



The Gifts of the Small Church (Ministry in the Small Membership Church)

Jason Byassee

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Dizzying changes have taken place in American religious life in the last half century. Yet in spite of that fact, taking a snapshot of a “typical” Christian church in America would reveal a surprising number of small-to-mid-sized congregations, rooted in a local neighborhood or community, tied to a specific denomination, where most of the members know each others’ names, and hence are blessed (and cursed) with being the church together.

In this clear-eyed, humorous appraisal, Jason Byassee contends that the “church around the corner” occupies a particular place in the divine economy, that it is especially capable of forming us in the virtues, perspectives, and habits that make up the Christian life. Not that he romanticizes these churches, however. Having been a rural, small membership church pastor, Byassee knows too well the particular vices and temptations to which they are subject. But he also knows the particular graces they’ve been given, graces like the “prayer ladies,” those pillars of the congregation who, “when one told you she was praying for you it meant something. When one hugged you, you remembered all week. When one cooked for you the casserole tasted like love. And when you were around them you were in the presence of Jesus.”

Anyone who serves, or belongs to, a “church around the corner” will find their ministry strengthened by this enlivening, inspiring book.

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