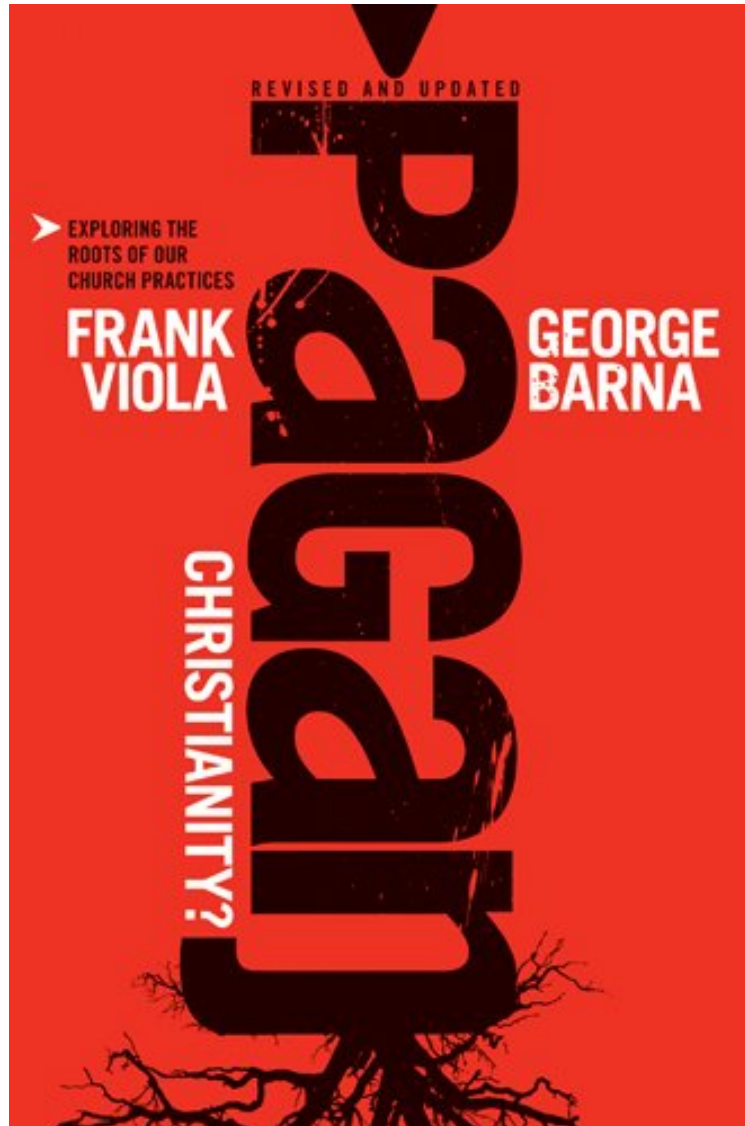


(Read download) Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices

Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices

Frank Viola, George Barna

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Frank Viola, George Barna : Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good ReadBy todd This was an eye-opening read. I have recommended this book to several people. It caused me to evaluate the church I pastor and has helped me see and

understand the impact culture through the ages has had on the church. Thanks for a great book Frank Viola. I have already purchased a few others and they are on my short list. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. eye opening
By Richard Hurschmangreat book lots of real knowledge in here highly recommended if you want to know why we do alot of what we do. Ids it biblical based or come from other sources1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Wow! This was a Life-Changer for Me!
By Keith MarshFor many in the Body of Christ, the Early Church provides a model. And yet, we've not been able to peel back the layers of Church history to see it shine. In particular, do we realize that our current practices of hiring a pastor, staff, building buildings - not to mention worship song list, the sermon and the altar call find no place in early church practice? Shocking isn't it? In Finding Organic Church, Frank Viola shows us another way that is compelling in its simplicity. You won't be sorry you purchased and read this book. But be ready to have some basic assumptions challenged. I am a former pastor who served one church for 30 years in New England.

Have you ever wondered why we Christians do what we do for church every Sunday morning? Why do we dress up for church? Why does the pastor preach a sermon each week? Why do we have pews, steeples, and choirs? This ground-breaking book, now in affordable softcover, makes an unsettling proposal: most of what Christians do in present-day churches is rooted, not in the New Testament, but in pagan culture and rituals developed long after the death of the apostles. Coauthors Frank Viola and George Barna support their thesis with compelling historical evidence and extensive footnotes that document the origins of modern Christian church practices. In the process, the authors uncover the problems that emerge when the church functions more like a business organization than the living organism it was created to be. As you reconsider Christ's revolutionary plan for his church to be the head of a fully functioning body in which all believers play an active role you'll be challenged to decide whether you can ever do church the same way again.

From the Publisher "Most contemporary Christians are massively ignorant as to how the church got to where it is today and of how much current church practice is due simply to accumulated tradition, with little or no roots in Scripture. This book provides a useful service in peeling back the layers of tradition, showing the origins of much that we today call "church." Christians who want to be biblically faithful, regardless of their particular tradition or church form, can learn and benefit from the book." Howard Snyder, Professor of History and Theology of Mission, Asbury Theological Seminary, author of "The Problem of Wineskins" and "The Community of the King." "PAGAN CHRISTIANITY is a landmark, a true milestone in the overall task of bringing in a new style of responsible, interactive Christianity to replace the old, severely paganized ecclesiastical forms. Frank has done us a great favor, drawing together revealing tidbits from hundreds of sources to create a continuous picture of the formation of today's institutional church. There's nothing like it in print. It is now THE book on church history from the point of view of the underground, open church." James Rutz, author of "Megashift" and "The Open Church." "PAGAN CHRISTIANITY contains a wide variety of interesting and helpful historical information of which most Christians - or non-Christians - will be completely unaware. The book identifies - in part or in whole - the pagan roots of many of our current church practices, as well as indicates some borrowed from earlier Jewish or, occasionally, more recent Customs." Robert Banks, New Testament scholar, author of "Paul's Idea of Community" and "The Church Comes Home." "This feisty book attacks the incipient paganism that has been absorbed into historic Christianity over the years. It exposes the syncretistic weak spots in what we assume to be basic in our way of doing church. Thoroughly iconoclastic, it is also at the same time a good apologetic for the house church movement which has strong restorationist impulses. My guess is that it will anger some readers and thrill others. I am one of the latter. Whatever, it won't be too easy to dismiss as it is really well researched and substantiated. I think it is definitely worth the read even if I do think it is a tad purist in tone. Just don't drop it-it is likely to explode." Alan Hirsch, author of "The Forgotten Ways" and "The Shaping of Things to Come." "Driving out demons is easy - compared with changing habits and traditions of man that develop into idols, to give us what only God should give us: identity, security, destiny. As in a child, the original God-given conscience is clean and clear. Many new born Christians feel the same and have an automatic feel for what is right. But in the case of organized Evangelicalism in the West, they are swiftly taken into a religious system that basically believes everything that Mom and Pap says -- and happily embrace "church practices" that are not in the Bible. Many just "know" at some point something is terribly wrong with Church-as-they-know-it. PAGAN CHRISTIANITY not only substantiates these ill feelings in millions of Christians with hard facts, but it provides us with a road map for the journey ahead. Once we know where we went wrong, repentance and finding the right way forward comes much easier." Wolfgang Simpson, author of "Houses That Change the World." "Anyone interested in the worship of the New Testament church and how that was altered through the centuries will find Frank Viola's PAGAN CHRISTIANITY very useful. The authors' position is clear and quite well documented." Graydon F. Snyder, Professor of New Testament, Chicago Theological Seminary, author of "Ante Pacem: Church Life Before Constantine." "As a Christian Artist/Musician I've had a chance to experience many different kinds of churches all over the world, from huge cathedral services to bizarre charismatics and strange Third World stuff to stiff denominational-- and good and bad

"house churches". For nearly 35 years in North America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Australia I've been involved with almost every conceivable kind of Christian expression. I've even served on staff as Worship Pastor at a large church here in the U.S. The result? I've already learned from study and experience what Frank Viola and George Barna have proven by historical documentation in *PAGAN CHRISTIANITY*: The traditional model of how we "do church" is very wrong -- and it's strangling Christ's Body. No matter where you are in your Christian journey, you need to read this book. It's truth whose time has come. Those who have never experienced His tangible presence as a regular occurrence when they meet will find it hard to believe that there is something more than what they know: It's very hard to walk away from what you've invested your life in when you don't know anything else. And the very grace of God Himself can be confusing: He'll fill whatever cup we lift to Him, no matter how small." Don Francisco, Christian musician/songwriter. "It's a great read and my copy has already been **STOLEN** by my neighbor who is probably just as fascinated in its contents as I was. *PAGAN CHRISTIANITY* by house church guru Frank Viola and researcher/author George Barna who have teamed up to give us the most thorough treatment yet of the pagan origins of many of our most cherished Sunday church traditions. Actually, Jim Rutz nailed a few of these in his book "Open Church," but Viola and Barna have gone far beyond Rutz, or anyone I know, in exposing more elements of Protestant church traditions to the scrutiny of historical research. Like dressing up for church. Pulpits and 3 point sermons. Clerical dog collars. Church steeples and seminary training. *PAGAN CHRISTIANITY* lets George Barna unpack his argument why the new Revolutionaries mentioned in his previous book are not rebelling against God by setting up organic house communities. And it gives Frank Viola the chance to put forward his best thinking yet in a series that has already assisted thousands of people in dealing biblically and historically with accusations of "lack of covering" or "neglecting church" or more recently, of adopting "pagan" practices in starting emerging churches. Ha! Watch as Franky and Georgy turn the tables! Controversial? Yes . . . **DUH!** . . . and the backlash has already started. Andrew Jones, tallskinnykiwi "Why do we 'do church' the way we do? Most folks seem to assume that our Christian religious trappings can be traced all the way back to the first century. But they can't. The things we hold dear-sacred buildings to meet in, pulpits, sacramental tables, clergy, liturgies, etc.-were unknown among Paul's assemblies. *PAGAN CHRISTIANITY* looks at our major church traditions and documents when and how they appeared in the ages long after the apostles. Haven't you ever wondered why people dress up in their best clothes for the Sunday morning service? *PAGAN CHRISTIANITY* unfolds the answer to this and numerous other questions looming in the back of many folks' minds. Reading *PAGAN CHRISTIANITY* will open your eyes to the fact that the ecclesiastical emperor really has no clothes on." Jon Zens, editor of "Searching Together." "In recent years, an increasing number of us pastors have recognized a major blind spot in the living out of our commitment to a Biblical lifestyle. That blind spot is ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church). As a former Presbyterian pastor, I believe *PAGAN CHRISTIANITY* will play a vital role in shaping the growing conversation on this subject now and in the future. Well researched and well written, this book is accessible to both church leaders and those formerly known as the laity." John White, former Evangelical Presbyterian pastor; Community Facilitator for *LUKE TEN: A Community of Practice for Church Planters*. "*PAGAN CHRISTIANITY* documents specific areas where contemporary church life violates Biblical principles. It is painful to read because it requires taking a journey beyond the comfort zone of our present paradigms. Whether you agree with all the conclusions the author draws or not, you will have no argument with his documentation. It is a scholarly work with an explosive conclusion. Particularly for those of us in the modern cell church movement, this is a valuable tool to force rethinking the meaning of the word "ecclesia." The Holy Spirit is not pleased with churchianity as we practice it, nor is the watching unchurched world." Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., author of "Where Do We Go From Here?" and founder of the Cell Church Movement. "Frank Viola and George Barna have teamed up to create an intelligent, readable, and yet challenging work about the historical roots of the many unbiblical modern church practices that hinder Christian growth in quality and church growth in quantity. Anyone who reads *Pagan Christianity* with an open mind and heart will never see the church the same way again. May those with newly-gained spiritual eyes not stop there, but go on to do something about it." Rad Zdero, Ph.D., Author of "The Global House Church Movement" and Editor of "Nexus: The World House Church Movement Reader." "Frank has done a masterful job both researching and then weaving together the threads that have made modern church practices what they are - pagan substitutes for authentic church life. One nice thing about *PAGAN CHRISTIANITY* is that it provides the history behind a perception that many of us Christians share: The way the modern Western church does things has little to do with the organic life we see in the New Testament. The difference is so great sometimes that one wonders how one could possibly have transmuted into the other." Hal Miller, author of "Christian Community: Biblical or Optional?" "This is an important book which demonstrates that many of the practical aspects of contemporary church life, ministry and structure have little or no biblical basis and are, in fact, inspired by a wide variety of non Christian patterns and ideas most of which are inimical to Christian life and growth. Many readers will find this book challenging in the extreme but all who are concerned with the future of the church should read it." Dave Norrington, Lecturer of religious studies at Blackpool and the Fylde College, author of "To Preach or Not to Preach." From the Inside Flap Sorting out truth from tradition Many Christians take for granted that their church's practices are rooted in Scripture. Yet those practices look very different from those of the first-century church. The New Testament

is not silent on how the early church freely expressed the reality of Christ's indwelling in ways that rocked the first-century world. Times have changed. Pagan Christianity leads us on a fascinating tour through church history, revealing this startling and unsettling truth: Many cherished church traditions embraced today originated not out of the New Testament, but out of pagan practices. One of the most troubling outcomes has been the effect on average believers: turning them from living expressions of Christ's glory and power to passive observers. If you want to see that trend reversed, turn to Pagan Christianity . . . a book that examines and challenges every aspect of our contemporary church experience.

From the Back Cover Are we really doing church by the Book? Why does the pastor preach a sermon at every service? Why do church services seem so similar week after week? Why does the congregation sit passively in pews? Not sure? This book makes an unsettling proposal: Most of what present-day Christians do in church each Sunday is rooted, not in the New Testament, but in pagan culture and rituals developed long after the death of the apostles. Authors Frank Viola and George Barna support their thesis with compelling historical evidence and extensive footnotes that document the origins of our modern Christian church practices. In the process, the authors uncover the problems that emerge when the church functions more like a business organization than the living organism it was created to be. As you reconsider Christ's revolutionary plan for His church to be the head of a fully functioning body in which all believers play an active role, you'll be challenged to decide whether you can ever do church the same way again.