



Beating the Boundaries: The Church God Is Calling Us to Be

John Spicer

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Using the image of the traditional practice of “beating the bounds” of the parish, this book contrasts the desire to mark boundaries with God’s call to explore boundaries in order to open them. Building on visits to nine Episcopal and Church of England congregations, Spicer explores how they are opening the boundaries between inherited expressions of church and the unique contexts in which they find themselves. He argues that to beat the boundaries around their current expressions of church, congregations should (1) name a missional identity common to both their past expressions of congregational life and the church they hear God calling them to become; (2) identify whom they’re seeking to reach in the community and how they intend to do so; (3) identify what sort of new church expression God is calling them to create; (4) empower a missional leader and plan for governance issues their work may raise; and (5) collaboratively identify how to define success and how to understand what might be seen as failure in terms of common church metrics.

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