

CONTEXTUALISATION: PART 2

Translating the Gospel into Cultural Forms



1. Language & Orality

- The **Heart Language**: Translating Scripture into the mother tongue.
- **Oral Bible Storying**: Crafting biblical narratives into local oral traditions.

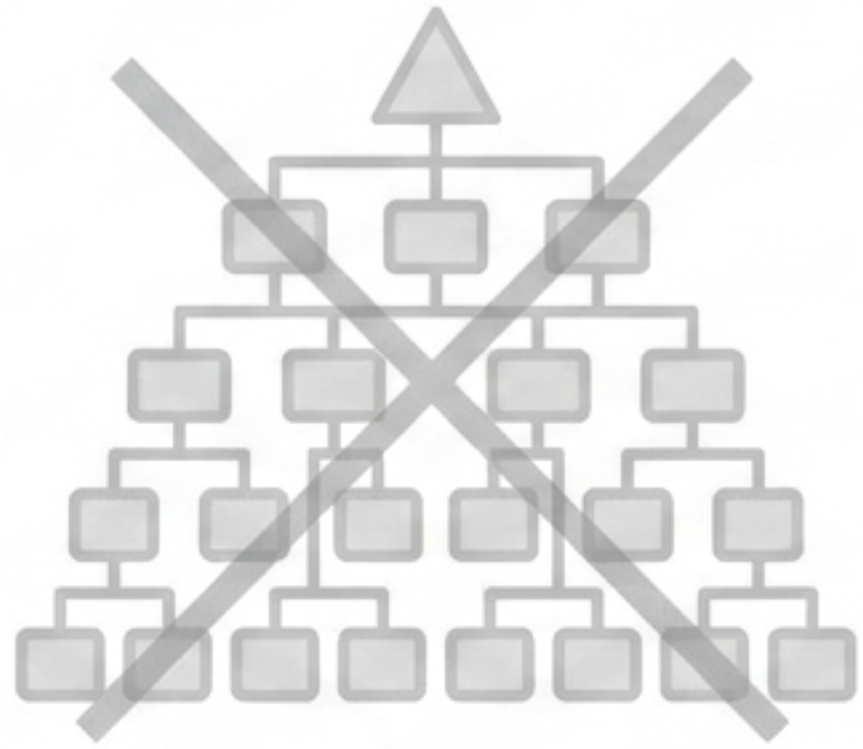


2. Indigenous Worship

The gospel takes root deepest when expressed through a culture's own:

- **Musical forms & rhythms**
- **Indigenous instruments**
 - **Vocal styles**

3. Community Structures



Corporate Hierarchy



Communal Gathering of Elders

Church organization should reflect natural social patterns (unless unbiblical).

Example: Using an elder-based communal decision model rather than a Western individualistic model.

Engaging Muslim Contexts

The Challenge

Christianity is often viewed with deep cultural resistance as a foreign, Western religion.

Contextualised Approaches

- Use familiar, accurate vocabulary (e.g., Isa for Jesus).
- Retain believers within their existing social communities.
- Develop culturally familiar forms for worship and fellowship.



Engaging Animist Contexts

The Challenge

Deep spiritual hunger combined with a pervasive fear of spiritual forces, curses, and ancestral displeasure.

Contextualised Approaches

- Start with indigenous concepts of the Supreme Being as a bridge.
- Use traditional community gathering forms for fellowship.
- Replace fear-based rituals with Christian equivalents (e.g., Dedication instead of an ancestral blessing).



Engaging Hindu Contexts

The Challenge

A highly complex system of philosophical knowledge and deep personal devotion.

Contextualised Approaches

- **Satsang:** Using traditional gatherings for spiritual instruction.
- **Bhakti:** Using devotional music styles to worship Jesus Christ.
- **Christian Ashrams:** Forming culturally familiar living communities for seekers.



LIMIT 1: Non-Negotiable Truth

Cultural adaptation can NEVER compromise gospel content:

- **Deity of Christ**
- **Atoning Death & Bodily Resurrection**
- **Reality of Sin & Need for Repentance**
- **Salvation by Grace through Faith**

LIMIT 2: Forbidden Practices

Practices explicitly forbidden in Scripture cannot be incorporated into Christian worship or life:

- **Ancestral veneration
(communication with the dead)**
- **Ritual divination**
- **Occult practices & idolatry**

LIMIT 3: Community Discernment

The Jerusalem Council Model (Acts 15)

Contextualisation decisions must be made in dialogue with the local believing community, reasoning together from Scripture and guided by the Holy Spirit.





THE PENTECOSTAL ADVANTAGE

The Holy Spirit is the Ultimate Cultural Guide.

The Spirit knows every culture from the inside. Through the gifts of discernment and prophecy, the Spirit-filled community can confidently distinguish true adaptation from dangerous compromise.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1. What specific contextualisation tools are most relevant to your mission context?**
- 2. What are your greatest contextualisation challenges?**
- 3. Where do you draw the line between adaptation and compromise?**
- 4. How can your local believers help test contextualisation decisions?**



PRAYER FOCUS

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in specific contextualisation decisions.

Pray for the discernment to distinguish between cultural adaptation that serves the gospel, and cultural accommodation that compromises it.

ACTION STEP

Develop a Contextualisation Profile

For a specific target people group, map out:

- **Primary language & oral traditions**
- **Musical forms & styles**
- **Social & leadership structures**
- **Primary religious background**

Share this map with a trusted mentor for feedback.