

# Session 1

## Introduction



## Instructor



**STEPHEN BECK PhD**

**Stephen** is a career church planter and church planting instructor. He has served with the Redeemer Church Planting network in Canada, more recently with Greater Europe Mission in Germany. He is considered one of the "cutting edge" Greater Europe Missionaries in this regard. He is Professor of Practical Theology at Freie Theologische Hochschule in Giessen, Germany. He has also been guest lecturer at a number of institutions on the European continent. He is married to Susan, and they have four children. In 2011 Stephen and Susan embarked on yet another journey: together with twenty-five college students they planted a multi-everything church for the Frankfurt metro region. Through the refugee wave that came over Germany, this church multiplied to fifteen congregations in 6 years.

## Goals

This 13 session course about contextualization and models for intercultural church planting is one of the most overlooked subjects in the area of congregation multiplication. The course begins with the definition of contextualization and finds in the Bible the guidelines for practicing it in the work of the Kingdom of God. You will learn the theory of contextualizing and you will be given practical tools. You will understand how the Gospel is designed to be contextualized and how you can adapt it to your own church planting situation.

## Recommended books

1. Keller T 2012. *Center Church. Doing Balanced, Gospel-centered Ministry in Your City*. Michigan: Zondervan. ISBN 9780310494188.
2. Meyer E 2016. *The Culture Map. Decoding How People Think, Lead, and Get Things Done Across Cultures*. Public Affairs. ISBN: 978-1610392761
3. Niebuhr H R 1956. *Christ and Culture*. Harper Collins. IBAN: 9780061300035
4. Carson D A 2012. *Christ and Culture revisited*. Eerdmans. IBAN 9780802867384

## Sessions Overview

1. **Introduction**
2. Errors in Contextualization
3. The Gospel, Culture and Shaping your Church's Culture

4. Faithful Contextualization
5. Bridging the Gospel into Culture - Step 1
6. Bridging the Gospel into Culture - Step 2
7. Active and Practical Bridging
8. Networking!
9. More Networking!
10. Research and SWOT
11. Church Planting Models
12. Church Plant Birthed out of Existing Churches, & out of nothing - part I
13. Church Plants Birthed out of Nothing Part II

### Session Summary

Dr. Beck introduces the course by sharing why the subject of ‘contextualization’ – one of the most overlooked aspects of church planting – is one of the most important parts of church planting. Beck defines concepts like ‘culture’ and ‘context’ and ‘contextualization’ and gives some humorous (though in reality embarrassing or painful) incidences of misunderstanding or conflict due to one not understanding another’s culture group cross-culturally.

### Fill in the Blanks

1. What are some things that Stephen mentioned as defining culture that you didn’t think of them as such so far? For example, did you ever think that the way you travel defines your culture? How about how loud you speak? Did you think this is something that defines your culture? Name other things that surprised you as culture defining.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the general context in which you live? Use only one short sentence or a couple of words to describe it. We will get to more detailed analysis of your context as the course develops.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Contextualizing and the dangers of not contextualizing can be done not only between people of different nations, but also between people of the same culture yet of a different subculture, which can be another neighborhood or of the other sex. Describe one incident where you felt your culture clash against someone else’s (Where

there was a misunderstanding which created a problem).

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