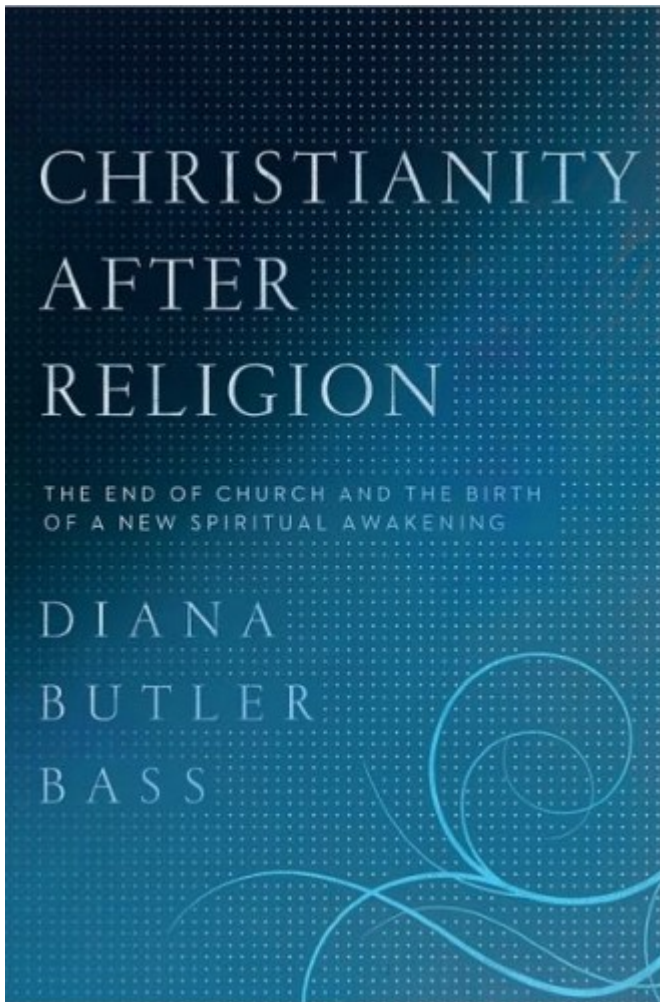


Brian McLaren's favorite books for ministry

selected by [Brian D. McLaren](#) in the [October 15, 2014](#) issue

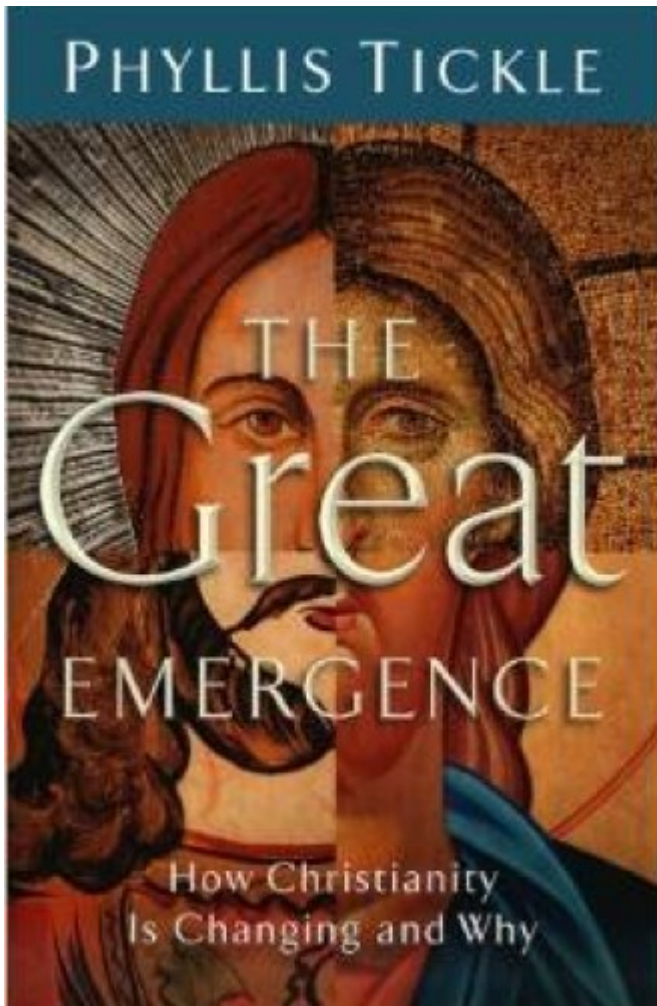
In Review



Christianity after Religion

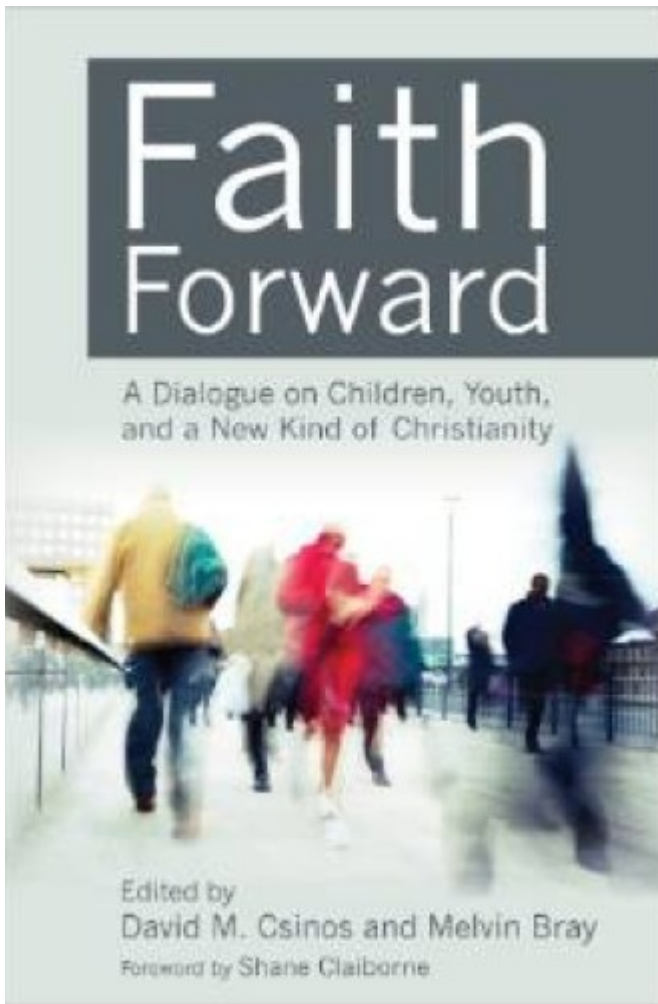
By Diana Butler Bass

HarperOne



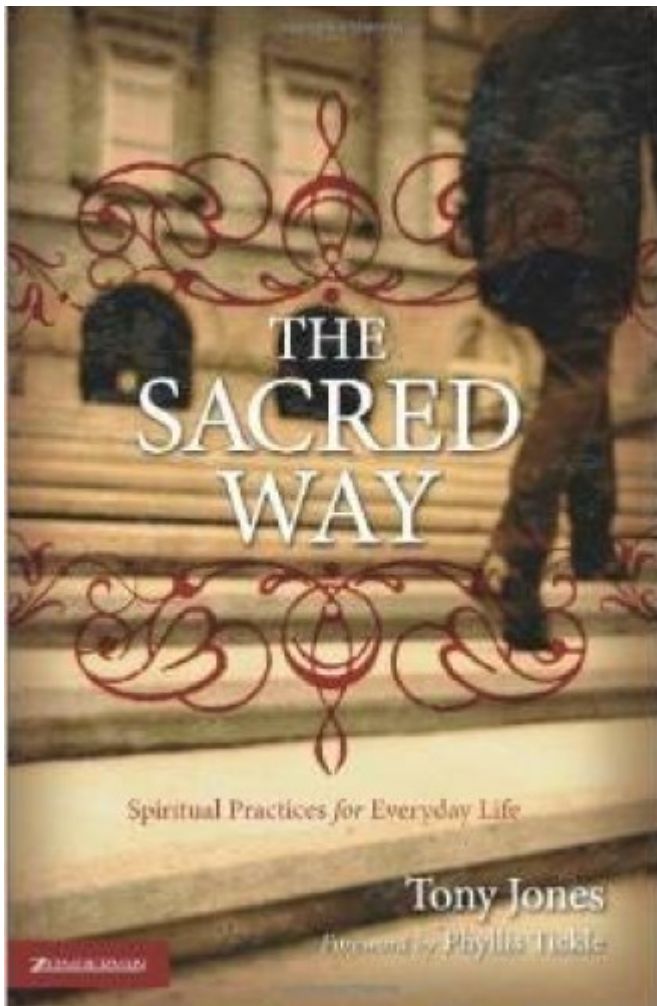
The Great Emergence

Phyllis Tickle
Baker Academic



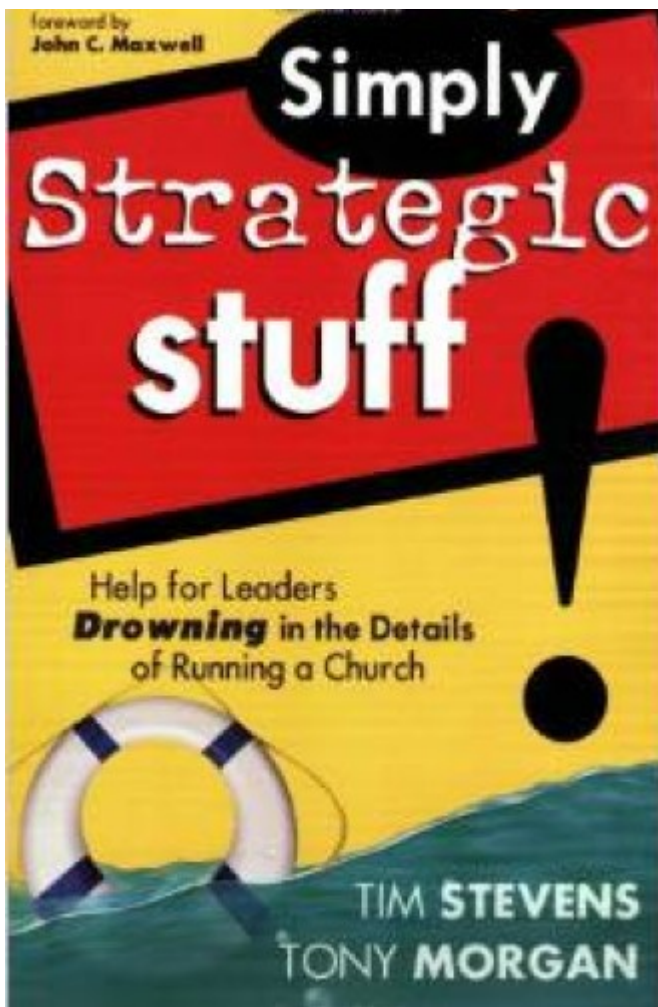
Faith Forward

edited by David Csinos and Melvin Bray
Woodlake



The Sacred Way

Tony Jones
Zondervan



Simply Strategic Stuff

by Tim Stevens and Tony Morgan
Group Publishing



Preaching in the Inventive Age

by Doug Pagitt
Abingdon

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

Pastors need to have some sense of the historical context of what's going on in the church. Diana Butler Bass's *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (HarperOne) and Phyllis Tickle's *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Baker) will inform, unsettle, challenge, and inspire you.

Ministry to and with children and youth often gets the leftovers of pastoral attention. In *Faith Forward: A Dialogue on Children, Youth, and a New Kind of Christianity* (Woodlake), editors David Csinos and Melvin Bray have brought together leaders

who are thinking in fresh ways about “the last and least”—who should be the first and greatest in pastoral priorities.

Congregational leaders need to teach members the disciplines of Christian faith, but too often they haven’t been taught these practices themselves. Tony Jones’s short, lucid, and accessible book *The Sacred Way* (Zondervan) is still my favorite introduction to the subject.

Typically pastors don’t learn about hiring, evaluating, and firing staff; budgeting and working with banks; planning and leading staff meetings; or dealing with disgruntled members. *Simply Strategic Stuff: Help for Leaders Drowning in the Details of Running a Church*, by Tim Stevens and Tony Morgan (Group Publishing), touches all the stuff that makes pastors sweat—stuff that is a bigger deal than it at first appears.

Preaching in the Inventive Age, by Doug Pagitt (Abingdon), is an excellent place to start on Pagitt’s Inventive Age series. Many preachers have a miniature seminary professor perched on one shoulder, whispering homiletical rules in their ear. They need Pagitt perched on their other shoulder, whispering his challenges to conventional homiletics.