

Epistles and oral cultures by Durk Meijer, March 31, 2016

How could truth from the Epistles be relevantly communicated in an oral culture?

It is important to remember that there are many different communication art forms used in Scripture and that we should help people choose the most appropriate forms that could be used for each scripture passage, not forgetting the form we actually have it in the original writings.

The letters, which we may call epistles, are a vehicle that allows the author to communicate principles that he wants us to process. Greetings and closures are a part, because the vehicle of delivery is a letter. This means that letters are not narratives and sometimes don't even contain narratives. So, the focus when using such a form of communication should be on how to process the teaching. Every culture has ways of processing teaching, so we should help the people look at relevant ways of doing so. This may include first reading the letter publically one or more times. Then one could start addressing a section at a time. Basic Biblical knowledge of the subject discussed is often essential. The letters are sometimes very much like sermons, since they are addressing essential principles, yet typically we don't process a sermon as a group.