

ministry and her community's ministry. She is inspiring and hope-giving in her message, and those who have the courage to read past her matter-of-fact acknowledgment of what it means to be dying will find life, hope, mission, and faith in what she has to say. For vestries who are weary, for clergy who are disheartened, for congregation members who wonder what it might be like to stop doing things the way we have always done them, this book will be a treasure, leaving them with images of hope and possibility that are full of life-giving Spirit. For those who want to believe that we are just hitting a bump in the road and the church will soon return to its past glory, this book will be painful and offensive; but even then, those who keep reading will find much to ponder and pray about.

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Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology. By Neil Ormerod. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2014. x + 444 pp. \$49.00 (paper).

Neil Ormerod has done Catholic ecclesiology a great service with this book. He has attempted and in many ways succeeded in something that has not been common in recent decades, namely, to engage in the task of systematic ecclesiology. The book has been fifteen years in the making, and those familiar with the author will recognize a number of his ideas previously argued in separate publications. Ormerod considers his book an experiment, for it seeks to integrate social science into ecclesiology. He sees his project as akin to Edward Schillebeeckx's *The Church with a Human Face* and Roger Haight's *Christian Community in History*, although he finds those attempts at integration not entirely successful. The author is a scholar of Bernard Lonergan, from whom he adopts several key conceptual tools. Ormerod is further influenced by the work of two other fellow theologians, Joseph Komonchak and Robert Doran, who also appropriated Lonergan's insights in their writings. This book is a major methodological achievement and it should not be missed by anyone interested in contemporary Catholic ecclesiology.

The book is organized into two main sections. In chapters 1 through 5 the author spells out his method for systematic ecclesiology, and the remaining chapters (6 through 10) illustrate the method by treating the data of the history of the church. Chapter 1 lays out Ormerod's conception of systematic

ecclesiology. The reader learns that it should be "empirical/historical, critical, normative, dialectic and practical" (p. 2). It should "tell a story of the Church from its origins until the present, with perhaps intimations into the future" (p. 4) in such a way that it provides a fit between the historical data and a theory about the church. For that to happen, systematic ecclesiology should engage the social sciences. Chapter 2 treats the question of how ecclesiology can engage the social sciences in its attempts to understand the church. Chapter 3 develops tools and categories for reoriented social sciences using Doran's account of the scale of values and applies them to an understanding of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom. Ormerod further applies the developed tools and categories to the mission of the church in chapter 4 and to its structure and ministry in chapter 5.

The second part of the book treats the history of the church from its beginning until the modernist crisis. While highly selective, these chapters offer a valuable overview of various theological issues. The author's objective is to show that ecclesiology must be grounded in the concrete data of history to avoid idealizing the church. The relationship of nature and grace, faith and reason, and the transition from a cosmological to anthropological culture receive heavy attention in this section.

Ormerod offers a compelling argument for why ecclesialogists should engage the social sciences in their investigations of the church. Still, in considering his analysis, I wonder if Ormerod's approach places the social sciences and ecclesiology in unnecessary competition, as if they are intended to accomplish one and the same thing. Perhaps it is more fruitful to think about the social sciences and ecclesiology as interpreting one and the same reality, but on different levels. The social sciences investigate the church from a perspective where divine revelation and faith do not enter into consideration, and ecclesialogists investigate the church precisely from that perspective. In this way, the social scientific and the ecclesialogical investigations of the church would have implications for one another, and they would be distinguishable in terms of their goal.

Overall, the book is a major contribution to contemporary theology of the church and will be appreciated by experts and graduate students, for whom it will become a valuable resource, especially with regard to methodological questions pertaining to ecclesiology. This creative work will no doubt inspire further discourse about revitalizing the discipline of systematic ecclesiology.

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