



IN THE UNITED STATES,

MORE THAN **80%** OF THE PEOPLE **LIVE IN CITIES...**

HOWEVER, MORE THAN **80%** OF THE LAND IS **RURAL LAND.**



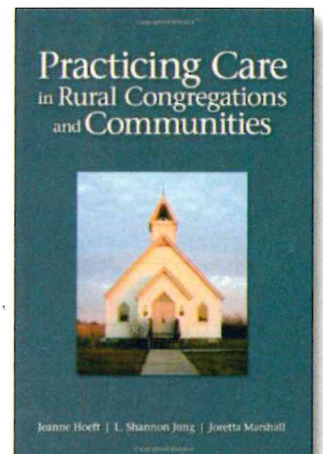
**H**ealth in rural communities is treated differently than in urban areas. Small towns and their close-knit environments shape pastoral care in specific ways. In *Practicing Care in Rural Congregations and Communities*, the authors provide insight into how pastoral care in rural communities functions and what makes it unique from other places.

One example they list is how pastoral care and leadership are connected in rural places. Within rural communities, if healing and transformation happen without care and leadership, the individual

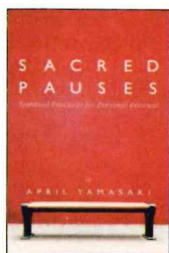
and social connections are lost. These connections are what bind small-town communities together. Yet the authors are clear to avoid romanticizing rural communities and instead “challenge the perception of rural United States as an idealized place on the one hand and a minimized place on the other.” With this in mind they offer practical suggestions for difficult pastoral situations such as finding support when many of the townspeople are members of the congregation, or addressing domestic abuse situations when the sheriff is related to the abuser.

This is a useful tool for pastors who are serving in rural communities and for seminarians and lay leaders who may serve in such a community in the future. As they point out, “An overwhelming majority of pastors will, at some point on their ministry career, serve small-town and rural churches, though they will likely have been raised and trained in cities and suburbs. What happens in rural churches and communities is crucial to the well-being of us all.”

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By J. Hoeft, L. Jung, and J. Marshall, Fortress Press 2013.



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