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On this 500th anniversary of the Reformation,[1] we remember that Martin Luther not only advocated for local-language scripture rather than Latin scripture, but also wrote new scripture-infused songs in the local language as a way for people to engage with scripture. When people worship in and learn through their local languages and arts, they can experience a heart-level understanding of the message of God's word. In this paper, I encourage readers to work with local storytellers, songwriters, dramatists, illustrators, and other artists to continue this Reformation of communication.

I will first expand Ferguson's (1968) and Cooper's (1990) three-part model of language planning into a three-part model of arts development, and then consider how Luther's work succeeded in combining these three types of activities. I'll present examples to verify that following the principles of language development and arts development while focusing on the domain of scripture use strengthens each of Wayne Dye's (2009) Eight Conditions for Scripture Engagement.

Why develop local arts for scripture engagement?

The first verb in the Bible tells us that God created. Formed in his image, we also create. David exhorts in Psalm 96:1 (NIV), "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth." Paul explains in Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) that "we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he

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planned for us long ago." Those "good things" include creating new works that glorify him and show our enjoyment of him. As C. S. Lewis wrote in *Reflections on the Psalms*,

> I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment. . . . The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him. (1958, 96–97)

The theological rationale for Christian creativity, then, is that we are created in the image of a creative God who encourages his people to create new works for him. Many of the ways people may encounter God and his word come through the voices and expressions of those who know him, telling his glory through their own art forms and bringing him all the glory of all the nations. These gifts, like the leaves of the trees in Revelation 22:2, may also be for the healing of the nations.

As of October 16, 2017, the Scripture Engagement homepage of the Forum of Bible Agencies International defines scripture engagement as "encountering God's Word in life-changing ways."[2] Scripture engagement activities work with communities to encourage people to encounter God's word in life-changing ways. Scripture engagement specialists encourage communities to distribute and interact with scripture and scripture-derived works in print, performances, visual arts, and recordings; to establish opportunities to use them; and to teach people how and why to interact with scripture or scripture-derived works. Local artistic genres communicate in ways people are used to receiving information, not requiring that people become readers in order to access and interact with scripture. Instead, people receive scripture in their traditional genres via works created by local community members.

Arts distinctives

Arts are form-heavy communication: the formal structures of arts carry emotive, symbolic, and contextual meanings and associations. Each genre and work is appropriate to its own set of occasions and functions. "There is no artistic form that communicates intended meanings universally. . . . Local creativity has essential benefits that outside creativity doesn't provide. These benefits include more penetrating, relevant, memorable, and engaging communication for education and motivation" (Schrag 2013a, ix).

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[2] http://www.scripture-engagement.org/

Arts offer ways to remember important truths, especially for nonreaders. They convey social memory and history. Arts often call out to people's hearts, eliciting emotional and cognitive responses. Arts may have performance contexts distinct from everyday interactions. Artistic communication tends to either expand or contract the density of information, compared to everyday communication. Artists and performers often rely on their audience's background knowledge of the artistic form and inside cultural references; thus, the meanings may be veiled from cultural outsiders, but for that reason more valued by insiders. Some arts require mastery by specialists, while others are commonly used by many in the community. Arts often represent a people's unique identity (Schrag 2013a, 7–9).

Different cultures' artistic genres make use of different artistic vocabularies, or meanings attached to symbols. They employ particular artistic grammars or structural rules. The Western visual grammar rule of perspective, for example, which artists use to convey relative distance by relative size, is not universal. Artists in other cultures may use size to indicate relative importance rather than relative distance (Petersen 2015, 5). They have a different artistic rhetoric, or rules for achieving a communicational goal (Hart 2007, 36–38).

Characteristics of local arts and arts of wider communication

People in multilingual societies—such as Côte d'Ivoire in West Africa with its 63 languages—may use one language for the market, another for home life, and another for the church or mosque. They associate each language with different functions and different social groupings. Vernacular languages and languages of wider communication (LWC) are suited to different functions in any given community. An LWC "provides a mutually intelligible medium for speakers in multilingual societies" (Brutt-Griffler 2006, 695). Languages that spread beyond their original communities become LWCs as other communities borrow them. Using a market language to buy carrots doesn't mean that that same language is the preferred one to learn about God.

When scripture is translated into a language for the first time, there is usually already a history of using scripture in a LWC. Changing the language of ministry from the LWC to a local language (or languages), or beginning to use multiple languages in ministry, is a paradigm shift for leaders and laypeople.

Similarly, local artistic genres[3] have a variety of functional associations. The categories of arts that Westerners think of, such as music, dance, and drama, may not use the same category boundaries as in other language or cultural areas. The Indian genre *bharatanatyam*, for example, has elements of music, dance, drama, and visual

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[3] Merriam-Webster defines genre as "a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/genre).

arts. When working with local communities, scripture engagement specialists ought to use local genre terms, following the semantic domains of the target language.

A *local art* is a genre that a society considers characteristic of their people, belonging to them, and performing an important function in their community. I define an "art of wider communication" (AWC) based on the definition of an LWC. An AWC is a genre that provides a mutually intelligible medium for members of multiple cultural societies. Local arts and AWCs are each suited to different functions in multicultural communities. Genres may function for solidarity or for prestige and be associated with social contexts and purposes. Each genre carries different emotions, associations, symbolism, and relational implications. All of those characteristics make different local arts or AWCs appropriate for different social contexts. The community chooses the appropriate genre for each communicational goal.

Every culture has unique genres, including elements of song, dance, drama, poetry, storytelling, and visual arts. In entering a community, we understand that different artistic genres perform different functions well. We enter an existing arts ecosystem. For example, when the Mono people of the Democratic Republic of Congo hear the *gbaguru* genre, they expect the work to communicate wise advice applicable to the situation at hand, accompanied by the *kundi* harp. When Mono artists communicate scripture in this genre, they communicate that scripture is wisdom they can apply to local life.[4] It is for them, and not the possession of a foreign culture only. Oral cultures use arts to pass on crucial knowledge from one generation to another. When they communicate scripture in their own genres, they more fully take ownership of their faith.

What arts development is not

Arts development does not imply teaching AWCs, nor "making another culture's arts more Western" or "more like fine arts." I view arts development not as an outsider teaching arts from outside the local culture, but rather as the outsider learning, valuing, and esteeming the local arts. Ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood writes about the challenges of becoming bi-musical: "The initial challenge, of course, is the development of the ability to hear. The tendency of Westerners to 'correct' unfamiliar intervals, usually without being aware of doing so, can only be corrected by repeated exposure to listening and by singing" (1960, 56). He encourages ethnomusicologists to be active participants, not passive analysts. Brian Schrag (1989, 311), following Hood, encourages cross-cultural workers to become bi-musical just as they seek to become bilingual. More recently,

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[4] More details about this genre will be given later in this article.

Schrag expands this encouragement to become not only bi-musical but also multi-artistic (2013, xii). We can value the vast expanse of arts from multiple cultures and learn to participate in some of them. For cultural newcomers—even those striving to be culturally sensitive in learning a local art—their inner "auto-correct" may conform to the genre standards of their own home culture (Hood 1960, 56). One culture's arts need not be judged by the rules of a different culture's arts.

Arts advocacy, in this view, is not about a cultural outsider making creative works. Rather, "an Arts Advocate's primary job is to encourage others to make new artistic things. Their posture toward a community is one of learning, dialoguing, facilitating, and encouraging" (Schrag 2013a, x). The scripture engagement specialist works with local artists and leaders, encouraging communities to encounter God's word in life-changing ways through their own communicational resources.

Arts development's three-part model, based on language development's three-part model

People learn more easily and rapidly in languages and genres that they understand well. According to the *Ethnologue* listing of 7,099 living languages (Simons and Fennig 2017):

- 576 institutional languages have a standardized written form, literature, and widespread formal education;
- 1,601 developing languages have some literature in a standardized form, although literacy is not yet widespread;
- 2,455 languages are in vigorous oral use, but they do not yet have locally composed literature or a standardized writing system; and
- 2,467 languages are endangered because the older generation is not passing them on to the next generation.[5] And it is not just the languages that are endangered, but also the related cultures, worldviews, and ways of life, including arts.

A language's vitality is stronger when it has more participants, greater prestige, and more domains (contexts) of use. The more domains—times, ways, topics—for which a language is employed, the more vital and stable the language will be. As a language loses domains, prestige, and participants, it becomes more endangered.

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[5] That scale may be further subdivided into more precise categories of the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis and Simons 2016, chapter 5.2), but I am summarizing with fewer categories to focus on the relationship of language development to arts development and scripture engagement.

Similarly, an artistic genre's vitality is stronger when it has more participants, prestige, works, and domains of use. The more people using an art form and the more functions for which they use it, the more vital the genre.

Domains are communication contexts in which people make choices about which languages and genres to use. Some examples include: education, home, market, newspapers, playground, religious services, government functions, and radio and television programming. Smaller domains exist within each of these large domains of use. Within the domain of Christian life, for example, subdomains may include a Wednesday evening study group, Saturday choir group, Sunday sermon, group worship songs, teaching dramas, public prayers, personal prayers, and Bible readings.

Gatekeepers are people who make decisions about how a domain functions, such as what languages or genres to use in a domain. These may include elders, pastors, Bible study leaders, choir group leaders, mayors, chiefs, and radio station managers. *Stakeholders* are all parties with interests in the linguistic and artistic decisions made in any domain. They include the intended audience and the people who will be using the language in the desired domains.

Communities interested in strengthening their languages may develop their local languages for more life domains using principles of language planning. Ferguson (1968, 27–35) and Cooper (1990, 99–163) describe three facets of language planning: status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. Lewis and Simons (Lewis and Simons 2016) extend Ferguson and Cooper's three aspects of language planning to language development led by local leaders, rather than being directed from the national or provincial level.

Language development considers how local languages may gain functions for more people in a community. Because arts are also means of communication, we can apply language development principles to the development of local arts. *Arts development* considers how local artistic genres may gain more functions for more people in a community. Both language development and arts development include the three components of status, corpus, and acquisition development.[6]

1. *Language status development* activities a) extend the current uses of a language to new functions, such as reading and writing, and new domains, such as media or education, and b) increase the level of

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[6] Thanks to Brad Keating and Pete Unseth for input about these key terms and helpful insights expressed in this paper.

approval and respect that gatekeepers and communities accord the language for these uses (Cooper 1990, chapter 5).

Arts status development activities a) extend the current uses of genres to new functions and new domains, and b) increase the level of approval and respect that gatekeepers and communities accord the genres for these uses.

Arts status development may include such activities as:

- asking gatekeepers to advise artists in the new works that need to be created, and for what purposes;
- leaders commissioning artists and performers, suggesting improvements to draft works, approving and introducing new works;
- leaders judging contests;
- leaders determining the times and ways to use new works, or granting time at public events for works in the local language and local genres;
- leaders encouraging more people to learn the new works;
- putting new works on the radio or other media, raising their prestige;
- showing people an analysis or notation of their music or dance so they realize that it can be reduced to writing;
- articulating how the grammar of a language or genre follows rules, so people see that it has beauty and structure;
- people seeing the beauty and complexity of a language or genre through the eyes of an outsider; and
- expanding the number of domains in which local genres are used.

These status development activities lay the foundation for creating new works and increasing the number of participants. The more the domains of use and the esteem of the genre are increased, the more people will create new works and transmit traditions to the next generation.

2. *Language corpus development* activities include: graphization: the reduction of an oral language to writing; standardization: codifying the written form and grammar of an unwritten language; and modernization: development of new terms for new concepts (Cooper 1990, chapter 6). I add to that list *creation*: innovate a body of new works to address a variety of topics for use in all domains which are

the focus of development. Language corpus development activities may include: transcribing existing proverbs, folktales, song lyrics, and other orature to create literature; local authors writing their personal experience stories; local authors engaging in creative writing about hypothetical situations; and translating literature from other languages into the language being developed (Wendell 1982, particularly chapter 2, from which these four levels of difficulty may be extrapolated; Petersen 2009).[7]

Arts corpus development activities include: graphization: describing and documenting a genre's forms; standardization: determining the stable forms of a genre and prototypes of known works; modernization: adapting malleable elements of current genres to new functions and developing new symbols for new concepts; and creation: innovating an emergent body of works for use in all domains which are the focus of development.[8]

Arts corpus development may include such activities as:

- deciding how best to notate and remember the community's arts;
- documenting by transcribing, audio and video recording, and annotating;
- deciding which aspects of a genre are stable and which are malleable;
- setting reference standards of features needed for a good instantiation of a genre;
- preserving standard versions of works;
- describing a genre's forms, rules, and grammar;
- developing new symbols for new concepts;
- innovating new uses of genres to meet new needs;
- establishing a prototypical form of a work, such as a hymn, hymn book, play script, dance or dance step;
- creating new works in local genres by introducing variations into the malleable aspects of a genre;

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[7] I expand Cooper's understanding of corpus development from graphization, standardization, and modernization to include the creation of a body of works in a language as described in Wendell's *Bootstrap Literature* (1982), because a language does not exist in the abstract but in the body of works of its users. Language development coaches and encourages local writers to create a body of local language literature.

[8] Schrag (2013a, 166) discusses how the stable and malleable elements of a genre lead to innovation: "Cultural dynamism happens when artists masterfully use the most malleable elements of their arts to invigorate the most stable." *Stable elements* occur regularly and are necessary for an instantiation of a genre to be recognizable as a member of the genre. *Malleable elements* are not as predictable and are able to change between instantiations of a genre. Schrag writes, "Artists create through plastic, malleable structures in ways that infuse new energy into the stable structures. Without this, the stable structures will decay and dissipate. And without stable undergirdings, the creators in malleable forms will have no place to hang their musical hats" (2013b, 438).

- expanding the available repertoire of works in local genres;
- adding to the number of topics addressed by works in a genre; and
- producing recordings of new works for wider distribution.

For an example of creating new symbols, we can look to Nicholls's (1983) description of Father Barboza studying bharatanatyam for ten years before working with dancers to portray stories of the Christian faith using this genre. During this time, he developed and taught new *hastas* (communicative hand symbols, akin to a deaf sign language) to be able to communicate Christian messages well. Barboza "replaced hastas that have definite Hindu connotations with Christian alternatives" (Nicholls 1983, 302), hoping that the new hastas will become part of the vocabulary of bharatanatyam. Father Paul Poovathingal and the Cetana Sangeet Natya Academy have continued and developed this tradition of Christian hastas in classical dance.

Some activities we may use to energize the creation of new works include (Schrag 2013a, 191–240):

- holding an arts creation workshop;
- organizing a regularly performing group;
- mentoring local artists;
- creating local media;
- recording performances and putting them on websites or cell phones;
- forming storytelling groups; and
- commissioning local artists to create new works for events.

Corpus development enables status development and acquisition development. The more works a community has created and are available to people, the more domains the genre will be used in, and the more people will be encouraged to pass them on. People wouldn't teach their children to read if there wasn't much reading material available in their language, and communities will not teach their children a genre unless there are some established performance contexts.

3. *Language acquisition development* activities increase the number of users of a language, especially by increasing motivation to use a language in more contexts and teaching a language to the next generation (Cooper 1990, chapter 7).

Arts acquisition development activities add to the number of participants using local genres by increasing the motivation to learn, perform, experience, or use local works and by instructing the next

generation in the use of local works. Intergenerational transmission of art forms is a key arts acquisition development activity, whether by mentorship or formal education.

Acquisition development activities may include:

- advocating for new works filling a need or function;
- teaching people how to perform or participate in new works;
- distributing, performing, and marketing new works;
- broadcasting new works in public media; and
- encouraging communities to participate more in their own arts.

Acquisition development helps status development and corpus development. When more people are trained, they will want to produce more works. And when more people pass on new works, they increase the popularity of the art and the number of domains in which it is used.

Scriptural example of arts development, drawing out the three-part model

All three kinds of activities must work together if scripture engagement in a language or an art genre is to thrive. We see all three aspects of arts development in Exodus 35:30–31, 34 (NIV):

> Then Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills. . . . And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others."

Moses's speaking on behalf of Bezalel and Oholiab, affirming them to the Israelite community, was status development, raising their status to that of gatekeepers. Bezalel and Oholiab's making new creations was corpus development. Their teaching their arts to others was acquisition development. Notice in this example how all three facets were active and working together to achieve a community goal.

Three-part model to develop community scripture engagement

Because scripture in a local language is part of its body of works, or corpus, and because scripture use is a communication domain, we can apply principles of language development and arts development to scripture engagement. The same three kinds of activities that strengthen the vitality of a language or an art genre can

also strengthen community use of scripture in that language or genre. The more forms and functions in which local-language scripture is used, the more vital its use becomes. To develop community use of scripture in a local language or art, three kinds of activities are required:

1. *Scripture status development* activities add to the number of domains for using a given translation of scripture, increase the number of gatekeepers who approve those uses, and increase a community's respect for God's word.

   Research questions for scripture status development include:

   - What domains of use will scripture in this language and genre have the status to engage with?
   - How will scripture gain the status to occupy the chosen domains of use?
   - What additional domains could new scripture-infused works enter?
   - Who are the gatekeepers for each domain? What are the gatekeepers' assumptions about the value of local-language scripture? How can we work to increase the vision and capacity of local leaders to use local-language scripture?
   - How can we address assumptions about the lack of value of local-language scripture? Why do people have these assumptions?
   - Who needs to be part of the creation, approval, introduction, performance, and distribution of new scripture-infused works so that they will be accepted by the intended audience?
   - What kinds of works will have status for audiences?

2. *Scripture corpus development* expands the quantity of scripture-based materials and the number of occasions for which they are suited. Activities that encourage this development include: translating the word of God; developing it in multiple forms such as print, performances, and recordings designed for various audiences; and creating scripture-infused works with local artists and recordists, addressing local questions.

   Thinking about Bible translation, people may think primarily of a print product. But corpus development on behalf of local-language scripture engagement may involve a variety of local genre forms in addition to print. Each kind of translation requires study of the chosen genre's forms. Scripture corpus development creates the works needed for various domains of use, such as Bible studies, youth groups, children's Sunday School classes, choirs, and worship services.

Scripture-infused works are integral to developing use of scripture. People remember scripture better when they access it in more forms, when they have scripture-based works as well as scripture itself. Scripture-infused works are derivative works based on and inspired by scripture. They might also include teaching points that are wholly the author's, including the juxtaposition of scripture and local proverbs to reinforce the teaching, or the contextualization of parables based on scripture. These new uses of old works are also arts corpus development on behalf of scripture engagement.

Research questions for scripture and scripture-based corpus development include:

- What sorts of new scripture-based print works, performances, and recordings could be created to answer the needs of the chosen domains? What specific works are needed in the form of print, practices, performances, and recordings?
- Who could create them?
- What further standardization could help preserve and transmit new and existing works?
- What forms can a scripture engagement specialist learn more about to create within the genre's structures and recognize the features of a good instantiation of the genre?
- To what extent do gatekeepers believe traditional forms need to be adapted to contain Christian content? How do they believe they will need to be chosen and adapted?
- Who will check the content and form of draft works and verify recommended improvements before presentation?

Importance of checking in scripture corpus development: Part of the creative process for new scripture-based works in local languages is checking draft works before finalizing them. Before the new works are publicly performed or distributed, these works should be checked by the creative team, by the community, and by a consultant to verify the reliability of the message, its quality, and its suitability for the intended audience.

Team checking: The members of the team first consider how they can improve their draft and revise it. The team may include creative artists, Bible translators, a supervising pastor, an arts specialist, and a scripture engagement specialist. The team ensures the reliability of their message when the team members study and meditate on scripture before creating new works and then verify that the new work communicates the intended messages clearly, accurately, and naturally.

Community checking: The team asks three or more representatives of the intended audience how they understand the work. The intended audience members discern the appropriateness of a genre

or work in meeting a community goal or fulfilling a desired function. Haaland (1984) recommends four community-checking questions for visual arts, and I recommend extending these four checking parameters to all new works, asking three or more members of the intended audience:

- *Content:* What is it about? What is happening?
- *Meaning:* What do you learn from it? How does it make you feel?
- *Strengths:* What do you like about it? What may people like about it?
- *Suggestions*: How can we improve it? What may offend someone? How can we change it? Is it natural for the genre we are trying to use? If it's a song, is it singable? Is this style of dance something we recognize as belonging to the genres that we use? How well can people catch on to it and participate in it?

Consultant checking: The creative team asks gatekeepers who know the word of God and the art form well for their recommendations to improve the draft work. The genre connotations and semiotic signification should match that of the scriptural content, conveying to the audience the intended emotions and aesthetics. Though good applications of scripture vary by culture, the biblical content itself is not culturally variable; scripture interprets scripture. New works should conform to the whole counsel of God as discerned by mature believers. After consultant checking, the work is ready for its first presentation.

Audience reaction: Those first audience members are asked for their reactions before performing or reprinting a new work again, in order to improve the second edition or future performances.

3. *Scripture acquisition development* activities increase the number of users of scripture by distributing scripture and performing related scripture-infused works; increasing opportunities and incentive for people to interact with scripture, including relating scripture to people's motivations for interacting with it; and teaching people scripture and its applications.

Scripture engagement specialists want to teach people how to teach scripture, because they want their work to be sustainable. Many traditional ways of learning and distributing knowledge involve local arts. The use of local arts allows the targeting of particular styles to particular audiences. Scripture acquisition development includes increasing opportunity and incentive to access, engage with, and learn from new scripture-based products.

Research questions for scripture acquisition development include:

- How will people learn the new works or experience them?
- In what places and at what events will people perform or experience new works?
- Who could teach people the new works?
- How will new print works, performances, and recordings be distributed?
- How will people transmit new works to coming generations?
- How will people gain interest in and ability to acquire new works?
- How will the community learn about leaders' approval of new works?

To review: scripture status development establishes domains of use in which scripture and scripture-based works can be integrated into life. Scripture corpus development creates needed scripture-based works for those domains. Scripture acquisition development increases the number of participants who value and are able to use these works. These three kinds of development depend on one another, like a three-legged stool. For any of them to be successful, they must work together.

Historical example of arts development for scripture engagement

An example of the three-part model in which arts development strengthens community engagement with scripture is found in the work of Martin Luther. He not only translated scripture into German but also wrote German scripture-based songs in local styles and encouraged others to do the same. Donald P. Hustad calls Luther "the great theologian and hymnist of the Reformation" (1993, 182). Developing German-language worship encouraged the use of German scripture translations.

Luther's arts status development in behalf of scripture engagement included encouraging Christian musicians to "let their singing and playing in praise of the Father of all grace sound forth with joy from their organs and whatever other beloved musical instruments there are" (Plass 2006, 982). Early Lutheran congregations brought all kinds of local instruments and genres into the church. Virgil Funk writes, "In seeing all of music as under God's redemptive hand, Luther underscored the freedom of the Christian to use all of music in the proclamation of the Gospel" (1994, 114). Luther helped promote the status of the German language for hearing God's word and the status of German songs for praising the God of the word.

What did Luther's German arts corpus development on behalf of scripture engagement look like? Funk writes that many of these songs were "secular melodies to which sacred words were adapted. . . . The Lutheran chorale texts spoke clearly of sin and salvation, of death and resurrection; they recounted the story of man's

fall into sin and his redemption won through Christ's victory over death and the devil. . . . Luther himself led the way in encouraging the creation of new texts and melodies through which the congregation could give voice to its faith in corporate song" (1994, 115). In some situations, Hilderbrands (2017) writes, secular songs were "spiritualized." Luther describes this practice as follows:

> Therefore we have divested and stripped such idolatrous, dead, and senseless texts of their noble music and with it clothed the living, holy Word of God to sing, praise, and glorify him and thereby confirm and strengthen our faith. (56)

What about Luther's arts acquisition development on behalf of scripture engagement? Eugen Eckert, translated in Hilderbrands, writes, "The Reformation was ultimately spread through song, not through preaching or writing" (2017, 55). Whereas before the Reformation the congregation was little involved in singing, "The chief musical reform of the Lutheran church in the sixteenth century," Funk writes, "was the establishment of congregational singing as a vital ingredient of corporate worship. . . . Thus what was only tolerated in the medieval church—and then only on infrequent occasions—became a central feature of worship in the Church of the Lutheran Reformation" (1994, 115). The practice of reading scripture in German and congregational singing in German went hand in hand. This movement toward congregational singing in local languages spread to other nations, too.

Luther im Kreise seiner Familie musizierend by Gustav Spangenberg, circa 1875

Just as Luther shifted the religious domains of use of his day from Latin to German, so Bible translation teams today seek to shift religious domains of use from languages of wider communication to local languages and

local arts. For many people, written Bible translations are as incomprehensible as was Latin to pre-Reformation congregations, whereas expressions in local arts are more easily accessible. When people can use

Table 1. Eight Conditions for Scripture Engagement, with the strengthening of local arts.

Conditions for Scripture Engagement	How Local Arts Develop Each Condition
1. Appropriate language, dialect, and orthography: Leaders encourage people to use local-language scripture at many times and in many ways.	Local artistic genres provide new domains of use and allow scripture to enter other domains.
2. Acceptable translation: The translation is respected, approved, clear, accurate, and natural.	Translations of scripture in local genres may communicate more clearly and powerfully than foreign genres do.
3. Accessible forms: A variety of print and recorded scripture, scripture apps, corporate worship songs, artistic performances, and visuals reaches wider audiences more deeply than does any one form alone.	Communicating scripture and worship through local arts widens the potential audience and deepens their understanding.
4. People learn background knowledge to make sense of scripture.	Arts can teach biblical background knowledge woven into dramas, stories, or visual arts.
5. Scripture is available when many known and respected channels exist for people to acquire it.	Arts make scripture available in performance domains for nonreaders.
6. People's spiritual hunger for God and his word is strengthened by interacting with presentations of scripture that are relevant to their interests, questions, and felt needs.	Arts draw out and respond to people's spiritual needs. Arts can increase people's motivation to interact with scripture by touching them at a deep, emotional heart level.
7. People are free to commit themselves to Christ.	Expressing faith through local genres enables people to be both Christians and members of their own culture.
8. Partnerships among a variety of stakeholders widen the likely audience.	Arts development activities increase the number and kinds of partners involved in encouraging the community's use of scripture. Artists work closely together with Christian leaders.

communicational resources they already have, scripture becomes more attainable. Changing the language of worship to the local language is often an integral part of local-language scripture use.

We can work with local storytellers, song composers, dramatists, illustrators, and other artists to continue the Reformation from foreign to local worship and from foreign to local scripture use, in verbal texts and in the arts. As scripture engagement specialists, we can build relationships with leaders and request their approval for using local-language scripture for more functions, leading to a Lutheran shift in communities.

Arts development and the application of Dye's Eight Conditions for Scripture Engagement

Dye (2009, 89–98) shows how strengthening the following eight conditions can increase a community's engagement with scripture, building a bridge to their understanding of scripture. One blocked condition can be like a bridge that is missing the last 100 feet. Scripture engagement work involves figuring out which pieces of the bridge are missing, and then working to construct the rest of the bridge. Table 1 summarizes the Eight Conditions for Scripture Engagement and the ways in which arts development strengthens those conditions.

We will now consider examples in which following the principles of language development and arts development, while focusing on the domain of scripture use, may strengthen each of Dye's (2009) Eight Conditions for Scripture Engagement.

Condition 1: Appropriate Language, Dialect, and Orthography

The local language, dialect, and orthography (or alphabet) chosen for scripture translation need sufficient status in the eyes of the intended audience for people to interact with God and his word in that form (Dye 2009, 92). For the arts, the genre needs to carry appropriate associations for the content and the event. We need to choose appropriate arts with associations congruent to the conveying of truth in a similar genre of scripture.

Often, the gospel first arrives in a region in an LWC that may be perceived as having higher status. Translation teams may assume that their translation will automatically gain these domains of use currently held by the LWC as soon as local-language scripture is available, since it is easier to understand. When people are in the habit of worshiping God and reading scripture in a language they respect but do not understand very well, however, it is actually a significant paradigm shift for them to change the language of scripture to the vernacular. For people to engage meaningfully with God, the language of worship also needs to change, or share domains between the LWC and AWC.

Gaining domains for vernacular scripture use and vernacular worship may require activities to increase the status of the local language, dialect, orthography, and genres, both for hearing from God and worshiping God. This takes time, as advocates encourage change in people's attitudes and beliefs—as Luther did in advocating for German scripture use and worship in familiar genres rather than in Latin. In Luther's example, above, strengthening the prestige of the language for learning about God through his word went hand in hand with worshiping God with German hymns and liturgy. An example of strengthening Condition 1 for scripture engagement is thus found in the work of Luther. He had sufficient status to work toward change in prestige domains. Bible studies, choir groups, drama groups, and other less formal gatherings may be easier starting points for many people. Appropriate languages and arts for appropriate domains are required.

Domains demonstrate varying malleability in their language and genre choices. Some people have found it easier to use local-language scripture first in song, sung by choirs, for example, before that scripture is accepted for public reading or preaching in the Sunday morning service, which tend to be a domain of the LWC. There may be a choir in the LWC and a choir in the local language, both singing in the Sunday service, making worship a shared domain of use. Many translation and scripture engagement teams have also found it easier to introduce local-language scripture in mid-week scripture listening groups, discussing passages heard from solar-powered players or cell phones; each small group can listen in their own language before scripture enters the more prestigious Sunday morning domain of use.

Condition 2: Acceptable Translation

Leaders need to accept and approve the local-language Bible translation (Dye 2009, 92). Similarly, translators and scripture engagement specialists must get approval for the genres they choose for the given context and the domains for which they are translating scripture. The genre chosen for presenting the scripture must also be acceptable for the task. For example, the Mono people of the Democratic Republic of Congo already had pride in the gbaguru genre and valued it as a way to give advice. Elders said the genre would be appropriate for the church choir domain of use if the lyrics contained scripture, even though gbaguru normally contains local proverbs.

Translating biblical narrative in local narrative structure, biblical proverbs in local proverb form, and biblical poetry in local poetic form increases the acceptability of some translations for their intended audiences. For example, a Kyrgyz poet translated the biblical book of Proverbs into a Kyrgyz proverb style so that it can be chanted in a traditional fashion. Unseth writes, "This translation of Proverbs was so well received in Kyrgyzstan that it was adopted for use in schools across the country" (2006, 169)!
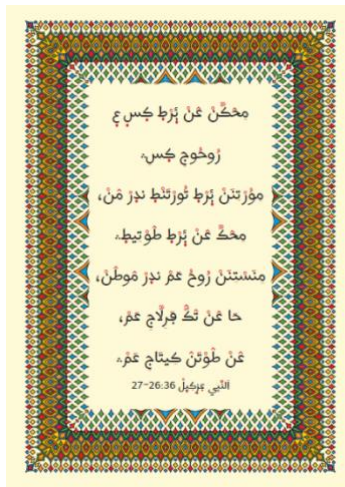
Artistic visual presentation of scripture may also help people receive the message well. A translation team working with a community in Sub-Saharan Africa studied local visual arts. Using these color patterns, they created 38 plates featuring key verses in large script with elegant, elaborate borders. The artistic borders show respect for holy text.

The border designs are reminiscent of esteemed artwork found on local milk calabashes, head caps, and baskets. Local color patterns convey respect for the local culture and for scripture.

Condition 3: Accessible Forms

People need to be able to read, hear, and see scripture (Dye 2009, 93). The more forms scripture is in, the wider the audience who can use it, because people do not have to learn how to read before they can access scripture. Literate artists, or artists who listen to scripture read aloud, can convert the written form of God's word into performance that is accessible to nonreaders. Even readers themselves learn better through multiple modalities. Scripture in appropriate forms helps oral learners remember and understand stories presented in songs, dramas, or visual icons.

Artists can communicate scripture well in many forms, strengthening Condition 3. Live or recorded dramas involve nonreaders with scripture stories. Dancers can communicate and celebrate scripture. Scripture can reach people's hearts through visual arts, especially in children's Bibles. Illustrations capture people's attention, especially for new readers, when they show as much as possible the action of key stories with interesting characters, events, and emotions (Petersen 2015, 3).

Bible studies can be enriched by singing scripture songs, and scripture memorization can be strengthened by choir songs, as in the case of the Naro people's *Messiah*. In Botswana, the Naro people made their own *Messiah* concert recording—not translating Handel's *Messiah* but creating their own 40-minute series of compositions. Each church choir created a song for a different passage, proclaiming the prophecies of the Messiah's birth and the New Testament narrative of their fulfillment (Veith and Veith 2016).

The benefit of using local song genres for scripture engagement is seen in research by Herbert Klem (1982, chapter 15), who worked with Yoruba people in Nigeria. He studied the results of local Yoruba Bible study leaders teaching the first six chapters of the book of Hebrews in Yoruba to 20 groups using four different methods. Five of the 20 Bible study groups used the written text. Five other Bible study groups used the written text and an audio recording of Hebrews being read. Five other Bible study groups used the text and a recording of Hebrews sung in Yoruba song styles. Finally, five Bible study groups used the Yoruba Hebrews song recording but without the written text. All groups included a mix of schooled and unschooled members.

Klem tested their comprehension and their memory of what they had learned through their studies. He found:

1. The highest-scoring Yoruba Bible study groups used *both text and song recording*.
2. The next-highest used *both text and a recording of Hebrews being read*.
3. Those using *only the song* came in third.
4. Those using *only the text* came in last.

The highest-scoring group was really using three modalities: singing, listening to a song recording, and reading a text. The next-highest group used two modalities: reading and listening. The song group was using two modalities: listening to the song and singing it. Those using only one modality, reading, a modality that half of the group members could not access, came in last.

Klem's study shows that learning from a combination of different forms of scripture helps people learn best. When scripture engagement specialists work with communities to put scripture in many forms and establish contexts for their use, those people learn and remember better than when they learn by any one modality alone. More modalities also open up scripture access to a greater variety of learners.

In creating new works in local genres, an important factor to consider is the content load a genre can hold. One scripture songwriting workshop in Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire, led to the creation of a series of new songs in call and response form based on the love of God for us. One song leads the participants through Romans 5. The "greatest command" forms the refrain. High text–load forms like these instructional songs are useful for teaching people long passages of scripture.

Low text–load forms can also be valuable, such as the Mamainde hymn "Stand Up You," from Brazil. Those three words in Mamainde, sung repeatedly, are the entire repeated lyrics of the song. An outsider may find it of little teaching value. While Mamainde people sing "Stand up you," however, they are meditating on the

story from the book of Acts, when Peter and John healed the paralytic in the temple. The low text–load is not representative of low content when considered from the insider's point of view. But the Mamainde song genre could not hold the verbal content of full scripture passages. The lyrics call to memory the longer narrative the audience needs to have heard in story form to make sense of the song. For people who have already been taught the story in one modality, singing about it activates further reflection in another modality.

Condition 4: Background Knowledge

People need sufficient background knowledge to make sense of scripture (Dye 2009, 93). People learn by relating the new to the known. When people approach scripture for the first time, many elements may be confusing. While scripture is intended for everyone, it was first written to particular people in a specific culture and time. Oral arts and visual arts can present explanatory background knowledge, either parenthetically or in introductions or closings. Artistic content in plays, songs, and stories can build on what people already understand to help people make sense of God's word.
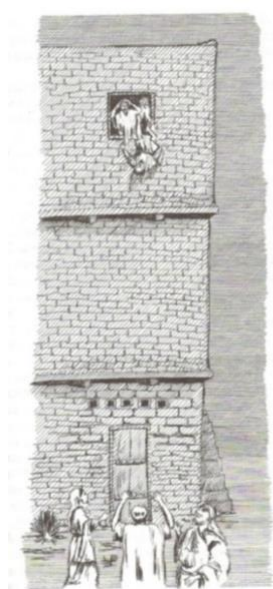
The Kambari people in Nigeria do not have experience with multi-story buildings. The story of Eutychus falling from an upper story, in Acts 20:7–12, was initially difficult for them to understand. The translation team clarified this narrative by commissioning a local artist to draw an illustration of the event, including a depiction of a multi-story building. Visual arts can explain implicit knowledge of the culture that everyone in the original audience would have known.

This illustration clarifies background knowledge of multi-story buildings in the Kambari translation of Acts 20.

In addition to visual arts, scripture-based songs and dramas can also be helpful for people learning background knowledge. Joanne Shetler (personal communication, September 2017) said that when she translated scripture with the Balangao people in the Philippines, Balangaos taught one another their background knowledge of theology through songs. Balangao believers needed to know where the world and spirits came from, and Joanne said, "How else would they teach that but through songs?" Songs can provide the background narrative people need to make sense of scripture narratives.

Condition 5: Scripture Is Available

People need to be able to access scripture (Dye 2009, 94). Strengthening Condition 5 is nearly identical to scripture acquisition development. Scripture-based performances and visual arts distribute scripture in more

ways—through singers, storytellers, performances, and scripture song recordings on cell phones—to a greater variety of audiences. Both readers and nonreaders need established domains (times and ways) to interact with God's word.

People need to know where, when, and how to access scripture in print, performances, and recordings. Local arts help distribute scripture in more ways and at more times, making scripture available to nonreaders. Scripture distributed through performances and recordings reaches a wider audience than scripture made available to people in print forms alone. Revelation 1:3 reminds us, "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near." Not just the readers but also the hearers are blessed if they obey. Ephesians 5:19 also exhorts us, "Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord."

In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul says, "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, and to teaching." Scripture read aloud, with appropriate inflection, is an art form. Good public reading is an artistic way of making scripture available. When scripture-infused performances are broadcast on the radio, many more people may acquire knowledge of scripture than when it is available only in book form.

West African Scripture Relevance Dramas show listeners how God's word can apply to everyday life.

Condition 6: Spiritual Hunger

For people to engage with scripture, they must desire to know God better. The number of believers in a community, and their hunger for God and his word, are strong predictors of scripture use (Dye 2009, 94). If people are apathetic toward scripture, their spiritual hunger may be strengthened by relevant presentations of scripture responding to their concerns. In his Ph.D. thesis, Dye (1980, chapter 3) identifies factors that enhance or hinder success in translation programs. Of all the factors affecting response, Dye found that the most crucial is *personal relevance* (1980, 39):

1. People respond to the Gospel in proportion to their conviction that God and His Word are relevant to the concerns of daily life. This will be called the principle of "Personal Relevance."
2. A translator or a local believer can help bring this conviction to someone by frequently applying the Good News in every-day encounters. Such episodes will be called "Good News Encounters."

Spiritual hunger is heightened by relevant presentations of scripture with content that responds to local questions, needs, and interests. A corpus development activity of producing new scripture-infused works in local arts can strengthen people's motivation to interact with God and his word, strengthening scripture acquisition development. Local arts can call out to people's hearts and address issues that may not be up for discussion in nonartistic ways. Local compositions can answer people's questions and fill local needs in ways that translated hymns and other foreign arts may not.

As an example of relevant scripture-derived arts, West African radio actors have dramatized "Good News Encounters." The dramas, created by local scriptwriters and actors, portray local characters in the midst of a difficulty. A friend or neighbor tells them a story from the word of God. Characters ask questions about the story. This answers the listeners' own questions by the storyteller. Listeners recognize the relevance of scripture to their lives by hearing it applied in situations with which they can empathize (Petersen 2012, 473–80).

The same three kinds of activities that, according to Cooper (Cooper 1990, chapters 5–7), strengthen language vitality also strengthen vitality of scripture engagement in this language through their dramatic arts, as local writers and actors dramatize local questions and answers from scripture (corpus development); local pastors approve draft scripts (status development); and radio stations present their dramas (status and acquisition development). These programs spread to 57 radio stations in three countries.

Condition 7: Freedom to Commit to Christ

People need to be free from hindrances to using scripture and following Christ. Freedom to commit to him may be increased by providing ways for people to live as Christians and members of their own culture. Worshiping using local arts rather than foreign forms may enhance people's freedom to commit to Christ.

Initially, the musical grammar of the Canela people of northeast Brazil baffled Canadians Jack and Jo Popjes, who spent 22 years studying the language and translating scripture with the Canela people. Jack Popjes (1996) writes,

How could we ever promote the composition of native Canela hymns when even after nearly 20 years of praying and trying, we just couldn't get the hang of their music?

Enter Tom Avery, a Wycliffe ethnomusicology consultant. Tom taped Canela music for several weeks. He took the music to his study and analyzed it. Instead of a musical system of eight notes [pitches] with some half notes [half steps], the Canela system has many more notes. Although Canela music can be sung or played on an instrument such as a violin or a slide flute, it is impossible to play on a keyboard. As I provided Scripture-based lyrics, Tom composed original Canela music for more than 20 hymns. We traveled to the Canela village to introduce the songs to the people. It was almost like pouring gasoline on a campfire!

Within a few nights, hundreds of Canelas crowded around wanting to listen and to learn the new songs. The main song and dance leader was deeply moved. He wanted a hymnbook for himself and sat for hours listening to a tape we had prepared. He eventually learned all the songs and made improvements on them. Other Canelas started adding verses to some of the hymns. Every night during our evening Bible classes with the Canela, more than half of the time was taken up singing the new songs. One Canela, with tears in his eyes, said, "You gave us the book in which God speaks to us, but your friend Tom gave us songs in which we speak to Him."

Artistic genres have structures and features that may be described and used generatively to create new works, as Tom Avery did with the Canela.

. . . After the dedication of the Scriptures in 1990, all the Canela men and women who had received their copy of God's translated Word crowded around the main song leader in the center of the plaza. They sang several of the Canela songs—"God's Word is sweeter than honey to me' and 'Let us hold onto and obey God's Word."

Tom's culturally sensitive work sped up not only the acceptance of the newly translated Scriptures, but the whole Gospel message among the Canela.

An example of this approach is "Pahpãm Jarkwa," meaning "God's Word," a song Avery developed with the Canela people in their own musical system.[9] Though it may not sound happy to all listeners, the Canela hear it as happy. In this song's musical grammar, each singer begins on a different starting pitch, and all singers "ride the roller coaster" of melody in the same ways from their different starting notes. What may sound discordant to some listeners sounds exactly right to the Canela.

When scripture engagement specialists work with communities to create new works that communicate scripture in local arts, local forms enable the freedom to commit to Christ. Through music, Canela people realized they can be both Christ-followers and Canela. They use their local music to pass along to the next generation how to be a good Canela. Scripture-derived messages are now part of the content being transmitted to the next generation.

Condition 8: Partnerships

Dye (2009, 96) writes that "when the local church and other missions are not invested in vernacular Bible translation projects, these projects can have little hope for success." Jesus said that people would know his disciples by their love for one another (John 13:35). Paul explains that God gives different gifts to the body of Christ to work harmoniously together; one part cannot say to another that it is not needed (1 Corinthians 12).

Punayima Kanyama plays the kundi, *using the* gbaguru *advice-giving genre.*

Partnerships among different parts of the body of Christ, including local artists representing different generations and genres, can strengthen local vision and capacity for ongoing use of scripture with more people, including oral communicators.

Schrag worked with Mono people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Fifty years prior, Mono Christians had burned their musical instruments when a local evangelist made that a requirement to become a Christian. Outside the church, people communicated in a variety of Mono genres, such as gbaguru; but inside the church, these genres were regarded as a sin, so people borrowed Lingala arts for their Christian worship. As Schrag talked with them about the value of Mono culture in the eyes of God, the Mono Christians decided to ask Punayima, an expert player of the kundi, to teach them how to play it. He was not part of the church, but later joined it through writing scripture songs with

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[9] An audio recording of "Pahpãm Jarkwa" is available here: https://goo.gl/SV8uz6.

the group. The group Punayima mentored came up with an innovation: although gbaguru is usually a solo genre for giving advice, they wanted to play together. They created "La Chorale Ayo," "the Love Choir."

When they first performed a song in the Mono language in church in this cultural style, the congregation was silent. Schrag was worried they had made a mistake. He asked a Mono friend why everyone was so quiet. He said, "What could we do? It cut our hearts." Schrag declares, "The truth of God making man and woman from the same clay had touched their hearts in a way that foreign hymns could never do." The choirs have spread to every major village and are making scripture-infused works available orally throughout the Mono region. Mono pastor Gaspard Yalemoto said, "Today, in all of the Mono churches, we see a radical change in how Christians live, because God's message communicated through gbaguru songs directly touches their hearts."[10]

Creating and performing new works with local artists, with the blessing of leaders who introduce new works, appropriately recognizes the artistic gifts of the body of Christ. The more stakeholders involved in blessing, creating and encouraging community use of scripture, the wider the use of scripture.

We see scripture status development and arts status development in the involvement of the church leadership approving the performance of new scripture-infused works. The gbaguru genre and kundi harp entered a new domain of use, which is arts status development. We see both scripture corpus development and arts corpus development in the creation of the new scripture-infused works. Finally, we see scripture acquisition development and arts acquisition development in the spread of the new Love Choirs throughout the Mono region. They are now beginning to explore communicating scripture through other local art forms.

Conclusion

Just as *language development* considers how local languages can acquire more functions for more people in a community, *arts development* considers how local artistic genres can acquire more functions for more people in a community. Language development and arts development both have three components. *Status development* activities extend the current uses of a language or genre to new functions and new domains. *Corpus development* activities describe, standardize, and modernize forms and innovate new works. *Acquisition development* activities increase the number of participants who use a language or genre.

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[10] To see how Schrag implemented this process, see the Center for Excellence in World Arts's video "Arts Consultants at Work: Chorale Ayo" at https://vimeo.com/143918920.

Because scripture in a local language is part of that language's body of works, people can apply principles of language development and arts development to scripture engagement. *Scripture status development* increases the perceived value of scripture, expanding the number of domains in which scripture and scripture-based works can be integrated into life. *Scripture corpus development* creates needed scripture-based works for those domains. *Scripture acquisition development* increases the number of participants who value and are able to use these works. Teaching people to internalize scripture by creating arts in local forms increases the number of people who involve themselves and their communities with scripture. These three kinds of development must work together for any of them to be successful.

Following the principles of language development and arts development while focusing on the domain of scripture use may strengthen each of Dye's Eight Conditions for Scripture Engagement. Scripture in local languages and genres provides new domains of use and allows it to enter existing domains. Translations of scripture in local genres may communicate more clearly than foreign genres do. Scripture in a variety of local genres can be more accessible, understood, and available in oral forms, especially to non-readers. When local arts call to people at a deep level, they see the relevance of God's word to their spiritual hunger and are free to commit to Christ while remaining members of their culture. Engaging in status, corpus and acquisition development involves more community members, including creative people, in partnerships that facilitate scripture engagement.

When people receive the word of God in languages and forms most meaningful to them, they are more likely to understand the content, resonate with it, and integrate the message with the rest of their lives. Scripture experienced in multiple ways is likely to more significantly influence people's lives. The word that gives life rightly lives in all parts of our lives as it is sung, danced, dramatized, drawn, and told in stories and poems, as well as being studied and read. Arts development work is integral to efforts for scripture engagement, particularly in oral societies. Engaging with God through local arts helps people love him with all their hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and is therefore key to the purposes of engaging with scripture and encountering God's word in life-changing ways.

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