

Beyond Suspicion Post-Christendom Protestant Political Theology in John Howard Yoder and Oliver O'Donovan



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Reviews

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(Summer Jacobson)

BEYOND SUSPICION POST-CHRISTENDOM PROTESTANT POLITICAL THEOLOGY IN JOHN HOWARD YODER AND OLIVER O'DONOVAN



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Paternoster Press. Softcover/Paperback. Book Condition: New. The modern era includes a twofold tradition of radical suspicionâ"the suspicion that politicians corrupt morality, and that politics is corrupted by theology. However, this view has been challenged in recent theological thought which seeks to move beyond this suspicion to recover a constructive role for political theologies of John Howard Yoder and Oliver O'Donovan. The present work shows how post-Christendom Protestant political theology has attempted to move beyond suspicion without putting forward some hidden attempt to reassert a contemporary version of Christendom. O'Donovan's political theology, written from within the British Anglican tradition, is a bold project in which he attempts to push back the horizons of commonplace secularist politics and open it up theologically, a move that he believes will offer crucial resources for thinking about justice and the common good. A related response is presented by Yoder, who, as an American Mennonite, represents Anabaptism. From this more marginal ecclesial location, Yoder's thought stands both as a challenge to regnant liberal notions of the relation of church and state, and as an important interlocutor for O'Donovan's political theology. Yoder argues that political theology entails a particular kind of focus on the church, where the very shape of the church in the world is a public witness for the world and not first of all a withdrawal from the world. The critical comparison brings to view areas of significant convergence and divergence in understandings of the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the New Testament. O'Donovan and Yoder's respective interpretations of Christendom are also fundamentally divergent, as are their views on the legitimacy of the use of force by government, clearly seen in O'Donovan's support of just-war tradition and Yoder's promotion of messianic pacifism.

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