

*Even as the world becomes increasingly dependent upon modern communication technologies, the majority of cultures remain connected only through the spoken word.*

## *Connecting the World's Oral Societies with God's Word*

# Oral Communicators

Some are illiterate because of a lack of education. Others belong to the thousands of oral cultures of the globe. They communicate and learn through stories, narratives, songs and proverbs, not through books or written works.

The Bible reveals the power of oral communication. After all, Jesus never wrote a book. He told stories within an oral culture that bears striking similarities to thousands of cultures today.

No medium provides the opportunity to reach these societies better than radio. TWR uses drama and compelling narratives like *The Radio Bible* so that listeners can experience faith through hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

The power of the broadcast medium lies in the creative use of the spoken word. Together with partner organizations, TWR produces and broadcasts dramatic Scripture and Christian teachings in dozens of languages.

The challenge for the future lies in broadening the ministry's reach to include many more regions yet to experience sustained evangelization.

As we join together today to pray for our global and regional initiative/s to reach Oral Communicators it may be helpful to reflect on the following:-

- ❖ How will those of us who are 'literate' reach those in Oral Societies when our communication styles are so completely different? Even when speaking, our understanding and 'translation' of the words/sentences are completely different. How then will the Oral Societies be reached with the message of God's love and saving grace?
- ❖ People cannot simply be classified as either literate or illiterate. The issue doesn't just deal with the ability of reading and writing and each stage in the process from illiteracy to accomplished literacy is significantly different. For effective communication to occur, individuals need to be communicated with in a style that matches their preferences.
- ❖ Narrative styles are common vehicles that oral communicators use to process and 'carry around' information. To remember a teaching, a concept, or a principle, the issue is very often remembered within a story.
- ❖ Knowledge for oral communicators, and especially illiterates, consists only of what can be recalled. Whilst stories are easier to recall and retell, styles of communication that involve outlines/bullet points, principles, or steps within a process are difficult for oral communicators to 'translate'.

- ✧ The oral communicator's ability to learn is, of course, just as good as a literate's - and their memory tends to be superior to the average literate person's memory. The oral communicator is, after all, very often totally reliant on the information that they can 'recall'.

Additional, more specific prayer points are:-

- ✧ Please pray for those involved in the development of programs and other initiatives which are designed/being designed for the oral cultures.
- ✧ Praise God for those that have identified and researched the issues regarding oral communicators.
- ✧ Please pray for the partnerships that TWR has in this area of ministry, particularly the developing relationship with Epic Partners whose focus is Chronological Bible Storytelling.
- ✧ Pray for wisdom as we seek to grasp the complexities of the communication styles that are needed to assist in the ministry to this huge people group.
- ✧ Give praise for the formation of the International Orality Network (ION) which is a merger between the Oral Bible Network and the Lausanne Task Force. Bill Mial has been asked to lead the Prayer Task Force for ION - please pray for Bill, and for this initiative.
- ✧ Give praise for the production of 'Radio Bible'. Eleven languages are now in production and six more languages are scheduled for recording in 2005. Please pray for God's continuing provision for these productions and for those working on them.
- ✧ Pray for John Northrop as he and Felix Widmer work to complete the longer version of the DVD called 'The Non-Literate Messenger'. This is an important tool in awakening the Church to the tremendous need of bringing the message of the gospel in an understandable (story) format.
- ✧ Pray for the individuals within this people group and please pray that 'lasting fruit' will be released with glory given to our God and Father.

## Oral societies across the globe

- More than 4,000 languages have no translated Scripture at all!\*
- At least 1.5 billion people have never been introduced to reading and writing in any form\*
- Women make up 66 percent of all oral communicators\*\*
- 52 percent of all oral communicators live in India and China\*\*
- 50 percent of all oral communicators are minority language speakers\*\*
- More than 50 percent of the world's population prefers oral communication to pass on values and truths\*

\*International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 2004

\*\*UNESCO, 2001