

Bradley N. Hill's favorite books for ministry

selected by [Bradley N. Hill](#) in the [October 15, 2014](#) issue

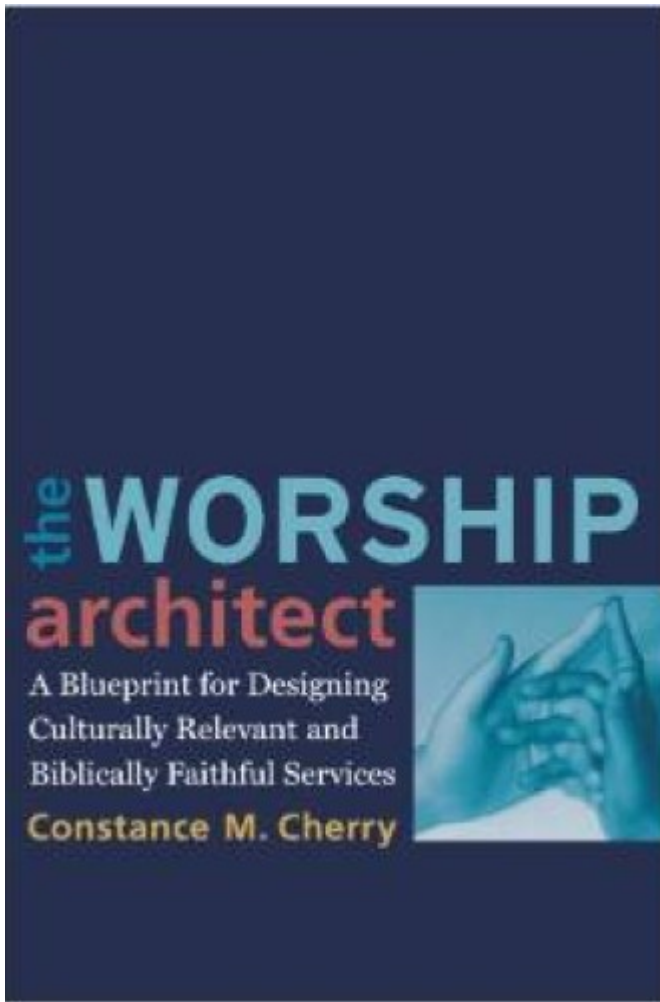
In Review



Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples

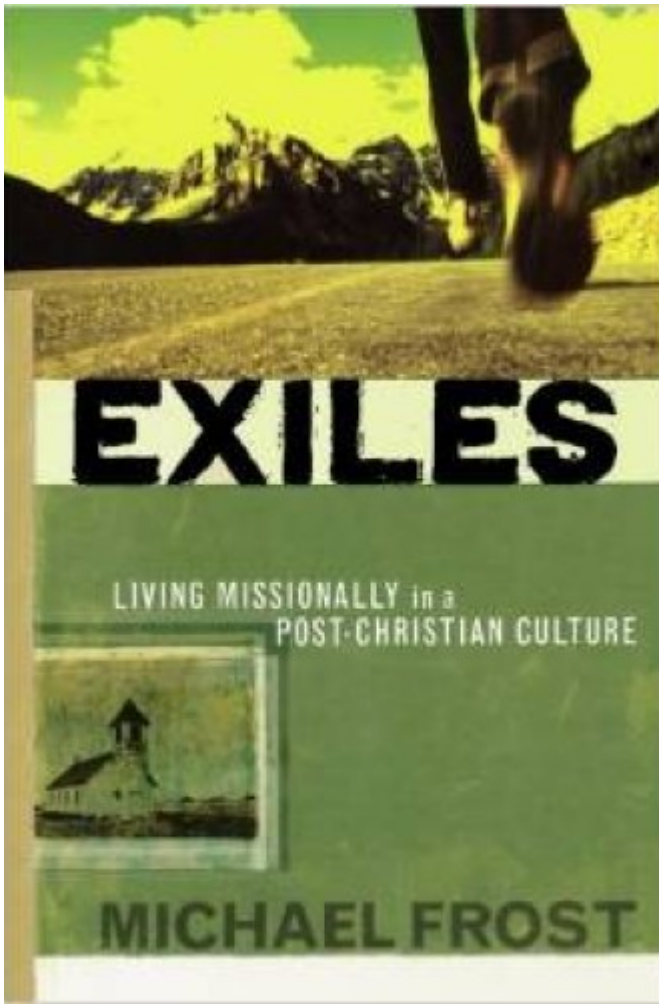
Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger

B & H



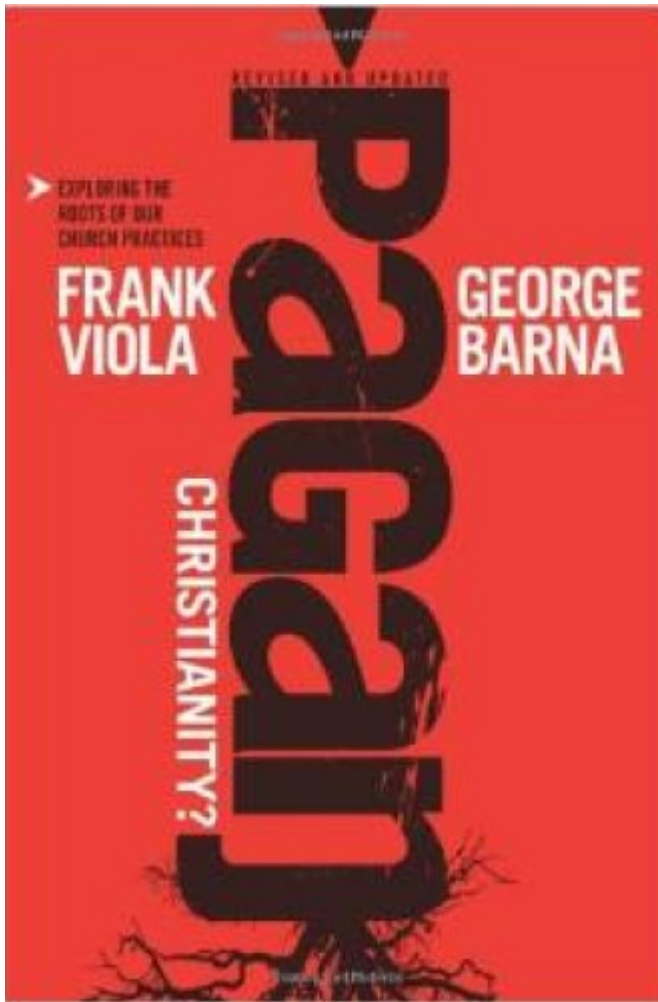
The Worship Architect

by Constance Cherry
Baker Academic



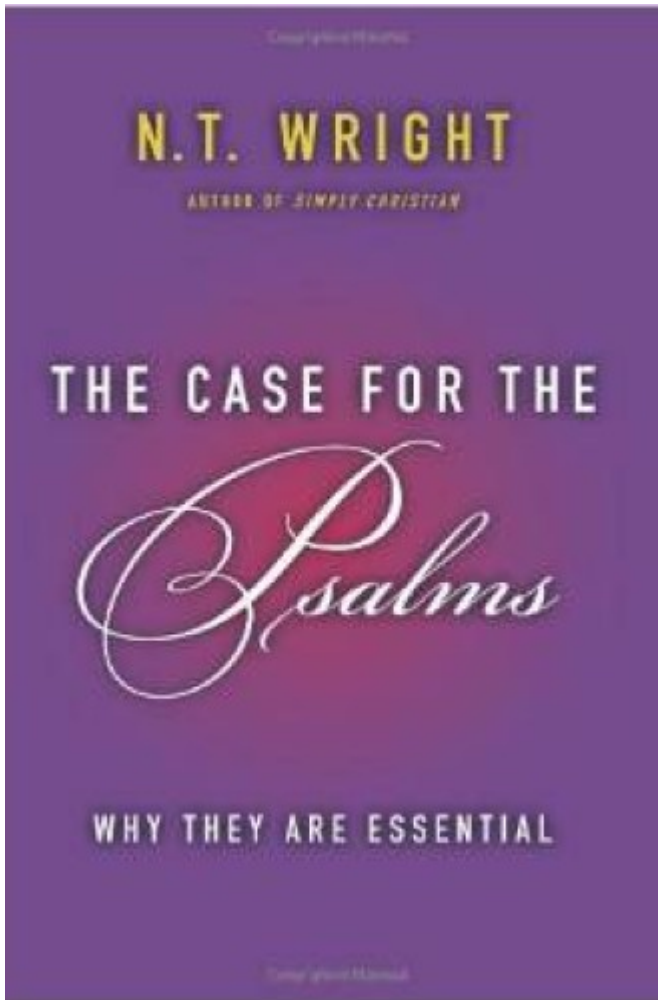
Exiles

by Michael Frost
Baker Academic



Pagan Christianity?

by Frank Viola and George Barna
Tyndale House



A Case for the Psalms

by N. T. Wright
HarperOne

What are the best books for ministry written in the 21st century? We [asked seven pastors](#) to pick their favorites. — Ed.

On the basis of case studies of 400 churches, Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger assert that vibrant churches are simple churches that say yes to a clearly defined mission and no to everything else. Churches united around this process grow in mission and in power. Their book is *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples* (B & H Books).

Using the metaphor of construction, Constance Cherry's *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Baker Academic) provides a way to think about the elements of worship: foundation,

rooms, load-bearing walls, doors, windows, and style. The driving question that pushes the reader deeper into the heart of worship is: How do we know whether our worship is pleasing to God?

For contemporary believers, argues Michael Frost, the metanarrative of Christianity has shifted from Christendom to exile. In *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture* (Baker) he urges Christians to live dangerous lives of faith and churches to live as culturally relevant and biblically faithful communities.

Many current church practices are derived from pagan sources and not from the biblical practices of the early church. The way out (or back, or forward), say Frank Viola and George Barna, authors of *Pagan Christianity? Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices* (Tyndale House), is the “living, breathing, dynamic . . . organic church”—that is, the house church.

The church is impoverished by its neglect of the Psalms. N. T. Wright’s *A Case for the Psalms* (HarperOne) shows how Jesus’ prayer book and hymnal transforms our worldview and imagination and sweeps us up into God’s redemptive story.