

# “...EMPOWERING PASTORS & LEADERS OF CHURCHES WITH MOSTLY NEW AMERICANS, WHO ARE REACHING THE WORLD!”

## NEW ROOTS MINISTRY

### THEY STOPPED USING DUTCH AND THE KING JAMES VERSION. WHY?

To be “relevant” is to be closely connected or appropriate to what is being done. Are the ways our churches do worship and ministry relevant for all of the people there?

It was the 1940s and 1950s when my mom and dad, and their families, immigrated from the Netherlands to the US. After exiting the ships in New Jersey, they traveled across the US to southern California, where they settled. The Dutch people stayed close together, starting their own churches in which they could do worship in the Dutch language. That was important for several years, but clearly it stopped because I don’t know any churches in the US doing worship in Dutch now.

Twenty-two years ago, I was the pastor of the Valley Springs (6 miles east of Brandon) Reformed Church after graduating from seminary. It was a good experience for my family and me. The church was very

traditional. One example is that they still used the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. The KJV Bible was difficult for me to understand as it used English from the 17th century. If I, the pastor, could not understand it well, you can imagine it was difficult for the teenagers and others to understand it, and it was boring for them. I gently encouraged the church



leaders to replace the KJV Bibles with a modern version, which often is more accurate in translating the original Hebrew words of the Old Testament and Greek words of the New Testament. The church leaders said that some of the old people in the church would be angry and sad if we replaced the KJV with a more

modern version. I told them I could explain to the old people our reasons—1) we want their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to understand our faith from the Bible, and to be excited about Jesus; a modern version of the Bible could help that; and, 2) some of the modern →

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**We offer “Strategic Planning for Achieving Goals.” If young adults in your church need this, let them know.**

**We continually offer Timothy Leadership Training. If you or others in your church may be interested in this good program, let me know.**

versions are more accurate than the KJV. Still, the leaders would not change Bibles at that time. Five years after I left the church for a new job, the church replaced the KJV with a more modern version. 😊

I realize that many of your churches do worship in your first language. That is probably good if your people are still quite new to the US and if the majority of them are still learning English. How long will you do worship in only your first language? Do the children and teenagers of your church understand your first language better, or English better? The bigger question—is your church

relevant to your children and teenagers, or are they getting bored, and not excited about faith? Remember, this is an important time when we want them to develop into strong Jesus-followers who will become the future leaders of God's Church.

The answers to those questions are different for each church, but please think much about them. Maybe for your church, it is best to now do worship in your first language and in English, and to do Sunday School and youth ministry in English.

The issue of being relevant touches on many things—the language of our worship, the length of our worship service,

the music that we use, if we offer good, engaging ministries for all ages. Do we do things a certain way because it is easiest and most comfortable, or because that is what we think is best in helping our people to grow in our great God?

This is a challenging subject for me, too. But, it is important, isn't it!

**If you want a coffee or meal with me, to talk about anything, I'm interested. Please let me know.**

*---Fred Wilgenburg*

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Fred Wilgenburg, Director & Pastor  
New Roots Ministry  
1915 E. 8th Street, Suite 104  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57103

[sfnewroots@gmail.com](mailto:sfnewroots@gmail.com), (605)376-6330