

Murray A. Rae, *Architecture and Theology: The Art of Place*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2017. (288 pp.) [ISBN: 9781481307635]

**Sara E. Evans
Dunedin, New Zealand**

The title of Murray Rae's award-winning *Architecture and Theology: The Art of Place* might suggest a simple survey of built environments within the church, or perhaps a theology of architecture. Rae does indeed survey a remarkable number of architectural concepts, models for urban development, and spans the history of architecture from classical Greece to the still incomplete Sagrada Família Basilica. That he does so without overwhelming the architectural novice is noteworthy; that he can simultaneously offer a thorough and thoughtful engagement with theology, ethics, and postmodern philosophy is nothing short of remarkable.

Despite its unassuming title, Rae's book offers something more than a mere consideration of the built environment. Instead, it is an exploration of how architecture nourishes, shapes, and gives meaning to our lives as embodied creatures. To do justice to every topic covered is impossible, I've chosen to highlight three, where Rae examines how architecture speaks to our views on freedom in daily life, offers a vision of public discipleship in city planning, and finally how architecture might open our eyes to the transcendent and coming Christ. Throughout these discussions and others, Rae implicitly suggests that the architect has as much to say about the faith as the theologian.

In his third chapter, Rae addresses the postmodern belief that restraint and law is opposed to human freedom and that it "stifles all creativity" (p. 45). Without explicitly condemning this view, Rae considers several examples of Greek architecture used, both in classical works and in the Renaissance, to demonstrate that rules may be applied with "creativity and imagination," even applied "*inventively* to a particular context" (p. 47). Far from destroying creativity, rules and structure provide the parameters for creative endeavors. This applies beyond architecture and in Christianity where Rae discusses the relationship between Jewish and Christian views of freedom and Torah. The central law, to love God and one's neighbor, serves to counter radical, individualized, and isolated views of freedom. Indeed, the enduring significance of Jewish law among Christians, Rae suggests, lies in the law's ability to order a life "free from bondage" placing constraint "not upon freedom, but upon chaos," (p. 62) just as architectural rules enable creative, sustainable building.

Rae's chapter "A Foretaste of Heaven," offers a vision of a public Christian discipleship. Here, Rae shifts to a broader focus on urban planning and renewal, and public ethics by examining the medieval world's architecture and urban structure. He does so through an extended foray into medieval Rome, describing various features that pilgrims and inhabitants encountered in their travels and daily lives. Rome developed shared public spaces to invite inclusion public (religious) acts, maintained a focus on community needs rather than obsessive privatization, and honoured the poor and needy by providing spaces for their benefit. Rae's survey culminates in the suggestion that through these and other features, medieval Rome provides an example of "Christian discipleship as a form of life to be lived in the public realm" (p. 125). He

notes further that God is not merely concerned with the sanctification of individual souls but an entire earthly existence, something which the Roman *urbanis* attempted to facilitate. Rae's consistent rebuke of modern excess, privatization, and unsustainable practices is held in contrast to the medieval emphasis on Christian ethics displayed in thoughtful, generous architecture and city planning.

Finally, the third chapter I wish to feature is Rae's work in chapter seven, where he develops an inaugurated eschatology by discussing indwelling, presence, and absence in architecture. Utilizing the Rufer House, which lacks an explicit hearth or anchoring object, Rae considers how something without concrete presence may still reveal itself to us. In the Rufer House, this occurs through functionality. Here, what "*takes place* through the architectural form is obedient to the [intangible] order" (p. 194). That is to say, one may *know* the intangible by living within the *sense* of the space. A home is a reality crafted around a specific vision of life, and one must indwell the space to know it, just as Christianity is a faith known by being lived. Further, architecture may enable us to look from what *has* made itself apparent, from that which has penetrated reality, towards that which is beyond. As the Apostles Creed opens up a new vista, a new way of seeing, architecture may "locate us within a wider landscape" so that we may look beyond the immediate towards the transcendent, towards that which is to come.

Rae provides many other remarkable and insightful examples of how the architect may speak to theology. His work canvases a wide array of architectural success and failures, their driving philosophies, and the way they can inform our sense of being in the world as Christians.

Architecture and Theology is a reminder that we are embodied creatures, meant to know and see God through not only our minds but our senses. The way in which we inhabit the world shapes not only what we say about ourselves and God, but our very knowledge of him. What Murray Rae has offered us, then, is an invitation to see and inhabit the world differently, so as to know God more fully.

Jason S. Sexton, Paul Weston, eds. *The End of Theology: Shaping Theology for the Sake of Mission*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006. (299 pp). [ISBN: 9781606405919]

**Kate Tyler
Nelson, New Zealand**

A biblical scholar, a missiologist, and a systematic theologian walked into a room. While this sounds like the beginning of a bad dad joke, it was the premise for *The End of Theology: Shaping Theology for the Sake of Mission*. This work collates the proceedings of the 2014 Tyndale Fellowship Christine Doctrine symposium, a collaborative gathering which brought together theologians, missiologists and practitioners to address questions about the relationship of theology and mission. Prompted by shifts in the demographic dominance of Christianity from the global North to the global South, as well as the rapid changes caused by secularisation, pluralisation, and globalisation, the essays contained within "address essential missiological questions for developing the kind of theology that will fuel Christian mission," (p. xxiii) emerging from a commitment to "*do theology* for the sake of mission" (p. xxii). A comprehensive range of perspectives and