

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers”: Challenges for Christians and the church amidst unbelievers in a post-modern context

ABSTRACT

Although Christians have the biblical instruction not to be associated too closely with unbelievers, they have the commission of Jesus Christ to be salt and light in the world. It is a huge challenge for believers to find the balance between “assimilation” on the one hand and “distinction” on the other hand. In this article, essential traits necessary for Christians in order to fulfil their calling to be a blessing in the world and to make society a better place, will be identified. Not only Christians individually, but also Christians collectively (the church), have an immense responsibility to be Jesus Christ’s representatives in this post-modern context and to respond to the renewed interest and quest for spirituality which is currently evident. Contemporary society also poses specific challenges for the church in order to have a positive impact. Certain guidelines to which she needs to adhere to will be proposed in the article.

ABSTRAK

“Moenie in dieselfde juk trek as die ongelowige nie”

Uitdagings vir Christene en die kerk tussen ongelowiges in ’n postmoderne konteks

Alhoewel Christene die bybelse opdrag het om nie hulself te intiem met ongelowiges te vereenselwig nie, het hulle tog die opdrag van Jesus Christus om sout en lig vir die wêreld te wees. In hierdie artikel sal daar gepoog word om essensiële kenmerke te identifiseer waaraan Christene behoort te voldoen ten einde hul in staat te stel om hul roeping uit te leef, naamlik om ’n seën vir die wêreld te wees en om die samelewing ’n beter plek te maak. Dis nie net individuele Christene wat ’n groot verantwoordelikheid het om Jesus Christus se verteenwoordigers in hierdie postmoderne konteks te wees en te reageer op die hernude belangstelling en soeke na spiritualiteit nie, maar ook die liggaam van Christus, die kerk. Die huidige gemeenskap stel ook spesifieke uitdagings aan die kerk. Indien sy begeer om ’n positiewe impak te maak, behoort sy aan sekere riglyne te voldoen wat voorgestel sal word in hierdie artikel.

1. INTRODUCTION

The passage in Scripture “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Co 6:14), may give the impression that Paul encourages Christians to withdraw from the world and to live almost

ascetic lifestyles. Such a reaction however would be contrary to Christ's great commission to go out into the world and to make the people his disciples (Mt 28:19). It is therefore imperative that believers should understand what the apostle Paul has in mind with his prohibition in 2 Co 6:14 where he uses a metaphor from the Old Testament (Dt 22:10 and Lev 19:19) where it is prohibited to yoke different types of animals together. With this image Paul wants to convey the message that Christians may not enter into partnerships with unbelievers (Kruse, 1991:136). Paul's prohibition (2 Co 6:14a) is followed by five rhetorical questions (2 Co 6:14b-16a). Each question anticipates a negative response and reinforces the initial prohibition by essentially repeating it. The antitheses stated in the questions illustrate the absolute antithesis between "believers" and "unbelievers" – they cannot be yoked together (McCant, 1999:66-67). It is important that Christians should understand what kind of union Paul forbids. Clearly he is not expecting them to cease all contact with the Gentile world (1 Co 5:10), for he exhorts them to be good witnesses in terms of business and ordinary social kindness (1 Co 10:25-27). They should use the contact as an opportunity to convey the saving message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He does however strongly advise them against compromising the integrity of their faith. With the metaphor, Paul warns believers to avoid any action which can cause them to link up with the world in thought and deed. He is clearly referring to close relationships with unbelievers (Martin, 1986:197; Jordaan, 1999:487).

Referring to the teaching of Christ in the Beatitudes, Blomberg (1992:102) suggests that believers may also get the impression that Christ is calling his disciples to a quasi-monastic lifestyle. The metaphor of salt and light (Mt 5:13-16) transmits however exactly the opposite message and shows that Christ wants his followers to permeate society with the message of salvation and to work against corruption and moral decay. In the ancient times, the basic function of salt probably was to serve as a preservative. In the same way, Christians should prevent moral decay by influencing society so as to make the world a better place and to bring answers where there is confusion (Kapolyo, 2006:1119; cf. Davies & Allison, 2000:472). This cannot happen if Christians withdraw from public life to a sphere of inner life and devotion (Van Wyk, 2005:352).

To be a Christian, states Du Toit (1994:480-490), is not only to follow a few moral instructions, but it entails an all-encompassing lifestyle. There is no doubt that a new, authentic Christian lifestyle should be cultivated for the demands of the changing South African community. New Testament letters written by Paul and other apostles to congregations and individuals are often focused on teaching about the cultivation of a true Christian lifestyle.

Although religion and specifically Christianity in Europe suffered severely under the post-enlightenment rationalism, there is a renewed interest and quest for *spirituality* which verifies that the world has not become post-religious (Vorster, 2007:1). However, the post-modern era brings specific challenges for the Christian Church. Aspects that need to be addressed, according to Du Toit (2000:173), are how the church can be inclusive to accommodate people with alternative faith experiences and how a dualistic lifestyle can be prevented (following a pre-modern faith on Sundays, but surviving in a post-modern world for the rest of the week).

In this article essential traits will be identified which can enable Christians to effectively fulfil their calling of God to be a blessing to the world and to make society a better place, but at the same time not compromise on the biblical instruction not to be associated with the activities of unbelievers. Guidelines will also be proposed for the Church, as the body of Christ, to have a positive impact on the contemporary post-modern context in which she lives. The aim of this article is to investigate *how* the church and Christians individually can be more effective in fulfilling their responsibility to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ in a post-modern world.

2. THE CONCEPTS “CHURCH” AND “church”

According to Hayes (1999:5-6), mention is made in the reformed tradition of the *universal* church (Augustine and some other Reformers referred to the *invisible* church) and the *local* church (congregations emerged after Pentecost). Passages in Scripture like Galatians 3:28 and Ephesians 2:11-22 clearly state that once the *Church* has been enlivened by God’s Spirit, all social and cultural boundaries disappear (Allen, 2007:116). In this article a distinction will be made between the *church* with a small “c” and *Church* with a capital “C”. With *church* is meant a congregation-based faith experience, including the church buildings and –structures (institution). With *Church* is meant the gathering of true believers in Jesus Christ, regardless of their church connections. It will become clear that people are not called to *go* to church, but to *be* the Church (Olivier & Van Deventer, 2004:14; Barna, 2006:x, 39; Niemandt, 2007b:50-56; Van der Walt, 2007:113). The difference between *church* and *Church* is given in a table as indicated by Niemandt (2007a:54):

The <i>church</i> is ...	The <i>Church</i> is ...
A place where people go.	Followers of Jesus Christ, no matter where they are.
A gathering on Sundays to listen to a sermon and sing a few songs.	Groups of disciples who meet during the week in various places, but also on Sundays.
Christians who go to church on Sunday to “consume” religious services and to receive spiritual nourishment for the week.	Believers who live dependent on God, who worship together and individually during the week and who are sent to the world.
Christians who ask “What can the church offer me?”	Disciples who ask “How can I help and serve this community of faith in its calling to go to the world?”
A place where people can bring their children to learn spiritual lessons while they can listen to a sermon and sing a few songs.	A community where believers are equipped to guide their children in the ways of the Lord. A place where children form part of the faith community.

For the purposes of this article “church” will be understood and used as explained in the column at the right above.

3. CHRISTENDOM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Christendom was legalised in the 4th century when Constantine declared the Christian religion as the official religion. The church and the state became one and the church had a position of great power and wealth. The church controlled the world of music, science and justice. Despite the power of the church, she lost her ability to positively influence society (Edmondson, 2002:2; Niemandt, 2007a:13, 15). The church was only an instrument in the hands of the state to promote state affairs (Van Wyk, 2005:353). This move influenced the church significantly (Niemandt, 2007a:14). People became “Christians” (church members) on ground of their birth and it boiled down to *hatch* (baptism), *match* (marry) and *dispatch* (funeral). Public opinion demanded that people should be “Christian” if they wish to be considered for public office or

get support in business. This kind of “Christians” can be called “cultural Christians” – they are associated with Christianity because of convenience, not because of conscience. They have no desire to understand and apply biblical principles in their daily lives (Anon., 2002).

Over the past 200 years, the influence of Christendom is waning and the church is losing much of her power in the world and in people’s lives. She has become one of *many* voices. The end of Christendom, however, does not necessarily imply the end of the Christian faith or the Church (Steyn & Lotter, 2006:540; Niemandt, 2007a:14-15). To use the words of Miller (1997:38), post-Christendom does not imply a post-Christian era. A time of reconstruction should follow the time of deconstruction as a “new” Christianity is needed to provide inspiration and direction.

4. REFORMED TRADITION

The authors of this article believes that Christianity is not a matter of convenience, but of conscience and has an earnest desire to understand what is happening in the world and to apply biblical principles to every day life. This attitude is in harmony with the reformed tradition to seek to put God always in the centre. An outstanding characteristic of the reformed tradition should always be towards openness to think new in new situations. Reformed people strive to reconcile the unchanging Word of God with changing circumstances (Gerrish, 1999:16-19; Burger, 2001:23-24). They do not only want to understand *God*, but they also seek to understand *life*. Although this openness of the reformed theology is a positive trait, it causes tension and vulnerability. The church of the 21st century faces enormous challenges to apply the Bible in the contemporary context. There are however many Church leaders who have embraced the challenge and who regard this post-modern era as a wonderful opportunity to present faith and the role of church in a new way. They believe that the Word of God and circumstances should constantly be in conversation so that new light may come to the fore in the light of God’s Word (Niemandt, 2007a:47-48). The deteriorating circumstance in Zimbabwe, the crime situation in SA, union between the four churches in the Dutch Reformed family and legislation regarding marriage- and civil unions in SA are examples of issues with which the DRC as one of the biggest traditional churches are currently busy (Anon., 2008a). Christians can only be “contemporary” Christians, states Stott (1993:29), if they are willing to listen both to the voice of God through Scripture and the voice of people.

This attitude corresponds with the spirit of the Reformation: *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* (the reformed church always reforms). What is heard in the Word of God must become visible in word and deed (Smit, 2002:133). True faith is a living faith which grows. The end of Christendom may bring about the birth of something new, something like the first century church which impacted society dramatically: a church which can help people to understand how God wants them to live, to make sense of life and to fill their deep emptiness with the presence of the living God (Niemandt, 2007a:48-49).

5. AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

Contemporary Christians should take time to study the lives of believers given in the Word of God who lived and worked among unbelievers and to be encouraged by their examples and to learn from them. Believers should moreover be conscious of the challenges and opportunities which the post-modern context poses for Christian-living. Nothing, argues Stott (1997:70), delays the expansion of the Kingdom of God as much as inconsistent Christian lives.

5.1 Examples from the Old Testament

The Old Testament gives proof of people who were yoked together with heathens. The first example is Joseph who experienced several dark moments during the time he worked for Potiphar (Genesis 39), but the distinctive phrase about his life is “the Lord was with Joseph” (Wenham, 1994:372, 374). He was divinely equipped for his task and was very successful. His moral behaviour was not only based on his beliefs *about* God, but on his fellowship *with* God. As long as the new culture and customs in which he found himself did not require of him to sin against God, he conformed to it (Wallace, 2001:33-36). Daniel and his friends (Daniel 1-3; 6), serve as further examples of people of God in the Old Testament who participated in the life of a foreign nation without compromising their religion. Faithfulness to God and the assurance that the sovereign God is in control and at work in the world, were their keys for living in a hostile world (Lucas, 2002:55-57). God bestowed Daniel with outstanding wisdom and his integrity and faithfulness were evident to all (Helberg, 1994:66-68). Daniel’s friends never compromised their faith in God, even in the face of death (Collins, 1993:188; Van Deventer, 2001:163, 196). God did not protect them *from* danger, but *in* it (Redditt, 1999:105-107).

The life of the young slave girl of Naaman’s wife (2 Kings 5) shows that God sometimes uses unexpected people to fulfil his purposes (Seow, 1999:193, 198; Branch, 2004:180, 187; Kim, 2005:50-52). She earns her mistress’ trust and then shares her faith with confidence, transmitting encouragement and hope (Bimson, 1998:366; Branch, 2004:180, 186). She had enough reason to be bitter, but she cared for the spiritual and physical well-being of her conqueror (House, 1995:272; Safari, 2004:23). Jeremiah’s advice to the exiles (Jeremiah 29:1-23) transmits the same message: do not be paralysed by resentment and self-pity, but work for growth and peace, settle down, build houses, plant gardens, marry and have children, because God is present and at the right time, He will intervene for their ultimate good (cf Kidner, 1987:100; Miller, 2001:791-792; Fretheim, 2002:402).

5.2 Examples from the New Testament

The New Testament provides examples of people who were yoked together with unbelievers, e.g. the apostles. During the time of the Gospels, the disciples of Jesus Christ are fearful and slow to understand His teachings, but after Pentecost (the outpouring of the Holy Spirit), they are changed men, willing to share the gospel even at the cost of their own lives (Lloyd-Jones, 2001:97-107). They obeyed the authorities, unless it implied disobedience to God (Acts 5:28-29). Although Jesus Christ prepared his disciples for possible opposition, He also promised the presence of the Holy Spirit who would teach them what to say (Wall, 2002:92). Both Paul and Peter give in the New Testament teaching to Christians who are slaves of unbelievers. Paul exhorts the Christians to be honest, faithful and obedient and to work with respect, integrity and dedication under all circumstances, because they were ultimately working for God (Ryken *et al.*, 1998:967; Best, 2004:575-577). They should accept the prevailing social structure and set an example *within* it as a sign of spiritual maturity and a way to make the gospel attractive to others (De Klerk, 2001:117; Janse van Rensburg, 2003:767; Stuckenbruck, 2003:125; Hoehner, 2004:808).

Peter urges the Christian slaves who are working for unbelievers to submit to their masters in reverence for God, to live as witnesses of Christ in spite of injustice and persecution and to disobey their masters only if they expect something against God’s will (Achteemeier, 1996:193; Schreiner, 2003:127, 134-138).

5.3 Believers’ mission in the world

It was foretold in Genesis 12:2-3 that all people will experience God’s blessing through their

contact with Abraham and his descendants (Wenham, 1987:274; Fretheim, 1994:424; Wenham, 1998:70; Whybray, 2001:49; Mathews, 2005:115-117). This corresponds with the vision of the prophet Isaiah for Israel – that they should be a “light for the Gentiles” (Isa 49:6). In the Bible, “light” and “salvation” are synonymous and it is evident that God does not limit his salvation only to Israel, but He wants his love to reach all people (Selman, 1997:327-328; Thomas, 1998:319; Thompson, 2001:78). The same message is transmitted in the New Testament through the use of metaphors such as salt, light and a letter (Matthew 5:13-15; 2 Corinthians 3:2-3). “Closet-Christianity” and self-directed service are ruled out as Christ calls his followers into a *visible* discipleship in which people can see their *new* lifestyle (Blomberg, 1992:103). He does not remove his disciples *from* the world, but pray for their protection *in* the world (John 17:14-15). His way to win the world is that people will not only become converts, but disciples who grow ever more in His likeness in order to comply with the Great Commission (Coleman, 2005:77).

5.4 Christian behaviour

In Christ’s life, there was no room for revenge, as He was unselfish, humble, prepared to suffer loss and willing to pray for His persecutors (Allison, 2001:855; Lucas, 2002:156). Believers should follow suit and submit even to non-Christian authorities, as long as the authorities do not require something against God’s will (Romans 13:1-7). Their behaviour should be above reproach as they “walk the talk” in all spheres of life and practice an encompassing spirituality, because Christianity is not only for Sundays (Hart, 2001:47). A criterion often used by postmodernists, is whether something works. They want to see that Christ makes a difference in a believer’s life (Lawrence, 2002:84). Non-Christians are consequently watching Christians closely. If believers wish to influence people, they should live integrated, authentic and contemporary lifestyles (De Villiers, 1999:87-89). They should show compassion and demonstrate a willingness to walk the extra mile (Theron & Lotter, 2007:9). A life of integrity is more effective than good arguments (Hart, 2001:47). Christians should shun a “know it all” attitude and should be kind, sincere, non-superior and non-judgemental and this attitude will keep the communication channels between believers and unbelievers open (Theron & Lotter, 2007:8, 11). The attitude of Christ, namely love, stewardship, self-denial and obedience to God, should serve as guidelines for all relationships and activities in all areas of life (Vorster, 2007:20).

Being a witness of Jesus Christ is not about propaganda, but it is about being a living mystery – to live in such a way that one’s life would not make sense if God did not exist (Kenneson, 1995:169). Believers must show with their changed lifestyle that they are serving the Almighty God. A transformed life is a powerful pointer to the resurrected Christ and people will ask about it (Thompson, 2000:151; Nyirongo, 1997:145). The credibility of the Christian witness not only depends on sound exegesis of the Bible, but also on sound practice, that is to live accordingly (Vanhoozer, 1998:15, 20-21; Falcke, 2004:174).

According to Barna (2006:7-8, 12-16, 25), Jesus Christ is looking for “revolutionary” Christians who are dedicated to glorify Him through every thought, word and deed. The trademark of “revolutionary” Christians is that they pursue an intimate relationship with God, even if it means to go against the flow.

Barna (2006:22-24, 105) provides a list of seven core passions of “revolutionary” Christians:

- *Worship* – to be aware of God’s magnificence, to voice gratitude for His love and to acknowledge His control and power.
- *Faith-based conversations* – for the purpose of inviting others into an intimate relationship with God.
- *Spiritual growth* – to learn more about the Christian faith and to apply Christian principles

daily.

- *Service* – to demonstrate the transformation that faith causes in one's life.
- *Resources* – a willingness to use one's *resources* like money, skills and time for the benefit of others.
- *Spiritual friendships* – to be encouraged by others and to be accountable to others.
- *Family faith* – to model a Spirit-led lifestyle so that children can learn to walk in God's ways.

They should be willing to return to a 1st century ethics characterised by values like goodness, love, generosity, kindness and simplicity.

5.5 Following Christ's example

Since Christ is the ultimate example for Christians (disciples of Jesus Christ – Acts 11:26), they should be imitators of Him. Paul describes Christ's attitude in Philippians 2:5-11 and uses it to give instruction on Christian living (Van Wyk, 2007:5). He became *human*, but also *humane*. In all these matters, Christians should be followers of Jesus Christ: He was available for people and had compassion with them → Christians should also demonstrate this *inclusive love*. Christ took on the nature of a *servant* → Christians should serve God by being responsible *stewards* in the community. Christ *humbled* himself → Christians should deny themselves. Christ demonstrated what it means to be obedient to God's will. God's will is expressed in His Law and explained in His Word and this should impact the Christian's lifestyle (Vorster, 2007:15-20).

People devote themselves to that which they believe are the highest priorities in life. Jesus Christ defined his priorities by speaking about it and demonstrating it by His deeds. If believers want to follow in the footsteps of their Master, they need to pursue the same priorities as He did. Barna (2006:74-76) gives a list of priorities of Christ which included commitment to obey God (Matthew 5:19), love (Mt 5:44), justice (Mt 5:6), peace (Mt 5:9), holy living (Mt 5:16), integrity (Mt 5:37), generosity (Mt 6:2-4), spiritual connection (Mt 4:10), spiritual wholeness (Mt 16:26), biblical literacy (Mt 22:29), faith in God (Mt 19:26) and disciple-making (Mt 28:19).

The character of Jesus Christ enabled Him to impact the world like no other person ever did. These qualities, listed by Barna (2006:76-77), should be visible in the believer's life too. Jesus Christ was merciful and grace-giving (Mt 5:7), reconciliatory (Mt 5:24), diligent (Mt 7:7), teachable (Mt 7:24), courageous (Mt 10:16), accepting (Mt 12:50), surrendered (Mt 16:24), humble (Mt 23:12) and servant-minded (Mt 20:26-27). Believers must ever more become like Christ, for it is Christ who lives in them (Van Wyk, 2007:4).

6. THE CHURCH AND HER MINISTRY

Along with spiritual hunger, post-modern people demonstrate a spiritual vitality and are thus looking for a dynamic and life-changing relationship with God (Olivier & Van Deventer, 2004:13). The church of God as the community of true believers in Jesus Christ has a vital role to play in this regard. For the church to effectively bring post-modern people in contact with the Gospel, she has to be aware of the social and intellectual context of people, she needs to address the changing circumstances and -needs of people and she has to do it in a contemporary way (Bolt, 2006:207; Conder, 2006:43; Norridge, 2006:5; Olivier, 2006:76-79).

6.1 Working among post-modern people

Post-modern people are exceptionally suspicious about absolutes or meta-narratives (Smith,

2006:62). The church should therefore be cautious *how* she presents the Gospel. She should not only *proclaim* the kingdom of God, but should *demonstrate* the kingdom of God by bringing healing to the sick, wholeness to the spiritually lost and kindness to those whose lifestyles are different from hers (Lawrence, 2002:83). Post-modern people are more interested in human experiences than in reason (Kingma & Lotter, 2002:315-317). They want to experience emotional warmth and that somebody has *heard* them and has compassion. To have impact, the church should be genuine and transparent in her interaction with people. God's *servants* should be trustworthy and willing to engage in authentic friendships (Lawrence, 2002:83-84; Steyn & Lotter, 2006:10). The Church should assist her members to interpret and apply the Word of God responsibly to every day situations. They will then not be scared to approach people who differ fundamentally from their traditional views (Du Toit, 2000:35-43).

Post-modern people are involved in a quest for meaning in life, because the known orders and -isms failed dramatically (Kingma & Lotter, 2002:310). They are looking for answers to their questions and relief from their feelings of uncertainty. They are earnestly seeking a God who cares, understands and who is available (Poling, 2002:85). The church should seize the moment to turn spiritual interest into convictions in Jesus Christ, because faith in Him gives meaning to peoples' lives (Kourie, 2006:22). Although post-modern people are interested in spiritual matters, they are often not interested in institutional Christianity and most of the time want to experience their religion in an individualistic manner (Gabriel, 2006:18). The church should therefore explore alternative methods to reach people, e.g. the internet and other technological devices (Anon., 2006b:38-39; Joubert, 2007).

6.2 Individualism or belonging?

There is currently a growing awareness that Western individualism is destructive. Research shows that it leaves people with feelings of alienation and an inability to maintain relationships (Nolan, 2006:15-16). One of the distinct features of the present generation, says Hunter (2001:21-22), is alienation. People are alienated from nature and from people. People are also spiritually alienated – they still believe in Jesus Christ, but do not go to church anymore – “believing without belonging” (Neilson, 2006:227). In the west, where individualism is rife, churches are empty, but in other parts of the world, especially in Africa, churches are packed (Mnyandu, 1997:80; Nolan, 2006:17-18) while the spirit of *Ubuntu* is gaining interest being based on the values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect and compassion (Broodryk, 2002:13).

There is currently a quest to balance individualism and communality (Niemandt, 2007a:31). On the one hand people feel secure in an egoistic individualism, but on the other hand they are in need of sincere and intimate relationships. There is a longing for a new connectedness and a sense of belonging (Fogarty, 2003:98). New kinds of Christian communities are emerging as “non-believing believers” organise themselves into Christian communities, e.g. pub-churches in the UK and home churches in Australia (Lyon, 2002:14-17).

In America, a trend is developing that people who are not interested to go to traditional churches, are meeting in coffee shops (Westbury, 2005). There is more spontaneity and an environment is provided where believers have easier contact with non-believers (Swanson, 2006:95-97; Grobler & Lotter, 2007). During the first few months that Bishop Wills visited Starbucks, nothing happened, but then God began to send people. They started to talk to him about personal difficulties and later became Christians (Jacobs, 2007). The National Community Church in Washington DC uses the movie theatres at Union Station to have their public services, because it is strategically located and highly accessible, also for the unchurched. Approximately 70% of people attending are from “unchurched” backgrounds (Batterson, 2007).

6.3 The Church's aim

All believers are called to be continuously transformed through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit (Smit, 2002:140; Van der Walt, 2007:9) and spiritual transformation is needed. Although individual transformation is important, transformation is also needed on a wider level. According to Smit (2002:125), it is the responsibility of the Church. Bohnen (2004:110) states that the Church should look at the surrounding culture with differentiated acceptance (that which is good) and –rejection (that which is bad). Through the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ, she can help to build a society based on love, peace, respect and justice (Anon., 2006a). In a broken world, the Church should be the carrier of hope, because hope has transformative power (Stone, 2001:259; Bohnen, 2004:110).

6.4 The church's message

In 1965 Harvey Cox wrote *The Secular City* in which he predicted the end of religion, but in 1984 he wrote *Religion in the Secular City* in which he retracted many of his earlier predictions. Religion is by no means dead and man is apparently “incurably religious” (Runia, 1994:312-313). The geneticist, Dean Hamer, proved through molecular genetics- and neurobiology research that spirituality is “hardwired” into human beings’ genes. In other words, people have a genetic predisposition for spiritual belief. He calls it the God gene (Hamer, 2005:6-9). Opportunities are opening up for the church as post-modern people are thinking about the meaning of life and looking anew at faith. There is a willingness to listen to the Gospel, because they feel something lacking (Duvenage, 1999:28; Vorster, 1999:12; Hunter, 2001:21; Venter, 2001:88; Janse van Rensburg, 2002:46-48).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is just as much a liberating message for postmodern people as it was for premodern- and modern people (Runia, 1994:313). Preaching is part of the essence of the church and the content of the preaching should always be the unchanging Word of God which must be preached in changing circumstances (Venter, 2001:78). Post-modern people need to hear about God revealed (*creatio ex nihilo*). The uniqueness of the Christian message (*kerygma*) is centred in the good news about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this, Christ sets Himself above all other gods. In Acts 17, when Paul speaks to the Athenian society, he does it with sensitivity and compassion and although he does not approve of their gods, he is courteous when he speaks to them and treats them with dignity. Paul adjusted his message in order to be contextually appropriate without compromising the content (Paauw, 2002:45-48; Lotter & Thompson, 2005:710-712; Westbury, 2005).

6.5 The church's methods

If churches are clinging to their traditions and methods and resist change, they may become culturally irrelevant and die (Olivier, 2006:121). Culture has changed from a left-brain dominance of rationality, to a more right-brain orientation of intuition and subjectivity (Neilson, 2006:279). Without compromising the message, the church needs to utilise the positive elements of the current paradigm and vary the style to proclaim the richness of the Gospel (Vergeer, 1999:13; Westbury, 2005). In the presentation of the Gospel to the post-modern generation, attention should be given to the *how*. Pure rationality in a “from above” instructional manner as the only means to communicate the Gospel is no longer acceptable and alternatives like metaphors, symbols, rituals, music, narratives, drama, retreats and meditation should be employed. Peoples’ attention should be captured and retained by stimulating multimedia presentations. In a certain sense the *process* is more important than the *product*. A two-way dialogue in which there is room for insights from the gospel and questions from people, is more productive than one-way

preaching (Hunter, 2001, 21; Olivier & Van Deventer, 2004:14-20; Steyn & Lotter, 2006:537).

Post-modern people need to experience the sermon as a “happening” and want participation (Janse van Rensburg, 2002:49; Olivier, 2006:131-132). They are looking for spaces where they can interact in a dynamic and life-changing relationship with God (Olivier, 2006:83). The church and house-groups need to create opportunities for people to develop a deeper level of spirituality as well as deeper levels in their experience of interpersonal relationships (Vergeer, 1999:14; Olivier, 2006:138). House-groups can provide the milieu for acceptance, respect and trust in which people can experience the liberating power of *koinonia*, where low self-esteem can be addressed and old wounds healed (Shorter & Onyancha, 1997:140; Hunter, 2001:22; Fogarty, 2003:100). This kind of fellowship where there is commitment between people can help them to go deeper than their masks and to listen to each other, rejoice together and mourn together (Attfield, 2001:23; Fogarty, 2003:99).

In order to reach the young people, the church should speak their “language” and the arts, music, DVD’s, dance and drama are very effective. To touch the hearts of young people, the traditional sermon should rather be replaced by narratives filled with principles from the Word of God. Above all, the church should demonstrate integrity. Young people need to experience that the church is genuinely interested in them and is willing to listen to their stories, care about them and love them (Smith, 2007:138-141).

The church’s ministry should not depend solely on words or arguments, to *have* an apologetic, but should much more demonstrate a transformed life of service, to *be* an apologetic (Smith, 2006:29). Unless the church becomes involved in practical outreaches, she will stagnate in self-centeredness and apathy (Coleman, 2005:79). Biblical interpretation should follow the Word from the page to the practice (Vanhoozer, 1998:13). The church should for example support people working in public institutions like the police service and correctional services and care for the poor, food-projects, homeless shelters, job creation, medical help, etc. In this way the church will become more visible and more available to unbelievers who are seeking help. This implies a willingness to live a life of service and self-sacrifice with no place for status and comfort (De Villiers, 2000:449; Thompson, 2000:154; Swanson, 2002:80; Olivier & Van Deventer, 2004:20-23; Anon., 2006a; Barnes, 2006:40). Hope in Richmond South Africa (Anon., 2008b) is a partnership between churches in America, Canada, South Africa and Rotary International to address issues like nutrition (soup kitchens), health (HIV education and upgrading of local healthcare systems), sanitation (community toilets) and unemployment (craft- and brick production, micro lending for small business development) in the Karoo town of Richmond. As Swanson (2002:79-81) states, the church loses its power, credibility and evangelistic effectiveness if she is not service-orientated.

6.6 Not the “insider/outsider” church

Post-modern people are suspicious about the institutionalised church (Hunter, 2001:22; Fogarty, 2003:12). Perhaps this stems from the exclusive “insider/outsider” church model of modernity. The church may no longer follow this model, but should be inclusive by gracefully accepting those on the margins and by accommodating diversity (Hendriks, 1997:36; Lyon, 2002:18). An attitude which demonstrates a willingness of the church to renounce its old pretentious exclusiveness is a precondition for survival in the post-modern context (Neutjens, 2000:339) and needs to earnestly answer the question for herself – why does she exist? The only answer should be – because there is a world in need! The church does not in the first place exist for the people who are every Sunday there, but for those who are *not* there (Bohnen, 2004:111; Bolt, 2006:217; Smith, 2007:133). Post-modern people often need to *belong* before they can *believe*

(Conder, 2006:114).

The interaction which the church has with people inside and outside the church, should be characterised by acceptance and unconditional love (Lombaard, 2007:150). Christians in general are comfortable to speak about their faith with fellow Christians, but not so with people outside the circle of faith. The church should teach believers to follow Christ's example and engage with people who are far from God in conversations about God. Narratives, when done prayerfully, produce existential challenges which arguments cannot pose.

6.7 The missional church

From history, the Afrikaners, as part of the South African society, understand the concept of "forming a laager". The Voortrekkers used the laager as a fighting technique in the Frontier Wars against the indigenous tribes. A laager was formed by strategically placing ox-wagons in a circle with thorn bushes jammed under the wagons and between the wheels (Giliomee, 2003:163). Today the concept of "forming a laager" is used when a safe space is created for the known by keeping the unknown outside. As soon as challenging situations are faced, there is a frantic desire for separation and self-determination. It may cause the downfall of a nation and for the purpose of this article, may have life threatening consequences for the 21st century's church (De Klerk, 2000:16). The church needs to break free from the "laager" mentality and explore new opportunities which implies *inter alia* that the church should once again become a missional church. She does not do mission work, but she is God's mission to the world (Falcke, 2004:176). The mission field is no longer far away, but right around the church (Olivier, 2006:143). She needs to go out and discover the needs of the community and tailor an outreach to meet the needs. In Gauteng, South Africa, for example, a church was started for the motorbike community – the Messiah's Disciples and Ministry 4 Bikers Church (Anon., 2008c).

The church has no option, but to *be* missional, because she is the body of Christ and He is a missional God. Mission is the very nature of the church (Messenger, 2004:7). The task of the missional church is to take the Gospel into the surrounding culture and to present her faith to non-believers (Conder, 2006:131). She needs to equip her members for this task (Hendriks, 2004:17). The missional church exists for the transformation of the community (The mission-shaped church working group, 2004:81). If the church is not making an impact outside her four walls, she is not making an impact at all (Swanson, 2002:82).

6.8 Leadership

To bring about genuine and lasting religious transformation, leaders should concentrate on more than just constructing bigger buildings or replacing the overhead projector with a big-screen projecting system (Anon., 2005). They have to escape the short-sightedness of their denominational worlds. In order to attain it, they need to be *poets, prophets and apostles*. A *poet* is somebody who can listen and discern new rhythms of life. A *prophet* helps people to re-discover their true stories by unmasking the lies. He/she can reconnect God's people with their core values by inviting them to leave behind the present individualised religious consumerism and journey to a God-centred and neighbour-focused life. The *apostle* has a clear sense of calling and can lead people where "the old maps do not work anymore" (Hendriks, 2004:202-203; Neilson, 2006:280).

Leaders will probably not experience certainty about the way ahead and should be willing to continually struggle to understand what it means to be a faithful, witnessing community in the current post-modern setting (Roxburgh, 1999:252). Apostolic leadership is needed for the church today, leaders who understand that they are *called* by a *sending* God to lead the body of

Christ out of the “comfortable known” to go to a society/world in need (Dodd, 2003:150-152). The Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago is an example of a church who attempts to leave the “Christian ghetto” in order to reach out to unbelievers through their “seeker services” (Hille, 2000:121).

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this article it was shown that Christians individually and collectively as the church, have an immense responsibility to be Jesus Christ’s representatives in this post-modern context and to respond to the renewed interest and quest for spirituality. To positively impact on society, Christians have to demonstrate an authentic Christian lifestyle. The postmodern era also brings specific challenges for the church. The church has to give attention to *inter alia* the quality of relationships, the transmission of the message and leadership. Believers should demonstrate what it means to live in God’s presence, not only on Sundays in church, but wherever they are. The world is their “church grounds” and their ministry is 24/7.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achtemeier, P.J. 1996. *1 Peter*. Minneapolis: Fortress. 423 p.
- Allen, R.M. 2007. The Church and the churches: A dogmatic essay on ecclesial invisibility. *European Journal of Theology*, 16(2):113-119.
- Allison, D.C. 2001. *Matthew*. (In Barton, J. & Muddiman, J., eds. The Oxford Bible commentary. Oxford: University Press. p.844-886.)
- Anon., 2002. *Biblical Christian or cultural Christian*. <http://www.leaderu.com/cl-institute/mirror/chap3.html> Date of access: 7 Feb. 2008.
- Anon. 2005. *Annual Barna group survey describes changes in America’s religious beliefs and practices*. <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=186> Date of access: 6 Feb. 2007.
- Anon. 2006a. *Declaration by church leaders on violence and crime in South Africa*. <http://www.kerkweb.org.za/persverklaring.asp?pid=31&sinid=22> Date of access: 13 Jul. 2007.
- Anon. 2006b. Media in motion. *Christianity Today*, 50(10):38-39, Oct.
- Anon. 2007. *Towards a Christian worldview*. <http://thebigpicture.homestead.com/TowardsaChristianWrldview~ns4.html> Date of access: 16 Jul. 2007.
- Anon. 2008a. *Persverklarings*. <http://www.ngkerk.org.za/persverklarings.default.asp?sinid=22> Date of access: 7 Feb. 2008.
- Anon. 2008b. *Hope in Richmond South Africa*. <http://www.hopeinsouthafrica.com> Date of access: 7 Feb. 2008.
- Anon., 2008c. *The Messiah’s Disciples and Ministry 4 Bikers Church*. <http://www.ministry4bikers.com/aboutus> Date of access: 7 Feb. 2008.
- Attfield, D.G. 2001. *Proclaiming the Gospel in a secular age*. Aldershot: Ashgate. 169 p.
- Barna, G. 2006. *Revolution*. Vereeniging: Christian Art Publishers. 144 p.
- Barnes, R. 2006. The rest of the story. Half a century after killing five missionaries, the “Auca” find

- themselves on the cutting edge of modern missions. *Christianity Today*, 50(1):38-41, Jan.
- Batterson, M. 2007. *Our Story*. <http://www.theaterchurch.com/about/story> Date of access: 6 Feb. 2007.
- Best, E. 2004. *A critical and exegetical commentary on Ephesians*. London: T&T Clark International. 674 p.
- Bimson, J.J. 1998. *1 and 2 Kings*. (In Carson, D.A., France, R.T., Motyer, J.A. & Wenham, G.J., eds. New Bible commentary 21st Century edition. Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press. p.334-387.)
- Blomberg, C.L. 1992. *Matthew*. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman. 464 p. (The new American Commentary, vol. 22.)
- Bohnen, K. 2004. 1 Peter – A manoeuvre between the modernist fossil and the postmodernist chameleon or “to be at home with God in a pluralistic society”. *The South African Baptist Journal of Theology*, 13:101-116.
- Bolt, J. 2006. An emerging critique of the postmodern, evangelical church. A review essay. *Calvin Theological Journal*, 41:205-221.
- Branch, R.G. 2004. “Your humble servant.” Well, maybe. Overlooked onlookers in Deuteronomistichistory. *Old Testament Essays*, 17(2):168-189.
- Broodryk, J. 2002. *Ubuntu. Life lessons from Africa*. Pretoria: Ubuntu School of Philosophy. 156 p.
- Burger, C. 2001. *Ons weet aan wie ons behoort. Nuut gedink oor ons gereformeerde tradisie*. Wellington: Lux Verbi.BM. 128 p.
- Coleman, R.E. 2005. The Jesus way to win the world. *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 29(1):77-81.
- Collins, J.J. 1993. *Daniel*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press. 499 p.
- Conder, T. 2006. *The church in transition. The journey of existing churches into the emerging culture*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. 222 p.
- Davies, W.D. & Allison, D.C. 2000. *Matthew, vol. I*. Edinburgh: T & T. Clark. 731 p. (The international critical commentary.)
- De Klerk, B. 2001. *Soeklig: Fokus op Efesiërs*. Potchefstroom: GKSA. 138 p.
- De Klerk, W. 2000. *Afrikaners: kroes, kras, kordaat*. Kaapstad: Human & Rousseau. 101 p.
- De Villiers, D.E. 1999. Challenges to Christians ethics in the present South African society. *Scriptura*, 69(1):75-91.
- De Villiers, E. 2000. Die morele genesing van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing: die bydrae van die Afrikaanse kerke. *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, 56(2&3):440-455.
- Dodd, B.J. 2003. *Empowered church leadership*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity. 191 p.
- Du Toit, A.B. 1994. Enkele Nuwe-Testamentiese vertrekpunte vir die vestiging van ’n Christelike lewenstyl in die nuwe Suid-Afrika. *Ned. Geref. Teologiese Tydskrif*, 35(4):480-491.
- Du Toit, B. 2000. *God? Geloof in ’n postmoderne tyd*. Bloemfontein: CLF-Uitgewers. 188 p.
- Duvenage, B. 1999. Hoe kan die kerk die postmoderne mens bereik? *Die Kerkblad*, 101(3056):26- 28, 24 Mar.
- Edmondson, C. 2002. *Fit to lead. Sustaining effective ministry in a changing world*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd. 142 p.
- Falcke, H. 2004. Christ liberates – therefore, the church for others. *The Ecumenical Review*, 56(2):166-183, Apr.
- Fogarty, P. 2003. *The missing God who is not missed*. Dublin: The Columba Press. 149 p.
- Fretheim, T.E. 1994. *Genesis*. (In Keck, L.E., ed. General & Old Testament articles, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus. Nashville: Abingdon. p.321-674.) (The new interpreter’s Bible, vol. 1.)
- Fretheim, T.E. 2002. *Jeremiah*. Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys. 684 p.
- Gabriel, K. 2006. The social background to the process of differentiation in society and the lifeworlds of human beings. (In Borgman, E. & Wilfred, F., eds. *Concilium* 2006/2: Theology in a world of specialization. London: SCM Press. p.13-23.)
- Gerrish, B. 1999. *Tradition in the modern world: the Reformed habit of mind*. (In Willis, D. & Welker, M., eds.

- Toward the future of Reformed Theology. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans. p. 3-20.)
- Giliomee, H. 2003. *The Afrikaners. Biography of a people*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. 698 p.
- Grobler, P.J. & Lotter, G.A. 2007. *Coffee shop evangelism*. (Paper: The Society for Practical Theology in South Africa at the Huguenot College. 17 – 19 January. Wellington.)
- Hamer, D. 2005. *The God gene. How faith is hardwired into our genes*. New York: Anchor. 241 p.
- Hart, A.D. 2001. Counseling the postmodern mind. *Christian Counseling Today*, 9(3):44-47.
- Hartin, P.J. 1997. Christian ethics in a pluralistic society: towards a theology of compromise. *Religion & Theology*, 4(1):21-34.
- Hayes, E. 1999. *The church. The body of Christ in the world of today*. Nashville: Word Publishing. 311 p.
- Helberg, J.L. 1994. *Die boek Daniël. Die heerskappy behoort aan God*. Kaapstad: NG Kerk. 135 p.
- Hendriks, H.J. 1997. Kerklike “megatrends”: bedieningsimplikasies. *Ned. Geref. Teologiese Tydskrif*, 38(1&2):27-38.
- Hendriks, H.J. 2004. *Studying congregations in Africa*. Wellington: Lux Verbi. 244 p.
- Hille, R. 2000. From modernity to post-modernity: taking stock at the turn of the century. *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 24(2):116-125.
- Hoehner, H.W. 2004. *Ephesians. An exegetical commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic. 930 p.
- Holz, A.R. 2002. The world next door. *Discipleship Journal*, 131:39, Sep./Oct.
- House, P.R. 1995. 1, 2 Kings. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman. 432 p. (The new American commentary, vol. 8.)
- Hunter, G.G. 2001. Ministry to “secular postmodern” people. *Christian Counseling Today*, 9(3):20-23.
- Jacobs, M. 2007. *Doing evangelism takes relationships, UMs say*. <http://www.reporterinteractive.org/main/Feeds/tabid/116/newsid/1437/Default.aspx> Date of access: 6 Feb. 2007.
- Janse van Rensburg, F. 2003. *Efesiërs*. (In Van der Watt, J., Bosman, H., Du Rand, J., Jansevan Rensburg, F., Nel, M., Smit, D. & Venter, P., eds. *Die Bybel A-Z. Vereeniging: Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy*. p.759-769.)
- Janse van Rensburg, J. 2002. Die postmoderne mens aan wie die evangelie verkondig moet word. *Praktiese Teologie in SA*, 17(2):38-59.
- Janse van Rensburg, J. 2007. *Research methodology*. (Paper delivered at a Seminar on Research Methodology at the North-West University, 30-31 August 2007.) Potchefstroom. 14 p. (Unpublished.)
- Jordaan, G.J.C. 1999. Die sosiale en praktiese implikasies van 2 Korintiërs 6:14 vir Christene in Suid-Afrika. *In die Skriflig*, 33(4):469-490, Des.
- Joubert, S. 2007. *Die passie van die Heilige Gees: sending/evangelisasie/besikbaarheid*. (Lecture delivered at the Revival Conference at N.G.Kerk Miederpark, Potchefstroom on 2-3 February 2007.) (CD recording in possession of the author.)
- Kapolyo, J.M. 2006. *Matthew*. (In Adeyemo, T., ed. *Africa Bible commentary*. Nairobi: WordAlive. p.1105-1170.)
- Kenneson, P.D. 1995. *There's no such thing as objective truth, and it's a good thing too*. (In Phillips, T.R. & Okholm, D.L. eds. *Christian apologetics in the postmodern world*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. p.155-170.)
- Kidner, D. 1987. *The message of Jeremiah. Against wind and tide*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity. 176 p.
- Kim, J.K. 2005. Reading and retelling Naaman's story (2 Kings 5). *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 30(1):49-61.
- Kingma, B.R. & Lotter, G.A. 2002. Begrip vir die lewenskonteks van mense as 'n vereiste vir pastorale begeleiding. *Koers*, 67(3):309-328.
- Kolden, M. 2004. Are you serious? First Peter on Christian life in a complicated world. *Word & World*, 24(4):421-429. Fall.
- Kourie, C. 2006. The “turn” to spirituality. (In De Villiers, P.G.R., Kourie, C.E.T. & Lombaard, C. eds. *The Spirit that moves orientation and issues in spirituality. Acta Theologica, Supplement 8*. Bloemfontein: Publications Office of the University of the Free State. p.19-38.)
- Kruse, C.G. 1991. *The second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. An introduction and commentary*. Leicester: InterVarsity. 224 p. (The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries.)

- Lawrence, B. 2002. Starbucks spirituality. *Leadership*:81-84, Fall.
- Lombaard, D. 2007. *Die perfekte storm laat kolk ons troebel motiewe na die oppervlak.* (In Joubert, S. ed. Die perfekte storm. Vereeniging: Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy. p.145-163.)
- Lotter, G.A. & Thompson, G.G. 2005. Acts 17:16-34 as paradigm in responding to postmodernity. *In die Skriflig*, 39(4):695-714.
- Lloyd-Jones, D.M. 2001. *Authentic Christianity. Sermons on the Acts of the apostles*, vol. 2. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust. 328 p.
- Lucas, E. 2002. *Daniel*. Leicester: Apollos. 359 P.
- Lyon, D. 2002. Being human, being Christian in a postmodern world. *Quarterly Review*, 22(1):7-19, Spring.
- Martin, R.P. 1986. *2 Corinthians*. Waco, Tex.: Word Books. 527 p. (Word biblical commentary, vol. 40)
- Mathews, K.A. 2005. *Genesis 11:27-50:26*. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman. 960 p. (The new American commentary, vol. 1B.)
- McCant, J.W. 1999. *2 Corinthians*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 196 p.
- Messenger, J., ed. 2004. *Mission in context: transformation, reconciliation, empowerment. An LWF contribution to the understanding and practice of mission*. Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation. 61 p.
- Miller, K.B. 2007. Rethinking Christ and Culture: a post-Christendom perspective. *Christian Century*, 124(22):38-41, Oct.
- Miller, P.D. 2001. *Jeremiah*. (In Keck, L.E., ed. Introduction to prophetic literature, the book of Isaiah, the book of Jeremiah, the book of Baruch, the letter of Jeremiah, the book of Lamentations, the book of Ezekiel. Nashville: Abingdon. p.555-926.) (The new interpreter's Bible, vol. 6.)
- Mnyandu, M. 1997. Ubuntu as the basis of authentic humanity: an African Christian perspective. *Journal of Constructive Theology*, 3(1):77-86, Jul.
- Muehlhoff, T. 2002. How should I react when I'm accused of being intolerant? *Discipleship Journal*, 131:39, Sep./Oct.
- Neilson, P. 2006. Christian spirituality: changes in the inner landscape. *The Expository Times*, 117(7):277-281, Apr.
- Neutjens, C. 2000. Het Christendom in een postmodern perspectief. *Koers*, 65(3):281-340.
- Niemandt, N. 2007a. *Nuwe drome vir nuwe werklikhede. Geloofsgemeenskappe in pas met 'n postmoderne wêreld*. Wellington: Lux Verbi.BM. 168 p.
- Niemandt, N. 2007b. *Sal die kerk van die toekoms vandag se wêreld oorleef?* (In Joubert, S. ed. Die perfekte storm. Vereeniging: Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy. p.45-62.)
- Nolan, A. 2006. Jesus today. *A spirituality of radical freedom*. Cape Town: Double Storey. 220 p.
- Norridge, M. 2006. The role of Church leadership in culture. <http://www.newpollution.co.uk/101/organicchurch/articles/pdf/RoleofChurchLeader.pdf>. Date of access: 23 Jan. 2006.
- Nyirongo, L. 1997. *The Gods of Africa or the Gods of the Bible? The snares of African traditional religion in Biblical perspective*. Potchefstroom: Institute for Reformational Studies. 212 p.
- Olivier, I.J. & Van Deventer, H.J.M. 2004. Kerklike bediening aan die postmoderne stadsmens. *In die Skriflig*, 38(1):1-28.
- Olivier, I.J. 2006. *The strategic task of the church in creating space for spirituality*. Potchefstroom: NWU. (Thesis - Ph.D.) 177 p.
- Paauw, G. 2002. Meet your new neighbors. *Discipleship Journal*, 131:39, Sep./Oct.
- Poling, J. 2002. What are they really asking? *Leadership*:85-86, Fall.
- Redditt, P.L. 1999. *Daniel*. New century Bible commentary.. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic. 211 p.
- Roxburgh, A.J. 1999. *The church in a postmodern context*. (In Van Gelder, C. ed. Confident witness – changing world. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans. p.240-259.)
- Runia, K. 1994. The challenge of the modern world to the Church. *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 18(4):301-313, Oct.
- Ryken, L., Wilhoit, J.C. & Longman III, T., eds. 1998. *Dictionary of biblical imagery*. Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press. 1058 p.
- Safari, R. 2004. *Counseling the traumatised adolescents of the Burundian war – a pastoral study*. Potchefstroom: North-West University. (Dissertation – M.A.) 142 p.
- Schreiner, T.R. 2003. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman. 512 p. (The new American commentary, vol. 37.)

- Selman, M.J. 1997. *Ἐως*. (In VanGemeren, W.A., ed. New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis, vol. 1. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. p.324-329.)
- Seow, C-L. 1999. 1 & 2 Kings. (In Keck, L.E., ed.. 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Tobit, Judith. Nashville: Abingdon. p.3-295.) (The new interpreter's Bible, vol. 3.)
- Shorter, A. & Onyancha, E. 1997. *Secularism in Africa. A case study: Nairobi city*. Nairobi: Paulines. 144 p.
- Smit, D. 2002. "Christ transforming culture"? Reflections on the nature of reformed faith. *Acta Theologica: Essentialia et Hodierna*, Supplementum 3:125-149.)
- Smith, J. 2007. 'n Gebrek aan jong profete jaag kerklike storms op. (In Joubert, S. ed. Die perfekte storm. Vereniging: Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy. p.129-143.)
- Smith, J.K.A. 2006. *Who's afraid of postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to church*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic. 156 p.
- Steyn, R.S. & Lotter, G.A. 2006. Veranderende tendense en die implikasie vir jongmens-verhoudinge. *Koers*, 71(2,3,4):535-555.
- Stone, H. 2001. Hope and possibility: envisioning the future in pastoral conversation. *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, 55(3):259-269, Fall.
- Stott, J.R.W. 1993. *The contemporary Christian*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity. 432 p.
- Stott, J. 1997. *Our guilty silence. The church, the gospel and the world*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity. 125 p.
- Stuckenbruck, L.T. 2003. Colossians and Philemon. (In Dunn, J.D.G. ed. The Cambridge companion to St Paul. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.116-132.)
- Swanson, D. 2006. Coffeeshop connections. What one pastor is learning, as a part-time barista, about relationship and discipleship. *Leadership*, 27(4):95-97, Fall.
- Swanson, E. 2002. Is your church a good neighbour? Why some communities resist churches – and others welcome them. *Leadership*, 23(2):78-82, Spring.
- The Mission-Shaped Church Working Group. 2004. *Mission-shaped church. Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context*. London: Church House Publishing. 175 p.
- Theron, P.M. & Lotter, G.A. (2007). Article submitted to be published in *Practical Theology in S.A.*: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers": Metatheoretical perspectives by means of an empirical study on Christian-living in a postmodern context. 16 p.
- Thomas, D. 1998. *God delivers. Isaiah simply explained*. Darlington: Evangelical Press. 415 p.
- Thompson, G.G. 2000. *Proclaiming the Gospel to postmodernists*. Potchefstroom: PU for CHE. (Thesis - Ph.D.) 174 p.
- Thompson, M.E.W. 2001. *Isaiah 40-66*. Peterborough: Epworth. 188 p.
- Van der Walt, B.J. 2003. *Understanding and rebuilding Africa*. Potchefstroom: Institute for Contemporary Christianity in Africa. 553 p.
- Van der Walt, B.J. 2007. *Transforming power. Challenging contemporary secular society*. Potchefstroom: Institute for Contemporary Christianity in Africa. 441 p.
- Van Deventer, H.J.M. 2001. *Die boek Daniël: 'n Retories-kritiese lesing van die Aramese gedeeltes*. Potchefstroom: PU for CHO. (Thesis – D.Th.) 420 p.
- Vanhoozer, K.J. 1998. Mapping evangelical Theology in a post-modern world. *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 22(1):5-27, Jan.
- Van Wyk, J.H. 2005. The responsibility of the state and the calling of the church in the South African context of crime and violence – a theological investigation. *Koers*, 70(3):351-371.
- Van Wyk, J.H. 2007. Gereformeerde spiritualiteit. *Die Kerkblad*, 110(3203):4-5, Sep.
- Venter, C.J.H. 2001. *Prediking as toerusting vir die jaar 2000 en verder*. (In Van Wyk, J.H. ed. Kerk- en Christenwees vandag. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroomse Teologiese Publikasies. p.78- 89.)
- Vergeer, W. 1999. Die postmodernisme – 'n "gevaarlike reus"? *Die Kerkblad*, 101(3056):12-14, 24 Mar.
- Vorster, J.M. 1999. Die ontwikkeling van postmoderniteit. *Die Kerkblad*, 101(3056):10-12, 24 Mar.
- Vorster, J.M. 2007. *Christian attitude in the South African liberal democracy*. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom Theological Publications. 272 p.
- Wall, R.W. 2002. Acts. (In Keck, L.E., ed. Acts, Introduction to epistolary literature, Romans, 1 Corinthians. Nashville: Abingdon. p.3-368.) (The new interpreter's Bible, vol. 10.)
- Wallace, R.S. 2001. *The story of Joseph and the family of Jacob*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Williams B. Eerdmans.

135 p. Mar.

Wenham, G.J. 1987. *Genesis 1-15*. Waco, Tex.: Word Books. 352 p. (Word biblical commentary, vol. 1.)

Wenham, G.J. 1994. *Genesis 16-50*. Dallas, Tex.: Word Books. 517 p. (Word biblical commentary, vol. 2.)

Wenham, G.J. 1998. *Genesis*. (In Carson, D.A., France, R.T., Motyer, J.A. & Wenham, G.J., eds. New Bible commentary 21st century edition. Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press. p.54-91.)

Westbury, J. 2005. *Stained glass & Starbucks*. <http://www.christianindex.org/1628.article> Date of access: 6 Feb. 2007

Whybray, R.N. 2001. *Genesis*. (In Barton, J. & Muddiman, J., eds. The Oxford Bible commentary. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.38-66.)

KEY WORDS

authentic Christian lifestyle

believers' responsibility

Church ministry

missional Church

postmodern context

TREFWOORDE

geloofwaardige Christen-leefstyl

gelowiges se verantwoordelikheid

bediening van Kerk

missionêre Kerk

postmoderne konteks

P.M. Theron & G.A. Lotter

School of Ecclesiastical Sciences

Faculty of Theology

Potchefstroom Campus

North-West University

POTCHEFSTROOM

george.lotter@nwu.ac.za