

**“Think Local, Act Global:
Reversing the Polarities of the 3rd Millennial Church”
www.pmchurch.tv**

□ **1 Peter 1:1; 2:9-11**

- Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom*: “. . . there was a time in the history of most Western nations when Christianity held court as the de facto religion of the empire, and the church stood at or near the center of political power. In this cultural setting the church had a significant role to play in the shaping of culture and the determining of the overarching moral structures of society.” (33)
- Beach: “If these trends continue at their current pace, religious ‘nones,’ as they are often called, will outnumber Christians by 2042.” (35)
- Beach: “Christianity has been gradually losing its status as the lingua franca in Western culture for some time and has increasingly tended to become a local language used only by those who are professing Christians, not understood by others. . . . As we enter into the twenty-first century and the dust from the cultural upheaval of the previous century begins to clear, it is apparent that the church no longer functions at or near the center of things any more. . . . The church must now function within a framework that precludes any kind of cultural authority.” (34-36)

□ **Implication #1—we must find new ways to engage and penetrate the culture and world in which we are exiled.**

- Daniel vs. Esther

□ **Implication #2—our modus operandi for doing so must be “engaged nonconformity.”**

- Beach: “Exilic holiness is fully engaged with culture while not fully conforming to it. Living as a Christian exile in Western culture calls the church to live its life constructively embedded within society while not being enslaved to all of its norms and ideals. Sometimes holiness has a personal cost and demands taking a stand that draws attention to oneself. At other times holiness is not defined by dramatic action but by the day-to-day choices we make.” (183)
- Walter Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home: Preaching among Exiles*: “The metaphor of Babylonian exile will serve well for my urging. . . . The great problem for exiles is cultural assimilation. The primary threat to those ancient Jews was that members of the community would decide that Jewishness is too demanding, or too dangerous, or too costly, and simply accept Babylonian definitions and modes of reality. And surely Jews in exile worried that their young would see no point in the hassle of being Jewish. . . . We ourselves [as Christians] surely know, moreover, about the next generation that too readily decides that discipleship is not worth it. As Jews disappeared into the woodwork of Babylon, so Christians now, as

never before in the West, disappear into the hegemony of secularism.”
(41)

- Philip Yancey, *Vanishing Grace: What Ever Happened to the Good News*: “These three statements provide a neat summary of the gospel story. We are loved by God, forgiven by God, and invited to the banquet table. In the midst of a planet marked by brokenness—violence, natural disasters, ruptured relationships—the gospel is truly good news. Like an iPod listener dancing in a subway station full of glum commuters, a Christian hears a different sound, of joy and laughter on the other side of pain and death.” (71)

“Supper’s ready!”