



Imagining the Small Church: Celebrating a Simpler Path

Steve Willis

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Imagining the Small Church: Celebrating a Simpler Path bears witness to what God is doing in small churches. Steve Willis tells stories from the small churches he has pastored in rural, town, and urban settings and dares to imagine that their way of being has something to teach all churches in this time of change in the American Christian Church. Willis tells us in the introduction, 'This book boasts no ten or fifteen steps to a successful small church. Instead, I hope to encourage you to give up on steps altogether and even to give up on success, at least how success is usually measured. I also hope to help the reader imagine the small church differently; to see with new eyes the joys and pleasures of living small and sustainably.' The joys and sorrows Willis helps us see through the compelling stories of faith in the small church puts flesh and bones on the possibilities that lie ahead for congregations in the future as well as the here and now. From the foreword by Tony Pappas: 'In Imagining the Small Church, pastor, writer, and lover of small things Steve Willis takes us on a narrative and imaginative journey. Some readers will have a sense that what Willis is describing simply names what they have already known in their hearts about their small churches. For them the journey will cover some familiar ground, explore some territory from a fresh angle, but deposit them nearly home again, hopefully with just a bit more awareness and appreciation. For others, though, Willis will take them on a long journey to a far and foreign place. They probably won't bother to finish reading it, and they will miss his invitation to find pastoring a small church extremely rewarding and meaningful. They will find this a strange book weird, off-center, and impractical; unlivable in the twenty-first century and undesirable in any event. This is because Willis is taking on the ethos, the values of our age, and claiming that it needn't be so. We can live on a different basis. We can live on the basis of gospel values.' There will be a variety of paths as the Church seeks new ways of being in this time. Willis knows this. In Imagining the Small Church he presents us with one that embraces a life of faith on the periphery and challenges church leaders to do the same.

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