

The topic of ecumenism surfaces during these well-crafted essays and addresses. The undivided nature of the earliest Church is mentioned often (pp. 161, 167, 171, 184, 209). ‘Acceptable canonical diversity emerges in the New Testament period’ (p. 231). References from other church traditions are used. High praise is given in ch. 10 to the Church of the Apostles, Seattle, USA, ‘which is an eleven-year old joint Episcopalian-Lutheran congregation’ where the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church ‘are in full communion, which allows mutual recognition of ministries, joint ordinations, Eucharistic hospitality, etc’ (pp. 174-77).

Many thought-provoking quotes are available. For example, ‘This engagement will not just mean a mind and heart open to God’s truth in the world, but also a commitment to the betterment of the world because it is the world God loves’ (p. 31). ‘My faith is simply that God is continuing to make the Church, and that staying on board with the actual Christian community can be a joyful, hopeful position’ (pp. 69-70). ‘Our Church has a future because Jesus Christ and his gospel have a future’ (p. 177). ‘What we do want is to inhabit secular modern culture in a distinctive way, having freely chosen to live as Christians and to be the Church *in* this world though not *of* it’ (p. 226).

Church Matters is a must purchase for serious readers of theology, and an essential addition to parish, public, theological college and university libraries. Thank you, Scott, for enhancing the critical and dialogical role of a professional theologian and theology within the Anglican Church of Australia and beyond, through these significant and valued ‘Essays and Addresses on Ecclesial Belonging’.

John Littleton
Retired Anglican minister in the Diocese of Adelaide, Australia

Samuel Tranter, *Oliver O’Donovan’s Moral Theology: Tensions and Triumphs* (London: T&T Clark, 2022), pp. 288. ISBN 978-0567694591
doi:[10.1017/S174035532300013X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S174035532300013X)

In his book, *Oliver O’Donovan’s Moral Theology: Tensions and Triumphs*, Samuel Tranter takes on a crucial, important and highly challenging task: synthesizing thematically the massive and complex corpus of Oliver O’Donovan’s moral theology. This appears to be one of the first, if not the first, scholarly monograph to undertake such an ambitious project. The advantage of this work over several of the high-quality but inevitably episodic edited volumes available to date is that Tranter’s unified focus provides his readers with a sense of the breadth, depth and internal coherence of O’Donovan’s work. Given O’Donovan’s prodigious output, in forms ranging from books to essays to sermons, and in fields both ecclesial and academic, it is a mammoth undertaking in which there is much to commend. O’Donovan’s moral theology is notable for its intellectual complexity and its penetrating insight and Tranter does an admirable job acknowledging and at times clarifying the complexity and highlighting the insights of O’Donovan’s work. The book is also a useful resource in its broad engagement with those numerous moral

theologians, both in the United States and the United Kingdom, who have drawn upon O'Donovan as a resource.

I found Tranter's organizational schema for understanding the various phases of O'Donovan's work especially helpful for contextualizing such a broad swathe of material and illuminating the intellectual and spiritual connections across O'Donovan's *corpus*. He begins by mapping the intellectual terrain of O'Donovan's early work in natural ethics, then turns to establish *Resurrection and Moral Order* as the hinge point of O'Donovan's work – both building upon his early efforts and providing the foundation upon which his later work rests. Obviously, *Desire of the Nations* and *Ways of Judgment* represent an expansion into the field of political theology in which O'Donovan has had especially significant impact. Tranter then, very correctly, takes O'Donovan's most recent trilogy focusing on 'ethics as theology' as a 'remapping' of the entire scope of O'Donovan's work. Tranter carefully illuminates the developments which have arisen in O'Donovan's work in each one of these phases, while also placing them into a synthetic whole.

In a book subtitled '*Triumphs and Tensions*', there is an inevitable issue in negotiating the balance between these two foci. Tranter is open about his own deep appreciation and theological sympathies with O'Donovan's project – making it clear that this engagement is motivated by gratitude and respect. While Tranter commends O'Donovan's methodology of a fully scripturally informed moral theology, driven by a reading of history and politics through the lens of the history of salvation, he is concerned that O'Donovan's theology does not at times deliver fully on its promises. He articulates this worry specifically in the way O'Donovan's emphasis upon eschatology works itself out in the concrete instances of real life. In considering O'Donovan's natural ethics, Tranter worries that O'Donovan's theology of the resurrection, even in *Resurrection and Moral Order*, actually ends up being really a theology focused on the restoration of natural order rather than the instantiation of a new heaven and a new earth. This approach results in what is perhaps an over-realized eschatology rather than a guide to living the moral life in this current age of the time between times – post-resurrection and pre-eschaton. In reading O'Donovan's political theology, Tranter appreciates O'Donovan's use of eschatology as 'critical comparative' but worries perhaps that O'Donovan's political theology misses the actual potential for transformative human action in the world. In a similar way, he worries that O'Donovan's latest trilogy perhaps misses out on resources for specific *actions* – clearly outlined in Scripture – especially regarding actions of mercy such as care for the poor. Given the breadth and scope of O'Donovan's work and the general appreciative tone, the tensions at times seem somewhat *picayune*. Yes, we can all want more – even from such a capacious scholar as O'Donovan. However, taken in another light, perhaps another service that the book offers other Christian theologians is a plan of action for those seeking to move forward beyond the ground O'Donovan has already covered, and which Tranter has sketched so admirably.

Elisabeth Rain Kincaid
Loyola University New Orleans, USA