

South African Reformed Baptists and contextualisation: Contemporary understanding, attitudes and praxis



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Postmodernism and urbanisation pose significant challenges and opportunities to Christian witness in the West. In South Africa, Reformed Baptists as well as the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) seem to be battling to engage with and reach new generations in the cities with the gospel. While the reasons for this may be many and varied, one reason for our faltering and seemingly ineffective witness can be traced back to inadequate and unbiblical views of contextualisation. While South African Reformed Baptists are passionately committed to biblical truth and orthodoxy, they appear to be negligent in the matter of faithful biblical contextualisation. Reformed Baptist pastors appear to be slow to take cognisance of and adjust to the unique challenges and opportunities that Postmodernism and urbanisation presents to gospel ministry in South Africa. Some conservative Baptists are suspicious of, or even critical of contextualisation, considering it a compromise with liberal theology. This article provides an overview of the findings of an empirical research that was done among a selected group of Reformed Baptist pastors as well as a selected group of ministers of the RCSA concerning their views on and practice of contextualisation. The article also provides some critical reflection on the findings and some proposals for more effective outreach to postmodern urban people.

Background

Postmodernism and urbanisation pose significant challenges and opportunities to Christian witness in the West (Conn 1984; Conn *et al.* 2002; Hastings 2012; Hesselgrave 1985; Moreau 2012; Schreiner 2001). In South Africa, Reformed Baptists are battling to engage with and reach a growing number of postmodern people in cities and emerging cities with the gospel. While the reasons for this may be many and varied one reason for this faltering and seemingly ineffective witness can be traced back to inadequate and unbiblical views and practices of contextualisation.

A growing number of missionaries, church planters and missiologists are expressing the need to contextualise the ministry of the gospel in order to connect and confront postmodern people more effectively with the promises and the claims of the gospel (Carson 1984; 1996; Flemming 2006; Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation 1978; Platt 2013).

While South African Reformed Baptists are passionately committed to biblical truth and orthodoxy, they appear to be negligent in the matter of faithful biblical contextualisation. Reformed Baptist pastors appear to be slow to take cognisance of and adjust to the unique challenges and opportunities that Postmodernism and urbanisation present to gospel ministry in South Africa.

The Reformed Baptists in South Africa are not a separate denomination but a group of likeminded churches, pastors and missionaries. Many are members of the Baptist Union of South Africa, while some are completely independent of any denominational body. There are presently two main forums where Reformed Baptists meet for fellowship and instruction. The Spurgeon's Fraternal is a biannual pastor's conference where Reformed Baptists (usually between 15 to 35 pastors) get together for fellowship, teaching and prayer. Sola 5 is a grouping of likeminded churches who seek to advance the gospel of sovereign grace and biblical faithfulness. Established in 2005, this group is not only comprised of South Africans. There are affiliated churches in Namibia, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. At present there are 29 churches in membership, of which 17 are South African. However, there are considerably more churches and pastors who attend the Sola 5 meetings. Aucamp (2011:234) considers Sola 5 to be a good example of what Baptist denominationalism should look like in practice. He asserts that it provides substantial improvements to critical weaknesses in the Baptist Union of South Africa (like growing doctrinal diversity) by affording opportunity for common identity and meaningful cohesion (2011:228). A number of the Reformed Baptist churches are confessional – holding to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith (also known as

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the second London Confession of Faith). The others are not strongly confessional – but are strongly reformed, being committed to a very high view of the Bible, God centeredness and reformed soteriology.

The purpose of this article is to identify, summarise, observe trends and make observations concerning Reformed Baptists and their approach to contextualisation.

Valid contextualisation

Valid contextualisation implies that relevant application of the meaning of texts in a specific context, requires from a minister of the Word to apply incarnational theology and ministry (Jn 1:14–18; Ac 17:19; 1 Cor 9:19–22; cf. also Conn 1984; Gilliland 1989; Hesselgrave 1985; 1991; Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989). Contextualisation means that the Word must dwell among all families of humankind today as truly as Jesus lived among his own kin. The gospel is Good News when it provides answers for a particular people living in a particular place at a particular time. This means the worldview and culture of people in a specific context provides a framework for communication. The questions and needs of that people raise concerns that require gospel-based answers. This implies that the interpreter has to know and understand the worldview and culture of his audience in order to connect with them so that they can eventually be confronted with the claims of the gospel on their lives. Cultural differences in individuals should be identified and utilised with discernment to advance the gospel. The message should be mastered so that it can be communicated in culturally relevant ways without compromising its meaning.

The Willowbank report: *Consultation on gospel and culture* (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation 1978) was the result of a consultation in which 33 evangelical theologians, anthropologists, linguists, missionaries from all six continents of the world, provides good guidelines on maintaining the normative nature of Scripture. The report, however, makes it clear that, although the essential meaning of the biblical message must be retained at all costs, critical discernment of the text's inner meaning and a translation of it into a specific contemporary culture should be handled carefully. Yet, according to this report of the Lausanne Movement (1978), there is often a weakness in traditional approaches of evangelicals:

The weakness of this 'historical' approach, however, is that it fails to consider what Scripture may be saying to the contemporary reader. It stops short at the meaning of the Bible in its own time and culture. It is thus liable to analyze the text without applying it, and to acquire academic knowledge without obedience. The interpreter may also tend to exaggerate the possibility of complete objectivity and ignore his or her own cultural presuppositions. (p. 5)

The Cape Town Declaration (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation 2010) similarly called the church to a:

... renewed commitment to go to those who have not heard the Gospel, to engage deeply with their language and culture, to live the gospel among them with incarnational love and sacrificial service. (p. 9)

It cannot be denied that theology – even conservative evangelical and reformed theology – is influenced, at least to some extent, by culture. In this regard Herman Bavinck (2003) writes:

Christian theologians must place themselves within the circle of faith and, while using the church tradition and experience, take their stand in the reality of revelation. Though dogmatists are bound to divine revelation and must take seriously the confessions of the church, their work is also personal and contextual. (p. 59)

This research took Keller's (2012) definition of sound contextualisation as its underlying understanding of contextualisation:

Sound contextualisation means translating and adapting the communication and ministry of the gospel to a particular culture without compromising the essence and particulars of the gospel itself. The great missionary task is to express the gospel message to a new culture that avoids making the message unnecessarily alien to that culture, yet without removing or obscuring the scandal and offense of biblical truth. (p. 90)

This definition affirms the following: the objectivity and supremacy of biblical truth; the priority of the gospel; the necessity of being receptor sensitive; the importance of being both affirming and prophetic towards culture; and it speaks of a comprehensive approach – contextualisation concerns not only verbal declaration, but the overall ministry of the gospel. In his book, *Center church: Doing balanced gospel-centered ministry in your city*, Keller (2012) place a strong emphasis on maintaining a balanced gospel centred, holistic ministry.

Two questionnaires (see Appendix 1) were sent out via email to South African Reformed Baptist pastors and missionaries to try and identify and evaluate their position on contextualisation. These questionnaires did not ask for simple yes or no answers or a response to agree or disagree, but required thoughtful explanation and motivation.

The purpose and scope of the two questionnaires

This article has followed Smith (2008:226–247) and Vyhmeister (2001:151–161) in setting up the questionnaires, getting an appropriate sample group, analysing and interpreting the data, and drawing some conclusions. Smith (2008:247) affirms that descriptive research is a valuable ministry tool for developing an accurate portrait of a present reality to lay a platform for diagnosing causes and prescribing cures. It seeks to examine a problem and uses data from questionnaires, surveys and interviews to form the conclusions and recommendations of a study. The main aim of descriptive research is to make reality known (Vyhmeister 2001:151). The information that is gained can either be quantitative (numbers and percentages) or it can be qualitative (including the *why* along with the *what* and *how many*). This research has included both quantitative and qualitative components. Vyhmeister (2001:126) states that it

is quite legitimate to draw conclusions and take decisions based on descriptive research, as does Smith (2008:248). However, he warns of the danger that the data gleaned is susceptible to the distortion of bias into the research.

The first questionnaire (sent in August 2014) was aimed at specifically identifying and assessing South African Reformed Baptist views on Tim Keller's theology and model of contextualisation. However, it did ask some generally pertinent questions that are relevant in this study, viz. How important is contextualisation in your ministry right now? Have you conducted neighbourhood research in your city/town/suburb? What form did it take? Do you have any significant concerns or reservations about the concept or practice of gospel contextualisation?

The second questionnaire was sent out in early 2015. In addition to Reformed Baptists, this questionnaire was also sent to pastors of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA; Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika – GKSA) and five pastors from Acts 29, an international church planting network that is starting to work in South Africa. The Acts 29 Network is currently headed by Matt Chandler, a Baptist with strong reformed convictions from Texas (USA). Reformed Baptists, the RCSA and Acts 29 share a number of significant theological commonalities, namely an unyielding commitment to the authority of Scripture, a God centred gospel, historic theological orthodoxy, a fear of modern gimmickry and compromise, and the doctrines of sovereign grace. The purpose of these other groups is to function as a control group for the sake of comparison and contrast – to determine if there are any significant differences between Reformed Baptists and other reformed evangelical groups in South Africa.

This questionnaire asked the respondents to define their understanding of contextualisation, to indicate their level of commitment to the Bible and the context of their hearers, to state their attitude to contextualisation and the current spiritual state of their congregation in terms of spiritual growth and vitality.

Questionnaires were sent to Reformed Baptist pastors in settled urban pastorates (apart from one pastor in a new church plant context), but three long-term cross-cultural missionaries were also questioned regarding their understanding, attitudes and approach in contextualisation. The purpose of this was to try and assess whether there were any significant differences in approach between pastors in settled urban pastorates and cross-cultural missionaries.

The two questionnaires were responded to by Reformed Baptist pastors in Cape Town, George, East London, Bloemfontein, Mooi River, Pretoria and Johannesburg. The pastors who participated are representative of a wide age group: from youth pastors in their 20s, through middle aged pastors and a few on the verge of retirement from fulltime Christian ministry. Some pastors responded to both questionnaires – a total of 26 Reformed Baptist pastors gave feedback via the two questionnaires.

Findings from the questionnaires

Anomaly between cross-cultural missionaries and urban pastors

The first questionnaire was sent to 30 Reformed Baptist pastors and missionaries and elicited a response of 12. According to Smith (2008:240) the response rate of questionnaires is usually between 30% – 50%. Results indicated that there appear to be a notable contrast between the approach of pastors in settled urban churches and cross-cultural missionaries. Clearly the cross-cultural missionaries who responded attach more importance to deliberate, careful contextualisation. Pastors were asked to place a numerical value to the importance they afford contextualisation in their present ministry. Of the responses, only two (16%) considered contextualisation as vitally important in their current ministry. However, one respondent, a long-term cross-cultural missionary wrote:

... surely this is fundamental to being a minister of the Gospel today? Contextualisation has never been a dirty word for me. It is the bread and butter of Gospel communication and missions.

He went on to ask: 'Why ... do we put so much effort into language and culture learning? Why then put any less effort into studying your particular context, whatever it may be?' This is a very pertinent question and needs careful consideration from Reformed Baptist pastors.

Reformed Baptists and intentional neighbourhood research

Only three of the 12 respondents (25%) had conducted intentional, organised neighbourhood research in order to better understand their context. While this is a low percentage, it does not necessarily indicate a disregard of context. Four other pastors (33%) indicated that informal research also has great value, such as talking to people naturally, by being led into 'divine encounters', by 'keeping an ear on the ground', and by being involved in society.

Reservations about contextualisation

The question about concerns or reservations that pastors may have with contextualisation elicited a substantial response. One pastor cautioned against anything that could degenerate into syncretism, and highlighted the 'Emerging Church' and 'Seeker sensitive' approaches as examples of contextualisation gone wrong. Another said that both liberalism (over-contextualisation, removing the offensive or challenging parts) and hyper-conservatism (under-contextualisation, failing to adapt because of preferred tradition and style) must be avoided. There was a general concern that the message of the gospel must never be compromised. Another senior pastor wrote: 'The church cannot become a disco session to win young people, or adopt sensational methods to attract.' Another pastor in a large Johannesburg church wrote:

There is always potential for compromise. ... There is a healthy tension between relevance and timelessness; between being accessible and transcendent; by being in the world but not of the world. We must have both and keep re-evaluating which side of the fence we are falling off on.

A missionary responded to this question by warning that the 'new hermeneutic' must be avoided at all costs, and warned of going down the same path as the Emerging church movement. Overall they seem to be more than adequately sensitised to some of the dangers involved in contextualisation.

Definitions and attitudes towards contextualisation

In questionnaire 2 the pastors were asked to define contextualisation and indicate how much emphasis they put on the Word of God, and how much they considered their immediate context in their preaching and ministry (17 Reformed Baptist pastors responded; 8 pastors from the RCSA, and 5 from Acts 29 Network). It is significant that all the respondents indicated the supreme importance of biblical faithfulness by giving it a value of 10 out of 10. This is commendable; indeed as Reformational believers it is essential.

In defining contextualisation all the Baptist respondents gave answers that fall into a typical evangelical understanding of the term. The primacy of Scripture as revealed and unchanging truth was emphasised, and the necessity of understanding context was appreciated. One respondent defined contextualisation as 'being able to represent the timeless truths of Scripture in a way that is compatible with current culture. Pastors must be students of Scripture and culture.' Other responses were as following: 'Presenting the truth of God's word and the gospel in a manner that is understandable in the culture into which it is being presented'; 'the application of unchanging revealed truth from the Scriptures into the different contexts of the world'; 'meeting non Christians where they are, not where I am'; 'communicating the unchanging message of the Gospel (and indeed the whole Bible) in such a way that the particular listening audience can understand it'. One younger pastor wrote candidly of the inevitability and dynamic nature of contextualisation:

The Gospel is not tied to any specific culture. Whether we like it or not, we are all products of a particular culture. For this reason contextualising the gospel is an on-going thing.

Almost all the pastors (82%) confined contextualisation to the verbal proclamation of the gospel, stressing the necessity to use language and idiom which their hearers can understand and identify with. Though reference was made to 1 Corinthians 9 in a number of responses, they said little about contextualisation as a lifestyle, nor about comprehensive contextualisation which should effect the ministry and structure of the whole church, not just the preaching of the truth. However, one respondent (from Acts 29) said that the Christian communicator should make himself like those he reaches, adopt a disposition of servanthood by removing unnecessary obstacles to the gospel. Another Reformed Baptist pastor defined contextualisation as 'seeking to incarnate the Gospel in the culture, setting and circumstances so that it is clearly understood, without diluting its essential meaning'.

The answers revealed that though the Baptist response was accurate and helpful, the Acts 29 pastors were more robust in their definitions. One of their pastor's wrote:

Contextualisation is the practice of making the Gospel heard in the specific context in which it is spoken. This is done by the speaker as he takes into account the audiences' culture, language, worldview, traditions, biases etc. and ... communicating the unchanging, uncompromised message of the gospel to the audience so that it can be clearly understood.

Another Acts 29 pastor put it like this:

'It is the attempt to bring God's never changing Word into an ever changing world. It originates from a burden to proclaim the full and final Word of God to a particular audience in a particular context ... in categories that help them better understand. In many ways it is simply the messenger striving to mimic Jesus, the Ultimate Messenger.'

It must be observed that these Acts 29 pastors all see themselves as church planters, who are deliberately endeavouring to reach and impact lost people. In her book, *Quality research papers*, Vyhmeister (2001:229) cautions that descriptive research cannot establish a causal relationship between variables. She does affirm that tentative observations can be made. Accordingly there appears to be a link between deliberate church planting and deliberate contextualisation; whereas in established churches there may well be a tendency to minimise the importance of contextualisation.

One RCSA minister said: 'I believe that the Bible principles cannot be changed whatsoever ... the Bible cannot be changed and our confessions cannot be changed.' While this is true, he failed to articulate what contextualisation is and his statement shows a misunderstanding of biblical contextualisation.

None of the Baptist respondents indicated that they were opposed to, critical, or suspicious of contextualisation. They all (but one) chose to define their approach to the subject as careful or deliberate. One pastor said he was enthusiastic towards contextualisation. As far as the Baptist pastors are deliberately considering the situation of their hearers in preparing and preaching the Bible, there was an equal response between those who indicated *often*, *mostly* and *always* – five pastors. Two indicated that they sometimes considered the situation of their hearers. The Acts 29 group were most enthusiastic about contextualisation.

Dominant worldviews in urban South Africa

The question about the prevailing worldview of the people in their area of ministry was very revealing. What is noteworthy is the very high number of pastors who identified the prevailing worldview as being *nominal Christian*. Respondents were permitted to tick more than one box – every responding Baptist pastor ministering in South Africa indicated that *nominal Christian* was the prevailing worldview in their area of ministry. This pattern was similarly reflected among the Acts 29 and RCSA pastors. One RCSA pastor wrote of 'an

almost unmovable nominal Christianity'. After nominalism, 12 Baptist pastors (67%) indicated Postmodernism as the prevailing worldview of the area in which they served. Of course *nominalism* and *Postmodernism* are not mutually exclusive categories. It could be quite legitimate to categorise many South African urban contexts as nominal Christian-postmodern. There is every reason to believe that many nominal Christians have been largely influenced by Postmodernism.

Health and growth of South African Reformed Baptist churches

The final two questions were aimed at getting an idea of the numerical growth and general spiritual health of the churches. Pastors were asked to indicate conversion growth in their churches over the last five years – as opposed to transfer growth from other churches, or biological growth from within. In their responses the pastors emphasised that these were approximate figures, viz. 0 to 10 conversions over the last five years: nine churches (three pastors indicated zero conversions); 11–20 conversions: four churches; 21–50 conversions 3 churches; 51–100 conversions: 1 church. One pastor indicated that it was impossible to answer this question. Conversion growth among the RCSA group was the lowest. Two of their pastors (25%) indicated zero conversions in the past 5 years; the highest figure being 25. The Acts 29 pastors indicated markedly higher figures of conversion growth: 10, 10, 70, 80 and 100 respectively.

These figures would seemingly indicate that the responding Reformed Baptist churches in South Africa are not presently characterised by significant conversion growth. When one considers the huge population growth in South African urban centres, coupled with the fact that these churches are simultaneously losing members through natural attrition such as member relocation and death, these figures are particularly disturbing. Indeed these churches are losing ground. (It must be noted that this research only received a 50% return from the second questionnaire that was sent out. The strong – but empirically unprovable concern – is that the actual situation may be more dire than this. This view is based on the concern that the most 'inward looking' and enculturated Baptist churches did not respond to the questionnaire.)

Another factor which indicates a seemingly introspective mindset and approach among Reformed Baptists is their apparent slowness to recognise the need of planting new churches in the burgeoning cities of South Africa. Of the 12 churches who responded to the first questionnaire, eight have not been involved in any kind of church planting exercise.

Contextualisation and spiritual growth

Spiritual growth and health of churches are very difficult to evaluate. However, the impression of those pastoring these churches is significant. In terms of their evaluation of spiritual

health and growth in their churches, two Baptist pastors indicated zero spiritual growth, the majority were cautiously encouraged by the spiritual tone and growth of their churches (11 pastors) and four were very positive about the spiritual growth of their churches. Their assessment was based on increasing numbers being involved in Bible studies, members going on mission trips, members becoming more involved in community projects, people more hungry for the Word, people being more hospitable, greater love and unity within the church, and greater openness to visitors. The RCSA pastors were slightly more positive. All their respondents were cautiously optimistic about the state of their churches, apart from two who were very positive. Of the three groups, the Acts 29 were most positive concerning the spiritual state of their churches, and gave the most detailed justification for their estimation.

Concluding observations

There are helpful trends to be noted and observations to be made. While appreciating that data from descriptive research is susceptible to distortion (Vyhmeister 2001:228), the following noteworthy trends and points were gleaned from the questionnaires:

- Reformed Baptists in South Africa seem to understand contextualisation in a typically theologically conservative, evangelical way.
- They tend to restrict its meaning to the task of verbally communicating the gospel. With two exceptions, very little was said about contextualisation in a more comprehensive sense. Reformed Baptists need to be cautious of understanding contextualisation as a negative concept, or in a restrictive sense, i.e. purely as an evangelistic technique or strategy.
- They are committed to the supreme place of Scripture, and appear very aware of the dangers of theological compromise.
- While most of the pastors ascribed the importance of contextualisation, only two Reformed Baptists indicated that it was a *vital* aspect of their ministry. This in contrast to Paul's attitude in 1 Corinthians 9:19–23.
- Reformed Baptist missionaries serving in cross-cultural contexts (trained in the same seminaries as those in urban pastorates) seemingly attach more importance to deliberate contextualisation than their colleagues in settled pastorates. There appears to be the assumption from these pastors that they understand (and perhaps even share) the worldview of their urban neighbours. This researcher considers this a devastatingly wrong assumption.
- There do not appear to be any fundamental differences in the approach or attitudes of the other two groups consulted. There do, however, appear to be differences in emphasis. The RCSA seemed most cautious in their approach, and the five Acts 29 pastors seemed the most deliberate and enthusiastic about contextualisation.
- There was complete unanimity that the prevailing worldview in which these pastors serve was *nominal Christian*. The next

most common designation was *postmodern*. Most (67%) indicated *nominal Christian* and *postmodern*. This is hugely significant for reformed ministry in South Africa. The research results reveal that the South African urban context may be adequately defined as predominantly *nominal Christian-postmodern*.

- There has been apparently no substantial conversion growth occurring in these Reformed Baptist churches over the last five years. Given the growth of the population and dramatic urbanisation, this is a cause for concern.
- Most of the pastors stated that there were indications that there was a reasonable degree of spiritual health and vitality in their churches. Two Baptist pastors appeared to be highly despondent about the spiritual state of their congregations.
- This study shows that Reformed Baptists (like other Reformed Christians) are to some degree, justifiably cautious about contextualisation. Yet just as cross-cultural missionaries have to learn a new language and become conversant with a different worldview and culture, so Reformed Baptist churches will have to learn to connect with and communicate effectively with postmodern, nominal, relativistic and unchurched urbanites.

South African Reformed Baptists should take note of Carson's (2000) highly pertinent challenge:

Churches that are faithful to the apostolic gospel are also sometimes the ones that are loyal to a culture becoming increasingly passé. In such circumstances, cultural conservatism can easily be mistaken for theological conservatism, for theological orthodoxy. In our age of confusing pluralism and postmodernism, it is easy to suppose that retrenchment and conservative courses on every conceivable axis are the only responsible for those who want to remain faithful to the Gospel. ... Such a course is neither wise nor prophetic. Sometimes it is not even faithful. The church may slip back into a defensive, conservative modernism that is fundamentally ill-equipped to address postmodernism. (p. 470)

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Authors' contributions

P.J.B. was the study leader and editor and J.K. the field researcher.

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Appendix starts on the next page →

Appendix 1

Questionnaire 1

Dear Friends

Warm greetings from East London! I trust that this mail finds you and your family well and that you are enjoying a season of fruitful gospel ministry.

Please can you help me? I am doing some studies on Tim Keller (pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Manhattan), specifically on his theology and practice of gospel contextualisation and its relevance for ministry in our country. You would help me greatly by answering the attached questionnaire.

With much gratitude in Christ

John Koning

Grace Bible Church, East London

(Please email your responses to me as soon as is convenient.)

General

Have you read any publications, blogs or listened to sermons and seminars by Tim Keller?

Please list what you have read or heard:

Yes	No
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How would you rate Keller's theological faithfulness and practical usefulness? (1 = not helpful or faithful at all, 5 = spot on)

Do you have any significant reservations or problems with Keller's

1	2	3	4	5
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theology or practice? Please specify. Have you made adjustments to your ministry as a result of what you have learned from him? Please specify.

Contextualisation

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being unimportant, 5 being vital), how important is contextualisation in your ministry right now?

1	2	3	4	5
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How do you understand 1 Corinthians 9:19–23 and apply it in your ministry?

Have you conducted neighbourhood research in your city/suburb/town? What form did it take?

Do you have any significant concerns or reservations about the concept or practice of gospel contextualisation? Please discuss below.

Has Keller challenged you in this regard in any way? Please discuss below.

Church Planting

During the time you have ministered with your current church, have you been involved in planting another church?

Are you currently busy with/ planning a church plant?

Questionnaire 2

Dear Friends

I am doing some studies via NWU on contextualisation and faithful Gospel ministry. I would very much value your input. Please take just a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to me. This is not an abstract, theoretical exercise. The purpose of this exercise is to serve the Church in the great task of Gospel ministry. Your names will not be used and what you say will be used sensitively. (eg 'one pastor indicated that ...')

Together for the cause of Christ

John Koning 0742524650

ENDORSEMENT from Prof. P.J. (Flip) Buys: Associate Director, World Reformed Fellowship

As study leader I want to stress the importance of this study for all reformed type churches. On the one hand there is a danger of pastors who are corrupting the core of the gospel in their efforts to be winsome and see numerical growth at all costs. On the other hand there is a danger that pastors who are very serious and labour hard to be faithful to the gospel but have lost touch with their audience, communicate as someone scratching where people are not itching.

Your participation in this questionnaire will assist John as researcher to eventually present research results that might help pastors and churches to be more faithful as well as effective in proclaiming the gospel to the desperate spiritual needs of all South Africans.

Contextualisation questionnaire

1. What do you understand by the term *contextualisation*? How would you define this term?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much importance do you place on being faithful to the Word of God in your ministry? (1 being of minimal importance, 10 being of supreme importance.)
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your flexibility in bringing the Gospel to people where they are at?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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4. How would you describe your attitude towards contextualisation?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Opposed	Critical	Suspicious	Careful	Deliberate	Enthusiastic
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5. Would you say that you deliberately give attention to the situation of your listeners in preparing and preaching the Bible?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Mostly	Always
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6. What are the prevailing worldviews/thinking patterns of the people in your city, town, suburb, area of ministry? You may tick more than one. If other, please indicate.

Christian	Nominal Christian	Postmodern	Atheistic/agnostic humanist	Animist	Pantheist	Post-everything
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7. How many unbelievers (as opposed to believers who have transferred from other churches) have come to faith and joined your church in the past five years?
8. Have you seen signs of real spiritual growth among members of your church? Briefly describe and motivate.