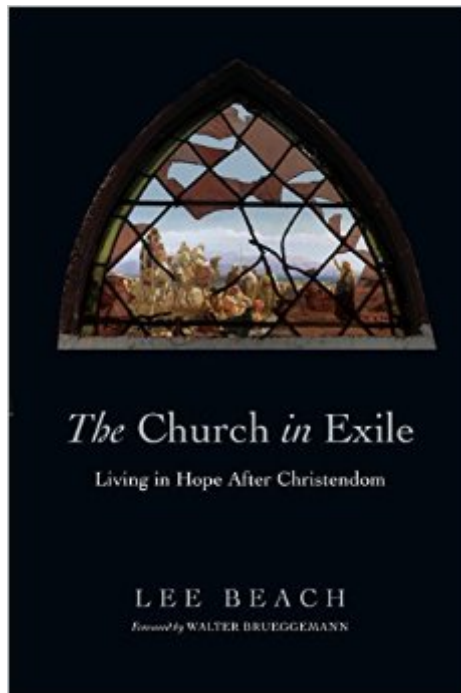


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The Church In Exile: Living In Hope After Christendom



Synopsis

The people of God throughout history have been a people of exile and diaspora. Whether under the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks or Romans, the people chosen by God have had to learn how to be a holy people in alien lands and under foreign rule. For much of its history, however, the Christian church lived with the sense of being at home in the world, with considerable influence and power. That age of Christendom is now over, and as Lee Beach demonstrates, this is something for which the church should be grateful. The "peace" of Christendom was a false one, and there is no comfortable normalcy to which we can or should return. Drawing on a close engagement with Old Testament and New Testament texts, *The Church in Exile* offers a biblical and practical theology for the church in a post-Christian age. Beach helps the people of God today to develop a hopeful and prophetic imagination, a theology responsive to its context, and an exilic identity marked by faithfulness to God's mission in the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The image of the church in exile is taken up by Lee Beach, an assistant professor of Christian Ministry at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, as an image of hope for the church. Even as God was with the exiles in the biblical story, God is with us as well as we enter this new post-Christian era. While Beach uses the image of exile to stir our prophetic imagination, Walter Brueggemann points out that the texts he chooses actually emerge out of the Diaspora. The difference between exile and Diaspora, is that with exile there is an expectation of a return to normalcy. With the Diaspora, there is a new normalcy of living and practicing one's faith far from

home. Brueggemann writes that "Exile" might be a hope of "recovery" for the way the church used to be, whereas "Diaspora" is a recognition that there will not be any return home and there will not be a recovery of any old normalcy" (p. 12). Thus, while the term exile is used here, there is clearly a sense in this book that we will never return to the former "normalcy." With Brueggemann's helpful caveat in mind we are ushered into Beach's provocative exploration of the biblical story of exile and diasporas, old and new, which is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the development of a theology of exile, with special attention given to Esther, Daniel, Jonah, the ministry of Jesus, and the wisdom of 1 Peter. One of the key points in expositing the idea of exile is that God is to be seen as present on foreign soil. The earlier symbols of divine presence – the land, the Davidic monarchy, and the Temple were gone. These markers of their identity as a people had been stripped away from them.

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