

Exile

By [Roger Lovette](#)

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People today often speak of a world that has changed dramatically. The old pillars of morality, values and truth seem to have shifted.

Newspapers and other periodicals are disappearing. Technology has changed our lives. There is an anger in the land. Many, worried about jobs and the future, are scared, tired and frustrated. Singing the Lord's song in our time seems hard indeed.

In all of today's texts we are dealing with a hard word: exile. In a splendid book called [Exilic Preaching](#)

(edited by Erskine Clarke), church leaders write about "a testimony for Christian exiles in an increasingly hostile culture." They point out three ways that exile is a proper metaphor for our time:

- Leslie

Newbigin says that Western culture is dominated by a modern scientific worldview. He says this understanding has created a dichotomy between facts and values. One only has to notice the spate of books proclaiming how irrelevant God is for our time—God cannot be proved, miracles are fantasy and modern folk have moved beyond this. What's forgotten is that there are two ways of knowing: head and heart.

- The book

states that the church finds itself a stranger in a strange land.

Christians are, as Stanley Hauerwas and Will Willimon put it, "[resident aliens](#)." Like the exiled Israelites we live in a culture foreign and strange to the gospel.

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third metaphor was developed by Walter Brueggemann. In a therapeutic and narcissistic culture, exile offers the same opportunity Israel found in its hard time. This is a challenge to see that the ways of God are

contrary to the ways of the world. The lion and the lamb really can lie down together. Learning from the prophets of the exile, we can respond to this time with hope and vision despite the difficulties that surround us.