researcher's ability to bring about change within the Ugandan ministry setting. Any change that does occur will be credited to the work of God through his Word to transform hearts.

### *Assumptions*

The first assumption is that the Bible provides wisdom and insight unavailable from any other source for developing leaders. It is viewed as the primary tool for biblical training and it carries with it the power and the promises of God. The full value of the Bible goes beyond what can be seen or measured with human mechanisms, yet the effect of its use can be seen and measured. Paul says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).



The second assumption is that there is a need for biblically trained leaders in Uganda. There are many teachers and preachers in Uganda, but not all of them have been thoroughly taught the Word of God. The lack of biblical training has allowed corruption to enter the church. Paul described the training needed for elders to Titus, “He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9).

The third assumption is that it is possible to use oral education as a method to train leaders in Uganda. The long oral history of the Bible is a strong example of how this training can be effective and accurate. The African oral tradition is another example of the use of oral training.

The fourth assumption is that the oral tradition of the Bible and the parable techniques that Jesus used are able to make biblically educated disciples. Jesus, himself, used an oral method to train his disciples.

The fifth assumption is that the Ambassador Institute Oral Bible Curriculum is able to teach students the knowledge, the character and the ministry life that they need to be leaders in the church. These three areas are the three pillars of the content in the curriculum and are based on the need for the training to affect the students head, heart, and hands.

The sixth assumption is that the students that have been trained in the 2015 class are a representation of the training as a whole. The students that participated in the two-year course did so of their own accord. They paid a small fee for the training and the benefit they received was the study of God’s Word.

The seventh assumption is that this oral training will continue to spread within and beyond Uganda. This will only happen if the students that have been trained have found it beneficial enough to give their time to train the next class as well.

### **A Layered Project**

There are multiple layers that are connected with developing biblically trained leaders in Uganda. The first layer is to study the use of oral training as a method to train leaders. Mission agencies have begun to use oral training in multiple countries and there are several studies that specifically address training in Africa.

The second layer is to consider the oral traditions of the Bible and the oral style of communication that Jesus used to develop his disciples. Included is the need to define what it means to become a disciple and the definition of biblical education. The instruction of theology and pastoral training is a clear object of this thesis and yet the understanding of what that means can vary greatly.

The third layer is to evaluate the knowledge, character, and ministry life of students trained using the Ambassador Institute Oral Bible Curriculum. It will be important to gather information from several sources and to compare them with one another. The training was done in both the English and Lusoga languages.

The fourth layer is to adjust the training for future classes. Teacher-training events are held annually and there is a written curriculum for the teachers to follow. Any change will affect the three previous generations of classes have been through the Ambassador Institute material.

## A Ugandan Project

The training that this project is based on was held in the country of Uganda. The spiritual climate in Uganda is varied. *The Joshua Project* stated that eight percent of the population is Muslims and five percent are other ethnic religions. Christianity is the largest religion with 85 percent of the population recognized as Christian. Only 31 percent are evangelical.<sup>2</sup> *The Joshua Project* defines an “Evangelical” as one who recognizes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the sole source of salvation, has a personal faith and conversion by the Holy Spirit, recognizes the inspired Word of God as the only basis for faith and living, and is committed to biblical preaching and evangelism.<sup>3</sup>

There are many factors that are used to gather these statistics but they do not measure the level of understanding of the faith that that is professed. Pastor Nate Jore is a missionary in Uganda. He stated that the knowledge of those who profess Christ is very shallow and syncretism between Christianity and the ethnic traditional religions is widespread.<sup>4</sup>

The Ambassador Institute is a training ministry that has been working in Uganda since 2009. It functions as the training branch of the World Missions Department of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The Ambassador Institute is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota but the training was held in Uganda in 23 different locations with Jinja as the ministry center for the classes.

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<sup>2</sup> “Country: Uganda,” Joshua Project, 2015, accessed February 16, 2015, <http://joshuaproject.net/countries/UG>.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Johnstone, “Definitions,” Joshua Project, 2015, accessed February 16, 2015, <http://joshuaproject.net/help/definitions#Evangelical>.

<sup>4</sup> Nate Jore, interviewed by author, Jinja, Uganda, January 23, 2014.

The first class was started in 2009 in Butagaya Sub-county, north of Jinja. In 2011, the first class of twenty students completed a two-year study of the Bible using an oral curriculum, which was developed during those first two years of training. Out of the first class of twenty students, eight agreed to teach classes to transfer what they had learned. The second generation of classes led seventy students through the same two years of course work. Those students graduated in 2013. Out of the second graduation, twenty-five agreed to teach classes of their own and continue the process of disciples making disciples. There were twenty-three classes in the third generation of students. They finished their two years of study in March 2015. One hundred twenty one students were a part of the third generation of classes and 58 of those students were a part of this study.

Pastor Jore led the training in Uganda. He was the instructor for the first class 2009-2011 and the teacher of the teachers for the second set of classes 2011-2013. In 2013, a Ugandan Ministry Team of four people was formed to oversee and lead the training. In 2014, two more members were added to the Ministry Team. The team then consisted of six members with Pastor Jore continuing in an advisory role. In 2015, one of the members was removed from the ministry team and two more were added so the ministry team would consist of seven members into the future.

The classes averaged ten students per class. They met weekly as agreed upon by the students and the instructor. Each week, the class studied one lesson for two to three hours. The oral style of training consisted of multiple repetitions of the biblical narrative so that the story was learned verbatim and so the students would discuss the content of the story from memory. Once the narrative was committed to memory, the content of the

story was discussed in careful detail. The training was led through questions whereby the teacher would inquire of the students based on the text, prompting them to learn through a Socratic method of discussion. After the content of the story had been discussed thoroughly, the teacher led the students through another series of questions to apply the lesson to their personal lives.

### **An Important Project**

#### *To the Researcher*

This project was important to the researcher for three reasons: the sense of call to missions, the mandate to make disciples of all nations, and the desire to make a difference in people's lives. These three passions came together in the ministry, which has become the Ambassador Institute.

For the researcher, the call to missions happened at the Urbana 84 Conference. The final speaker at the conference challenged people to commit one year of their lives to spreading the gospel in another part of the world. Short-term mission opportunities came up that led him to Israel, Brazil, Mexico and Eastern Europe. Each time, the leading to ministry in the United States seemed to be more prominent than the leading overseas. In the fall of 2004, the World Missions Director of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) presented the researcher with an opportunity to spend a year teaching at a Bible School in Tanzania. The idea seemed impossible, but the researcher was granted a sabbatical from his work as the Youth Ministries Director for the AFLC and the affected boards granted him approval for this extended season of ministry. The support came in, the house was sold, and the family of five moved to Tanzania for nine months.

In Tanzania, the need for biblical training of rural pastors became apparent. Lay pastors serving small churches had little or no Bible training and education seemed unattainable because of the many obstacles. There had to be a way for Bible training to be brought to people living in remote situations.

After the year in Tanzania, the family presented their ministry to churches and special events in the AFLC. At every presentation, people would ask them if they were returning to Tanzania to continue the work. Every question was another reminder of the Great Commission that had not been completed and of the need for an emphasis on “teaching them to obey all that I have commanded them” (Matt. 28:20). Those regular reminders and the biblical references to “all nations” knowing the glory of God challenged the researcher. It is easy for people to ignore the command of the Lord when it is difficult or does not fit with their own ideas, but thankfully the Lord has patience with his people. He gently uses things like people’s questions to direct their lives into his will.

For the researcher, there was a need to fulfill the Great Commission as well as a sense of responsibility to meet the needs of the rural Tanzanian pastors. The first step was to make sure something would be done on their behalf. To that end, a paper was presented to the World Missions Committee of the AFLC, which detailed the need for training among the rural pastors and leaders. There was another paper submitted to the committee at roughly the same time with the same emphasis. Those two papers showed the committee that there was a need for a new method to teach people who would never be able to attend a regular classroom setting. The classroom setting would also not be

helpful to for them to learn God's Word. A new method of training was needed and someone was needed to lead that training.

*To the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations*

Seeing the need for a distance education program for people in other countries was a major step for the AFLC World Missions Committee. Entrusting someone with that responsibility was an equally challenging step. The World Missions Committee was beginning to see the change in missions which had taken place over the past forty years. The church planting model of the past in which missionaries would set up, control and run the work needed to change. A partnership model, which emphasized the training of national leaders, became the new paradigm for missions.

The need for training and change was obvious, but taking a philosophical concept and creating a plan, which could be implemented for leaders in other countries and in other languages was a vast challenge. The World Missions Committee concurred that the need was worth the investment and they committed to fund the position for five years on a decreasing scale. The task of instructional development was given to the researcher in August 2007. In February 2009, a year and a half later, the first class of oral training was started in Uganda.

*To the Church at Large*

The formation of the International Orality Network signifies the importance of addressing the issue of effectively serving oral communicators in missions. Presently, over 400 organizations and ministries have been a part of the ION consultations and partner events. Five Ugandans sponsored by the Ambassador Institute participated in an ION event held in Nairobi, Kenya in the spring of 2008. Later, the researcher attended

events in 2008 and 2009. In 2009, the “Innovation in Missions Award” from The Mission Exchange was given to the International Orality Network in recognition of their values of excellence, innovation, partnership and finishing well.<sup>5</sup> The founders of ION are reputable organizations who have seen the need for oral training in the broader work of missions.

The uniqueness of the Ambassador Institute’s contribution is the two-year oral training. The students memorize 84 stories. Those 84 stories make up 2200 verses of the Bible. The course is divided into six 14-week semesters. Three semesters make up the first year and another three complete the second year. There are many organizations using oral methods to teach God’s Word but none of them have a rigorous two-year standardized curriculum as part of their training. This ministry is unique in that the Bible is being brought to people who need an oral style of training. The instruction is delivered to them in their own language from a native teacher beginning with the first lesson.

Those who complete the two-year certificate level course are invited to gather a class and teach their own students using the Ambassador Institute course manual. If students finish both the certificate level training and two-years of teaching, they are allowed to take the one-year oral study of the Book of Romans. The students, who study Romans, memorize the entire book and receive a Diploma of Theology through the Ambassador Institute.

### **Summary**

The need for biblically trained church leaders could be highlighted in many countries, but bringing the training to Uganda or other oral cultures provides unique

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<sup>5</sup> “How We Began”



challenges. The challenges of culture, language, location, and finances could describe many locations as well, but the challenge of learning style adds another layer of difficulty. The oral history of Scriptures and Jesus' use of parables carries with them an opportunity to connect with the African oral tradition.

Biblical education is the goal of this study but biblical education can be defined in many ways. It is important to allow the Bible to define the training along with the description of discipleship. Key to the definition is a look into the life of Jesus as he developed his own disciples.

The work of the Ambassador Institute in Uganda provides a unique opportunity to evaluate oral training, biblical education and discipleship. The results of this project can give insight to the greater mission community regarding students' ability to understand, retain and apply the Scriptures they have studied orally. This case study will allow other ministries the opportunity to learn from the evaluation of this training exercise.

## CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL ORAL TRAINING

### **Biblical and Theological Basis**

Since the instruction of theology and pastoral training is a clear object of this thesis, the Bible must be at the core of the study. There are several aspects of biblical knowledge which need to be understood when evaluating an oral tool used to train pastors and leaders. Understanding the biblical oral tradition is important so it can be done thoroughly in the unique style of oral teaching presented in this study.

First, God's inerrant Word was miraculously transmitted orally from Adam to Moses and from the priests to the people, so historically it has been a successful part of communicating the Word of God. Jesus also passed his training on to his disciples orally who then continued the oral tradition after his death and resurrection.

Second, Jesus used parables and questions to teach, allowing people to reason with the truth as it applied to their lives and their relationship with God. He used them to create a spiritual hunger and to relate with different segments of society. This method was not only a way that he taught; it was the primary way that he penetrated hearts with poignant truth. Narratives can jump cultural and language barriers where other teaching methods struggle. Third, the Bible itself must define biblical education. The Bible emphasizes discipleship rather than just a knowledge-based training. The example of Jesus developing his disciples and the multiplication of the early Christian church are strong testimonies of training, which can revolutionize the world. Fourth, biblical

education is a transformative process as much as it is an opportunity to gain knowledge. The Bible is full of ordinary individuals who lived extraordinary lives because of the work of God in them and through them. The narratives of the Bible and the parables of Jesus describe people who have encountered the living God.

## **A History of Oral Scriptures**

### *A Practice from the Beginning*

The modern use of oral training in missions has a relatively short history, which will be discussed in chapter three. The use of oral training in biblical history traces back to the beginning of Genesis. Oral communication has been used to preserve history, understand theology, train leaders, and transcend the boundaries of time and culture. There is good value in understanding the history of oral transmission within the Jewish culture and the use of oral narratives from the time of Genesis. The Israelites had the Law, the Prophets, the historical books and the Psalms, yet the scripture familiar to the average person came from an oral presentation of these books.

When Moses was given the Law of God on Mount Sinai he wrote it down and then read it to the people. They responded to what they had heard by saying, “We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey” (Exod. 24:7). Moses put the tablets in the ark that he had made and they stayed there (Deut.10:5). Robert G. Bratcher and Howard A. Hatton in their *Handbook on Deuteronomy* point out “Moses is saying that the two stone tablets are still in the Box, where he had placed them some forty years earlier.”<sup>1</sup>

The priests were instructed to read the Book of the Law to the people during the Feast of Tabernacles so that “they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and

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<sup>1</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Deuteronomy*, UBS Helps for Translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 196.

follow carefully all the words of the law” (Deut. 31:11). Immediately after writing down the words of the Book of the Law, Moses taught the people a song so they could remember God and his instructions for them (Deut. 31:24-26, 32). He commanded them to instruct their children with these words so his word would become a part of their family. Today, even nominal Jews will still recite the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4-8 when they start their day. These verses in Deuteronomy say, teach ... diligently: this translates a Hebrew word that seems to mean “repeat,” or “say again and again”; this meaning is reinforced by the following “shall talk of them.”<sup>2</sup> Sharing the Book of the Law was intended to be a part of every aspect of their life.

“Joshua read all the words of the Law – the blessings and the curses – just as it is written in the Book of the Law” when they were entering the land of Canaan (Josh. 8:34). “It is important to translate *read aloud*, to make clear that an oral reading to the people is indicated.”<sup>3</sup> The whole assembly of Israel was a part of the retelling: women, children, and foreigners in their midst. Their return to the land that God had promised to Abraham was linked to hearing of God’s instructions.

David composed many Psalms, which became a part of the people’s worship to the Lord before they were written down. Though diverse in content, they are unified by their focus. The Psalms bring us in touch with ancient Hebrew life and worship. Although the Psalms do not provide historical outline, they bring flesh and spirit to the skeleton of Israelite history.<sup>4</sup> The tradition of psalmody “had at least three aspects: David’s musical

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<sup>2</sup>Bratcher and Hatton, 139.

<sup>3</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and Barclay Moon Newman, *A Handbook On the Book of Joshua*, UBS Helps for Translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 121.

<sup>4</sup> C Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books*, rev. and expanded. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 124.

abilities, David’s role as founder or organizer of Temple musicology, and David as founder of Hebrew psalmody.”<sup>5</sup>

The reforms of King Josiah began when he read the Book of the Law: “When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes” (2 Chron. 34:18). The king in turn read “all of the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord with... all the people from the least to the greatest” (2 Chron. 34:30). In response, the people entered into a covenant with the Lord. “The assembly heard all the words of the Book of the Covenant. Josiah retraces his steps in order to include the people in the reforming movement.”<sup>6</sup>

Nehemiah recorded a dramatic picture of the oral sharing of Scripture. He wrote, “And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard” (Neh. 8:1-2 ESV). This reading “involved the entire community, including young people and children. The Jews became known as ‘the people of the book.’ The Old Testament emphasizes that God’s Word is to be known and used by all the people, not only the priests and leaders.”<sup>7</sup>

Ezra read the book from early morning until midday “and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law” (Neh. 8:3 ESV) and “the people had been

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<sup>5</sup> Bullock, 114.

<sup>6</sup> John Mark Hicks, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 2001), 518–519.

<sup>7</sup> Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, electronic ed., vol. 10, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 224.

weeping as they listened to the words of the Law” (Neh. 8:9 ESV). This reading was the only scripture the people knew and their response reflects the deep impact it had on them.

There is evidence of a link between the narrative sections of the Bible and the instructional sections. Events recorded in the historical books are seen in the Psalms and the Psalms in turn remind the people of the history from which they were written. Sections of the Book of Isaiah include the historical details surrounding the events of his prophecy and his prophetic messages are fulfilled in the historical records. This inter-connectivity highlights the oral nature of how Scripture has been given from one generation to the next.

#### *A Tradition of the Rabbis*

The entire early history of the Bible was transmitted orally through the generations until Moses recorded the first scripture. Even after that, the priests were the only ones with access to the scrolls containing the Law of Moses and the prophets. The oral tradition of Scripture was practiced up to the time of Jesus and was used by the synagogue as well as the education system at the time of Jesus. Before and after the time of Christ, the “oral law” or Talmud evolved over centuries of scholarly effort by Jewish Rabbi. They meticulously memorized this oral law, which was not written down until years later.<sup>8</sup>

In the synagogues, the Scriptures were read in Hebrew and then translated into Aramaic, for the majority of the people ... could not read nor correctly understand the Hebrew. The reader held the Hebrew scroll but the translator was not allowed to have any written Aramaic notes of any kind. He was required to give an oral paraphrase that correctly expressed the meaning of the text.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Adin Steinsaltz, *The Essential Talmud*, 30th ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, CA: W. Carey Library Publishers, 1981), 63.

The only scripture the people knew was the one they heard on the Sabbath. The Jewish rabbis would teach using parables and Old Testament narratives.

In the synagogue, there were three levels of school that used an oral emphasis to train people. At the first level, the *Mikra*, boys started learning to recite the scriptures in a melodious pattern at age five. An approved teacher, who had memorized the text, taught the children the scriptures line by line until the children could chant the verses by heart with the correct pronunciation. Some schools required the reading of the entire Hebrew Bible before graduating from *Mikra*, while others only required the successful chanting of the Pentateuch.<sup>10</sup>

The second level of school, called the *Mishnah*, was for boys of about ten years of age who had completed the *Mikra*. This was for the study of the oral traditions, the *Halakah*. These were the rules of the Pharisees and rabbis. They indicated what interpretations of the Law were acceptable. These were transmitted orally for 600 years before they were written down.<sup>11</sup>

The third level of school was the cultural equivalent of the Ph.D. It was the study of the *Talmud* or the application of the Law in certain situations. This instruction was completely oral and was transmitted from a rabbi to his disciples. Out of 1000 students who began the *Mikra*, only one would complete the training at the *Talmud* level.<sup>12</sup>

An oral tradition was the norm of the culture. The training that Jesus used did not follow the oral traditions used in the synagogues nor did he model the education used to

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<sup>10</sup> Klem, 64.

<sup>11</sup> Klem, 65.

<sup>12</sup> Klem, 65.

train students in the three levels of the Hebrew education system. Jesus knew the scriptures and was able to recite them. He knew the rules of the Pharisees but he did not teach them. He knew the application of the scriptures but he did not teach the traditions of men. Jesus used the parable as his tool of choice, and it was the parables that made his style unique from the other education models. The people remarked that Jesus “taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (Matt. 7:29). “Another way to express this may be ‘he taught as one who had authority himself to teach the truth.’”<sup>13</sup>

Jesus’ disciples learned the living word of God rather than the rote memorization of commands. They learned the about the whole character of God, which included the holy and the personal, the righteous and the gracious, the wrath and the love. In doing so, Jesus disciples accurately passed on the same teaching. On the day of Pentecost, the people said, “‘we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’”<sup>12</sup> Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’” (Acts 2:11-12). The elders and rulers of the people had the same response when Peter and John spoke to them. “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

### *The Parables of Jesus*

Jesus faced some enormous cultural barriers as he taught radical new concepts. The church was to be built on a living relationship with the Heavenly Father rather than on the religion and ritual that they had learned from the rabbinic tradition. The parable of the prodigal son showed a father who longed for his lost children (Luke 15:11-32). The

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<sup>13</sup> Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 218.



parable of the lost sheep describes a shepherd who would leave the ninety-nine to look for the one that was missing (Matt. 18:12-14). The parable of the wedding banquet described a father who went to extremes so that the wedding celebration was fully attended (Matt. 22:2-14). Each of these would have astonished his listeners and caused them to reconsider their understanding of the Lord.

Along with the new picture of God was a new revelation of how Jesus saw the various levels of society. Instead of viewing some as less important and others as more because of their prominence or position, Jesus used a child as the example for his disciples (Matt. 18:1-5). In another account, Jesus elevated the beggar Lazarus, putting him at Abraham's bosom rather than the rich man (Luke 16:19-31). In still another story, Jesus compared the tax collector to the Pharisee and shocked the people when the former went home forgiven rather than the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14). How could they comprehend this complete reversal of societal norms? The verbal images were the key.

Jesus continued his cultural transformation by describing a new set of priorities, the kingdom of heaven, the example of love, the treatment of enemies, the cost of being a disciple, the strength of small faith, the investment of time and talents, and his own return. He turned everything upside down.

Jesus also needed to empower his disciples to pass on the message that they had received. Jesus needed to equip fisherman, tax collectors and common people with a life-changing message. Instead of the synagogue rulers, the Pharisees, or the Scribes, these common people would be taking on the role of communicating the Word of God. They needed to become like the Good Shepherd looking after his sheep. They were to be entrusted with the talents so they could hear the master say, "Well done, good and

faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matt. 25:21).

Jesus faced challenges in communicating these radical new concepts to the people. The kingdom Jesus needed to reveal to his disciples was profoundly different from anything they had ever conceived of. The task Jesus faced in trying to entrust information to his disciples was far beyond a language or a cultural barrier. The nature of the topic was a matter of eternal consequences.

This point is relevant today as well. "If we, like Jesus, plan on 'speaking the word to them as much as they could understand' (Mark 4:33), then we must know how people are best able to hear our message. ... The stakes are too high for us to misunderstand our audience's capacities and preferences with respect to orality and literacy."<sup>14</sup>

The parables show that Jesus was fully acquainted with human life in its multiple ways and means. He was knowledgeable in farming, sowing seed, detecting weeds, and reaping a harvest. He was at home in the vineyard, knew the times of reaping fruit from vine and fig tree, and was aware of the wages paid for a day's work. Not only was he familiar with the workaday world of the farmer, the fisherman, the builder, and the merchant, but he moved with equal ease among the managers of estates, the ministers of finance at a royal court, the judge in a court of law, the Pharisees, and the tax collectors. He understood Lazarus's poverty, yet he was invited to dine with the rich.<sup>15</sup>

Jesus was able to flow between these various strata of society and relate to each as if there was no social barrier between them. The parables made the connection between them possible because the stories related to people on a personal level.

The ministry of Jesus provides a unique look at the use of an oral training method. He used parables and questions regularly as he trained his disciples and taught the

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<sup>14</sup> Grant Lovejoy, "The Extent of Orality: 2012 Update", *Orality Journal* 1, no. 1 (2012): 16-18.

<sup>15</sup> Kistemaker, 12-13.

crowds. Jesus was able to train disciples from a wide variety of backgrounds, multiple languages, and multiple cultures. Even though the bulk of his ministry was focused in the region of Galilee, scripture records that “the people still came to him from everywhere” (Mark 1:45).

Sometimes Jesus spoke with people one-on-one and at other times he addressed the crowds. Jesus used parables to tell the people about the kingdom of God, to confront them with their sin, to bring them to a personal response and to invite them to follow him. They were the primary tool he used to train his disciples.

According to *The Lutheran Study Bible*, Jesus used fifty different parables.<sup>16</sup> Authors vary in their count and definition of a parable, but the number of parables highlights the fact that Jesus was using the parables intentionally. In Matthew 13, in the middle of a string of ten parables, Matthew records, “All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable” (Matthew 13:34 ESV). A parallel statement is recorded in Mark, “He did not say anything to them without using a parable” (Mark 4:34 ESV). He deliberately used this illustrative teaching tool. It was more than just a way to teach; it was the primary way he chose to communicate God’s Word. Leon Morris says, “Matthew is not saying that Jesus never taught in any other way than by using parables, but he certainly maintains that this was his common practice, and perhaps also that this was the way he taught about the kingdom. The crowds could so easily understand plain teaching on the kingdom in a political sense, but parables made this much more difficult.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *The Lutheran Study Bible* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House), 1609.

<sup>17</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 354.

## **The Power of the Parable**

For the Christian community, the life of Jesus is lifted up as a model to follow for ministry methods. His mandate to make disciples is a pre-eminent theme for missions and his Word is the foundation for everything that is taught. The student who takes time to learn from the life and ministry of Jesus can also learn from the methods he used. Jesus used parables to make disciples, teach the people, bridge cultures, reveal scriptures, and to transform lives. Looking closely at Jesus' approach can validate this method as an essential cross-cultural tool for missions, a powerful technique for biblical students, and a revolutionary method for communicating across language barriers.

### *Mirrors and Windows*

Warren Wiersbe describes the parables as both mirrors and windows: "As mirrors, they help us see ourselves. They reveal our lives as they really are. As windows, they help us see life and God. You may not have an easy time identifying with some truth in Romans 7 or Ephesians 2, but you probably have little difficulty seeing yourself in one of the parables."<sup>18</sup> Wiersbe describes the beauty and the power of the parable. It can be easily understood, easily identified with and yet pointed and revealing.

Martin Scharlemann says, "The words for 'knowing,' 'learning,' and 'inquiring' are all found in combinations with parabola. They indicate the close relationship of the word to God's work by revealing Himself, suggesting that Christ came to be our wisdom."<sup>19</sup> In the parable, the listeners become part of the story. They see themselves as characters in the narrative not only observers of a text. "When we hear a parable, we nod

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<sup>18</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *Meet Yourself in the Parables* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1979), 14.

<sup>19</sup> Martin H. Scharlemann, *Proclaiming the Parables*, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 17.

in agreement because the story is true to life and readily understood. Although the application of the parable may be heard, it is not always grasped. . . . The truth remains hidden until our eyes are opened and we see clearly.”<sup>20</sup>

How could Jesus describe the things of God to people who could only see the things of man? Matthew 13 gives a series of parables, which brought his listeners closer to an understanding of the things of God. These parables were a window to get a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven. The incomparably great value of the kingdom is described as the buried treasure and the precious pearl. The kingdom is described in the parable of the mustard seed that became a tree and the yeast that affected the whole batch of dough.<sup>21</sup> “For the multitude, the parables were indispensable, as affording their only chance of getting a little glimpse into the mysteries of the kingdom.”<sup>22</sup>

Ultimately the purpose of the parable is to teach the people. To do so, it must show them an image of themselves and a vision of what is beyond them. It must engage the listeners, connect them to what they know and unveil the mysteries of what they do not understand. The secret of the parable is that it can lead people to see themselves as well as revealing the kingdom of God.

### *Double-Edged Sword*

In the Book of Hebrews, God’s Word is described as “living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). “The ‘sword’

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<sup>20</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker, *The Parables: Understanding the Stories Jesus Told*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 9.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1971), 45.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce, 45.

penetrates until it dissects the joints and the marrow of the soul and spirit, the hidden depths of our being. . . . The searching power of God’s Word, the depths to which it penetrates, and its judicial scrutiny, form an awful warning.<sup>23</sup>

When Jesus spoke parables he was speaking the Word of God, which cut to the core of people’s hearts. He exposed their motives and he revealed their hidden agendas. “The word ‘parable’ belongs to the language of revelation. Like ‘grace’ and ‘faith’ it belongs to the lexicon of ‘good news’; it is descriptive of God’s activity rather than being either prescriptive or predictive.”<sup>24</sup>

One edge of the sword revealed the kingdom of God. A kingdom beyond what anyone could comprehend was put into words that common people could begin to grasp. He enticed the curious to dig for the treasure and seek for the jewel. He warned his listeners about the coming judgment and encouraged them with the anticipated kingdom. In a few short word pictures, Jesus drew in his listeners and began to illustrate his father’s spiritual realm.

The other edge of the sword exposed the hearts of men. The parable of the sheep and the goats leaves every person asking, “When did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?” Their hearts are immediately exposed when the king responds, “Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me” (Matt. 25:44-45). The parable of the prodigal son reveals the folly of those who secretly want to leave their family and live a decadent life as well as the bitterness in the heart of those who dutifully obey. The parable of the

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<sup>23</sup> Edmund J. Wolf and Edward T. Horn, *Annotations on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and the Hebrews and on Philemon*, ed. Henry Eyster Jacobs, vol. X, The Lutheran Commentary (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1897), 296–297.

<sup>24</sup> Scharlemann, 14.

tenants revealed the hard hearts of the chief priests and the Pharisees. When they heard the parable “they knew he was talking about them” and “they looked for a way to arrest him” (Matt. 21:45-46). These same heart issues are as common today as they were when these parables were told.

The edge of the sword can show the love the Father lavishes on the humble and repentant. In the parable of the prodigal, the actions of the father would have been scandalous to the culture. How could the father take back the son? Why would he wait for one who had shown such disrespect? Who would run to him, clothe him, give him a family ring, and slaughter the fattened calf for such a contemptible person? The father shows a love that was unexpected and undeserved.

The edge of the sword can teach people the theology of God. They illustrate the nature of God and the nature of man. The parables show the character, the power and the wisdom of God alongside the common experiences of human life. The rabbi and the widow, the zealot and the fisherman all hear the same wonders of God.

### *Producing Fruit*

The word picture of the vine and the branches from John 15 is a convincing reminder that the power of the parable is the power of God.

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned (John 15:4-6).

The emphasis in missions is often a focus on what we must do to communicate God’s Word to the world. Here “Jesus stresses the impossibility of producing this fruit apart from him. People are able to produce much without God, including converts, good

deeds and even prophecies, exorcisms and miracles. But the divine life such as we see in Jesus is dependent on God's own character, power and guidance at work in the life of the disciple."<sup>25</sup>

The reminder from this text is that the Lord is the one at work, and he is the one who causes the fruit to grow. Jesus says that he is the vine and his Father is the gardener. The gardener prunes the good branches, and cuts off the dead ones. The vine produces nourishment and life, which causes fruit to grow. Once the fruit grows, the branch can still not take credit, because "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8). The small twisted brown branch attached to the main stem cannot boast of the quantity or quality of its grapes. Neither can well-minded missionaries boast about the size of their ministry, the number of their converts, or the depth of their Bible knowledge.

There was a fruitful response to Peter's message to the multitude on the day of Pentecost. "About three thousand were added to their number that day" (Acts 2:40). The fruit can be seen in the lives of individuals. The Philippian jailer, Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch were all transformed and yet the Pharisees, Sadducees and the expert in the law tried to justify themselves. An oral approach such as Jesus used in the parables will produce fruit because it demands a response. Sometimes that fruit is a changed life, at other times it is a hardened heart. It is a training style deep enough to give the profound truths of God yet simple and accessible enough for anyone who is willing to walk with Jesus through his Word. It will transform the character of the student so when he is fully

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<sup>25</sup> Rodney A. Whitacre, *John*, vol. 4, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 370–377.



trained, he will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40). “Since the disciples are not greater than Jesus, they must therefore train themselves fully in order to be like Jesus.”<sup>26</sup>

### **The Definition of Biblical Education**

Biblical education is more than knowledge about the Bible because the Word of God is more than a textbook. It is more than the memorization of Scripture because God’s Word is “living and active” (Heb. 4:12). It is a process of discipleship rather than just acquiring information. Biblical education must affect the whole person.

There are three aspects of biblical education that need to be defined in this study of the Bible. The aspect of knowledge is first because education and study belong to the realm of gaining knowledge. The reason we know about God is because he has revealed himself and made himself known. Second, biblical education has to do with the character of a person. Jesus said to Simon and Andrew, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). Jesus was transforming the disciples as much as he was teaching them. Third, biblical education has to do with action. It is training that demands a response. An expert in the law asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied with the story of the Good Samaritan and concluded by saying, “Go and do likewise.”

Biblical education must affect the head because the mind contains our knowledge of God. It must affect the heart because the heart holds values. It must affect the hands of ministry because ministry overflows from what is inside. If any one of the three is missing, the education is not complete.

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<sup>26</sup> Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 213.

### *Defining a Disciple*

Jesus' commission to go and make disciples is a familiar scripture and a deeply held value for Christians, but the way it is carried out seems like an ever-present mystery. It is more than leading people to Christ. It is more than going through a Bible study with them. When biblical education is the goal it is important to define and identify a disciple.

The goal of making disciples was central to the work Jesus was doing. It is possible to educate people so they know God's Word, understand doctrine, pass tests, and train others but yet miss the goal of making disciples. Bill Hull, in *The Complete Book of Discipleship* describes discipleship as the relationship with Jesus Christ, which results in taking on his character. "As his disciple, I am learning from him how to live my life in the Kingdom as he would if he were I. The natural outcome is that my behavior is transformed. ... Increasingly, I routinely and easily do the things he said and did."<sup>27</sup> This description includes three important aspects of discipleship that need further detail: learning, character, and how to live life. Perhaps a simpler summary could be used: a disciple is more than one who knows about Jesus, a disciple is one who is becoming like Jesus in his or her head, heart, and hands.

#### **Knowledge**

One aspect of discipleship is education. The knowledge of God must become a part of the person rather than only an intellectual assent. As a disciple grows in the knowledge of God's Word, he or she will grow in their understanding of God. Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus replied, "The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me" (John 14:8-9). The

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<sup>27</sup> Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 16.

words Jesus spoke were living words. They were more than a description about God; they were the intimate knowledge of God in a living form. R. C. H. Lenski says, “Every time Jesus opens his mouth (λαλῶ, ῥήματα) to say something (λέγω), it is the Father who speaks through his mouth. ... This oneness and identity of even the very utterance evidences a oneness of the two persons concerned.”<sup>28</sup>

The knowledge of God is also described throughout the Bible in the narratives with each one revealing further aspects about the kingdom and each one building on a previous one. The narratives give a vivid picture of the character of God as he fulfills his promise to Abram. This narrative covers the books of Genesis through Joshua. For the first time reader, it does not seem possible for the promise of a child or the land to actually be fulfilled; the prospect of a 90-year-old woman having a baby was impossible. It was also incomprehensible for Jacob to be blessed, for Joseph to survive and become a ruler, for the Israelites to be led out of Egypt, for them to cross the Red Sea, for them to survive in the desert for 40 years, or for them to defeat a city by marching around it.

This long narrative reveals multiple attributes of God. Those attributes were captured in the names of God written in this story. He is described as El Shaddai, Lord God Almighty (Gen. 17:1); as El Elyone, the Most High God (Gen. 14:18); as Adonai, Lord Master (Gen. 15:2); as Yahweh, Lord Jehovah (Gen. 2:4); as Jehovah Nissi, the Lord is my Banner (Exod. 17:5); as Jehovah Rapha, the Lord who Heals (Exod. 15:26); and as Jehovah Mekoddishkem, the Lord who makes you holy (Exod. 31:13). God has told us about himself and much of that description comes from the stories of the Bible.

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<sup>28</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 985.

## **Character**

Intimate knowledge about God has the power to change a person's character. What a person knows or understands will affect what he or she values in life. Those values will then affect what he or she believes to be good or true. People's beliefs about what is good or true will affect their views of the world and their understanding of what is right.

Jesus made teaching his disciples about character a priority. Jesus corrected the disciples when they argued about who was going to be first in the kingdom of heaven. He used a child as the example of humility and challenged them to become like children in order to be great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt.18:1-6). Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?" (Matt. 18:21). Jesus gave Peter a simple answer, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Matt. 18:22). Then Jesus gave Peter a word picture to cement the answer into his mind.

The scriptures teach the theme of character development. The Lord used the events of history to mold and shape those who would be called by his name. God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac was Abraham's only son, the child of the promise, the one he had waited so long for. Yet Abram followed the Lord's command in faith. He told his son on the way up the mountain that the Lord would provide the sacrifice and indeed the Lord did provide. Abraham came to know personally that God was "Jehovah Jireh," the Lord who provides.

Jacob, who stole his brother's birthright and blessing, was subjected to his uncle Laban's dishonesty. Jacob worked for Laban twenty years, seven for Leah, seven more for Rachel and six more for the flock. During that time Laban gave Jacob Leah as his

wife before Rachel and changed his wages ten times (Gen. 31:38-41). Jacob's character was being developed under the hand of his uncle Laban.

Joseph's character was also under development. Joseph's perseverance was tested when the slave traders carried him away and when he was put in prison. Potiphar's wife tested Joseph's self-control when she tried to seduce him into sleeping with her. His forgiveness was tested when the brothers came to Egypt for food and they revealed themselves to him.

The Israelites were also under development as the Lord led them in the desert for forty years. They depended on God for manna, water, and quail. They looked to him for healing from the snakes and the defeat of their enemies. The sin of rebellion at Kadesh Barnea was dealt with harshly as were the rebellion of Korah and the sin of Achan. Yet, Caleb and Joshua were honored and allowed to go into the Promised Land.

### **Ministry**

Beyond instruction or refining of character, the Bible teaches about life and ministry. Jesus taught about fair employment, investing talents, priorities, marriage, raising children, paying taxes, being a neighbor, loving enemies, evangelism and many other life issues. Instead of giving them a list of instructions to memorize, Jesus put lasting pictures into their minds. In the parable of the talents, the disciples were confronted with the use of their time, abilities, and resources because there would be an accounting for their actions before God. They could no longer sit and idly watch others take action. Their own actions would be tested and measured on the day when they would meet the one who had given them their gifts (Matt. 25:14-30). Wiersbe says, "We have

been assigned our ministries according to the abilities and gifts God has given us. It is our privilege to serve the Lord and multiply His goods.”<sup>29</sup>

When the character of a person is changed, it will be reflected in his life and ministry. The conversion of Zacchaeus is a dramatic display of the outward response to the inward change. Saul’s transformation to Paul is another example of a life that was dramatically changed. He went from persecuting the church to being an evangelist for the faith. “Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.” (1 Tim. 1:13-14). Paul was zealous. He pursued the Christians in Damascus with the same zeal with which he shared the gospel that put him in chains.

When Paul and his band of ministers crossed over to Macedonia they were flogged and thrown in prison. The next day, the magistrates sent word to the jailer, telling him to release Paul. Only then did Paul identify himself as a Roman citizen who was being punished unjustly. The marks that Paul received in his beating were evidence of the sincerity of his ministry and that his true citizenship was in heaven rather than as a Roman.

After the martyrdom of Stephen, the early church scattered and brought with it the message of Jesus. “They traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch” (Acts 11:19). This expansion of the gospel was geographically extensive but it was also a new expansion of the ministry to the Greeks. The unnamed people from Cyprus and Cyrene took the bold step of crossing these cultural boundaries. The Greeks accepted this new message and displayed “evidence of the grace of God” (Acts 11:23).

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<sup>29</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 92.

Outreach, ministry and concern for unbelievers are evidence of God's movement in the heart of a disciple. Making disciples is about walking through life with people in such a way that they gain the knowledge of God's Word, their character reflects the Lord, and the way they live is patterned after Jesus. Jesus said, "Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40).

### *Disciples Making Disciples*

If the goal of training is for disciples to make disciples, then an oral training model must be given serious consideration. Jesus himself started with twelve, then he sent out seventy-two. After his death there were more than five hundred. After Peter's address at Pentecost, three thousand were added to their number. The oral style of training is not solely responsible for this multiplication, but it is the primary tool Jesus used and it is the way the early disciples passed on the essentials of what Jesus had taught them.

Avery Willis is often considered the father of the modern oral training emphasis. He wrote and spoke often about the value of oral training. In his book *Truth that Sticks*, (coauthored with Mark Snowden), Willis states, "[Jesus'] disciple making was not accidental; it was intentional. . . . Jesus intends for us to make disciples as he did. It was his work, and now it is our work. If we follow his example we will intentionally make disciples as he did."<sup>30</sup>

The Essenes and the Pharisees, although sincere in their desire to teach the law to all men, required people to come to their institutions, learn their special language, and memorize a large amount of material. They required the people to leave their popular

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<sup>30</sup> Avery T. Willis Jr. and Mark Snowden, *Truth That Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 127.

modes of expression and learn new skills.<sup>31</sup> All of these became barriers for people to know God, understand his Word, follow the Lord and tell others about Him. The institutions, languages and excessive requirements made the Word of God inaccessible to the very people who needed it.

One of the significant advantages to the way Jesus taught is that he was meeting the people where they were. He was stepping into their world, using their language, going to them, and illustrating his messages with common every day examples. Christ took upon himself the social identity of the majority. He used their popular system of communication and accepted their level of knowledge as sufficient preparation to produce spiritual maturity.<sup>32</sup> It is an inspirational manner of learning about God.

### **The Transformative Nature of Parables**

The purpose of parables can be seen in the effect they had on people. They were brief stories, sometimes just short object lessons. They were simple and repetitive, easy to remember and easy to recite to others. They were made up of objects, examples and experiences from the crowd's normal daily life. They often contained major and minor points; they frequently connected to the Old Testament and the Kingdom of God. They were engaging for listeners at multiple levels and the people were shocked, surprised, and challenged. They were appealing and relevant.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, CA: W. Carey Library Publishers, 1981), 83.

<sup>32</sup> Klem, 83.

<sup>33</sup> J. O. Terry, *Basic Bible Storying: Preparing and Presenting Bible Stories for Evangelism, Discipleship, Training, and Ministry* (Fort Worth, TX: Church Starting Network, 2009), Inside Front Cover.



*An Amazing Tool*

Jesus was connecting with his hearers. Their response reveals he was capturing their attention, exciting them with the truth and transforming their understanding of God's Word. There are multiple references to people's amazement at Jesus' teaching. Matthew recorded, "The crowds were amazed at his teaching" (Matt. 7:35) and "They were amazed. 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?' they asked" (Matt. 31:54). Luke wrote, "All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips" (Luke 4:22) and "They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority" (Luke 4:32). "They admired not *what* but the way *in which* the Savior spoke, especially when they remembered His humble origin."<sup>34</sup>

It would make sense for them to be amazed at the miracles. We would expect them to be astonished when the blind saw, the lame walked and the dead were raised to life but repeatedly the crowd is amazed at his teaching. Their descriptions include wisdom, gracious words, and authority. They were not just impressed with a polished orator; they could see that what Jesus said was right and good. His words reflected an insightful application, a compelling inviting tone in contrast to that of the Pharisees. Even his parables carried with them transformative authority.

The images, objects and settings from these stories made God's Word come alive. These down-to-earth moral illustrations communicated deep spiritual truths and the people responded. The crowd represented the full range of people: children, widows, farmers, fisherman, soldiers, teachers, rich and poor together. The parables included the

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<sup>34</sup> John Peter Lange and J. J. van Oosterzee, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Luke*, trans. Philip Schaff and Charles C. Starbuck (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 73.

same characters. Jesus spoke to a diverse audience and his parables reflected that diversity, yet all of them were able to understand Him. “It is of fundamental importance to remember that the parables of Jesus were spoken to ordinary folk. They were related to be understood by even the most simple person.”<sup>35</sup>

### *A Revealing Tool*

Jesus gives an interesting response when the disciples came and asked Him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” He answered by quoting Isaiah 6:9-10.

And he said to them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled:

‘You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive.’

For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed,  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Matt. 13:10-15 ESV).

This text of Isaiah 6:9-10 is quoted five times in the New Testament (Matt. 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:39-40; Acts 28:26-27). It was significant enough for all of the gospel writers to include it. Luke recorded it in Acts as well. “This prophecy refers to the spiritual deterioration of the people of Israel. They would hear God’s Word but not understand it and they would see God’s power at work, but not perceive what he

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<sup>35</sup> Scharlemann, 30.

was doing. Their dull hearts would make them spiritually blind and deaf, and the result would be judgment.”<sup>36</sup> It may seem unusual that Jesus would intentionally use parables to talk to the people and yet state that the result would be condemnation, but the effect of the parables was two-fold. For those who were seeking God it caused them to look further and listen more carefully. For those who had not responded in faith, what they heard caused them to become callous. “Israel’s failure to see and to hear is for Matthew an established fact. It is not caused by Jesus’ parables; it is more the case that Jesus speaks in parables in ‘response’ to this lack of understanding.”<sup>37</sup>

By using the parables, Jesus was stirring the interest and curiosity of those whose spiritual senses had grown dull. The Jewish people and specifically the religious leaders had become deadened in their spiritual perceptions.<sup>38</sup> By telling stories with deeper meanings, he was arousing their interest and giving them an opportunity to respond to God’s Word. The parables to the Pharisees were so pointed and clear that even with their hardened senses they understood that Jesus was talking about them. “When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them” (Matt. 21:45-46). “The high priests belonged to the Sadducees. While they were united against Jesus, Matthew here conveys the thought that each group was affected by the parables in its own way. Both groups realized at least that these parables dealt with them.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Wiersbe, 10-11.

<sup>37</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Matthew: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 246.

<sup>38</sup> Wiersbe, 11.

<sup>39</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 845–846.

Jesus made a distinction between the crowd and his disciples. The crowd had heard but had not yet responded to the kingdom. The disciples had shown receptivity to the Kingdom of God and they committed themselves to following him on his terms. In response, Jesus revealed a deeper understanding of the truth to his disciples. They were granted the “knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom” (Matt. 13:11). The parables clarify and expand upon the knowledge they already had. They could understand more because they believed and accepted the message of the kingdom. The crowd on the other hand could not understand more since they did not accept the initial message. In fact, the parables even hid further revelation of the kingdom from them.<sup>40</sup>

The same message that awakens one will harden another. These parables both revealed and concealed. The careless and indifferent, those with no spiritual hunger for truth and salvation, would not understand his teaching. It is not that his Word would harden their hearts so much as their hearts were hardened against his Word.<sup>41</sup>

#### *A Sharp Tool*

When a person is cut with a very sharp knife, the sight of blood will often precede the pain. When King David committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband Uriah killed, the prophet Nathan told David a parable:

There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this

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<sup>40</sup> Knox Chamblin, *Commentary On Matthew, IIM Magazine Online* 1, no. 24 (August 9 to August 15, 1999): 1, accessed November 21, 2013, [http://thirdmill.org/articles/kno\\_chamblin/NT.Chamblin.Matt.13.1-23.html](http://thirdmill.org/articles/kno_chamblin/NT.Chamblin.Matt.13.1-23.html).

<sup>41</sup> Wiersbe, 11.

deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity” (2 Sam. 12:1-6).

David’s response was immediate and he pronounced judgment before he realized the story was about him. “The genius of Nathan’s parable was that it so aptly depicted the baseness of David’s behavior without the latter’s realizing it.”<sup>42</sup> People’s response to parables indicates whether the message penetrated their hearts. That reaction can be seen in the crowds, the disciples, the Pharisees and individuals when they were “cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37).

One response from the crowds was to follow Him. Wherever Jesus went there were crowds. They gathered by the Sea of Galilee, in desolate places, in Jerusalem, and as he walked along the road. Mark records that “Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places” (Mark 1:45). That type of response would seem to indicate they were accepting and excited about Jesus and his message. However, there was another response by the crowds; in John 6, Jesus confronted the crowds that had been following him regarding their true motive. When he told his followers that they would need to eat his body and drink his blood, the people found that to be a hard teaching. John records, “From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him” (John 6:66). Instead of welcoming his message or trying to understand it further, they rejected it.

The disciples responded to the parables by listening carefully and asking for clarification or explanation such as in the parable of the sower, where the disciples wanted to understand the meaning of the seed. Mark says, “When he was alone with his

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<sup>42</sup> James E. Smith, *1 & 2 Samuel*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 2000), 427–428.

own disciples, he explained everything” (Mark 4:34). Their desire for understanding shows the Word was at work inside of them. They wanted and needed to know more; they were unwilling to leave a story until they understood it.

Jesus told parables to individuals such as Simon the Pharisee who invited Jesus to his house for supper. Simon did not provide water to wash Jesus’ feet but a prostitute washed his feet with her tears. Jesus told Simon, “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” (Matt. 7:41-42)? Simon knew the right answer, but couldn’t respond. His lack of love had been exposed.

The Pharisees also were affected by the parables but they had a different response. Matthew records, “Then the disciples came to him and asked, ‘Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?’” (Matt. 5:12)? When Jesus spoke parables to the Pharisees they knew the parables referred to them and repeatedly they plotted to kill Jesus or to trap him in his words. In Matthew 21, Jesus tells the parable about the landowner who rented out his vineyard to his servants but the servants of the vineyard abused and killed the servant messengers and the son. Matthew says, “When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew that he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet” (Matt. 21:45-46).

The parables were sharp, they cut straight to the point, and they revealed the hearts of the listeners. The disciples listened and wanted more, the crowds were amazed but the Pharisees hardened their hearts against Jesus in anger and unbelief. They could

hear but they could not understand their hearts “had grown dull and their ears could barely hear” (Isa. 6:10). The response of the Pharisees confirmed the truth of Isaiah 6:9-10.

Many who followed Jesus were transformed by their encounter with him: Peter, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the woman at the well and the man born blind, for example. The Bible does not directly connect the telling of parables to the changes in their lives but parables are the way he communicated to the people. These five people heard or experienced word pictures and those pictures spoke volumes into their hearts. They encountered Jesus as he illustrated God’s work in their lives.

Peter had worked the entire night before his encounter with Jesus. This rabbi who wanted to sit in his boat to teach the multitude did not initially require a commitment. When Jesus asked Peter to put out the nets again and he reluctantly did so. Perhaps out of respect for this leader or perhaps because the crowd that was watching. Peter’s answer didn’t seem to indicate willingness on his part. The nets went down and were filled with enough fish to fill two boats to the point of sinking. The crowds and the fisherman all saw the great catch of fish, but only Peter responded to this living illustration with deep conviction. It was the first of many stories Jesus would use to change his life.

Nicodemus seemed to have a curiosity about Jesus. He sought out this fellow rabbi to understand who this Jesus was and to further understand the source of his power to perform signs. Jesus gives Nicodemus a short word picture that pierced through his surface question straight to his heart. “No one can see the kingdom of heaven unless he is born again” (John 3:3). “The verb see in this passage has the meaning of ‘to experience’

or ‘to share in,’”<sup>43</sup> The point was not whether Jesus had the ability to perform signs, but rather Nicodemus’ ability to experience or share in the kingdom of heaven. It was not about being “a teacher who has come from God,” it was about being born of God (John 3:2). In one short sentence, Jesus answered Nicodemus’ question, impressed a lasting word picture on his mind, and gave him an invitation to become part of the family of God. Nicodemus tried to grasp the meaning behind the statement, but he had layers of “earthly things” hindering his understanding the “heavenly things.” In the end, Nicodemus displayed his faith in Jesus by speaking for him in his trial and taking part in his burial.

Zacchaeus’ desire to see Jesus was greater than the embarrassment of a grown man climbing up a tree. Jesus only says, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today” (John 19:5). To a chief tax collector, a person who was despised and rejected, this invitation and picture of acceptance was the only thing needed to change his life.

The Samaritan woman was only going to draw water from the well, a simple daily action, led to eternal consequences for her and her whole village. The request for water by a Jewish man to a Samaritan woman in itself broke the cultural boundaries, but it was the picture of the gift of God and the living water that caused her curiosity to rise and the door of her heart to open. In response, she left her water jug and immediately returned to town to tell the others what she had seen and heard. Her action is evidence of a change in her heart. The testimony of those in town who said, “We know that this man really is the Savior of the world” is a display of the further change that took place (John 4:42). “Faith

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<sup>43</sup> Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 78.



based simply on the testimony of another is only secondary. True faith moves to its own experience and confrontation with Jesus.”<sup>44</sup>

The man who was born blind begged daily and heard people refer to him as a sinner because of his blindness. Jesus looks at this same man who others looked down on and declares that he was born so the glory of God might be revealed. Jesus used a strange method to bring about his healing. He spit, made mud, put the mud on the man’s eyes, and then sent this blind man across town to wash in the pool of Siloam. Jesus used this unique method and unusual practice to bring about his ability to see physically, to testify before the Sanhedrin, to gain spiritual sight, and to glorify God with his life.

The parables, analogies and object lessons that Jesus used had dramatic effects on people’s lives. Some rejected the work of God and others were transformed by the power of God. No one could listen and walk away without responding. The effect this oral communication has on people needs to be considered as a valid tool in ministry settings today. The many books and articles written by people who are using oral communication in their work needs to be evaluated. The effect of modern orality indicates similar results compared to biblical times or the ministry of Jesus. It can still be used for the glory of God today.

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<sup>44</sup> Edwin A. Blum, “John,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 288.

### CHAPTER THREE: OVERVIEW OF ORAL TRAINING

Oral training has emerged as a widely used training tool in the mission community. There has been a growing collection of books, journal articles, and literature on oral training. These resources are the foundation from which to understand what defines oral training, where it came from, how it is presently used, its use in leadership development, and the oral history in Africa.

To understand the use of oral training, it is important to look at the history of where it came from and why it grew in popularity. Decentralized education was the initial motivation for new modes of teaching. The early pioneers saw the need to teach people who did not have access to biblical training using the traditional western model. Once the effort to reach the non-traditional student came about, the need of training them in non-traditional means also became apparent. They started by using a written form, which later emerged in the present oral form.

Students learn in many different ways. The method used to train a student needs to match the student's learning style rather than the tradition of a school, experience of a teacher, or the expected results of a system. When new methods of instruction are used, it is important to evaluate the training on several levels. The effectiveness of a specific style of training can be seen when students are able to recall what they have been taught, when they are able to understand the training, when it has impacted their lives, and when the message is able to cross cultural and literacy barriers.

## Oral Training

### *What is Orality?*

All of human history has included oral communication to pass on information. When the topic of oral training is mentioned, it is important to define what is meant. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the International Orality Network published *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*. In the book they describe what they mean by “oral learners”:

We mean those people who learn best and whose lives are most likely to be transformed when instruction comes in oral forms. Many groups transmit their beliefs, heritage, values and other important information by means of stories, proverbs, poetry, chants, music, dances, ceremonies and rites of passage. Cultures which use these forms of communication are sometimes called “oral cultures.”<sup>1</sup>

By this definition, the list of styles or methods of communicating orally is broad, yet there are similarities between them. The book goes on to describe the people who use these forms to teach as “oral communicators” and those who receive information in these forms as “oral learners.”<sup>2</sup> These three terms are often used interchangeably recognizing oral cultures are made up of oral communicators who also learn orally.

Herbert Klem’s book *Oral Communication of the Scripture* is subtitled *Insights from African Oral Art*. Charles Kraft shares the emphasis on oral communication as art in the forward for the book: “In most of the world, people expect more from communicational situations than mere preservation of the past, announcement, or performance. They expect to participate, to interact as people with people. They, therefore, favor communicational vehicles that are lively, flexible, oriented toward the

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<sup>1</sup> *Making Disciples of Oral Learners: To Proclaim His Story Where It Has Not Been Known Before* (Lima, NY: International Orality Network in cooperation with Elim Publishing, 2005), 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 4-5.

present and adaptable to any change in the circumstances.”<sup>3</sup> Kraft is right in pointing out that we have minimalized oral communication as the passing on of information rather than truly reaching into people’s hearts and engaging them.

Klem emphasizes our lack of appreciation for an oral based system.<sup>4</sup> We can become egocentric in how we communicate and how we receive communication. He states that there is an oral art across the continent of Africa, which is vital to the indigenous social structures.<sup>5</sup> The concept of multiple countries, languages and people groups sharing an artistic communication style says there is much to learn regarding oral expression.

### **Narrative**

One common attribute in oral communication is the use of stories. The Bible is full of illustrative stories describing real life successes and struggles. One would expect the hero of a story to be cast in faultless glory. Instead, the Bible includes the human failures of these biblical models as much as their successes. These tarnished narratives point out the inner human nature of all of mankind. These characters are understandable by anyone who hears God’s Word. In fact, the failures cause the greatness of God to shine out even brighter. Success comes when the Lord brings about victory over problems rather than immunity from problems.

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, Calif.: W. Carey Library Publishers, 1981), x.

<sup>4</sup> Klem, xviii.

<sup>5</sup> Klem, xxi.

The proportion of Bible written in narrative form is quantified to be as low as 40 percent and as high as 75 percent, depending on how “narrative” is defined.<sup>6</sup> Regardless of those specific numbers, the Bible had been passed down orally for thousands of years before it was written. After the stories had been recorded, the people still only knew what God’s Word contained when someone read one of the rare copies of the manuscript.

In his book *Telling God’s Stories with Power*, Paul Koehler said, “Knowing about orality and understanding why narrative works will make you more effective in communicating the Gospel among oral people.”<sup>7</sup> Koehler includes numerous stories in his book, which illustrate the title and the effectiveness of narrative.

J. O. Terry is one of the founders of the modern oral movement. He wrote a journal article for *Orality Journal* titled, “The Worldwide Spread of Bible Storying: A Look at Where We’ve Been.” In his article he describes how oral narratives are being used in Southeast Asia, Africa, South Asia, South America, Europe, and East Asia. In one example he states, “The missionaries there explained that the narrative form permitted them to meet the cultural relevance in both form and content and at the same time permitted avoiding a number of theological problems that would have hindered comprehension.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Tom Steffen, “Why Communicate the Gospel through Stories,” in “Unleashing the Gospel through Storytelling,” *Mission Frontiers* 35, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 2013): 7.

<sup>7</sup> Paul F. Koehler, *Telling God’s Stories with Power: Biblical Storytelling in Oral Cultures* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library Publishers, 2010), viii.

<sup>8</sup> J. O. Terry, “The Worldwide Spread of Bible Storying: A Look at Where We’ve Been,” *Orality Journal* 1, no. 1 (2012): 45.

## Multi-sensory

Storytelling is a multi-sensory learning style because the listener not only hears the story but also sees the actions and feels the emotions of the characters. It allows the message to be illustrated, dramatized and put to music. Tom Steffen states in a journal article, “Effective communication touches not only the mind, but also reaches the seat of emotions – the heart. Unlike principles, precepts and propositions, stories take us on an open-ended journey that touches the whole person. Stories have a way tapping those feelings that we habitually anesthetize.”<sup>9</sup>

Avery Willis says, “God made us to feel experience strong emotions. These can become powerful learning agents.”<sup>10</sup> He goes on to say it is possible to engage emotions as part of the learning process and it is possible to integrate the emotional factor into the story.<sup>11</sup> The disciples were filled with fear when they were out on the lake in the storm (Luke 8:24). The lame man was jumping and leaping and praising God after Peter and John offered him the healing found in Christ (Acts 3:8). Mary, Martha and Jesus were all filled with sorrow at the death of Lazarus (John 11:19, 35).

The easiest way to help listeners become part of the story and to experience what the characters were feeling is to have them act it out. The drama does not need to be complicated. Simple actions can cause the story to be seen and sensed. They can touch the listener’s emotions. A blind man sitting on the roadside begging, a woman with hunched back or the proud and arrogant Pharisees can be illustrated with just simple body

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<sup>9</sup> Steffen, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Avery T. Willis and Mark Snowden, *Truth That Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 92.

<sup>11</sup> Willis and Snowden, 92.

language. The acting process makes the character seem real. It can evoke hidden emotion and it can cement the memory of the story into their minds.<sup>12</sup>

Traditional western teaching methods involve a lecture containing good and helpful information for students to learn. The use of drama or illustrations eliciting feelings would come across as inappropriate. Fortunately, many are realizing that to communicate to the present generation, which has grown up with simultaneous stimuli, multiple styles need to be used to communicate the gospel.

### **Interactive**

Another aspect of this method is its interactive style involving all of the people gathered, instead of a single person instructing the many. People will remember what they are engaged in and their participation is a part of ownership of the story.

Participating in the story process can take many forms. In a western setting, the involvement would include discussing the story together with a leader directing the discussion. Another culture might include acting out the story and another may include responsive song or dance.

When Jesus was using the parables, he would often ask questions to teach the very thing he was trying to illustrate. Jesus told the story of the prodigal son to an expert in the law who was trying to test Jesus. The hero of that story is a Samaritan, but the Jews hated them. At the end of the story Jesus tested the expert in the law, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The man would not even respond by saying the word “Samaritan” instead he said, “The one

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<sup>12</sup> Willis and Snowden, 92-94.

who had mercy on him” (Luke 10:36-37). Jesus forced his unwilling participant to interact with the story rather than to be a critical observer.

Avery Willis recounts a time when he was in an Anglican church in southern Sudan that had been a part of an oral class on the Bible. Every Friday night a huge crowd of people would gather at the market to hear the new stories the students had put to song. The students would sing the songs and the people would dance in a circle as they sang. After the singing, the students would tell the stories that explained the songs. One student said when he returned to his village the people kept him up until three in the morning listening to the stories.<sup>13</sup>

### **Application**

Application is often the missing ingredient in discipleship. People may understand the Bible, see themselves in the stories, feel the emotion conveyed, share the stories with others, and yet miss the critical step of living out what they have learned. Application flows naturally out of the oral training because the stories are real life people with real life difficulties. Stories help people put themselves into situations and consider how they would respond if it were them. The stories give people an idea of new and better ways to deal with situations. God’s Word acts like a mirror to show people how to evaluate their own lives. It is also a window to help people see God.

*The Disciple Making Movement* started by City Team uses an oral style of instruction in its discipleship process. They have seen over 100,000 Muslims from northern and Western Africa come to faith in Jesus through their oral training. Their students just respond to three questions: What does this scripture say in your own words?

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<sup>13</sup> Willis and Snowden, 96-97.



What can we learn about God and man? What will you do to live out what you have just understood?<sup>14</sup>

The last question emphasizes application. When an answer is given in front of the other members of the group, there is automatic accountability. The accountability can be both direct and indirect when the training is interactive. When people respond in a group setting, the whole group is aware of what they have said. The group can directly hold them accountable for what they have said or they can act as passive observers of the persons actions compared to their words.

In traditional classroom training, the emphasis is on one person passing on information; the leader does not know what the students have heard or what they have understood. It is more difficult to know what students intend to do with the training they have received and even more to hold them accountable for it.

Paul Koehler tells a story about a young boy from India who was learning stories from his father. One day, Sadhu was beaten up at school. When the principal found out she wanted to punish the children who had hurt him. Sadhu said he did not want to hurt them because he had learned the story of the two men who had debts and how the master had forgiven the one who had such a large debt. Sadhu impressed the principle at his school so much that she had him stand in front of the whole class and teach the stories he had learned from his father to the rest of the class.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Jim Lilly, interviewed by author, Plymouth, MN, February 12, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Koehler, 94-95.

*A Model for Missions*

Grant Lovejoy, a longtime advocate for oral training, says, “Entire mission strategies have been built on the conviction that oral communicators should be strongly encouraged to learn to read. ... This happened despite the fact that the early Church grew up, in fact thrived, in an environment dominated by orality.”<sup>16</sup> This idea stands in sharp contrast to the model that Jesus gave.

Modern mission strategies need to consider the use of oral training styles as a bridge from one culture to the next. In the past ten years there has been a resurgence of oral training in the mission communities. Many organizations have moved from a purely written curriculum to an oral form of training that is more familiar to the indigenous people. This allows the ministries the ability to communicate quickly without the long translation process.

Jesus used the parables to describe God, restructure the view of society, teach new concepts, and empower the disciples. Jesus was able to use the parables in a variety of settings with ease. It fit into topics about the second coming, family life, religious philosophy, and the business world. J. O. Terry points out the flexibility or versatility of oral instruction is key for missions. He points out that it is being used with all levels of reading competency: the inner city immigrant, the deaf, children’s groups, divorce recovery groups, and coffee houses. The history of storytelling in other cultures makes it a natural choice as a missions or ministry method.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Lovejoy, 13.

<sup>17</sup> Terry, 12.

In 2001, fifteen mission organizations came together for an orality consultation. The Oral Bible Network was formed out of that event with sponsor groups including Campus Crusade, Wycliffe, Scripture in Use and the International Mission Board. The mission was to “effectively serve oral preferred communicators in the context of who they were.” That initial partnership became the International Orality Network (ION) in 2005. Since then, the number of mission organizations associated with ION has grown to include 17 sponsoring organizations and over 400 organizations that have attended their annual conference.<sup>18</sup>

In 2005, ION and the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) jointly published the book *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*. The network started to broaden by seeing global initiatives start in India (2006) and in cooperation with Movement of African National Initiatives in Africa (2008), as well as starting to network and serve through Ethne to Ethne (2006), Finishing the Task (2006), Transform World (2006), Impact Indonesia (2008), and Call2All (2008).<sup>19</sup>

The mission community has taken oral communication to the world because it is a powerful tool to bridge cultures.

### *A Cultural Bridge*

Culture is what gives us identity and makes us unique, but culture also separates us from one another. “Culture is what defines our group of people that have similar education levels, beliefs, customs, language and communication methods. Culture

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<sup>18</sup> “How We Began,” International Orality Network, October 29, 2013, accessed October 29, 2013, [http://www.oralty.net/how\\_we\\_began](http://www.oralty.net/how_we_began).

<sup>19</sup> “How We Began”.

connects us, gives us a sense of belonging, familiarity and peace.”<sup>20</sup> Yet culture makes it difficult for one people to understand another. Finding a bridge to communicate across these barriers is the goal and the challenge of missions. “Culture becomes the key to unlocking the hearts of people all over the world. Studying it illuminates strategies ordained by God to reach people in their own setting.”<sup>21</sup> The power of the parable and oral communication can be the key to unlock the hearts of people around the world.

“God has created each culture in a unique way and we must study it to make the gospel as relevant to that culture as we can. We should address issues important to them, do so in familiar ways, and use every contextual example we can find to make the truth of the kingdom vital and real.”<sup>22</sup> At the same time, there are human experiences that transcend culture. There are experiences like birth, death, joy and pain, which are common to all people. The parables can be the linking tool that connects people’s experiences. When words fail or translation is difficult, common experiences can act as the bridge.

That is what Jesus did: he bridged the culture gap from God to man. He was himself a cultural bridge, but he also used the parables as another bridge. Jesus described the kingdom of God with common every day terms. He created a picture of God that man could grasp. He presented spiritual ideas in such a way that it would be sought after like a precious jewel.

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<sup>20</sup> Durwood Snead, “Culture”, *Orality Journal* 2, no. 2 (2013): 42-43.

<sup>21</sup> Snead, 43.

<sup>22</sup> Snead, 45.

*The Living Message*

A young boy was marveling at a butterfly he saw floating in the air, going from flower to flower. It moved effortlessly and had a captivating beauty. The brilliant colors of the wings were stunning; the fluid motion of its flight was magnificent. He longed to keep it and show it to his friends, so he caught it and took it apart. He took off the wings and put them in one pile, the legs in another pile, the antenna and the body in another pile so he could show his friends. In doing so, he killed the butterfly.

That story illustrates what we can do to the living, breathing narratives of the Bible. We dissect them into several parts in order to show our friends. Western sermon structure often includes a title, three points, sub points and a concluding application, but the living Word is killed. The encounter with the story and all of its emotion, awe, and wonder is dissected. The anticipation of the wedding, the buried treasure, the friend knocking in the middle of the night, and the man half dead on the side of the road are all important to the living word. The father waiting, longing, for his prodigal son is the picture of a man with an empty heart and then overflowing with emotion. Hearing of the tenants who killed the landowner's son raises fury in the heart of the listener. A parable communicates more than just information; it is an experience with God.

Jesus left lasting memories in the minds of the disciples. The ministry that has multiplied throughout the world is evidence of its effectiveness. Scholars have studied the parables of Jesus and come to various conclusions regarding how they should be understood and interpreted, but the beauty of the parable is its inherent life apart from dissection, categorization, or systemization. It is important to consider a detailed analysis

of these teachings but it is also important to step back and look at the parables, simple as they are.

Simon Kistemaker simply describes how Jesus used parables: “Jesus drew verbal pictures of the world around him by telling parables. By teaching in parables he depicted what was happening in real life.”<sup>23</sup> Real life is where we meet God, where we depend on him, and where we get a glimpse into his kingdom. Martin Scharlemann says, “The parables describe the kingdom of God in action. They do not deal with abstract truths. They are descriptive, telling us of something that happens when God is busy reestablishing Himself as King among and over men.”<sup>24</sup>

### *The Dynamic Meaning*

Gilles Gravelle published an article in *Orality Journal* and pulled information from studies on how the brain understands meaning. In it, he highlights the fact that the process of communicating is more than deciphering a group of symbols into words; it is more than transferring those words into sounds that make up a language. Communication happens when meaning gets transferred from one person to another. Gravelle’s study addresses where meaning resides and how is it communicated.

Studies using MRI imaging suggest that meaning is made in our minds through simulation. ... Simulation involves seeing. Our visual system sees non-present things in the ‘mind’s eye’ in the same way it sees present things in the world. So this means that thinking is performing. When you are seeing it in the mind’s eye, you are performing it in your mind, too. When you hear language about things, like the action of running, you use the same brain pathways to visualize it as if you were actually doing it. It’s not just vague perception. You construct very

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<sup>23</sup> Kistemaker, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Scharlemann, 13.

detailed meaning. You hear a sound in your mind. You see an action happening. You imagine a result.<sup>25</sup>

In a parable or an oral story, meaning is transferred from the one sharing to the one receiving through the actions that the receiver pictures. Instead of deciphering and processing information, the mind can recreate the meaning because it can simulate the information the person sharing is conveying. “If we use our brain systems for perception and action to understand, then the processes of meaning are dynamic and constructive. It’s not about activating the right symbol; it’s about dynamically constructing the right experience.”<sup>26</sup> The mental visualization is the meaning. Both oral processors and print media processors mentally simulate the things they hear or read, according to Benjamin Bergen.<sup>27</sup>

Gravelle summarizes these thoughts with this application, “Oral processing of a text ... could greatly aid in producing similar experiences in the mind of the receiving language speakers so that what they simulate matches, more or less, what is simulated in the mind of the source language oral or written text.”<sup>28</sup>

This means Jesus’ use of parables had a benefit beyond the goal of relating to people or sharing stories that would be easy to remember. It means the parables gave the people the chance to experience the events Jesus was telling them. The people were able to hear the information, but they were also able to enter into the story, to see the events

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<sup>25</sup> Gilles Gravelle, “More Than Words: Linguistics, Language and Meaning”, *Orality Journal* 2, no. 2 (2013): 49-50.

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin K. Bergen, *Louder Than Words: The New Science of How the Mind Makes Meaning*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2012), 16.

<sup>27</sup> Gravelle, 52.

<sup>28</sup> Gravelle, 52.

unfold, to feel the emotion and respond as the people in the parable would respond. Oral processing is an active dynamic process.

The relevance of using orality goes beyond the use of the parables. The Bible contains more narrative literature than any other literary type; over 40 percent of the Old Testament is narrative.<sup>29</sup> That means the parable model of instruction was not a new idea when Jesus began his ministry. The whole narrative content of the Bible highlights the value of the story. It reaches people other methods of communication cannot.

### *The Oral Learners*

In addition to the topic of how people understand meaning, people's ability to receive information lies on a spectrum between written sources versus oral sources. "What sets orality apart is reliance on spoken language. To the extent that people rely on spoken communication instead of written communication, they are characterized by 'orality'."<sup>30</sup> People are sometimes described as literate and illiterate. These terms do not fully describe people's ability to learn from written text because within the literate population are many who prefer to learn orally. They may be capable readers but reading is not how their minds process information or they may be able to read but not be able to repeat what they had just read.

Grant Lovejoy uses the terms "primary orality" and "secondary orality" to distinguish between people with access to written communication and those without. "Primary orality exists in communities that have no written language and little or no acquaintance with reading and writing. Secondary orality depends on electronic media

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<sup>29</sup> Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stewart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 78.

<sup>30</sup> Lovejoy, 12.



and the literate people who operate it.”<sup>31</sup> The world where there is no written language or there is no acquaintance with reading and writing continues to get smaller as travel, computers, and schools have become the norm even in remote places. However, the population that falls under the secondary orality category is growing. The number of people that receive the bulk of their information from written sources is on the decline and the various forms of digital media continue to increase.

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) measures people’s ability to read on four levels: proficient, intermediate, basic and below basic. NAAL surveys done in 1992 and 2003 reveal that only 13 percent of those surveyed were proficient at reading, which means that 87 percent read with some difficulty. They also revealed that 14 percent of those surveyed were below the basic level of literacy.<sup>32</sup> This means, even in the United States, there is a great need to address oral learners. The understanding of secondary orality can help define the way in which people receive information.

The audience for oral communication is beyond the illiterate. Parables and oral communications can bridge gaps written communication cannot. J. O. Terry describes that oral interaction is literally for all people:

It must not be assumed that the Bible Storying is only for non-literates and other oral learners. Stories speak to every level of literacy, education and sophistication. The desire is not to deny anyone an opportunity to know Jesus because of his/her lack of literacy, their oral learning preferences, lack of Scripture in their spoken language or simply a lack of understanding that God’s Word is relevant whatever their spiritual disposition.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Lovejoy, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Kutner, M., Greenberg, E., Jin, Y., Boyle, B., Hsu, Y., and Dunleavy, E. (2007). *Literacy in Everyday Life: Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NCES 2007-480)*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 12.

<sup>33</sup> Terry, ix.

Parables are living breathing stories of God's action in people's lives. They are a bridge to communicate meaning and they communicate to all of the various levels of society including those that require or prefer oral communication.

### **Oral History**

Oral training in the mission community has led many organizations to use an oral training model in the development of their leaders. To understand this style of education, it is important to understand some of the history and experience that led large numbers of ministries to leave traditional educational approaches in exchange for the current efforts done through an oral means.

#### *The Precursor*

A brief history of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) reveals the desire of the founders to bring culturally relevant education to people who needed theological training outside of a traditional classroom setting. "The founders of TEE set out on a new and revolutionary course. They were dealing in innovative ways with the problems of leadership training."<sup>34</sup>

### **Parallel Ideals**

There are many parallels between modern oral training and its predecessor Theological Education by Extension. The goal of both has been culturally relevant instruction in the Word of God outside of the traditional classroom setting. Both of these methods emphasize small study groups that allow the students to learn from one another and the use of a teacher who can lead the group into a deeper understanding of the word

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<sup>34</sup> Stewart Snook, *Developing Leaders through Theological Education by Extension: Case Studies from Africa*, A BGC Monograph (Wheaton, IL: Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College, 1992), 7.

of God. TEE was in many ways the stepping-stone for educators to better understand how to bring culturally relevant training to nationals in new ways.

Ross Kinsler and James Emery were both involved in the development of TEE. They describe the root motivation behind this training in their book *Opting for Change*: “The inspiration and the challenge to change have come from the those who had previously been excluded from formal patterns of theological education and thus have been excluded from formally recognized ministry.”<sup>35</sup> Kinsler and Emery emphasize that TEE is a ministry by the people; which means overcoming previous limitations imposed by academic, professional, class, or cultural boundaries. It is a mission by the people; which means the ministry as a whole is contextualized and engaging God’s people in their theological vocation. It is also a theology by the people in regard to its worldview, how the Bible is communicated and how the church works.<sup>36</sup>

Oral instruction at its core is flexible. It can meet the people where they are at and reach into difficult places. Oral teaching is conveying the stories of God’s Word, dialoguing about them and leaving the results to God. It is organic and formed by the people. The stories can go where the printed Bible sometimes cannot go. They can cross borders, enter jail cells, even go into the heart of Muslim, Hindu, animist or socialist homes. They can penetrate the heart of the one listening and change that person’s life for eternity.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> F Ross Kinsler and James H. Emery, *Opting for Change: A Handbook On Evaluation and Planning for Theological Education by Extension* (Pasadena, CA.: W. Carey Library, 1991), 3.

<sup>36</sup> Kinsler and Emery, 3-4.

<sup>37</sup> *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 16.

The TEE program has been compared to railroad tracks where the two rails are the self-study and the field experience. These two rails are held together by regular meeting times.

A praxis-oriented program is one in which the interaction of the three essential component parts function in a reflection-action-reflection pattern. The first component part (self-study material) involves reflection. Students reflect cognitively on a biblical lesson. The second component part (service to God) involves action – the participant’s act in response to their previous reflection. In the third component part (group discussion), they bring the results of their service to the discussion seminar and reflect on the consequences of action to refine and better their ministry.<sup>38</sup>

Those who are using oral strategies of education use a similar strategy of meeting weekly for instruction and then are given the stories they are to share with others throughout the week. Oral training has emphasized culturally appropriate strategies and relationships. The International Orality Network and the Lausanne Conference listed five principles in *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*:

The word of God is more effectively communicated through appropriate cultural relationships. The word of God will be best heard and understood when we use appropriate oral strategies. The word of God is most effectively proclaimed when worldview issues of the unreached are addressed; stories and other cultural forms do this more effectively by inviting listeners to identify with the message. The word of God changes individuals, cultures and worldviews. The word of God can be passed along by ordinary Christians if they receive it in appropriate oral forms.<sup>39</sup>

### **Similar Curriculum Goals**

It is helpful to look at the content of the Theological Education by Extension material and consider the lessons that can be learned from it as oral training is developed. In the TEE program, there was an emphasis on intentional training that should be

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<sup>38</sup> Snook, 7-8.

<sup>39</sup> *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 15-16.

included in the development of any curriculum. Specifically, TEE emphasized “programmed instruction,” which Sam Burton describes as “a progressive method to furnish the cognitive input.”<sup>40</sup> “The texts are autodidactic, self-teaching. The text is the teacher and all the necessary information is within the text. The texts used are divided into three parts: information repeated several times (usually given as a frame), the answer given by the student to the information given, and a reward or approval of a correct answer.”<sup>41</sup>

Burton describes the seven characteristics of programmed instruction used in TEE. He notes that it is instructional material, it has specific objectives, it is structured and developed empirically, it is self-instructional, it is self-pacing, it requires problem solving, and it increases in complexity as the lesson progresses.<sup>42</sup>

There are similarities between developing programmed instruction and developing a lesson plan for traditional classroom instruction. The above list could also be used to develop curriculum for teaching in an oral setting. If the previous seven were adjusted for a biblical oral curriculum it might look like this:

1. The biblical story is the instructional material
2. The story has a purpose
3. The method of sharing the story and the questions asked are structured
4. The story is self-instructional
5. Memorizing the text and sharing it is self-paced
6. It requires an analysis of the narrative
7. The more a person comprehends, the deeper he or she can go.

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<sup>40</sup> Sam Westman Burton, *Disciple Mentoring: Theological Education by Extension* (Pasadena, CA: W. Carey Library, 2000), 43.

<sup>41</sup> Burton, 43.

<sup>42</sup> Burton, 43-44.

There is a need for educational standards regarding any instructional curriculum whether it is a traditional classroom, a Theological Education by Extension course or an oral training curriculum. When the foundational goals are clear, then the instruction will be clear. The reason for choosing a traditional classroom, TEE or an oral method of instruction has to do with the students learning style. The uniqueness of these different styles is in the methodology rather than the educational goals.

### **Comparing Expectations and Assumptions**

In traditional classroom settings, the emphasis is placed on the teacher's knowledge. The assumption is that if a teacher is knowledgeable about a topic and can clearly communicate that topic, the students will learn and will be able to apply that knowledge in their lives. A student's success is based on the work he or she put into remembering what was given to them and the teacher's ability to teach the information required for the course content. Criticisms include: questions about student comprehension, the lack of field experience, and the separation of students from their home community.

Pastor Dick Gunderson was a TEE educator in the early years of the work in Bolivia. He had a positive experience training pastors and leaders but he also saw the real challenges that went along with the training as well. In TEE programmed instruction, the emphasis is placed on the self-teaching curriculum, the field experience, and the small group discussion. The expectation is that these three will give a student well-balanced ministry training. The assumption is that the student is able to read and understand the self-study programmed instruction and he or she must apply the instruction to their ministry experiences. Criticisms include: the training requires a great deal of self-

initiative, programmed instructions require a large amount of time to develop, the curriculum requires the student to be literate, and it can be difficult to make the lessons culturally appropriate or easily translated.<sup>43</sup>

In oral training the emphasis is on the content of the story and the group interaction learning from the story. Jumping the language barrier or cultural boundaries is much easier with an oral style of training than with a written text. It is assumed that the student is gaining all of the knowledge he or she needs for each topic and that the story relates to their cultural setting. Similar criticisms could be made toward oral training. It has a lack of depth because an educated teacher is not directly instructing the students. There is a lack of structure because the discussion is led through questions, and it is difficult to teach the non-narrative sections of the Bible.

### **Transferable Concepts**

The structured development of TEE lessons ensures that the training is well thought out with clear objectives and direction. This same structured thought needs to be given to students of the oral training so the criticisms leveled against it can be addressed. Sam Burton lays out a clear step by step process of creating TEE lessons. Burton gives several guidelines regarding the goal or objective for the lesson. He says to set out general objectives that are related to the subject matter, important to the student, job-related and performance-based. Burton adds that it is important to identify specific behaviors by asking and answering what is to be done under what conditions with what level of proficiency.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Dick Gunderson, interviewed by author, Plymouth, MN, November 20, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Burton, 46.

Burton encourages “precise objectives” such as to “write, recite, identify, solve and construct” as opposed to “fuzzy objectives” such as to “know, understand, appreciate, believe or enjoy.”<sup>45</sup> These principles for developing clear objectives are important for any instruction regardless of the style. An oral curriculum needs objectives for each lesson. Clear objectives may be even more important with an oral curriculum because the training comes from a narrative source. Exegesis or the study of a scripture is the process of understanding the main point or meaning of the text. An exegetical study is important when preaching or teaching and it follows through to the application of developing an oral lesson as well.

The expectations for the behavior of the student also need to be defined so that his or her progress, comprehension, and skills can be verified. If these expectations are not set, the quality of the education will be in question and the criticism against an oral education could be justified.

Training content differs slightly between an oral training and the programmed instruction used in TEE. Programmed instruction is based on a series of sentences that lead a student toward understanding a topic based solely on the written information in a given frame. Each frame contains information, a requested response and confirmation of the student’s response.<sup>46</sup> Oral training is based on questions posed by the leader and the discussion that centers on understanding the biblical text. In some ways the same process is at work. The story contains the information that is given. The leader asks questions that help the student find the treasures of information in the story. When students answer

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<sup>45</sup> Burton, 46-47.

<sup>46</sup> Burton, 52.



questions, the leader has the opportunity to confirm the student or encourage them in their new discovery.

Burton includes five principles for programmed learning which are transferable to oral instruction: small steps, active response, immediate confirmation, self-pacing and program testing.”<sup>47</sup> In oral training, the small steps are a series of questions that lead a person to discover the treasures in God’s Word. A well-prepared teacher will know the main points that need to be brought out of the story and how to lead the students to those truths. However, it is easy to ask questions that lead the whole class down unexpected trails rather than sticking to the point at hand. Active response is a good description of the interaction that is built into oral training. It is active in the presentation of the drama, it is active in the discussion around the text and it is active when the student returns to home and tells another person the story learned. Immediate confirmation is a part of the story-telling process as well. There is confirmation when someone learns the story correctly. There is confirmation by the teacher when an answer or insight is given, and there is confirmation when the story is shared outside of class. The self-pacing principle is part of the memorization process. One person can learn a story immediately while another one may take extra time to recall the same story.

Programmed testing in the TEE curriculum includes a self-test that confirms or verifies whether the person understood the material. That is a self-directed test and is not measured in terms of comparison to others. In the oral training, every story is a program test in this same manner. They either know the story or they don’t and they can review it in their mind until they feel confident. The graded tests in the Ambassador Institute

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<sup>47</sup> Burton, 52-57.

training is done at the end of every quarter. The student is given a chance to choose two numbers out of a hat and they must recite one of the two. The Ambassador Institute also includes a written test that asks questions regarding comprehension, application and synthesis.

Theological Education by Extension (TEE) was a necessary first step toward the training of people outside of the structured classroom setting. The process of developing a means to reach the majority of church leaders in Guatemala began in 1958. James Emery, Ralph Winter, Jose Carrera, and Charles Ainley began developing the TEE program. In 1962, the training expanded to include 200 students. Ross Kinsler joined them in 1964. The missionaries focused on the need for regional centers for students to attend. They began developing self-instructional study materials. Students would come to the regional centers each week to study together and they would be sent home to study on their own.<sup>48</sup> In 1966, TEE was limited to one seminary in Guatemala. Eight years later, in 1974, there were 16,475 students in 182 institutions in 57 countries.<sup>49</sup>

The need for training pastors and leaders outside of the traditional classroom was obvious in mission communities around the world. Finally, TEE, offered a method with which to reach people where they were at instead of trying to fit them into traditional training models. The success was in the fact that national leaders were being trained. It was reaching them in their sub-cultures, allowing them to remain with their families, take care of their farms and continue in their jobs. The challenge was that this training depended on adults with high levels of literacy. This was a large step toward a culturally

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<sup>48</sup> Sam Westman Burton, *Disciple Mentoring: Theological Education by Extension* (Pasadena, CA: W. Carey Library, 2000), 14-16.

<sup>49</sup> Burton, 18.

sensitive form of training, but providing programmed instruction books for all students as well as translating the material into all of the languages for the countries that were beginning to use TEE was another hurdle mission agencies needed to face.

### *The Early Beginnings*

#### **Herb Klem – A Man Before His Time**

It is interesting to look back on history and recognize that some people have caught on to ideas or concepts before society is ready for it. Herbert Klem was a man before his time. Klem was a pioneer with his book *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art*. In it he presents a convincing case for teaching and learning scripture through oral means. He provides a new and effective outreach strategy for people from oral cultures. In 1981, Klem wrote from his experience of working in West African societies regarding the need to use training that crosses the language and the cultural boundaries. He states that the previous missionary emphasis on literacy and western schooling was founded on the assumptions that the African culture was inadequate for expressing Christian truth and the most valuable information Christians should know was learned from books.<sup>50</sup>

Klem did a study with the Yoruba people of Nigeria in which the Book of Hebrews was to be memorized as much as possible. Four study groups were formed, all with the same goal but each with different methods for accomplishing that goal. The first group was taught in a traditional method using a teacher and written copies of the text. The students were given copies of the text to read and memorize between classes. The

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<sup>50</sup> Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, CA: W. Carey Library Publishers, 1981), 33.

second group was taught with a teacher and a cassette tape player with an audio recording of the text from Hebrews. The students were given tape players to listen to between classes. The third group had a teacher, a written text and a cassette recording of the text sung by a choir. The students were encouraged to listen to the music and follow along with their written texts. The fourth group had a teacher and a cassette with the musical version of the Hebrews text, but no written copies.<sup>51</sup>

The results of the findings showed that the first group of students without an oral means of hearing the text did the poorest in their memorization. In the second and fourth groups which did not have any written text, the unschooled students did slightly better than those who were stronger in reading. All three groups that used an audio player scored significantly higher than the group that only had the written copy of the text from Hebrews.<sup>52</sup>

Klem argues that making literacy the primary means to learn the Bible or to learn theology creates a separate class of people who are elite and disconnected from the masses of people without access to the same opportunities. It creates a communication barrier within the culture and between people who speak the same language. It creates a church that is not indigenous and a false perception that they are becoming self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting.<sup>53</sup> At the time of Klem's writing, mission agencies were heavily invested in using literate means to communicate, to teach and to establish the church in foreign lands. His message was not well received at that time.

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<sup>51</sup> Klem, *Oral Communication of Scripture*, 171.

<sup>52</sup> Klem, 174-175.

<sup>53</sup> Klem, 179-180.

Now, with the wave of acceptance in missions for orality, his findings have been a reference point emphasizing the need of oral communication.

It seems fitting that Herbert Klem's book would be published by the William Carey Library, since Ralph Winter, one of the founders of Theological Education by Extension, was also the founder of the William Carey Library. Winter was a maverick when it came to new thoughts and ideas regarding missions. His life efforts continue to have an impact on the mission world through the U.S. Center for Missions, Perspective classes, and William Carey International University, to name a few. Winter's work did not flow directly into the movement toward oral teaching but his work has indirectly affected everything toward that end.

### **New Tribes Mission – Ee-Taow**

Mark Zook was another unlikely candidate for leading the way into the oral efforts used in missions. Rejected by one mission organization because they were too old, Zook and his wife Gloria applied with New Tribes Missions and were sent to Papua New Guinea in 1983. After learning the language and the culture of the Mouk people, Mark began Bible translation, Bible teaching and church planting.<sup>54</sup> Mark developed a set of stories with pictures that began with Genesis and carried through to the life of Jesus. The movie *Ee-Taow* documents the presentation of biblical stories Mark shared with the Mouk people. Released in 1989, it shows the intense emotions people felt as they watched and heard the stories throughout the Bible. The video captures the drama of the crucifixion of Jesus and displays the moments when the people started to understand Jesus as their sin bearer, their sacrificial lamb. It is a vivid portrayal of a whole tribe

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<sup>54</sup> "Mark Zook," ZoomInfo, last modified August 20, 2008, accessed May 5, 2014, <http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Mark-Zook/384739569>.

understanding who Jesus is and putting their trust in him individually and as one group simultaneously.<sup>55</sup>

*Ee-Taow* makes a strong case for oral storytelling communicating across cultures and languages. It shows how the oral narratives can cut straight to people's hearts; they can correct bad traditions and change people from the inside out.

The follow-up video titled *Ee-Taow, the Next Chapter* continues where the first video left off and shows how Mouk people started to share the biblical stories with other tribes around them. It shows that the oral method of sharing stories can also be effectively passed on to others so the training can be multiplied. When the Mouk people told people from another village the same stories they had been told, that next village also responded with a community celebration. The whole community joined together as they rejoiced in their corporate trust in Jesus.<sup>56</sup>

### *The Developmental Years*

#### **Southwestern Seminary in Sudan**

In July 2000, the Baptist Mission of Southern Sudan began teaching students at the Kulu Evangelist Training Centre using an oral form of education. They began with 23 students and used an approach that modeled the Chronological Bible Storying method. The teachers included International Mission Board missionary John Witte, Kenyan pastor Tom Ogalo, Southwestern seminary professor Grant Lovejoy, and recent Ph.D. graduate Tom Reed. Witte and Lovejoy left after a week, leaving the program in the hands of Ogalo and Reed. The students studied for two years and learned 135 biblical stories.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ee-taow – the Mouk Story*, directed by New Tribes Mission (Destination Summit New Tribes Mission, 1989), DVD).

<sup>56</sup> *Ee-taow*.

In interviews conducted after the two-year training was complete, students admitted that before the training they had little Bible knowledge. For example, various students acknowledged they entered knowing little of the Old Testament, did not understand the relationship between God and Jesus, did not know the characteristics of God, did not know God created the angelic beings, had not heard of being born again, and did not know Christians should not seek help from local deities. As entering students they were unable to communicate the Christian faith to other people. At the end of the two years, 17 students finished the training and had dramatically improved their understanding of all of these matters and many more.<sup>57</sup>

This experiment conducted by Southwestern seminary in Dallas was a natural bridge to make the transition from the Theological Education by Extension to an oral method of teaching pastors and church leaders. It naturally led into the initial conversations that became the International Orality Network.

### **International Orality Network**

“In the late 1990s, several consultations were conducted with Campus Crusade for Christ International, International Mission Board, Summer Institute of Linguistics, and the United Bible Society that brought a growing awareness of many unreached peoples being primarily oral preferred communicators.”<sup>58</sup> In 2000 at the Billy Graham *Amsterdam 2000 Conference*, evangelists met to discuss how to reach the unreached in the world. “Marcus Vegh of Progressive Vision asked Avery Willis, who was Senior VP of Overseas Operations for the IMB, ‘How do you make disciples of oral learners?’ The

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<sup>57</sup> Grant Lovejoy, interviewed by author, Dallas, TX, September 18, 2008.

<sup>58</sup> “How We Began” International Orality Network, accessed May 5, 2014, [http://www.oralty.net/how\\_we\\_began](http://www.oralty.net/how_we_began).

question hit home because it had just been pointed out that about 70 percent of the unreached peoples of the world being oral preferred communicators.”<sup>59</sup>

In 2001, the Orality Bible Network (OBN) was formed, which included the previous groups CCCI, IMB, SIL, and newly added Wycliffe International. In 2005, The Making Disciples of Oral Learners Working Group of the *2004 Lausanne Forum on World Evangelization* merged with the Orality Bible Network to form the International Orality Network, (ION).<sup>60</sup>

It is interesting to consider the groups that came together to form this new network. Campus Crusade for Christ has at its core the movie *Jesus*, which is translated into over 1200 languages.<sup>61</sup> SIL and Wycliffe had previously focused solely on written text. Now they are both participants in developing oral communication through the formation of this new ministry.

Starting in 2005, annual meetings of ION were held in various locations. Over 400 ministries and thousands of people have participated in these annual meetings. There are many organizations applying the oral training methods to their work in India and Africa.

Many organizations and denominations are starting to make adjustments and have used orality as a practice to reach unreached and unengaged people groups. In 2009 the Innovation in Missions Award of The Missions Exchange was given to The International Orality Network in context of the four specific values The Missions Exchange wants to champion: excellence, innovation, partnership, and finishing well.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> “How We Began”.

<sup>60</sup> “How We Began”.

<sup>61</sup> “The Jesus Film Project, Supported Staff”, accessed May 5, 2014, <http://www.jesusfilm.org/get-involved/supported-staff>.

<sup>62</sup> “How We Began”.



The International Orality Network has published two books: *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* and *Breakthrough Innovations: Practices for the 21st Century*. Both books challenge readers to understand the needs of primary oral learners and to consider ways to apply that knowledge.

### *Summary*

Oral communication has become a wave that has swept across the mission community. Each organization has been using it in a way that meets its goals. Wycliffe is using orality to decrease the time it takes to produce a written translation in a language. People need to have an understanding of some aspects of scripture for them to be useful in the translation process. City Team International has been using oral communications with great success in their disciple making movements across Northern Africa among Muslim communities.<sup>63</sup> Scripture in Use Ministry has been using it to train church planters among the native Indians of in Mexico.<sup>64</sup> Other organizations are using orality to plant churches, engage people in scripture, and for evangelism.

It is clear orality has been recognized as a useful tool for missions but it is also important to understand how it is used, especially in an African context.

## **African Orality**

### *The Need for Oral Communication*

The early missionaries to Africa took the approach that literacy training was the critical first step from which biblical knowledge and understanding would flow. There

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<sup>63</sup> Trousdale, 34.

<sup>64</sup> James Bowman, "Communicating Christ through oral tradition: a training model for grass roots church planters." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 20, no. 1 (2003): 25-26.

was little understanding of the African oral tradition from their cultures. Herbert Klem, an early observer of this problem, states, "Most modern mission movements have worked on the assumption that literacy is essential to evangelism, spiritual maturity, and church growth."<sup>65</sup> Jonathan Draper, writing in 2002, stated even more strongly, "There was even a belief among some missionaries that the simple reading and study of the Bible alone will convert the world. The missionary's work is to gain for it admission and attention, and then let it speak for itself."<sup>66</sup>

Gilbert Ansre emphasizes this specific need regarding Africa in his article, "The Crucial Role of Oral-Scripture: Focus Africa."<sup>67</sup> He states, "A fundamental assumption of contemporary agencies involved in translating, producing, and promoting Scripture is that the printed Word is the ultimate objective."<sup>68</sup> Ansre studied the literacy levels across the continent of Africa where "illiteracy is preponderant and the many efforts to increase literacy through the years have not been spectacularly successful. In some areas the annual population growth is higher than the annual increase in literacy."<sup>69</sup>

Ansre collected the official records of literacy from 45 countries in Africa. He notes that the literacy rates tend to be inflated but regardless of the accuracy of the numbers useful information can still be gained. Tanzania reported the highest level of literacy with 89.6 percent and Mali reported the lowest rate with 13.2 percent. His

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<sup>65</sup> Hebert Klem, "Dependence on Literacy Strategy: Taking a Hard Second Look." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12, no. 2 (1995): 59.

<sup>66</sup> Jonathan Draper, "The Bible as Poison Onion, Icon and Oracle: Reception of the Printed Sacred Text in Oral and Residual-Oral South Africa." *Journal of Theology for South Africa* 112 (2002): 40.

<sup>67</sup> Gilbert Ansre, "The Crucial Role of Oral-Scripture: Focus Africa." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12 (1995): 65-68.

<sup>68</sup> Ansre, 65.

<sup>69</sup> Ansre, 65.

findings become much more telling when he added these five further considerations to the literacy levels:<sup>70</sup>

1. Not all people who claim they can read actually can do so.
2. Not all who can read actually do read.
3. Not all who actually read do read well.
4. Not all who read well actually read Scripture.
5. Not all who read the Scripture do so regularly.<sup>71</sup>

When those five statements were applied to the literacy levels in Tanzania, with the highest literacy, and Mali, with the lowest literacy, the following percentages result:

**Table 3.1. African Literacy Levels**

Number	Stated Literacy Levels	Tanzania	Mali
		89.6%	13.2%
1	Can actually read (70%)	62.5%	13.2%
2	Actually do read (50-70%)	43.8%	6.4%
3	Can really read well (70%)	30.6%	4.5%
4	Do read Scriptures (70%)	21.6%	3.1%

His point is that, at best, 11 percent of the literate population of any African country is actually reading the Bible regularly. Faced with this situation, a group of United Bible Society (UBS) executives passed a 10-point resolution summarized by Ansre:

1. They are grateful that UBS has decided to emphasize audio-Scriptures.
2. They commend the Africa Region for recognizing the importance of audio-Scriptures.
3. They recommend that 50% of the Africa budget be devoted to this project.
4. They request a full-time Audio-Media Consultant be appointed.
5. They suggest that up to 30% of the audio production be distributed free.
6. They call on UBS to provide hardware for the production.
7. The request that all National Societies benefit from audio seminars.
8. They recommend collaboration with other organizations.
9. They confess that they have failed to emphasize Scripture use.

<sup>70</sup> Ansre, 66.

<sup>71</sup> Ansre, 66.

10. They dedicate themselves to the support of audio-media.<sup>72</sup>

If the efforts put toward developing literacy in Africa are falling behind the growth in literacy, then there must be another reason for the disparity. Klem suggests the reason may be a resistance to literacy rather than an inability: “In my readings on literacy and mission policy I have found no systematic treatment of the concept of resistance to literacy which has attempted to deal with the social conflicts caused by a choice of western over indigenous communicational techniques.”<sup>73</sup> Klem observed that “the assumption, held by many, that African people did not value knowledge was also wrong.”<sup>74</sup> Oral learners do value learning, but emphatic and participatory learning instead of objective and distanced.<sup>75</sup> Previously, those from the west did not recognize the oral traditions in Africa nor the knowledge delivered in an oral package.

#### *The Form of Oral Communication*

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the International Orality Network defined oral learners as groups that “transmit their beliefs, heritage, values and other important information by means of stories, proverbs, poetry, chants, music, dances, ceremonies and rites of passage.”<sup>76</sup> These characteristics of the oral tradition are true throughout Africa in various forms.

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<sup>72</sup> Ansre, 66-67.

<sup>73</sup> Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, CA: W. Carey Library Publishers, 1981), 98.

<sup>74</sup> Klem, 99.

<sup>75</sup> W. J. Moon, "Discipling through the eyes of oral learners." *Missiology* 38, no. 2 (2010):131.

<sup>76</sup> *Making Disciples of Oral Learners: To Proclaim His Story Where It Has Not Been Known Before* (Lima, NY: international Orality Network in cooperation with Elim Publishing, 2005), 4-5.

## Music and Dance

Rick Brown states, “Narrative songs seem to be particularly characteristic of oral cultures.”<sup>77</sup> In Egypt, some ballads have been popular for centuries. A major radio station plays hours of these ballads every afternoon and the people repeat the memorized lyrics. The use of music in the oral history of Africa spreads from the east to the west, from the north to the south. Each area has its own style. Rick Brown says “a common mistake made by some cross-cultural broadcasters is to assume that music is a universal language. . . . Each culture has its own genres of music, and each form has a particular function.”<sup>78</sup>

W. Jay Moon states, “We become what we hum.”<sup>79</sup> He says the Bulisa people of Ghana, West Africa, repeat just a few lines over and over and over; which is also characteristic of those from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania in East Africa. “The song is a memory book to help them remember the theology contained in the song.”<sup>80</sup> “Through dancing, people participate in the song and feel the theological meaning, not merely gain more head knowledge.”<sup>81</sup>

Klem notes that among the Limba people of Ghana and Kpelle of Liberia the women work to singing and drumming. “They may dance as they weed the crops. The singing, harvesting contests, and the religious ceremonies for good crops are all important

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<sup>77</sup> Rick Brown, "How to Make Oral Communication More Effective." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21, no. 4 (2004): 175.

<sup>78</sup> Brown, 175.

<sup>79</sup> Moon, 129.

<sup>80</sup> Moon, 129.

<sup>81</sup> Moon, 131.

occasions for oral art."<sup>82</sup> Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, the praise singers play an important role in the African tradition of formal celebrations and religious events.<sup>83</sup>

### **Stories and Drama**

Mwana Hadisi writes about his oral experience among the Digo people of Kenya, "Digo narrative performance shares a number of common features with other African traditions."<sup>84</sup> Hadisi goes on to say religion and family relationships are the main subjects in Digo narrative. The stories he observed were all delivered during an event where the extended homestead would gather for a common meal and listen to stories told by the elders.<sup>85</sup> The sharing stories together in a group or at night are a common theme in the African Oral tradition. J. O. Terry describes the use of story telling with the nomadic Fulani people of West Africa and the Berbers of North Africa. "The storyer must be prepared to story all night as the people do when telling their stories."<sup>86</sup>

Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, there are two types of professional storytellers: one travels about telling stories as a traveling bard and praise singer, the other is an official narrator of the national tales. Their leader is the chief historian and is called "the one who possess old times."<sup>87</sup> The storehouse of culture and history is oral literature –

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<sup>82</sup> Klem, *Oral Communication of Scripture*, 100.

<sup>83</sup> Klem, 130-131

<sup>84</sup> Mwana Hadisi, "Exploring the performance, semantic, and cognitive dimensions of orality." *Missiology* 40, no. 4 (2012): 445.

<sup>85</sup> Hadisi, 445.

<sup>86</sup> J.O. Terry, "Chronological Bible Storying to Tribal and Nomadic People." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 4 (1997): 170.

<sup>87</sup> Klem, 130.

traditions, poems, proverbs, and stories.<sup>88</sup> The Limba people of Ghana are quoted as saying, “When we hear something we put it in our hearts; our hearts are our books.”<sup>89</sup>

Moon points out the connection between stories and drama is participation. “Oral learners often enjoy speech as oral art. How something is said is just as important as what is said.”<sup>90</sup> Dramas encourage contextualization. They allow the abstract to become concrete in the lives of the participants and the observers. “Oral learners conceptualize and verbalize knowledge with close reference to the human life world, dramas take them one step closer to contextualizing the Scripture within their own worldview.”<sup>91</sup>

### **Ritual**

Moon describes the oral ritual of a funeral that began at sunset and continued until sunrise. “Boom, boom, boom, beat the drums, vibrating throughout the air. A wide circle forms – filled with people dancing to the rhythm and singing indigenous songs of faith in Jesus.”<sup>92</sup> Moon’s description includes songs, dance, the story of Lazarus, food, and a prayer dirge. Rituals such as funerals, weddings, and births are discipleship times in oral cultures. They are significant teaching opportunities where the values of one generation are passed on down to the next. Discipleship “is a kind of apprenticeship, by listening, by repeating what they hear, by mastering proverbs and ways of combining them and recombining them, ... by participation in a kind of corporate retrospection.”<sup>93</sup> Ritual can

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<sup>88</sup> Klem, 106.

<sup>89</sup> Klem, 106.

<sup>90</sup> Moon, 132.

<sup>91</sup> Moon, 132.

<sup>92</sup> Moon, 128.

<sup>93</sup> Moon, 129.

bond the community to each other, give them identity, and unite them to their corporate faith.<sup>94</sup> Moon says, “Rituals drive meaning into the bone.”<sup>95</sup>

Klem points to three different forms of ritual from his observances in Nigeria among the Yoruba people. There were formal celebrations, religious events, and informal observances. Each of these three types of events included a mingling of song, stories, and poetic history. At the formal celebrations, there was a sense of competition between those who are presenting which includes formal presentations and informal singing. For the religious events among the Yoruba, the next generation is required to learn the history and pass on their beliefs. This is true for both the Christian and the animistic religions. The informal observances take on a casual yet important role. The parents tell their children local parables to curb their actions, or there may be jokes, stories, and songs shared at home in the evening.<sup>96</sup>

### *The Receptivity of Oral Scripture*

Consideration of the audience’s culture, their oral styles, and the nuances of presentation are all important to the receptivity of an oral scripture. African oral communication has a broad spectrum of style and form. Written scripture is far removed from what is common and understood among an oral culture and even oral scripture can miss the goal of clearly communicating the Bible to oral communicators.

Mwana Hadisi experienced this when he was working with the Digo people of Kenya. In 1993, Hadisi began using cassettes that contained Bible stories retold in a

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<sup>94</sup> Moon, 131.

<sup>95</sup> Moon, 131.

<sup>96</sup> Klem, 126-138.



simple straightforward manner. Christian mother tongue speakers had recorded the translated stories into the Digo language. The stories were well received but produced few converts. After listening to the tapes for 10-15 minutes the Digo audiences seemed to lose interest and comprehension of the content was uneven.<sup>97</sup>

Hadisi notes that if the contrast between orality and literacy is more than memorization, “then new approaches to ministry among oral populations are necessary.”<sup>98</sup> He later did a comparative study between his 1993 recording of the story of Noah and a newly created recording that took into consideration the nuances of Digo storytelling. He played the two versions for 125 individuals in four locations with half listening to the straight translation first and the other half listening to the Digo-style first. He found there was negligible difference in factual comprehension, but “an overwhelming majority, 80%, chose the Digo-style version.”<sup>99</sup> His study emphasizes that communication is more than passing on of information. Communication is passing on the meaning behind the words. Oral communicators are looking for the heart and soul of the person communicating the message they share.

Klem’s study with the Yoruba people of Nigeria also showed that those who had access to audio means of learning the Hebrew text scored significantly higher than those without the recording. The group that had the Hebrew scripture put to music scored the highest on their recall of the information.

Both of these studies show the need for oral training and each included sensitivity to the need for the communication to be transmitted in a manner considerate of the oral

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<sup>97</sup> Hadisi, 444.

<sup>98</sup> Hadisi, 444.

<sup>99</sup> Hadisi, 448.

culture. For the Digo in Kenya, the Digo-style of scripture recording was preferred by 80 percent of the people listening. For the Yoruba people of Nigeria, the book of Hebrews put to music was preferred and had the highest retention rate between the four methods used in the study.

Rick Brown has written an article specifically focused on “How to Make Oral Communications More Effective.” He states, “Oral communicators are deeply affected by the sound quality of what they hear and not just the content. They especially like the sound of poems, songs and catchy phrases. ... They are alert to the intonation and voice qualities of every speaker, and they are quick to perceive insincerity of hidden meanings. When listening to stories, they are aware of every nuance of the storyteller’s voice, and they appreciate a storyteller who modifies his or her voice to fit each part in the story.”<sup>100</sup>

Hadisi emphasized this same point in his study of the Digo people of Kenya. He notes three specific styles that their stories would use consistently. First, they repeat information from one phrase to the next, a style called chaining. Second, they included songs in the midst of the stories. Third, they used ideophones; which are the sounds certain actions make such as a big stick hitting a person, a machete hitting a tree, or a box closing. “Other aspects of meta communication include paralinguistic features such as intonation, tempo, volume, and special voice effects.”<sup>101</sup>

In Brown’s article, he quotes Viggo Søggaard as saying, “The tone of voice, the speed of delivery, and the use of words all say something about the speaker and his or her

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<sup>100</sup> Brown, 173.

<sup>101</sup> Hadisi, 446.

attitude to the audience. The voice has to be so good and so appropriate that the listener will actually forget the voice and listen to the content.”<sup>102</sup>

The nuances of oral communication reinforce the need for an oral communication to develop biblically trained leaders in Uganda. It also highlights the value of using nationals to teach the classes rather than missionaries. The national speakers can learn the oral narratives of the Bible and present them to the class in a natural manner as opposed to someone from the outside trying to teach using their cultural communication cues.

### **Leadership Development**

The problem addressed in the project is “the need for biblically trained leaders in Uganda. The biblical aspect of the training was covered in chapter two. In this chapter, the topics of oral training, oral history, and African orality have also been addressed. This section will focus on leadership development with consideration of Africa. Justin Irving points out while “cultural awareness and sensitivity on the part of leaders may occur through a variety of leaders and leadership styles or philosophies, servant leadership – with a focus on the needs of followers – provides a platform upon which the unique cultural perspectives of leaders and followers may be considered.”<sup>103</sup> Among the many methods for developing leaders, servant leadership follows a biblical model, the example of Jesus. There is a helpful overlap between the servant leadership exemplified by Jesus and the oral nature of his training.

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<sup>102</sup> Brown, 174.

<sup>103</sup> Dirk van Dierendonck, and Kathleen Patterson, eds. *Servant Leadership: Developments in Theory and Research*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 118.

There are two potential questions that come out of the problem for this project. First, how can leaders in the United States develop leaders in Uganda without imposing an American idea, curriculum, or plan? Second, how can leaders in Uganda develop leaders from within their own community with a servant leadership emphasis? Both of these questions are legitimate and difficult topics to address. The goal of this project is for Ugandans to train Ugandans from the very first lesson, so that will be the primary focus. An American missionary led the initial two-year class. Since that time, Ugandans have taught Ugandans in most of the classes.

### *Servant Leadership*

Specifically addressing leadership development in Africa, William Kumuyi boldly states, “What Africa needs for its redemption is servant leadership instead of the self-serving governance.”<sup>104</sup> Kumuyi sees the need for the leaders to be servants for the people, but feels that servant attitude needs to be initiated by the governmental authorities. Matthew Parris, a columnist for the London Times and a self-identified atheist, states equally boldly, “I truly believe Africa needs God. Missionaries, not aid money, are the solution to Africa’s biggest problem – the crushing passivity of the people’s mindset.”<sup>105</sup> Both of these men recognize the need for a different kind of leadership and surprisingly they point to the same need even though they come at that conclusion from radically different perspectives.

The Bible offers another perspective of leadership but the servant life of Jesus might be questioned by some cultures. Kathleen Paterson has developed a theoretical

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<sup>104</sup> William Kumuyi, "The Case for Servant Leadership." *New Africa* 467, Nov2007 (2007): 18.

<sup>105</sup> Matthew Parris, “As an Atheist, I Truly Believe Africa Needs God”, *Times (London)*, December 27, 2008.

model for servant leadership that follows the biblical model of Jesus and has been used in some testing in Africa. Patterson's seven qualities of servant leadership are: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service.<sup>106</sup> These seven are also biblical character attributes for Disciples of Christ.

Justin Irving wrote "Cross-Cultural Perspectives of Servant Leadership," a chapter in the book *Servant Leadership: Developments in Theory and Research*. In that chapter Irving included a number of studies done regarding servant leadership in Africa.

Irving quotes an important study done in Ghana, West Africa, where Hale and Fields found that:

- Ghanaian followers reported experiencing servant leadership behaviors significantly less than North Americans
- The servant leadership dimensions of vision had a significantly stronger relationship with leader effectiveness for Ghanaians in comparison with North Americans
- Both Ghanaian and US followers relate service and humility with leader effectiveness in a similar manner.<sup>107</sup>

Irving's chapter included a study done in Nigeria, West Africa, by Okafor-Dike which conducted an exploratory study of the relationship between presidential leadership and economic development. The study concluded inadequate and ineffective leadership was a more significant cause of underdevelopment than resource availability.<sup>108</sup>

The two studies were done in Kenya, East Africa, by Koshal and Ngunjiri. They both concluded that service and/or servant leadership was seen as positive and important

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<sup>106</sup> Kathleen Paterson, "Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model" (Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Virginia Beach, Virginia, August 2003), 1-10, accessed January 9, 2016, [https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl\\_proceedings/2003/patterson\\_servant\\_leadership.pdf](https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2003/patterson_servant_leadership.pdf).

<sup>107</sup> Dierendonck and Patterson, 120.

<sup>108</sup> Dierendonck and Patterson, 120.

in a leader's success. A study done by Irving in Rwanda found love, empowerment and vision were strong whereas humility was lower.<sup>109</sup>

In a study done by Dannhauser and Boshoff in South Africa, strong and significant relationships were found between servant leadership, trust, and team commitment. Ramsey's study in South Africa explored how former President Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu modelled servant leadership.<sup>110</sup>

Irving summarizes all of these findings by answering the question: "Is servant leadership a valid and viable leadership approach across cultures?" His answer is yes, with qualifications. First, he states that although demonstrated as valid, more study is needed. Second, high power-distance relationship can cause servant leadership to be viewed as a weak form of leadership. Third, "servant leadership must take on culturally-contingent characteristics to be effective."<sup>111</sup>

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) study has analyzed leadership qualities around the world. Their summary of Sub-Saharan Africa states, "These countries or populations expressed high scores on humane orientation. ...people generally are very concerned for and sensitive to others. Concern for family and friends is more important than concern for self."<sup>112</sup> That description is supportive of servant leadership and its acceptability within the greater African community. The GLOBE study continues, "In Sub-Saharan Africa, an ideal leader is

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<sup>109</sup> Dierendonck and Patterson, 120-121.

<sup>110</sup> Dierendonck and Patterson, 121-122.

<sup>111</sup> Dierendonck and Patterson, 128-129.

<sup>112</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012), 394.

modest, compassionate, and sensitive to the people. ... In short, the Sub-Saharan Africa profile characterizes effective leadership as caring leadership.”<sup>113</sup>

The studies mentioned by Irving and the Globe study point to a positive correlation between how the people view leadership and the description of servant leadership given by Patterson. Although cultural issues need to be considered, there is evidence that the qualities associated with Paterson’s theory will be valued in Africa as a whole and in Uganda specifically.

### *Servant Development*

The challenge with education in any classroom or training in any situation is one of setting goals and keeping to them. Along with that difficulty is the contrasting responsibility for the growth. The teacher carries the weight of teaching well so the students learn what is outlined for the course. If the students succeed, then the teacher has done his or her job well. On the other hand, it is the student’s responsibility to study and learn. The more the student applies himself or herself to the topic the better they will do on tests and retention of the information.

An oral teaching style of teaching puts the responsibility on the student for memorizing the information and engaging with the questions. This is a servant leadership model for education. The teacher, as a servant of the student, desires for them to succeed and will do everything they can to encourage the student in a positive direction.

Irving and Longbotham emphasize six responsibilities that can be applied to the class trainer in their article, “Team Effectiveness and Six Essential Servant Leadership Themes”. “The authors suggest that leaders should attend to six primary servant

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<sup>113</sup> Northouse, 400.

leadership themes when seeking to effectively lead in team-based environments. These themes are: providing accountability, supporting and resourcing, engaging in honest self-evaluation, fostering collaboration, communicating with clarity, and valuing and appreciating.”<sup>114</sup>

### **Providing Accountability**

Providing accountability is a primary responsibility of the teacher for their students. It is the taking of tests, the reciting of memory work, and the grading of assignments. The quality of the school depends on setting goals and keeping standards. The teacher must keep the students accountable for their own choices.

### **Supporting and Resourcing**

The student with a supportive teacher will outperform students attempting the work on their own. Students need to know their teacher believes they can succeed and is willing to help them toward that end. Support is both relational and material. Providing information, answering questions, and encouraging students are a part of preparing them for success.

### **Engaging in Honest Self-Evaluation**

It is assumed the teacher will evaluate the students, but the servant teacher begins by modeling their own efforts to achieve high standards. The result is a humble foundation from which to engage others.

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<sup>114</sup> Justin Irving and Gail Longbotham, “Team Effectiveness and Six Essential Servant Leadership Themes: A Regression Model Based On Items in the Organizational Leadership Assessment” (Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Virginia Beach, Virginia, August 2006), 1-13, accessed October 27, 2015, [http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl\\_proceedings/2006/irving\\_longbotham.pdf](http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2006/irving_longbotham.pdf).



### **Fostering Collaboration**

In contrast to the traditional lecture model of classroom education, an oral method encourages, even depends on group interaction. It is a process of learning together, a sense of community rather than a sense of competition.

### **Communicating with Clarity**

If the students do not understand the teacher they can become discouraged and despondent. The one leading the class is responsible for giving clear goals, plans, ideas, concepts, and questions.

### **Valuing and Appreciating**

These two words can change the entire tone of the classroom setting. When the students know they are individually important and their input is necessary, then they will excel in the expectations before them.

These six themes are essential qualities for successful classroom management and practicing them will lead to servant development.

### *Servant Discipleship*

The goal of this project is biblically trained leaders. It is essential to have the Bible as the center of training biblically grounded leaders. It is important to find a method such as the oral communication that will make education possible across culture, language, and distance barriers. Servant leadership lays a great foundation that follows the example of Jesus. All of these together would make a great training program except for the missing element of discipleship.

The previous definition given for a disciple is “more than one who knows about Jesus, a disciple is one who is becoming like Jesus in their head, heart, and hands.” That

description includes knowledge, character qualities, and ministry skills. Those three attributes will not happen automatically in a classroom setting. The Bible, an oral methodology, and servant leadership principles prepare the environment for true discipleship to happen.

Avery Willis describes how Jesus did discipleship:

Jesus got involved in his disciples' lives to get them involved in his life. He went to Peter's house and healed his mother-in-law. He got in Peter's boat and asked him to push it out into the water so he could teach the crowd. He got involved in Peter's business when he told him to cast in the deeper water and catch more fish than he could haul in. He got the disciples involved in his work when he said, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men" (Luke 5:10).<sup>115</sup>

Servant discipleship is another way of saying, "getting involved in their lives."

The disciples that followed Jesus spent three years with him. They watched him, learned from him and put into practice everything he did. "At times Jesus explained after he modeled something."<sup>116</sup> After Jesus washed the disciples' feet, He explained, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:14-15).

Jesus coached his disciples on what to do and what not to do. "There was never a graduation day. They did what he told them on their own."<sup>117</sup> Once people learn a truth, skill, or lifestyle they still need support to help them practice it.<sup>118</sup> Jesus also sent them out with authority. They were to carry the message of the kingdom of God everywhere they were sent.

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<sup>115</sup> Willis and Snowden, 129.

<sup>116</sup> Willis and Snowden, 131.

<sup>117</sup> Willis and Snowden, 132.

<sup>118</sup> Willis and Snowden, 133.

**Prayer**

The Evangelical Free Church developed four areas where they could measure a person's growth in discipleship.<sup>119</sup> The first was prayerfulness. As people grow in their prayer life they will grow in their intimacy with the Lord, conversation will become comfortable, and they will expect their prayers to be answered. They might start out praying for others privately but they can become comfortable with corporate prayer and the topics they are concerned about will expand. As they mature, they will grow in their persistence regarding difficult things or in the waiting that can be required.

**Word**

The second area for growth is in the Word of God. A person will begin their walk of discipleship by growing in their understanding of who God is and then share what he or she has learned. The word will be at work inside transforming them into the likeness of Christ. The external evidence of growth begins with a desire to know more, then discuss what they have learned until the Bible is a part of their natural conversation.

**Love**

The third area is love. We are able to love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). When a person fully understands the extent of Jesus' love for them on the cross it will affect their own attitude. Their own love will overflow into the lives of others until the sacrificial love of Christ rules their own lives. Love is contagious when someone displays compassion, generosity, and kindness to others.

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<sup>119</sup> Pastor Glenn Olson, interviewed by author, Richfield, MN, January 24, 2014. Glenn is the Youth Director for the MN District of the Evangelical Free Church.

## **Worship**

Worship is the natural response from a person who knows God. God's greatness, power, and kingdom demand a response. Growing in the knowledge of the Lord will be reflected in their adoration of whom he is. The intimacy of a relationship with the Lord will affect personal and corporate responses to God. As worship grows it is reflected in a life of ministry.

A disciple will be growing in all four of these areas until there is a unity of spirit and fellowship with the body of Christ.

This research describes oral training from both the practical aspects as well as the historical progress. Africa's oral unique communication style is part of oral history and it can be used to develop biblically trained leaders. There is a great need for servant leaders in Africa. Those students who allow Jesus to mold them will become his disciples and will reflect the life of Jesus.

## CHAPTER FOUR: A CASE STUDY OF ORAL TRAINING

### **Data and Methodology**

This project was a qualitative case study of the Ambassador Institute oral training in Uganda. The goal of this study was to accurately understand how the oral training had been going with a special focus on the past two years. The curriculum emphasized the three qualities of knowledge, character, and ministry. Every student was expected to grow in these three areas as they studied and applied the Ambassador Institute curriculum over the two-year cycle. It was important to know if the content of what the students studied actually had an affected them. If the training did not affect the students, then the goals of the training were not being met and changes would be needed.

### **Potential Biases**

In order to get a clear picture of the training, some biases need to be discussed and mitigated. An accurate study can only be ensured if potential problems are accounted for. In this study there are three potential biases to be addressed.

#### *Researcher Bias*

The researcher for this study is the Department Head of the Ambassador Institute. The study was done using the Ambassador Institute classes in Uganda and the Ambassador Institute curriculum. It is true the researcher wanted the results to confirm that the training in Uganda was successful, but it is also true the researcher wanted to know exactly what was happening within the students who had been attending the

classes. The greatest value from this study was a clear direction for the future. That priority motivated the researcher to get accurate information rather than just positive feedback.

In order to mitigate researcher bias, the data was collected objectively. The oral and written tests were administered by the Ugandan teachers and scored by the Ugandan leadership team. The surveys were distributed, described and collected by the Ugandan leadership team. The students were asked questions relating to their own understanding and the student observers were asked the same questions with regard to what they observed in the students. The interview questions were written up prior to the trip to Uganda and the same questions were asked of all respondents.

#### *Student Bias*

Just as there was a potential bias from the perspective of the researcher, there was an equal or greater potential for bias from the Ugandan students. The students want to do well on the exams and they want to impress those watching them.

To mitigate the potential student bias, the exams were standardized so all of the students take the same exam and, as stated above, the leadership team rather than the teachers scored the exams. The student's family and friends were given surveys about their student who then become the accountability instruments for the student in their daily life. The answers to a survey from the spouse or friend of a student would be different than the student's answers simply because of their perspective. These observers make it possible for their response to be an objective third party report. The third method used to mitigate student bias was interviews of a variety of people including family and community members.

The triangulation of these three instruments and the three information sources help to validate the accuracy of the student's answers as opposed to their potential for bias. The analysis of the information looked for themes which correlated with one another across the three curriculum themes, across the instruments, and across the various people in the study. Matching test scores, survey results and interviews increase the reliability. Input from students, teachers, family members and the community which agree with each other increases the reliability. Curriculum themes represented in the various instruments and among the various people increases the validity.

#### *Teacher or Observer Bias*

The teachers desire to do well as much as the students. One teacher, Olao John Bosco, was the valedictorian of his class in 2013. He put out a challenge to the other teachers and said, "The next valedictorian will be coming from my class at the next graduation."<sup>1</sup> Observers and the teachers cannot control how the students do on their exams or what they say in the interviews. The student exams, surveys, and interviews all mitigate teacher and observer bias. Each of these data sources are outside of the teacher or family member control. The researcher gathered the data and analyzed it outside of the influence of those in Uganda who would have liked to see positive results.

The potential for bias has been acknowledged and the cross correlation of data gives strength to the findings. All of these acted as accountability factors for the others. The researcher ensured the tests and the results of the student's observations were verified. The students were accountable to those who lived in or near them and the teachers were accountable to the researcher and the Ugandan leadership team. Even after

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<sup>1</sup> Olao John Bosco, interviewed by author, Bubugo, Uganda, January 25, 2015.

addressing these potential biases the long-term affect of the training on individual lives is the real measure of success.

### **Information Sources**

#### *Primary Data*

The training took place from April of 2013 until March of 2015. The data sources include oral tests, written tests, student surveys, observer surveys, and face-to-face interviews. These data sources were collected on the researcher's trip to Uganda, March 16-31, 2015. The oral and written tests were designed to examine the student's ability to recall the knowledge gained through the course of the fourteen lessons covered each of the six semesters. The surveys were designed to understand the student's application of the character and ministry life themes. The interviews were designed to gain information about all three of these qualities and to validate the information in the other primary data sources.

Oral tests were given twice a semester. Each oral exam covered seven stories. The student would draw two stories out of the seven, which had been covered, and would choose one to recite from memory. The students were scored on the accuracy of their retelling using a 30-point scale. Each story contained thirty points which the student needed to include as they retold the story.

Written tests were given at the end of each semester for each of the six semesters of the curriculum. Students who struggle with literacy were able to use a proctor to write down their verbal answer. The content of the exams included short answer and short essay for the first three semesters and short essay answers for the second three semesters. The researcher has copies of the English exams and the student test results on file.



Surveys were given to the students, close observers and teachers to find out more specific detail regarding the effect of the training on the character and the ministry life of the students. The student surveys included six general questions to find out the person's name, gender, teacher, permission to use the survey, and the class they attended. Four statements were asked to find out the student's general perception of the usefulness of the training regarding knowledge, character, and ministry. Those statements included: the class was helpful to me, the class has helped me grow in knowledge of God's Word, the class has affected my character, and this class has affected my ministry. The students were given the possible answers of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree for the above statements and all of the following survey questions.

There were 14 questions used to gather the student's input regarding the effect of the training in the 14 character topics. Those topics included: love of money, telling the truth, anger, managing their home, quarrelsome, sexual thoughts, serving, being double-minded, dishonest gain, generosity, self-control, pride, perseverance, and faith. These questions are listed in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1. Student Character Survey Questions**

Number	Question
5	Would others say that you love money too much?
6	Are there times that you hide truth from others?
7	Would others say you are quick to become angry?
8	Would others say you manage your home well?
9	Would others say that you are quarrelsome?
10	Do you avoid opportunities for sexual temptation?
11	Would others say you have a desire serve?
12	Would others say that you are a double-minded person?
13	Would others say that you seek dishonest gain?
14	Would others say that you are a generous person?
15	Do you show self-control in your life?
16	Would others say you are arrogant?
17	Would others say that you have perseverance?
18	Is faith in God seen in your life?

The final 14 questions dealt with the student's ministry life. These were the same 14 topics the curriculum covers regarding ministry. Those topics included: worship, Bible study, prayer life, spiritual disciplines, love for family, love for neighbors, love for the church, church unity, prayer for healing, testimonies, evangelism, calling from God, suffering for the gospel, and missions. These questions are listed in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2. Student Ministry Survey Questions**

Number	Question
19	Does your family see you worship?
20	Does your family see you study the Bible?
21	Does your family see you pray daily?
22	Do you practice spiritual disciplines like fasting?
23	Would your family say that you love them?
24	Would your neighbors say that you love them?
25	Would the people in your church say that you love them?
26	Is there unity in your church?
27	Do people ask you to pray for them for healing?
28	Do you tell people about what God has done for you?
29	Do you invite people to accept Jesus into their lives?
30	Have you sensed a calling from God?
31	Have you had to suffer for the gospel?
32	Have you shared your faith with someone from another tribe?

The observer surveys covered the same topics as the student surveys but were asked from the perspective of the graduate they had observed. The six general questions in the beginning included: the person's name, their graduate's name, their relationship to the graduate, survey permission, and the class their graduate attended. The four general questions asked whether the class was helpful to their graduate and their general perception of the usefulness of the training regarding knowledge, character, and ministry. The next 14 questions asked the observer what they had seen in the life of their graduate in the character quality topics. The last 14 questions asked questions about what they had witnessed in the life of their graduate concerning the 14 areas of ministry.

Face-to-face interviews were held with students, close observers of the students, teachers, and the leadership team. The seven questions were asked of the students about themselves. The same questions were asked of the close observers, teachers and leadership team about the students they observed. The four general interview questions included: the person's name, interview permission, why they took the class, and what they were hoping to gain from the class. Specific questions were asked regarding the knowledge, character, and ministry of the students. Those questions included: the overall results of the training, what the student had learned, how the training affected their character, and how the training had affected their actions. A final summary question was asked to find out if there was anything else they wanted share about the class or its impact on the student. The list is given in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3. Interview Questions**

Number	Question
1	What is your name and which class have you been in?
2	May I have permission to use your answers in a study?
3	Why did you take the class?
4	What were you hoping to gain?
5	What results have you seen from the training?
6	What have you learned from the classes?
7	How has the training affected your character?
8	How has the training changed your actions?
9	Is there any advice that you would like to share about the class?

There were times the question needed to be worded different so the interviewee could understand what was being asked. There were three interviews done through a translator. The translator asked the student the questions in Lusoga and translated the Lusoga answers back to English. All of the interviewees were excited to participate and eagerly gave approval.

The researcher has attended multiple classes with different teachers. Personal notes, video and audio records are available from these observations.

### *Secondary Data*

Secondary data included biblical and theological resources; pertinent literature from books, journal articles, case studies, and dissertations; mission conferences and training seminars. The bibliography contains a description of the secondary literature for this study.

Secondary data included the researcher's experience working with training in Uganda since 2009 and his experience with training in Tanzania, India, Ecuador, and Brazil.

### **Project Overview**

The first step was to gather the field data from the previous two years of training and to use the graduation as a time to collect further information. This included the oral and written test scores, interviews, surveys, and field notes from the class observations.

The second step in the research was to transcribe and code the interviews, analyze the surveys, and evaluate the test scores. The Dedoose analysis software was used as the tool to study the qualitative data. It specializes in the analysis both qualitative and mixed methods data. As such it was able to give clear results from the interviews in an effective manner.

The third step in the process was to study the oral history of the Bible, Jesus' use of parables, the definition of biblical education, and the transformative aspects of oral training. Each of these could have been a rich independent study, but the purpose of looking at each of these areas was to see its effect on the oral training. The biblical oral

history can inform and direct the training. Jesus' use of parables was foundational to the method employed in this training. The purpose of the training was biblical education so the Bible illuminated that definition. The objective was training that resulted in a significant lasting value for the students. Successful training would be measured in the effect of the training in the student's head, heart, and hands. This step required information in the secondary sources on the theological understanding of these various aspects of orality in the Bible.

The fourth step required an in depth study of the literature relating to oral training, the African oral tradition, and leadership development. The mission community has actively adopted oral training as a tool for ministry in the past ten years. Their experience helped inform this ministry as well. Africa has a rich oral tradition, which must be understood for oral training to be done well in Uganda. Leadership development does not happen just because students are in a class or are studying God's Word. Scholars have studied leadership development in international settings. Their studies gave wisdom into this aspect of training. The sources were studied for information to direct the future training of this ministry.

The fifth step was to get an accurate picture of the training as took place in Uganda. The combination of the literature review, the field data, and the biblical studies were combined to understand the training as it took place. From this understanding direction for future training was made.

## **Multiple Layers**

### *First Subproblem*

In order to respond correctly to the need for biblically trained leaders in Uganda, there are several layers to be peeled back and addressed. The first layer was the use of oral training as a method to train leaders. The question to be addressed was, Can the oral method be used to effectively develop biblically trained leaders?

There are many ministries using oral training or similar methods. Their application of oral training was able to give clarity to this study as well. The history of oral training and modern studies gave understanding to the challenges of cross-cultural engagement. The scholarly works from those who had been using oral training, working in Africa, and doing international leadership development all contributed to the content of this study.

Recognized scholars in the oral field were consulted to inform the themes of this research project. Much of the research related to oral training has been done recently and was found in journal articles as opposed to scholarly books. The journals of pioneering missiological efforts are not peer reviewed and yet they are the respected writings in missiology. *Orality Journal*, *International Journal of Frontier Missions* and *Missiology* are three of the respected journals in this field.

### *Subproblem Two*

The oral traditions of the Bible were important foundational aspects of developing biblically trained leaders. The instruction of theology and pastoral training was a clear object of this thesis and yet the understanding of what instruction means can vary greatly. The Bible needed to be carefully consulted since it defines a “disciple” and “biblical

education.” The history of oral training includes the biblical training in both the Old and New Testaments.

The Bible was used as the primary resource in this area of the study. Scholars were able to add information to the historical oral training and Jesus’ use of parables to enhance the researchers scriptural study.

### *Subproblem Three*

This project required a careful study of the knowledge, character qualities and the ministry life of students trained using the Ambassador Institute Oral Bible Curriculum. It was important to gather information from several sources and to compare them with one another. This meant gathering data in different methods and different sources. These different methods included: oral exams, written exams, surveys, interviews, and field observations. The different sources included: students, teachers, close observers, leadership team, community members, and the researcher. The correlation of the different methods with the different sources enhances the reliability of the results of the project.

### **Objective Data**

Objectivity was critical in gathering accurate data from field studies. The administration of the written exams was done uniformly across the classes. The leadership team rather than the teacher did the grading of the written exams. The oral test procedure was the same for all students.

The surveys were administered objectively. They were given at the same time to both the students and the observers. The surveys were administered in English and Lusoga since there were people from both language backgrounds among those surveyed. The surveys were translated and checked for errors by different people.

Objective data for the interviews meant there was an interview guide from which the questions were asked. The students, observers, teachers and community members were asked the same questions with regard to the students.

### **Coding the Data**

The oral and written exams were a measurement of the knowledge retained from the training. The student's percent for the exams were calculated by dividing their score by the number of points possible. Each oral story had 30 pre-determined points for the student to recall by memory. The written exams were weighted as follows: term one exam – 100 points, term two exam – 126 points, term three exam – 126 points, term four exam – 112 points, term five exam – 112 points, term six exam – 112 points.

The coding of the survey data was done using a five-point scale for each survey question. There were 28 questions in the survey, which matched the fourteen character topics and the fourteen ministry topics. The surveys were coded based on the five-point scale for each of the 28 questions. Each question had the possible answers of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree as options.

The Dedoose qualitative analyzation software was used to code the interviews and to search for trends within the statements recorded by the students and the observers. It is specifically designed for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis, which describes an important aspect of this project. The researcher compiled the data and analyzed the information looking for patterns and trends. The researcher attempted to understand the three qualities of knowledge, character, and ministry life as well as look for other themes in the data analysis.



The initial codes entered into the software included the 14 knowledge topics, the 14 character qualities, and the 14 ministry life application points. These were the expected outcomes from the interviews since they represent core lessons from the curriculum, listed in table 4.4. Seven of the initial 42 were not referred to in any of the interviews.

**Table 4.4. Interview Codes**

Number	Knowledge	Character	Ministry
1	Father	Not Love Money	Worship
2	Jesus	Not Hide Truth	Study Bible
3	Holy Spirit	Not Quick to Anger	Pray Daily
4	Nature of Man	Manage Home	Spiritual Disciplines
5	Power of the Word	Not Quarrelsome	Love Family
6	Word as Law	Avoid Sex Temptation	Love Neighbors
7	Word as Gospel	Desire to Serve	Love Church
8	Salvation	Not Double Minded	Church Unity
9	Baptism	Not Dishonest Gain	Praying for Healing
10	Lord's Supper	Generous	Testify for God
11	Eternal Things	Self-control	Evangelism
12	Judgement	Not Arrogant	Call from God
		Perseverance	Suffering for
13	Angels/Demons		Gospel
14	Satan	Faith in God	Missions

An additional ten codes were added based on the responses in the interviews. The additional codes included: discipleship, ability to preach, changed my life, confidence, desire to learn, forgiveness, know the Bible, love for Jesus, loving faithful God, and repentance.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE DATA SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

The data for this study includes the three themes of knowledge, character, and ministry, which are taught in the curriculum. The three data sources included the exams, surveys, and interviews gathered in this study. The participants who contributed their perspectives to the study included students, observers, and teachers. The cross-comparison of these multiple topics, sources and people will increase the reliability of the data and mitigate the potential for subjective bias in the results.

### **Curriculum Themes**

There were 90 surveys filled out. The students filled out 42 surveys and the observers filled out 48. The first four questions on the surveys were intended to give an overview of the perspectives on the three curriculum themes. The first statement on the survey was, “The class was helpful to me (or to my graduate).” From the 42 student responses, 32 strongly agreed and seven agreed that the class had been helpful. Three students were neutral about the helpfulness of the class. From the 48 observers who filled out the survey, 42 strongly agreed and three agreed that the class had been helpful to their graduate. One was neutral and two did not answer that question.

There were 33 students who strongly agreed and five who agreed with the statement, “This class has helped me grow in the knowledge of God’s Word.” There was one student who was neutral, one disagreed and two strongly disagreed with the same statement. There were 43 observers who strongly agreed and one who agreed that their

graduate had grown in the knowledge of God's Word. One observer was neutral and two strongly disagreed with that statement.

The third and fourth survey statements were, "The class has affected my (or my graduate's) character" and "The class has affected my (or my graduate's) ministry."

After the survey was completed it was clear that those who filled out the English surveys had answered opposite of those who filled out the Lusoga surveys. The word "affected" had been translated with the idea of a negative effect. A diagnosis of Malaria is used in conjunction with the word "affect" in Uganda. Although the information for those two questions would have been useful they will not be included because of this translation error. The other questions in the survey were translated correctly. The English and the Lusoga answers show consistency with one another.

## **Exams**

### *Oral Exams*

The first pillar of the curriculum is knowledge. The knowledge the students gained as they went through the two years of study can best be measured by the test results. The oral tests were given in the middle of the semester and at the end of the semester. Each oral test covered seven narratives. The two oral exams were averaged to get one oral exam percentage score for each term. Table 5.1 shows the scores of the oral exams from the Kimaka class as an example of the lowest scores and Table 5.2 shows the results of Nakanoni as an example of the higher scores. The complete list of class scores can be found in Appendix A.

It is easy to see that the some of the class were not able to get the same results as others. There are many factors that go into a student's success. Some teachers are going

to be better than others. Some students are stronger than others. Personal life challenges, family support, teaching quality and previous education are all significant factors in the student's ability to succeed. The overall student averages for the six oral exams were: 70.2, 75.7, 73.5, 78.7, 74.9, and 75.5. There are several terms with missing results which means there is a need for better record keeping.

**Table 5.1. Kimaka Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
40			58	53		75
41			43	53		10
42			55	43		20
Average			52	49.7		35

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table 5.2. Nakanoni Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
47	71	98	86	93	100	93
48	91	71	86	100	100	100
49	100	98	100	100	98	100
50	90	100	77	93	88	93
51	81	84	73	78	80	83
Average	86.6	90.2	84.4	92.8	93.2	93.8

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

The knowledge gained is more important than the specific percent the student received. Each exam represents the memorization of a long narrative from the Bible. The Old Testament stories in terms one and two are longer. The term three stories on the life of Jesus tend to be shorter. Terms four through six vary in length because they use stories from several parts of Scripture.

#### *Written Exams*

The written exams tested the students recall on the lesson content of the previous 14 lessons. They showed that some students were better than others and some teachers were better than others. Overall the students had learned the material through the oral

method of study that they were using. They received average scores on their written tests.

The exams for the classes are found in Appendix A for comparison.

**Table 5.3. Kimaka Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
40		81	88	92	70	58
41		80	53	61	60	32
42		80	89	89	70	52
Average		80.3	76.7	80.7	66.7	47.3

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table 5.4. Nakanoni Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
47	86	77	84	88	83	80
48	69	43	66	77	61	77
49	85		90	96	88	79
50	81	74	79	75	58	50
51	66	70	78	69	73	47
Average	77.4	66	79.4	81	72.6	66.6

*Source:* Ambassador Institute Graduation Survey March 2015

It is interesting to note that Table 5.3 shows that Kimaka actually scored much higher on the written exams than on the oral exams. Table 5.4 shows that Nakanoni scored lower on the written exams than the oral exams. The individual test scores reveal the amount of information the student was able to remember from class. The scores show that the students have taken time to learn the oral narratives to the point that they are able to answer specific short answer and short essay questions. The average written test scores for all of the students were: 71.7, 75.4, 76.9, 76.7, 76.4, and 70.8.

The desire of every teacher is to see all of their students excel in their understanding of the material. However, 75 percent is a normal average and applying the bell curve to the exam scores means some students will be in the 90 percent range and others in the 60 percent range. The students were required to get a combined average test score above 60 percent before they could meet the graduation requirements for each term.

## Surveys

### *Character Questions*

The second pillar of the curriculum is character. Character is more difficult to measure in a quantitative manner because there is a reflective and subjective nature to understanding the student on the inside. In order to get a more accurate perspective of the student's character, close observers were asked the very same questions as the students.

It is possible that the observer would want to record positive things about their graduate especially on Graduation Day. It is also possible for the graduate to describe themselves as nearly perfect students. The results of the character questions revealed that sometimes the students were harder on themselves than the observer. Other times the students rated themselves highly but the observers pointed out their weaknesses.

The wording on the character section of the survey was varied so that the students would be encouraged to think carefully about their response before answering. Statements five, six, seven, nine, twelve, thirteen, and sixteen were worded in the negative. Questions eight, ten, eleven, fourteen, fifteen, seventeen, and eighteen were worded in the positive.

The students were asked the fourteen statements about themselves. The observers were asked the same fourteen questions about their graduate. The questions are personal and probing. It is possible the students did not answer the questions transparently. When the student and the observer answers agree it enhances the probability the student answered honestly. When the observer's response is opposite of the student then it is possible that either the student does not recognize the problem in his or her self or the

student is not rating his or her self accurately. The observers function as a quality control and answer validation for the student.

The questions serve multiple purposes. First, they remind the student of the topics covered in class. Second, they force the student to wrestle with the unfinished work of God in his or her life. Third, they give valuable information regarding the effectiveness of the training in the student's character development.

The character attribute of being quarrelsome was the area all of the respondents recognized as the students weakest character trait. There were 28 people that highlighted quarrelsome out of the 90 surveys. The next closest area of concern was arrogance with 16 people saying they agreed or strongly agreed with the question. The top six areas of concern included: quarrelsome (28), arrogance (16), the love of money (13), hiding the truth (12), dishonest gain (11), and a lack of perseverance (11). The student survey answers can be found in Appendix B. Note that some student identification numbers are missing because those students did not take the survey.

There were seven character areas rated higher by both the students and the observers. Those included: being generous (2), having self-control (2), managing their home well (3), faith in God (4), having a desire to serve (4), not being double-minded (5), and not being quick to anger (5). There were seven responses indicating a struggle to avoid sexual temptation, five of those seven were students.

The benefit of surveying the observers can be seen by the fact that multiple observers for the same person agreed with one another in their assessment of the student. There were 14 students who had multiple observers filling out a survey on their behalf. Out of those 14 students, the multiple observers disagreed with their student 51 times, but

34 of those times the multiple observers agreed with each other. There were 85 times that the observers answered opposite of the student. One student rated himself high in four areas. That same person was rated low by his three observers five separate times. Another student rated himself low four times but his three observers rated him high in each incident. There were 37 students who rated themselves low in at least one area and 29 students in at least two areas.

It is clear both the students and the observers recognize the need for improvement in some areas. After the graduation, Pastor Mfumbiro David reported that five people had approached him at graduation and stated their appreciation of the surveys. The observers enjoyed having a method to be able to tell the leadership what they had observed in the student's lives.<sup>1</sup> The observer survey answers can be found in Appendix B.

### *Ministry Questions*

The third pillar of the curriculum is ministry. Ministry is the application of what we know through the vehicle of what we have become. Ministry is an outward action which can be seen by those who are watching. It is possible for students to say they are acting in a certain manner on a survey without a method of verifying the veracity of their claims. Observers were able to verify or deny the claims of the student, so their response to the questions can validate or disqualify the student's response.

The ministry section of the survey included 14 questions. Both the students and the observers answered the same question in regard to what could be verified in the ministry life of the student. The ministry section was answered by the same 90 respondents who filled out the character section, 42 students and 48 observers. The

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<sup>1</sup> Mfumbiro David, interviewed by author, Namagera, Uganda, March 23, 2015.



student answers to the ministry survey are found in Appendix B. All of the questions in the ministry section were asked from a positive perspective rather than the positive and negative questions used in the character section.

The ministry questions may be easier to answer positively since they do not appear judgmental of the person's character. It is possible for the student to do good work or appear good on the outside without changing his or her character on the inside. The close observer may be able to see past an outward display and report what they actually know to be true.

These fourteen questions are ordered in increasing difficulty. The later ones require more commitment than those at the beginning. Weekly worship requires less commitment than daily prayer. Loving people, witnessing, or suffering for the gospel all require increased loyalty. These questions continue to serve several purposes. First, they remind the student of the topics covered in class. Second, they force the student to consider how they will apply the truth they have learned. Third, they give valuable information regarding the student's ministry life.

The character section had a total of 123 negative responses to the 14 questions. Surprisingly, the ministry section only had four negative responses. Out of the 14 ministry questions answered by 90 respondents, there were only four answers with disagree or strongly disagree. Those four answers included two students who said they had not suffered for the gospel, one who had not shared his faith with a person from another tribe, and one who said there was not unity in his church. Considering the high response to quarreling in the character section, it seems that there should have been some respondents who would have said there was not unity in their church or that they had a

lack of love for neighbors. There were 72 neutral responses to the questions but none of the 14 categories stood out as having a significantly higher number of neutral responses than the others.

One possible reason for the high number of positive responses is the seriousness of the students. These Ambassador Institute students had just completed two years of biblical study. They are the committed ones. They have an interest in a study of the Bible because they were already active in various aspects of ministry. Pastor Nate Jore, the National Director of the Ambassador Institute of Uganda, highlighted this fact. Jore said the oral training was advertised and offered to the 2000 member Evangel Church in Jinja, Uganda. Out of the 2000 members, 40 students started the training. Out of the 40 students who started only five completed the full two years and received their certificates.<sup>2</sup>

## **Interviews**

### *Interview Overview*

There were 26 interviews conducted in Uganda. Those interviews included 21 students and 6 observers. The researcher made a concerted effort to interview people from a spectrum of backgrounds, ages, and locations. There were 10 women and 17 men who were interviewed. There were two students who died before the graduation was held so another student was interviewed to describe their stories. The interviews include the oldest student to complete training, 77 years, and the youngest student to finish, 13 years. There were six interviews from the Ambassador Institute leadership team; one of those six is an American missionary. The observer interviews included a teacher, a former student, a teenager of two parents who had been through the training, the Bishop of the

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<sup>2</sup> Nathan Jore, interviewed by author, Jinja, Uganda, March 19, 2015.

“Born Again Churches” of the Jinja area, a former enemy of the Ambassador Institute, and the alcoholic husband of a student. This wide variety of people adds strength to the information gained through the interviews.

### *Student Interviews*

There were three new themes which came out of the interviews. None of the three themes were part of the 42 expected codes from the knowledge, character, or ministry sections. The three are intended to be key aspects of the training, but the extent to which the students valued these three codes was surprising.

#### **Changed My Life**

Of the 21 student interviews only six of them did not mention the change which took place in their lives through the training. For those six, a change was either mentioned outside of the interview or evident in his or her life. In the 21 interviews “changed my life” was mentioned 39 times. Many students gave multiple references to a changed life in differing contexts.

The purpose of the Ambassador Institute curriculum is to teach the students the Word of God. There is not a directly stated intent of changing people’s lives in any of the lessons or in the mission statement. However, the effect of memorizing the 84 stories and 2200 verses from the Bible did change their lives. It is interesting to consider this response happened irrespective of the teacher, age, gender, or test scores. It is not something a teacher, a curriculum, or a study can control. This response is a pleasant and unexpected result of the training.

**Know the Bible**

Closely following the response of a changed life was the knowledge of the Bible with 37 mentions. Several students mentioned it multiple times in different contexts. This was an expected result of spending two years studying the Bible. It would have been discouraging for the students, teachers, and the researcher if they had not grown in their knowledge of the Bible. Yet, it is good they mentioned it specifically. There was not a code directly related to a general knowledge of the Bible so this was added.

**Discipleship**

Discipleship should include both the knowledge of God's Word and the change which comes from applying that knowledge to the student's life. Discipleship is the intention of the Ambassador Institute curriculum. The scripture verse used to describe this program and this ministry is 2 Timothy 2:2, "Entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

There were six other codes repeated by the students which are important to notice. The codes confidence, ability to preach and love of money were mentioned 16, 13 and 12 times. The codes character, knowledge, and helpful class were all mentioned ten times. The above nine codes made up 51 percent of the 56 codes mentioned in the interviews. The additional ten codes are found in Table 5.5. The knowledge code chart, character code chart, and ministry code chart can be found in Appendix C. These charts are the combined student and observer charts.

One of the reasons for the general response in the interviews is that the questions asked led to answers regarding the overview of the training rather than specific details of

the individual topics. At the same time, individual interviews did address individual topics but those topics were often unique and not often repeated by other interviewees.

**Table 5.5. Interview Additional Code Chart**

	Discipleship	Helpful Class	Ability to Preach	Changed my life	Confidence	Desire to Learn	Forgive	Know the Bible	Love for Jesus	Loving Faithful God	Repentance
Rodencia					1			2	1		1
Patrick Tigua			1	3	1						
Omara Tracy					2					2	
Olau John Bosco	2	1	1	2				3			
Nate Jore	3										
Musasizi Wilson	2	1	1	2	3			3			
Mukisa Franco	2	1	3	1	4			2			
Mukisa Jesse	1	1		2	1			1			
Mfumbiro David	4			3							
Mfumbiro David 2	2	2		5	1						
Mama Kate	2	2	3					5	1		
Kirabo Esther				2			3	1			
Kenabe Jesse		1		4							
Kenabe Christopher	3	1	1	2				3			
Juliet	1				3			5	1	4	2
Helen Anglican	1		1	1	2		2	1			
Godfrey	2	1	1	3				3			
Francis Pumude		2	1	1		1		3			
Francis Emolu				1				5			
Eyotia Jane				4				1			
Drunk Wycliff											
Carol Thieno				1							
Bishop Jackson											
Bishop Eliab Kinene	2			4							
Bagatia George	1		1	4				1			
Anita Bulungi			1					2			
Totals	28	13	15	45	18	1	5	41	3	6	3

Source: Dedoose Analytic Software 12/18/2015

### *Observer Interviews*

The six observers mentioned the code “change my life” eight times. That was the highest response out of the possible codes. In the six interviews, seven other codes were also repeated. Those included: faith in God, perseverance, discipleship, helpful class, knowledge of the Bible, salvation, and daily prayer. The three main themes from the student interviews were also recognized by the observers. The small number of observer interviews makes it difficult to see significant themes rising but it is encouraging to know that the observers were able to recognize the same three themes the students had highlighted.

## **Ambassador Institute Development**

### *Enrollment History*

Student enrollment has a subjective side as well as a measurable side. The reasons students enroll is subjective. The measurement of class sizes, student drop-out rates, or the expansion training is a quantifiable measurement. If a training course is perceived as negative, students will drop the course and future classes will stop or dwindle in size. If students appreciate a course, the information is valuable, and they want to share the content with others, it will have a direct effect on the enrollment for future classes. Class enrollment is a measurement of the student attitude towards a course if other potential influencing factors are removed.

The Ambassador Institute courses require commitment. They are two years in length, taught in three 14 week terms per year. The students pay a small fee for the training, they are required to attend twelve of the fourteen classes, they are given oral and written tests along with the homework of memorizing each story and the requirement of

telling the story to others. The complete two-year course work includes 84 stories and 2200 verses of the Bible. These requirements alone should deter people from joining the program. The final outcome is only a certificate stating the named person has completed the Oral Bible Study Curriculum.

The enrollment in these classes has seen exponential growth since the program was started in 2009. The first class of 20 finished in January 2011. There were eight students who agreed to teach classes of their own and seven new classes were begun. Two years later, in January 2013, 71 students completed the two year course, 66 of them received the certificate of completion and five received the certificate of participation. Out of the 66 who completed all of the requirements, 25 of them agreed to teach and 23 new classes were begun. There were 110 students who finished the third generation of instruction. The March 2015 class is the focus of this study. There were 31 classes still meeting after the graduation in March.

This exponential growth is a source of data which could be overlooked. It reflects the student's perception of what they are learning and the value they have put on the training they have received. There have been many other requests for training but the current leadership is stretched with the classes they are currently managing.

#### *Previous Students*

During the last week in January 2013, the author interviewed eleven students and eight teachers randomly without prior notice.<sup>3</sup> The interviews were held at a variety of locations near Jinja, Uganda. The students and teachers were asked about their experience in the class, what they had learned, and their favorite story from the training. The

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<sup>3</sup> Ambassador Institute Students, interviewed by author, Namagera, Uganda, January 28, 2013.

similarity of their responses highlighted a consistency in their experiences. They showed a common growth in their knowledge of the Bible with their ability to quickly reference the biblical stories.

The first common experience that stood out was the student's appreciation for the training. It went beyond a respectful greeting or the appropriate response in an interview setting. Many of the students listed specific aspects of the training they appreciated, such as the vision, the oral method, the teachers and leaders, the ability to understand the Bible and the things they had learned within the lessons.

Another aspect of their common experiences was the change in their personal lives. Repeatedly, without prompting, the students stated that the "training changed my life." Most of the time, those comments were given in connection with the story they appreciated. Some students went into great detail to retell the story, others pointed out the specific things from the story that had impacted them. Some told friends and neighbors the stories; others were evangelizing people; some wanted to start up a new class while others had already registered new students for their own class the day after their graduation. These testimonies revealed why the training had grown and why more classes were being added. There was an attitude of contagious excitement. The new graduates had made reproducing the training their priority. Those who taught did not receive a salary, they committed two-years to lead a class, and they often spent their own money to get to their class. The graduate's attitudes, the testimonies that they shared and their vision for teaching others the Word of God was an encouraging result of this program.

The stories the students shared had a personal nature to them. The feelings they felt or the emotions they displayed made it clear that the story had touched them deeply.



As Nathan told the story of the Aramean army going to Elisha, it was clear he personally was identifying with the servant whose eyes had been opened to the army the Lord had sent to protect Elisha. When Alice described the story of the Samaritan woman, it was as if she was that woman and Jesus had been sitting by the well and talking to her personally. Emanuel described the story of the Lost Son as if he personally had been the lost son.

The purpose of the training was for the students to grow in their knowledge of the Word of God, that goal was clearly met. The lives that were changed, the desire to reinvest their own time in teaching others and the personal nature of the stories which touched them are evidence of this work of God. He is the one who had given these students living testimonies to share.

#### *Teachers Training*

A teachers training session was held January 31, 2013.<sup>4</sup> All eight teachers were interviewed and were asked about their personal experience in the classes, what they had observed in the students, and about the stories from the training. These eight teachers were students just two years prior. They had received the training and in return spent two years educating others. That commitment indicates a successful transfer of information as well as the teacher's willingness to sacrifice time to mentor others.

The teacher's answers were similar to the student responses in regard to their personal experiences. They repeatedly stated their thanks for the training, the vision, and the leaders. Many times the thanks they described were in connection to the personal changes in their own lives. The teachers spoke about specific ways in which they were

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<sup>4</sup> Ambassador Institute Teachers, interviewed by author, Namagera, Uganda, January 31, 2013.

changed. It is interesting to notice in the midst of the common theme of change that each person experienced the work of God in unique ways. For Bagatia, the change was in his own ability to understand the Bible and to share it with his family. For James and Godfrey, forgiveness was the most important message, for Tracy it was justice, for David it was being faithful and for Musasizi it was growing deeper into the Word of God. The teacher's observations are another confirmation of the success of this education method.

### *Personal Stories*

The interviews reveal how people answer or understand certain questions. The personal stories of these students give greater insight into the reason that the training was important to them.

Musasizi Wilson is the chairman of the Ambassador Institute in Uganda. He was a third generation witch doctor, following after his father and grandfather. In 1989, Wilson became a Christian and a short time later was asked to be the pastor of a church.

In 2009, at the age of 49, Wilson enrolled in the Ambassador Institute to study God's Word using an oral training method. Two years later, Wilson graduated and was elected to be the chairman of the teachers. At his graduation ceremony he said, "We want to thank you for bringing this oral training to us because we know that now we are receiving the true Word of God."<sup>5</sup>

After the first graduation he began to teach three classes. One time he walked three hours to reach the class because his bicycle had broken down. When asked, "Why

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<sup>5</sup> Musasizi Wilson, interviewed by author, Jinja, Uganda, January 22, 2011.

do you give so much of your time and energy to train others?” He said, “When you have tasted something that is sweet like honey, you want to share it with others.”<sup>6</sup>

Tracy grew up in a strict Muslim home. She had a difficult life which included abuse, rape, and being kicked out of her home with a child at age 13. She was hired by a Christian missionary family to help with the cooking and work around home.

Tracy always had a desire to know God and had attended a church but didn't really have any knowledge of the Bible. When the oral training class was started in Uganda, she was quick to join and faithful to attend. The stories of the Bible were coming alive to her. Previously, she would read the Bible and not understand anything, but in the classes, the Bible started to make sense and have meaning like it never had before. She says, “Now I understand the Word of God. I understand what it means to me. I understand how much God loves and cares for us. I understand the love of Christ.” “Now I can explain the Bible to people.”<sup>7</sup> She would not have used the word disciple to describe herself, but she had become one. It shows in her understanding of God, the attitude of her heart and her desire to share with others.

David was not home when the team stopped at his house, so they asked his wife if the training had been helpful to him. She said, “I have identified a change in his life, a change in his ministry and a total change in his character.”<sup>8</sup> Character can be best measured by what people say about you when you are not around. For David, the change had become obvious to his wife so she also joined the training.

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<sup>6</sup> Musasizi Wilson, interviewed by author, Jinja, Uganda, January 28, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Omara Tracy, interviewed by author, Jinja, Uganda, January 30, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Namuyonjo Joruth, interviewed by author, Jinja, Uganda, January 28, 2013.

Fredrick is a milk distributor in Uganda. He is well known over a large area because the milk for the district goes through his office; he is full of joy and has a great reputation. A Muslim man asked Fredrick about the training he had been a part of, “How can we get this training as well?” Fredrick said, “We can train you as well, but instead of meeting in the mosque we can meet under the mango tree.”<sup>9</sup>

Sebastian was 72 when he started the Ambassador Institute oral Bible study. He was 74 when the graduation was held. Although Sebastian had studied hard, the 84 stories and 2200 verses of the Bible were too much for him to complete in the two years, so he was given a Certificate of Participation. That was not enough for him, so two years later he finished all of the course work and received the full diploma.

Jimmy’s class was asked to present one of the stories they had learned. They chose the story of creation. The ten students in the class all participated in acting out the drama to the delight of the crowd who was watching. After they had received the traditional Ugandan celebration shriek, they started to tell the story over again in a traditional African style of song. Before the people even knew the song they were singing the echo and memorizing the entire story.<sup>10</sup>

### **Literature Review**

Another aspect of evaluating the oral method is looking at the measurable results found in the literature review. It is important to consider what other authors have to say

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<sup>9</sup> Isabirye Fredrick, interviewed by author, Jinja, Uganda, January 28, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Jimmy Mpata, performance witnessed by author, Butagaya, Uganda, September 8, 2009.

about this methods ease of use, its reproducibility and its accuracy. These are factors in whether this training should be used to teach people who would in turn teach others.

*Measured by Recall*

Avery Willis is considered one of the fathers of the modern oral emphasis. In his book *Truth that Sticks: Communicating Velcro Truth in a Teflon World*, Willis points out the very simple truth that we are created and designed with *loops* in our brain which make it possible to *hook* or attach the truths of God’s Word. “God intended for us to use our sensory learning loops – sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste – to remember His Word”<sup>11</sup> The problem is that we are so overloaded with information our senses have become callous to constant communication and have created a sort of Teflon coating over our naturally created receptors. The challenge we face is to reclaim the use of all of the senses rather than just the audible voice which is a part of one-way communication highlighted in an outline and word analysis.

Willis suggests that to reclaim our sensory learning loops, we need to communicate the story of God’s Word in a way that uses all of the five senses. For example:

Hearing is not only listening to the words, but also imagining all of the sounds that go along with the story. They might include a song, background noises like sea waves, sounds that things in the story make like a bird or a sheep. Sight includes the drama of the setting, the emotion in a person’s face, vivid descriptions of the scene, personal involvement in the reenactment of the story. Touch takes the abstract and makes it more concrete. Body language provides sight, but the body language of a crown of thorns together with the facial features of the pain involved can allow the person listening an opportunity to feel in their minds the very thing that is being recreated. Smell and Taste in the same way might be difficult to reproduce in reality, but connecting a person to the smells and the tastes that they have experienced in the

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<sup>11</sup> Avery T. Willis and Mark Snowden, *Truth That Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010), 23.

past can cause the smell of a net full of fish or the meal at the Last Supper to be imprinted on a person's mind.<sup>12</sup>

Once the story has been told in a way people can remember, then the study of the text becomes easier. The study of the thoughts, attitudes and actions of the people in the story cause the story to be memorable and to grow in depth. People can start to understand the real life situation of the beggar on the side of the road, the woman with the flow of blood or the man born blind.

A final memory loop is to apply the text to people's own lives. It makes the disciple who asked Jesus how many times he must forgive his brother the same disciple they see when they look in the mirror. It is not only Abram's faith being tested by the sacrifice of Isaac; it is the listeners' very own faith that is being stretched.

### *Measured by Understanding*

Paul Koehler has written a book titled *Telling God's Stories with Power*. In the book several people describe how they and their hearers have gained in their understanding of the Bible. One man, Sunil Kumar Sadhu writes,

The way I used to preach, I would need a long time to prepare my message. But now without any preparation, I can preach at least fifty messages. Everyone told me, "Brother Sunil, you are preaching so differently now. Your messages are so beautiful. Whatever you were speaking before we could not understand it. But now we are able to understand you very well."<sup>13</sup>

The beginning of understanding the Bible is to understand the narratives. The Bible is between 40 and 70 percent, narrative depending on the definition of "narrative." Jesus himself used parables and questions to teach his disciples and the crowds. Matthew

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<sup>12</sup> Willis and Snowden, 48-49.

<sup>13</sup> Paul F. Koehler, *Telling God's Stories with Power: Biblical Storytelling in Oral Cultures* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library Publishers, 2010), 36.

says, “Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable” (Matt. 13:34).

Nalin and Linda Senapatiratne have co-authored *Telling God's Story*. They describe the differences between linear thinking and circular or narrative thinking. The emphasis is linear thinking is reason. It looks for universal principles which can be shown to be true regardless of context. It strives for explicit definitions of truth. In contrast, narrative thinking is a way of knowing that places knowledge in human experience located in a particular time and place. It calls on the listener to recreate the experience rather than analyze the discourse.<sup>14</sup> Since the Bible is in large part narrative in its form, then it seems understanding the circular thought process would be critical to understanding the Bible more fully.

Toward that end, Herbert Klem quotes Charles Kraft and four principles for effective communication. The first is the frame of reference principle that states ideas are most effectively communicated when the speaker and the hearer have the same understanding of life, worldview and culture. The second principle is the credibility of the communicator. If the communicator is believable, the receptor is more likely to give the message serious attention. Third, the communicator needs to be relevant to felt needs of the listener. If the message applies to the receptor, the message is more likely heard. The fourth principle is when the receptor is able to identify with the communicator.<sup>15</sup> These also point out the value of using oral narratives to communicate the Bible. In the

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<sup>14</sup> Nalin and Linda Senapatiratne, *Telling God's Story* (Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: Lanka Bible College and Seminary, 2009), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, CA.: W. Carey Library Publishers, 1981), 81-86.

story, the bond between the communicator and the listener, these four points of effective communication are more quickly bridged.

*Measured by Communication*

In regard to effectiveness of oral communication, some of the same benefits and same challenges of TEE apply to the oral methods of communicating across cultures. Instead of using a programmed instruction manual created by one author and translated to a second or third language, the text is made up exclusively from the Bible. It is a natural method of learning since the texts are narrative and storytelling is the root of many societies social fabric. The Bible has already been translated into many languages by teams of people and the discussion or training can begin from that very point.

Stories are easier than abstract theological terms or thoughts to transfer from one culture to another. Deeper thoughts and concepts can then be developed within the language of the receiver's culture by discussing and learning from the actions of the biblical characters. For example, in storytelling, the listener decides what to do with the information. In preaching, teaching, or programmed instruction, the preacher, teacher or writer decides what to think, know or believe. Storytelling involves the listener in the learning process and helps them develop their own critical thinking skills. They learn how to learn rather than just learn what to know.

Stories can also be put to music and drama to help the learning or memorization process to take place. Avery Willis says, "Bringing the stories of the Bible to life in a way that involves people's emotions allows them to walk away with God's truth deeply embedded in their hearts. The truth of God's Word will stick in their heads and hearts."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Willis and Snowden, 98.



Herbert Klem describes that in the African context “songs are central to the story to the extent that the story is primarily a ‘frame’ for the song, a setting in which to sing the song.”<sup>17</sup>

One of the reasons oral training is effective is that it allows the listener the privilege of self-discovery. Paul Koehler recalls a story from Ben Haggarty about his colleague. “One of the girls was hanging back at the end” he recalls, “and came up to the colleague quite aggressively, and said, ‘What did you do to my head? You put something in my head, what did you do?’ She realized this girl had never experienced imagination before.”<sup>18</sup> Biblical oral narratives can jump from one culture to another effectively because listeners are learning for themselves.

Another reason the oral style of communication is effective in cross-cultural communication is that values are held within emotional experiences, pictures, and actions from our past. Ben Okri is quoted in Paul Koehler’s book regarding the power of stories. Okri says,

It is easy to forget how mysterious and mighty stories are. They do their work in silence, invisibly. They work with all the internal materials of the mind and self. They become part of you while changing you. Beware the stories you read or tell: subtly, at night, beneath the waters of consciousness, they are altering your world.<sup>19</sup>

### *Summary*

There is a large amount of information connected with this study. The exams and surveys give quantitative information that shows the positive effects of the training. The interviews reveal some of the reasons why there were positive effects on the students.

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<sup>17</sup> Klem, 127.

<sup>18</sup> Koehler, 59.

<sup>19</sup> Koehler, 187.

The past enrollment, previous students, and previous teacher testimonies add to the information available. The literature also emphasizes the effectiveness of oral training in a variety of ways. There is sufficient data for a reliable study but the correlation of the data is essential to ensure that the study is valid.

## CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF THE ORAL TRAINING

This project addressed the need for biblically trained leaders in Uganda. In response to this problem, the researcher studied the use of oral training as a method to train leaders. There are several aspects of this training that run parallel to each other. They are dependent on one another and yet independent as well. The parallel nature of these topics can be seen throughout the paper. These topics intersect in the analysis of the data and they enhance both the reliability and the validity of the study.

### **Theoretical Findings**

#### *Biblical Oral Training*

The biblical aspects of this study were important because of the use of orality throughout the history of the Bible and the definition of what is meant by biblical education. Biblical oral history by itself is a good reason to consider using an oral means for modern training. The biblical study was an essential part of understanding how oral training could be used to train Ugandan leaders in the Bible.

Oral training would be just another training technique except for its long biblical history. The powerful creative all-knowing God used the narratives of Genesis and Exodus to introduce his character to his people. He chose oral communication to pass on his character through the millennium from the time of Adam and Eve through the New Testament. Through this method his people were able to personalize this God who was far above and beyond them. The distant incomprehensible God became real and personal.

Moses put the instructions he received from the Lord in the Arc of the Covenant and taught the people with a song. The Rabbis and Jewish leaders adopted an oral training for their multiple levels of education. Memorization of scripture began at an early age and was the education method for children throughout their formative years. An oral tradition became the norm of the culture and the synagogues.

Jesus himself used oral communication and specifically the parables as his tool of choice to bridge the gap between heaven and earth. With the parables he was able to relate to all segments of society. He was able to teach the people about the kingdom of God in a way they had not previously understood.

The parables had a power that was unique. With them the people could see themselves and they could see the kingdom of heaven. For some, their sins were exposed, for others they were given hope that God was still waiting for them to return. The people learned about the mysteries of heaven in simple understandable terms. They learned about God through narrative communication. It was the way they understood God.

### *Biblical Education*

In addition to the method that God used to communicate with his people is the content of what he was communicating. He was teaching his people about himself, who they are, and how to live before others. The word disciple describes a person who is learning about God, growing in his likeness, and living out that change in their lives.

Biblical education includes the three aspects of knowledge, character, and ministry. Knowledge of God is more than information it is powerful, transformative, active, and intimate. Those that came to know God could never be the same because they were changed on the inside. The development of a person's character is a process that

involves the influence of the Holy Spirit's work as much as it does a decision of a person's will. Throughout biblical history the Lord was changing his people. That inner work had an outward effect as God's people lived a life of worship, prayer, Scripture, love for people, and the call of God on their lives. Ministry is bringing the knowledge of God to the world. It is making disciples.

Biblical education is discipleship. It is not information alone but it is learning and growing for the purpose of teaching others. Discipleship is both a person's conscious decision to pass on what they have received as well as God's revelation of himself to others. When disciples make disciples, the Spirit of God is actively at work changing people so that the kingdom of God grows. Jesus used parables to train his disciples and they followed the oral example to teach those that followed them.

### *Modern Oral Training*

The modern oral training technique has a similar form to its biblical forerunner and it has unique qualities. The importance of the biblical study is matched by the importance of understanding how the modern mission community was using oral communication. Understanding oral training, looking into the history of orality, and the African oral culture each contributed necessary elements to the study as a whole.

Oral training is more than just telling stories. It is an interactive learning style that unites the communicator and the listeners. In oral communication real people are learning from the real people in the stories. The listeners are sharing the experience of those in the narrative. The communicator is involved with, interacting with, and learning alongside of those that are listening. It is multi-sensory and interactive. When the people of the

narratives are challenged to follow the Lord, then those who are involved in the training are challenged to do the same.

The International Orality Network and its member organizations have led the way for oral communication to be recognized as a tool for international missions. Oral training has a unique way to bridge cultures and languages. It allows the word of God to be living and active. It leaves a lasting memory in the minds of those participating because this communication is an experience with God as he interacts with his people.

People were created with five senses. These senses act as hooks for the Velcro stories to be remembered. The meaning of a story is communicated from one person to another through the mental recreation of the image or action that is described. That means that the story is easier to communicate, experience, remember, and transfer to the intended audience. It is the way that oral cultures learn.

### *Oral History*

The history of oral communication can be understood from its modern mission usage and its African roots. The modern mission movement grew out of a desire to bring theological education to people outside of a traditional classroom setting. That concept took the form of Theological Education by Extension (TEE). TEE started in Latin America and spread across the mission fields because of its potential training benefits for the difficult to reach students. The use of orality had similar goals and has also spread widely.

At the time that TEE was making inroads into the mission community, the early pioneers of oral training were laying the foundation for the oral mission movement. Herb Klem and Mark Zook were both emphasizing the need for the same thing at the same

time in different countries by different methods. By the year 2000, the foundation of the International Orality Network was being formed. The partner organizations saw the need for a new ministry method that could reach primary oral communicators.

These steps made it possible for the oral communication of scripture to be used in Africa rather than the previous emphasis on literacy training. Statistics on African literacy highlight the need for oral communication. More than an issue related to literacy in Africa is the cultural value on oral communication. From east to west, from north to south, the continent of Africa is united in its interactive participatory oral communication. Orality is a part of African history, religion, rituals, celebrations, work, and family gatherings. If there is going to be leadership development in Africa as a whole or Uganda in specific, then oral communication must be considered as a primary tool.

To develop biblical leaders in Uganda the servant leadership theories need to be connected with Jesus' discipleship principles and an oral teaching method. Servant leadership is possible in Africa; studies have shown that the people are receptive to the idea. An important aspect of this study is the fact that the Ugandans were judging their fellow Ugandan's with regard to the surveys and the interviews. They are measuring their own people against the biblical standard for leadership strengths and weaknesses.

## **Practical Findings**

### *Exams*

The exam results highlight strengths and weaknesses in teachers and students. The students of some teachers did well on their oral exams while the students of other teachers did poorly. The classes of Kimaka, Kisima, and Naranbhai had the same teachers, but the exam results from one class to another vary greatly. Students from

Kimaka were consistently poor in their oral exams but did much better on their written exams. The students of Kyomya were consistently better on their oral exams but did poorly on their written exams. Overall the students did average on their exams.

Average scores shows that the training was understandable enough for everyone to be able to pass. It was difficult enough that the training required hard work to pass. Those who found the training to be beyond their ability dropped out earlier in the program. Those who did not have enough time to study stopped rather than get to the end without sufficient grades to receive a certificate. The students that did pass come from a wide range of ages and educational backgrounds, so it is not an exclusive club of elite students that managed to finish the training.

### *Surveys*

#### **Character**

The character surveys highlighted the attribute of quarrelsome as the quality that the students most struggle with. The other areas of concern included: arrogance, love of money, hiding the truth, dishonest gain, and a lack of perseverance. These character qualities are a concern for the Ambassador Institute students as well as the people of Uganda at large. Corruption permeates the culture. These survey responses show that the Ambassador Institute students still need to be molded by the hand of God. On the positive side, generosity, self-control, managing their home, faith in God having a desire to serve, not being double-minded, and not being quick to anger are examples of the work of God in these student's lives. As these students have lived their lives in front of their close family and friends they have been held accountable for the character that they have displayed.



## **Ministry**

The students and observers all rated the fourteen ministry areas high. The students that took this class have proven that they were committed to the study of God's word. That commitment likely follows them into their ministry lives as well. Since there was honest feedback on the personal and probing character qualities there must have been honest feedback on these areas of ministry as well.

### *Interviews*

The interviews came from a wide variety of students and observers. The age range and the backgrounds of the interviewees is a statement in itself of the spectrum of people involved with the Ambassador Institute training. The original 42 codes used for the interviews came from the second year curriculum topics. Only seven of those codes were not referenced in any of the interviews. There were ten additional codes that were added that were not directly part of the 42 codes from the curriculum.

The surprising result of the interviews was the consistent repetition of the codes, changed my life, knowing the Bible, and discipleship. These three are the greatest possible benefit that could come from the training. It is possible to educate people so that they know the Bible and it is possible to train people in discipleship, but to change people's lives requires something outside of educational control. The curriculum can be helpful, the teachers may be good, but to change a person's life is a work of God.

The changed life is a result of spending two years studying the word of God. It is the result of memorizing 2200 verses of Scripture. It is the result of discussing that word and considering how to apply the Bible every week. It is the result of a small group of people keeping each other accountable for the previous lessons learned. In this training

the purpose of knowing the Bible is to become a disciple of Jesus. The process of becoming a disciple means allowing the Holy Spirit to change the student's life.

The observer testimonies did not vary significantly from the student testimonies. The researcher made an effort to find people who would specifically mention negative things about the students or the training but even former enemies spoke well of it.

#### *Ambassador Institute Development*

The testimony of increased enrollment, multiplying classes, and new locations speaks well for the training. These measurements are indirect, but they may measure student attitudes and perceived value of the training better than exams, surveys, or interviews. The training has expanded numerically to 31 classes, linguistically to three languages, and geographically to distant locations.

The eleven students and eight teachers who were interviewed from the 2013 graduating class spoke favorably about the training. There were 25 students from the 2013 class who were ready to start their own classes immediately after completing their two years of study.

The personal stories of these students go beyond interview questions or survey results. They come from backgrounds of witchcraft, Islam, farmers, business men, and soldiers. They are young and they are old, they come from honored positions of status and difficult places of abuse. Yet, they have come to understand and know God's word and the power that it has to change their lives.

#### *Applied Literature*

Several literature sources emphasized the practical application of the oral training methodology. Avery Willis emphasized the practical aspect of memory recall that is

naturally built into people. Paul Koehler emphasized the listeners understanding of the message. Charles Kraft discussed four key principles that need to occur between the communicator and the receptor. Along with these is the practical aspect of communicating across cultures.

### **Conclusions**

The topics included in this summary could all be independent of one another. Biblical education does not necessarily coincide with biblical orality and yet in this project these two entities are interdependent. The African oral history does not necessarily connect to the modern orality mission movement. Yet, the goal of orality movement was to intentionally reach those people with an oral history so that the gospel could be understood by all. Oral communicators find their identity in how they share information. In this study, there are many themes that come together. The themes of biblical education, Jesus' parables, discipleship, biblical orality, African traditions, and modern missions all have an effect on the oral training being done in the area of Jinja, Uganda.

These many broad topics get narrowed even further in the Ambassador Institute oral curriculum. The emphasis in that training is specifically on the head, the heart, and the hands of the student. A person's knowledge of God must affect his or her character. The changed life must have a ministry outlet in the life of others. If this process is not happening, discipleship breaks down. When this process is working, the multiplication of ministry takes place. Biblically trained leaders come from the discipleship of people in their knowledge, character and ministry.

The student interviews summarized the results of the training. They testified to the changed in their own lives, the knowledge that they have gained, and their desire to disciple others. The observer interviews and surveys affirmed the same in the lives of the students.

This Ambassador Institute class has been trained in the Bible. Their test scores show that they have learned much. The surveys point out that the students have areas of strength and areas of weakness in their character. The surveys also show that the students desire to be leaders in ministry.

The use of the oral training has been effective in preparing this class for graduation. It has been effective in preparing teachers from previous classes who could reproduce what they had learned. It has been effective in passing on the biblical knowledge that the students needed to be able to pass their exams. It has had an effect on the students' lives personally and corporately. The family and friends that have been watching these students have confirmed that the training has been good.

One of the reasons that this training was able to bridge the language and cultural barriers is that the training was done by Ugandans to other Ugandans. The first class was taught in English, but since then subsequent classes were taught in their own mother tongue. Narratives are able to bridge these barriers more easily than other styles of education because meaning can be transferred from one person to the next through the mental images that stories create.

## **Evaluation of the Training**

### *Strengths*

The greatest strength of this program is the word of God working in people's lives. When the students give two years of their lives to the study of God's word, it will affect them. That is a strength that is separate from who is teaching the class. It does not depend on the student's intellect or ability to pass exams. It does not depend on the quality of the curriculum because the power is in the word of God that they are studying.

The strength of the program is the oral method used in the training. The stories get into the student's mind. The people of the Bible are lodged in their thoughts. The students begin to think and act in response to what they have learned from the people in the biblical narratives. Oral training is a natural communication style for those in Uganda. Their oral traditions can easily adapt to this new style of education.

Another strength of the program is that it is led by Ugandans for Ugandans. The training has been fully entrusted to the Ugandans to train their own people. This allows the training to match their cultural uniqueness, to multiply quickly, and to spread within Uganda without the direct or perceived outside influence. The Ugandans have taken pride in the fact that they are leading the training and that they are being examples to other countries on how to develop biblically trained leaders.

### *Weaknesses*

A weakness of the training is their lack of accurate records. If the training was only for one training cycle, losing the records from tests may not have a lasting effect. If this training is going to continue and grow, then there is a need for accurate record

keeping. In the future, government officials may require records to verify the legitimacy of the school.

There is a need for regular teachers training. The teachers need to be kept accountable to the classes that they have been entrusted with. They need to be sharpened in their communication skills and in their knowledge of the Bible. Regular teachers meetings will help them realize their interdependence and will grow their relationships with one another.

More research will need to be done regarding the reason for the high quarrelsome rating. Since it was reported as concerning significantly more than the other character qualities there must be an answer to why it received that rating. The other negative character ratings need to be brought to the attention of the leadership team in Uganda for their input and consultation.

### **Recommendations to Strengthen the Work**

One necessary step to bring unity and strength to the training is to establish an Ambassador Institute office where curriculum can be kept, records can be stored, and tests can be administered. Up to this point, the Ambassador Institute has not been operating out of an office or any normal school facility. All of the training has been dependent on shared spaces with churches or schools. A designated office would also be important for government acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the Ambassador Institute training.

The ministry team needs to be strengthened in their role of setting the course for future training. They need to see their role as leaders over the Ambassador Institute of Uganda. That includes responding to character weaknesses and missing test scores.

Previously they have not seen themselves as leaders over any major ministry, but now they have an opportunity to be a recognized training institute that can compete with other schools that use traditional classroom education.

Quarterly teachers meetings and annual teachers training events would go far to strengthen those that lead the lessons week after week. These quarterly meetings would be a chance for them to encourage each other, share the struggles of their teaching setting, and get ideas for creative ways to teach lessons. It is just as important to disciple the teachers as it is to disciple the students.

An annual class competition could be a good way to have the classes sharpen each other. The simple presentation of a lesson that has been learned well can cause the students to learn from other classes and their practices. Presenting the oral narratives in a simple drama or composing a song that goes along with the lesson are ways in which the personal and cultural can meld with the biblical.

The training over all has been doing well. The results of this project reveal the same. The above recommendations will benefit the training and strengthen the Ambassador Institute in Uganda into the future. These disciples have been trained and they are now capable of training others, thus setting up a multiplication ministry that can continue to train many more to the glory of God.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: PROJECT EVALUATION

### **Growth**

It has been a privilege to spend these last several years developing this oral training program. The training has been received and it has been passed on to three generations of students. The investment in developing training has a great personal value, but it does not have a larger lasting value unless others desire the training. Beyond the first generation of students, there must be students who understand the training and are willing to commit to teach it to others if content is going to get passed on to the second and third generation.

The success of this training must be credited to the efforts of the teachers and ministry team leaders in Uganda. They are the ones that took the tools that they received and built the Ambassador Institute of Uganda. The ministry team trained students every week for two-years, they traveled to remote classroom locations, and often paid their own transportation costs to reach training sites.

The curriculum makes the training possible, the Ugandan teachers invest their lives in the lives of their students, but the hand of the Lord is what changes lives. Something similar happened in Antioch. Luke wrote, “The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:21). The multiplication of the training in Uganda started with 20 people, now it has grown to 31 classes. That exponential growth could not be explained apart from the hand of the Lord.



He is the one that has caused the students to have a sincere interest in the study of his Word and the perseverance to complete two years of study. Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the wall in Jerusalem is a fitting picture of this development process. When the wall was finished “they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God” (Neh. 6:16).

The development of the Ambassador Institute has been a growing process. It started with a simple proposal for a board to discuss. It went from there to a concept, which needed to be implemented. The implementation started slowly over the course of two years as the first class tested each lesson as it was written. The next set of classes started immediately after the first set was completed. Now the third set of classes have already completed their two years of study. It would have been hard to predict that the training could have grown as it did. The data in this project show that the students in the study grew significantly as well.

The growth of the program has been numerical. The number of students that have participated in the two-year training has expanded exponentially. The growth has been geographical as the classes have expanded to distant locations, and the training has grown linguistically expanding into four native languages in Uganda. The future of the training seems to indicate a continued path of growth.

The researcher experienced personal growth in this process as well. He grew in his understanding of oral training in all of the areas described within this study. That growth was both an intellectual understanding of oral communication as well as the practical application of developing the oral curriculum. The content of the oral curriculum could easily have been a doctoral thesis in itself, but this study was focused

on validating the curriculum that had been put into practice. For the researcher it meant learning the essence of biblical education, ensuring that those core principles were apart of the teaching material, and verifying that the students were learning those same values.

The Ugandan students have grown through the training. They have said, “This training has changed my life.” They have also grown in other unexpected ways. The first class of 20 students did not speak English when they began the training, but two years later they were fluent in it. The memory work was difficult and seemed impossible for some. By the end of the training they had grown in their ability to recall longer and longer texts with out mistakes. The students grew in their ability to analyze the biblical texts on their own. In the beginning, to answer the questions about the narrative was challenging. They had not been taught to think in abstract ways or to consider for themselves what the text was saying. By the end the students had grown in their knowledge of the word of God. There were seven students that were led through a yearlong study of the book of Romans. They had to memorize two sections of the book every other week. Learning a story was significantly easier than memorizing long sections of an epistle. The students test scores were poor for the first term, but by the end of the third term they were quoting Romans in the same way they had recited the 84 narratives.

### **Lessons Learned**

One aspect of growth is learning from mistakes. The researcher was able to apply lessons learned in previous cross-cultural settings to this context. The following are three simple lessons that were helpful in making this training successful.

Be a learner. The international worker who comes in to a country with all of the answers will be viewed as arrogant rather than helpful. If that same person has a humble teachable spirit they will be welcomed, honored, and respected. The honor that the international worker gives to his or her international partners will be multiplied many times in return.

Language is the first place to be a learner. Greetings are very important step in gaining access to or respect from another people group. Language mistakes are a natural way to break down formal barriers and allow a level of friendship to begin. Vulnerability and laughter open the door to the next level of intimacy.

Be a servant. Instead of coming to a group of people with a personal agenda, allow the nationals to set the agenda. Let them describe their need and find ways to meet those needs. Sometimes the surface needs can hide their deeper felt needs. The students in Uganda have a surface need for money their deeper felt needs are for respect, honor, significance, and confidence. At the graduation service in 2013, the researcher was introduced as the International Director of the Ambassador Institute. He was able to turn the honor back on the students by stating, "In all of the world, Uganda is setting the example for the other countries. These 71 graduates are the ones that are leading the way for the Ambassador Institute in India, Ecuador, Ukraine, and the United States." The applause of the visitors showed the graduates that they were honored and respected. The statement from the researcher communicated his confidence in them and their significance in God's plan for this training.

Share your story. The focus of the work is on training, but the people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. In the Western world the

primary emphasis is placed on knowledge and information. In oral cultures the emphasis is placed on relationships and history. A teacher's history matters more to the student than his or her knowledge. They will decide whether to listen someone based on the person's age, family background, and their social standing. They care about who they know and whether they will join their community. The researcher found that sharing his life with the people of Uganda was an invaluable investment of time. It was that relationship that caused the teachers and ministry team leaders to recall with fondness times in the past and look forward to future times together.

The researcher was able to attend a teachers training event with eight Ugandan teachers in 2011. That event was held at a fancy resort intended mostly for tourists. The four Americans and eight Ugandans ate, hiked, studied, swam, and cried together for three days. In those three days a deep bond of friendship was formed. It was a friendship that persevered through trials, doubt, and mistrust. It continues to be a memory that unites that band in their common goal of developing biblically trained leaders in Uganda.

It was difficult to continue close relationships between the Ugandans and the researcher because of the distance and the time zone difference. More regular communication could have enhanced the relationship and may have avoided some pitfalls along the way. Some distance between the researcher and the ministry team was beneficial. It allowed an attitude of mutual respect that rose above the daily challenges of life. The American missionary, Pastor Jore, was the essential link to ensure that the Ugandan nationals had weekly contact and encouragement.

### **Responses to the Training**

It is interesting to notice that there seems to be a natural acceptance of the oral training by ministry supporters but the training in Africa seems distant from their own lives. They don't know the people, but they are thankful that they are being trained in God's Word. They understand that those people in Africa need Jesus and biblical training. They support this ministry because it is an effective way of helping them. One person has said, "You get the most bang for your buck. This is the only ministry that is multiplying in size."

The missionary community has a different response. There is recognition that oral training is a new valuable ministry tool. There is an interest and a longing to get a hold of anything that is working and find out if it is useable in their own settings. The vast network within the mission community includes close friendships and and sharing of information with one another. They will readily share success stories of changed lives. The reason that this ministry expanded into five countries and six languages was because of the interest of the nationals to this training concept. The training in Brazil and in Ukraine has since followed other paths for uncontrollable situations in their training settings.

The denominational leadership has another response. They look at this oral training as a method for the nationals to become self-sufficient. Their goal is see ministries grow, become nationalized, and turned over to the local church. There has been a great excitement over the training in Uganda because they have been self-sufficient from the beginning. There has not been any money given toward salaries, transportation, building rent, or class supplies. The only money that has been channeled through the

denomination office was the initiation of microloans to help the leaders provide for their families.

### **Community Validation**

The first class of 20 was made up of Ugandan pastors and church leaders. When they completed the training, several of the senior pastors from their churches asked to be trained. This made a natural multiplication bridge. Eight of those first graduates started classes in their own churches. It was amazing to see multiple examples of the senior pastor becoming a student of one of his own congregational member.

Those that have been through the training are often recognized for their ability to preach, teach, evangelize, pray, and lead. The students themselves repeatedly said that they had gained confidence in the Word of God. That confidence could be easily seen in their own demeanor. Many students have been asked, “Where did you learn to preach like that?” which means that the student’s exegetical walk through one biblical narrative for a 45 minute message has been captivating to people. This has also attracted students to enroll or classes to be requested.

Ministry roles in Uganda are not defined in the same way in the United States. Often a person is given a leadership position within a church based on the communities’ perception of their leadership abilities. The training has validated many in their role as a leader. For example, Bagatia invited his wife’s family over to his house for a formal event. At the event, Bagatia was not allowed to speak, his friends had to speak on Bagatia’s behalf. His friends spoke repeatedly about the validity of his leadership over his home based on his leadership in the Ambassador Institute.

The government has cracked down on religious leaders who don't have any formal training. Unless a pastor has at least two years of training he is at risk of being removed from the church he serves. This crackdown has validated the training in the eyes of the government. The Ambassador Institute has been registered with the government and as such it is allowed to be a theological training institute for the country.

The graduation ceremony is the first such ceremony that many of these adults have ever had. It is a highly prized event to wear the traditional cap and gown, invite friends to watch, receive a diploma from an international guest, listen to small speeches, and share a meal with soda. That event alone may have contributed to the growth in attendance at future classes as much as the training that they received. At the 2015 graduation, photographers were brought in to capture the event and take pictures of the students receiving their diploma. Those photographers were able to send those digital images to the studio during the meal and have finished pictures back to sell before the meal was over.

At the 2011 graduation, the President of the Uganda Four Square Church was invited to attend. After the graduation this denomination leader approached the researcher and said, "All of my pastors are welcome to study underneath your program. I can see that this training is solid on the Word of God and these two pastors of mine that studied with you are well-prepared."

The 2015 graduation was the first event to include a class from the Anglican Church. There had been a long-standing mistrust and disrespect between the "Born Again" and the Anglicans. Multiple people stated in wonder "Who would ever guess that these two groups could study and graduate together?"

### **Further Study**

There are many areas that could be studied further in this aspect of developing biblically trained leaders in Uganda. The topic of oral training has only been touched in this study both from its history in Africa as well as the understanding of its effectiveness in training. It would be good to follow this study with a quantitative study of the training. It would be helpful to know what knowledge the students bring to the class before the study begins and then test them again afterwards to observe specific areas of growth in their knowledge of scripture.

It would be helpful to know if students in future graduation cycles compare to the responses given in this graduation. It would be helpful to compare the character and ministry qualities from other locations in Uganda to see if similar results are reported. If they do compare, it would give reliability to this study and it would highlight the areas that need special focus within the current curriculum.

The Ambassador Institute curriculum is also being used in India. It would be interesting to know if the value of the training was able to transfer to that culture and language. If the students see a similar value in the training, do they show similar character traits or ministry lives?



APPENDIX A  
ORAL AND WRITTEN EXAM RESULTS

Table A.1 through A.9 contain the oral exam results from the data collected in Uganda. Table A.10 through A.18 contain the written exam results from the student exams over the past two years.

**Table A.1. Nakanoni Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
47	71	98	86	93	100	93
48	91	71	86	100	100	100
49	100	98	100	100	98	100
50	90	100	77	93	88	93
51	81	84	73	78	80	83
Average	86.6	90.2	84.4	92.8	93.2	93.8

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.2. Kimaka Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
40			58	53		75
41			43	53		10
42			55	43		20
Average			52	49.7		35

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.3. Bubugo Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
4	99	73	83	85	70	80
10	70	98	83	70	60	80
33	64	60	60	50	50	70
37	65	58	63	60	57	67
38	79	63	55	50	60	62
39	70	60	60	50	50	60
35	61	70	55	60	60	70
34	65	68	60	60	51	67
11	64	73	70	70	60	62
Average	70.7	69.2	65.4	61.7	57.6	68.7

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.4. Evangel Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
5	83	69	73	93	80	90
6	66	84	85	93	75	70
15	57	30	73	80	55	70
43	60	72	98	85	65	80
44	86	97	90	98	93	83
Average	70.4	70.4	83.8	89.8	73.6	78.6

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.5. Kisima Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
7	65	74	88	88	85	75
8	72	61	60	60	60	90
9	79	69	73	100	83	95
32	59	66	85	88	70	85
Average	68.8	67.5	76.5	84	74.5	86.25

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.6. Kyomya Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
16	83	77	83	85	85	80
17		71	75	75	80	73
18			76	80	78	85
19	62	70	78	78	86	80
20	90	68	75	85	83	68
21	86	65	83	73	80	73
46	34	84	76	90	80	60
Average	71	72.5	78	80.9	81.7	74.1

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.7. Lubani Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
23	66	64			73	78
24	72	81			65	73
25	41	41			60	63
27	90	83			75	70
29	72	86			83	75
Average	68.2	71			71.2	71.8

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.8. Namagera Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
1		97		93		
12		91		93		
13		95		93		
14		93		90		
26		98		95		
28		86		93		
30		90		75		
36		84		83		
Average		91.8		89.4		

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.9. Naranbhai Oral Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
2	59	52		72	72	80
3	76	76		83	98	93
22	70			62	72	92
31				70		
45	90			100	100	100
Average	73.8	64		77.4	85.5	91.2

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

The following are the written exam results from the data collected in Uganda.

**Table A.10. Kimaka Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
40		81	88	92	70	58
41		80	53	61	60	32
42		80	89	89	70	52
Average		80.3	76.7	80.7	66.7	47.3

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.11. Nakanoni Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
47	86	77	84	88	83	80
48	69	43	66	77	61	77
49	85		90	96	88	79
50	81	74	79	75	58	50
51	66	70	78	69	73	47
Average	77.4	66	79.4	81	72.6	66.6

*Source:* Ambassador Institute Graduation Survey March 2015

**Table A.12. Bubugo Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
4	94	93	88	90	98	96
10	86	83	92	90	84	90
33	67	64	62	65	84	90
37	66	67	92	94	92	90
38	82	59	86	85	88	76
39	60	62	63	80	60	96
35	68	89	78	85	76	90
34	60	91	62	90	94	76
11	79	88	85	90	88	90
Average	73.6	77.3	78.7	85.4	84.9	88.2

*Source:* Ambassador Institute Graduation Survey March 2015

**Table A.13. Evangel Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
5	81	98	90	70	86	81
6	79	92	87	88	79	64
15	37	60	61	90		64
43	66	72	81	77	88	71
44	70	67	79	54	89	74
Average	66.6	77.8	79.6	75.8	85.5	70.8

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.14. Kisima Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
7	66	78	75	70	90	63
8	74	77	77	91	86	51
9	92	94	88	92	97	72
32	68	60	83	93	64	65
Average	75	77.2	80.8	86.5	84.3	62.8

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.15. Kyomya Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
16		95	72	67	66	70
17		89	55	42	57	60
18			45	60	44	69
19		75	71	66	52	58
20		64	74	79	74	65
21		73	54	51	53	68
46		75	85	71	65	69
Average		78.5	65.1	62.3	58.7	65.8

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.16. Lubani Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
23		72			70	65
24		76			70	62
25		42			65	60
27		56			68	61
29		83			75	68
Average		65.8			69.6	63.2

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.17. Namagera Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
1		89		88		
12		84		68		
13		74		56		
14		65		57		
26		72		43		
28		75		84		
30		79		64		
36		49		57		
Average		73.4		64.6		

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

**Table A.18. Naranbhai Written Exam Results 2013-15**

Student ID	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
2	72		92	76		
3	83	81	96	88	91	88
22		55		80	84	70
31		89		93	96	
45	94	94	93	98	95	95
Average	83	79.8	93.7	87	91.5	84.3

*Source:* Ambassador Institute March 2013-2015

APPENDIX B  
STUDENT AND OBSERVER SURVEY RESULTS

Table 5.19 contains the 42 student surveys in which they judged their own character and ministry life. Table 5.20 contains the 48 observer surveys in which the observers gave their perception of their student in regards to their character and ministry performance. The character questions included the topics: love of money, telling the truth, anger, managing their home, quarrelsome, sexual thoughts, serving, being double-minded, dishonest gain, generosity, self-control, pride, perseverance, and faith. The student answers are given in Table 5.19 and the observer answers in Table 5.20.

The ministry life questions included the topics: worship, Bible study, prayer life, spiritual disciplines, love for family, love for neighbors, love for the church, church unity, prayer for healing, testimonies, evangelism, calling from God, suffering for the gospel, and missions. The student answers are given in Table 5.19 and the observer answers in Table 5.20.

The analysis of these two tables is found in chapter five on pages 117-121.



**Table 5.19. Student Survey Answers**

Student ID	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	52	53	54	55	56	57						
Not Love Money	5	5	2	5	5	4	4	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	5	2	5	5	5	2	5	5	2	5	5	5	3	2	5	5	2	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	2	4	4	4						
Not Hide Truth	5	5	5	5	2	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	1	2	4	2	3	5	5	4	2	5	5	5	3	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	2	4	5	5	4	4				
Not Quick to Anger	4	5	4	5	5	3	4	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	3	2	4	4	5	1	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	3	2	5				
Manage Home	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	5	4	4	4	4	1	5	4	5	5	3	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	5	4	3	3	4	4	4	4					
Not Quarrelsome	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	3	2	2	4	1	1	1	3	1	4	1	4	5	2	5	4	5						
Avoid Sex Temp	5	5	4	5	5	1	5	5	5	3	1	5	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	1	3	5	5	4	1	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5				
Desire to Serve	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	1	5	1	5	5	5	3	4	4	4	5	2	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	3	5				
Not Double Minded	5	5	5	4	5	2	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	4	5	5	2	4	5	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	2	5	4	5			
Not Dishonest Gain	5	5	4	4	4	5	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	3	4	5	4	5	2	5	4	5	5	1	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5			
Generous	5	5	5	4	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	3	4	4	3	5	5	1	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	3	5	3	2	5	3	2		
Self Control	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	1	4	5	5	3	5	5				
Not Arrogant	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	4	1	5	4	5	5	5	2	5	5	5	5	3	4	1	5	5	1	1	5	5	5	4	1	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	5			
Perseverance	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	1	1	5	2	3	1	5	3	5	5	5	3	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	1	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5			
Faith in God	5	5	1	4	4	5	5	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5			
Worship	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	5	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	3	5	5			
Study Bible	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	3	5	3	5	5			
Pray Daily	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	3	4		
Spiritual Disciplines	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	4		
Love Family	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	3	4	3	4	4	
Love Neighbors	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	5	5	3	5	3	4	4	4		
Love Church	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	4	4		
Church Unity	4	4	2	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	3	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	3	4	4
Prayer for Healing	5	5	4	4	3	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	5	4	5	5	3	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	
Testify for God	5	5	4	4	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4
Evangelism	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	4
Calling from God	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4
Suffer for Gospel	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	1	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	4
Missions	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4

*Source:* Ambassador Institute Graduation Survey March 2015

1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree

**Table 5.20. Observer Survey Answers**

Student ID	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48						
Not Love Money	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	4	2	5	4	5	3	1	5	3	5	1	5	5	1	5	5	1	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	1	4	5	5					
Not Hide Truth	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	1	5	4	5	5	5	1	5	5	1	5	5	1	5	1	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5			
Not Quick to Anger	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	1	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5			
Manage Home	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		
Not Quarrelsome	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	4	5	5	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	1	3	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		
Avoid Sex Temp	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	4	5	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		
Desire to Serve	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		
Not Double Minded	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	1	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		
Not Dishonest Gain	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	4	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
Generous	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
Self Control	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	1	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
Not Arrogant	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	2	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Perseverance	5	5	4	5	1	5	5	5	3	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Faith in God	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Worship	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Study Bible	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Pray Daily	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Spiritual Disciplines	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Love Family	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Love Neighbors	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Love Church	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Church Unity	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Prayer for Healing	4	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Testify for God	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Evangelism	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Calling from God	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Suffer for Gospel	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Missions	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	

Source: Ambassador Institute Graduation Survey March 2015

1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW CODING RESULTS

Appendix C includes the results of the 27 interviews conducted in Uganda. Those interviews included 21 students and 6 observers. The three tables in this appendix reflect the topics covered in the training curriculum. Table C.1 includes the character qualities in the curriculum and the number of times the interviewee referred to that character quality in the interview. Table C.2 includes the ministry topics in the curriculum and the number of times that the interviewee referred to those areas of ministry. Table C.3 includes the knowledge topics in the curriculum and the number of times that the interviewee referred to those knowledge topics. These three tables and the interviews are discussed in chapter five on pages 121-125.

**Table C.1. Interview Character Code Chart**

Character	Avoid Sex Temptation	Desire to Serve	Faith in God	Generous	Manage Home	Not Arrogant	Not Dishonest Gain	Not Double Minded	Not Hide Truth	Not Love Money	Not Quarrelsome	Not Quick to Anger	Perseverance	Self-control
Rodencia		1	1						1					
Patrick Tigua														
Omara Tracy			1							1			3	1
Olau John Bosco	3													1
Nate Jore										2			2	
Musasizi Wilson	1													
Mukisa Franco						1								
Mukisa Jesse			2		1						1	1	1	
Mfumbiro David		2	1		2				2					
Mfumbiro David2										1				
Mama Kate														
Kirabo Esther														
Kenabe Jesse			1		1	2						1		
Kenabe Christopher	1										1			
Juliet		3	1							1				2
Helen Anglican			1								1			
Godfrey	1		1		2	1						1		
Francis Pumude														
Francis Emolu			2											
Eyotia Jane						2								
Drunk Wycliff	1												1	
Carol Thieno						1								
Bishop Jackson														
B. Eliab Kinene														
Bagatia George	2											1		
Anita Bulungi	2		3			2								
Totals	11	3	7	10		6	9		3	5	3	4	7	4

Source: Dedoose Analytic Software 12/18/2015

**Table C.2. Interview Ministry Code Chart**

Ministry	Call from God	Church Unity	Evangelism	Love Church	Love Family	Love Neighbors	Missions	Pray Daily	Prayer for Healing	Spiritual Disciplines	Study Bible	Suffer for Gospel	Testify for God	Worship
Rodencia					1									
Patrick Tigua	2	2	1	1		2								
Omara Tracy												1	1	
Olau John Bosco	2			1	1						1			
Nate Jore														
Musasizi Wilson			1										1	
Mukisa Franco	1	1	1	1	1								2	
Mukisa Jesse					1			3		1			1	
Mfumbiro David	3													
Mfumbiro David 2														
Mama Kate						1					1			
Kirabo Esther														
Kenabe Jesse					1									
Kenabe Christopher						1		1			1			
Juliet											1	1	1	
Helen Anglican				1				1					2	
Godfrey	1			2	2	3					1		1	
Francis Pumude	1	1		2							3			
Francis Emolu		2	1				1				2			
Eyotia Jane			1	1		1								1
Drunk Wycliff														
Carol Thieno						1								
Bishop Jackson														
B. Eliab Kinene					2	2								
Bagatia George			2	1		1		1						1
Anita Bulungi	2		2											
Totals	10	6	5	7	9	9	12	1	6	1	10	2	9	2

Source: Dedoose Analytic Software 12/18/2015

**Table C.3. Interview Knowledge Code Chart**

	Knowledge	Angels-Demons	Baptism	Eternal Things	Father	Holy Spirit	Jesus	Judgement	Lords Supper	Nature of Man	Power of the Word	Salvation	Satan	Word as Gospel	Word as Law
Rodencia															
Patrick Tigua											2				
Omara Tracy					3										
Olau John Bosco	1														
Nate Jore										1					
Musasizi Wilson	1											1			
Mukisa Franco	1											1			
Mukisa Jesse											1	1			
Mfumbiro David	1														
Mfumbiro David Second					1										
Mama Kate															
Kirabo Esther															
Kenabe Jesse												1			
Kenabe Christopher	2						1					2			
Juliet				1	1	1				3			1		1
Helen Anglican															
Godfrey															
Francis Pumude	3					1					2	2			
Francis Emolu	1				1		1				2	1			
Eyotia Jane	1						1								
Drunk Wycliff												1			
Carol Thieno															
Bishop Jackson															
B. Eliab Kinene	2				1	1	1								
Bagatia George			1												
Anita Bulungi		1			1		2				1	3		2	2
Totals	13	1	1	1	8	3	6			4	8	13	1	2	3

Source: Dedoose Analytic Software 12/18/2015

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