

doi:[10.1017/S0036930618000418](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930618000418)

Amy Plantinga Pauw, *Church in Ordinary Time: A Wisdom Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), pp 198. \$20.

This is an original and inspirational book offering an ecclesiology shaped by our identity as God's creatures and the Wisdom literature of the Bible. Plantinga Pauw defines this as an 'ordinary time' church. She takes the phrase from the liturgical year and explores what it means for the church to exist in the 'time between the times'; in the reality of complex bodily existence. This ordinary time helps us to see ourselves and the church as part of the much bigger relationship God has with the created world.

Her vision is honestly critical about the ways certain ecclesiologies have elevated the church as an end in itself. Instead she invites us to see the church as a 'school with a very long and bodily curriculum' (p. 37); a community that is rooted in earthly realities where we learn with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to 'make new and make do'. Her vision of church is informed by scriptural Wisdom theology and the works of a great number of theologians including Calvin and Bonhoeffer. It is a humble understanding of church and, in its grounded reality, it is also a very hopeful vision.

The book is organised in three parts reflecting the persons of the Trinity. First, there is a reflection on the Creator God and what it means for Christians to view God's involvement with the whole of creation rather than having an anthropomorphic view of the world and salvation. Part two reflects on Jesus. This includes a wonderful reflection on the humanity of Jesus, Mary's child who models for us an engagement with the human reality of interdependence and relationships of care.

The third section explores the Spirit's engagement with the church and the world. In this section she considers the liturgical year and the way the themes touch our day-to-day lives. From the 'longing' of Advent to the 'joining of hands' that is at the heart of Pentecost, the seasons reflect the good news of God in relation to the realities of our human existence in the world. She concludes with a section on polyphony, the way in which we hold together different emotions, different truths and different voices, in our being church. 'With this multidimensionality comes complexity and dissonance, a communal life of making new and making do. Welcome to church in ordinary time' (p. 162).

In calling us to reflect on Wisdom literature in understanding what it is to be church, Plantinga Pauw invites us to let go of many of the certainties Christians have sought to claim about the church and the Christian life. Her vision allows for a church which is holy and yet fallible, in which scripture and sacraments are essential tools of our growth into Christ. These tools are capable of being used to exclude and limit the grace of God, and her

vision requires a serious look at the ways in which a narrow view of the church diminishes our vision of God. Understanding ourselves as creatures means taking seriously context and culture and being open to the ways they impact on our understanding of the traditions we have inherited. For our understanding to develop and change according to time and place is a natural way of being in the world that God made.

This ordinary time ecclesiology impacts on the understanding of the church's mission. We are to proclaim our faith in the living God, yet not to try and build up a club of likeminded people. The church is to be engaged in a genuine 'joining of hands' working for the good of all of God's creation. Pentecost calls us to join hands across the boundaries that alienate. This she rightly suggests means 'unlearning the habits and assumptions that isolate and alienate' (p. 152). We may need the wisdom of Qoheleth from Ecclesiastes to understand when the church is not shaped by the success we long for. We may need the humility of Job to accept that God is engaged in the world in a more complex and visionary way than we can begin to understand.

This is a book to be read and then reread. It is both challenging and comforting. Her 'ordinary time ecclesiology' teaches us to enlarge our understanding of God's involvement with all of creation and see the church as part of that. It reminds us that we are called to live out our lives in the bodily reality of an earthly existence. This is where church is located, and thus it is a fallible community, learning how to be Christ's body in the places it is called to be, inspired by the Spirit yet always knowing that the Spirit is at work beyond the boundaries that we set.

Emma Percy

Trinity College, Oxford OX1 3BH

[emma.percy@trinity.ox.ac.uk](mailto:emma.percy@trinity.ox.ac.uk)

doi:[10.1017/S0036930618000285](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930618000285)

Murray A. Rae, *Architecture and Theology: The Art of Place* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2017), pp. xi+288. \$49.95

In this contribution to the steadily increasing stream of writing on theology and the built environment, Murray Rae seeks a mutual illumination between theology and architecture, essentially through a series of analogies. The book is marked by a becoming modesty, a chastened awareness of the ever present problem of evil, and a sensitivity to theological hubris.

After the introduction, two chapters draw on Vitruvius taking up his theme (originally Pythagorean, and the impulse behind Greek classicism) that architecture is a means by which humanity both discovers and