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### Wandel, Lee Palmer. The Reformation: Towards a New History

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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supervision of at least some Catholics, allowing households to serve as parish or diocesan headquarters. Native itinerant priests who serviced the countryside, adapting to geo-political realities, brought change (e.g., in traditional gender roles) and influenced the development of pseudo-regular organizations outside of tradition clerical oversights. Catholicism survived not because of the firm recusancy of the few but due to the occasional conformity, mutual toleration, and recognition of the political realities by the many.

Every essay in this collection features text and language both scholarly and easy on the eye; each has a pleasing flow, which not only enhances the academic value of the work but also solidifies Walsham's reputation as a major voice in the revision of early modern British Catholic studies.

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**Wandel, Lee Palmer.**

***The Reformation: Towards a New History.***

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. viii, 281. ISBN 978-0-521-71797-7 (paperback) \$26.99.

In *The Reformation: Towards a New History*, Lee Palmer Wandel sets out to reorganize the way in which the history of the Reformation is told and to integrate two important sixteenth-century histories: the history of Europe's discovery of and expansion into the Americas and the history of the fragmentation of European Christianity into multiple competing Churches. Her treatment of the Reformation is divided into three parts: the first, "Beginnings," describes late medieval Christianity, the impact of Columbus's voyages and Spain's expansion into the New World, and the state of Bible printing and distribution by the beginning of the sixteenth century. The second part, "Fragmentation," describes the clash of competing interpretations of and approaches to Scripture and the resulting reordering of familial and subject-ruler relationships. The final section, "Religion Reconceived," elucidates the changes in how sixteenth-century Europeans defined what it meant to be Christian, how they interacted with sacred objects and spaces, and how they approached the Eucharist.

Wandel's book has many strengths. Her call to bear in mind the effects of contact with the Americas on European religious debates is welcome, and she presents her readers with a succinct, clearly organized, and well-argued treatment of the religious upheaval in sixteenth-century Europe and its consequences. She argues that the challenges posed by the Reformation and conversion encounters with indigenous peoples of the Americas fundamentally reordered how Western Europeans defined what it meant to be Christian. It no longer meant simply undergoing baptism; acquiescence to other core confessional doctrines became essential. Nor was it any longer bound to particular places or kingdoms, for rulers governed confessionally-mixed principalities. Lutherans, Reformed Christians, Anabaptists, and Catholics differed in their beliefs about God and the Bible, in their worship practices, in their attitudes to sacred objects, and even in the ways they marked time. The appellation of "Christian," which in the Middle Ages had indicated a widely shared, albeit flexible, identity, came in the sixteenth century to reinforce the theological differences between different types of Christians. Most Catholics, Reformed Protestants, Lutherans, and Anabaptists came to consider only those who shared their particular confessional affiliation truly Christian, and Wandel aptly delineates this shift in religious allegiances.

Wandel's eighth chapter, "Things and Places," is particularly innovative, and her expertise on Reformation iconoclasm and sixteenth-century visual culture serves her well. She presents an accessible introduction to the controversy over images in Reformation-era Europe and the differing views of sacred objects and spaces held by Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed Protestants, and Anabaptists. She describes the prevalence of images and sacred objects, both inside and outside churches, in the late medieval period and examines acts of iconoclasm, both small-scale (such as the rebellion of the Swiss peasant Uly Anders, who in 1520 destroyed a small crucifix and threw it from a window) and large (the dissolution of the monasteries in England). She also goes beyond descriptions of iconoclasm to examine how Protestants ordered their own sacred spaces: for Lutherans, this varied somewhat by location whereas Calvinists preferred more austere churches, oriented around the pulpit to emphasize the importance of the Word. Anabaptists, who often had to meet clandestinely, did not initially have dedicated worship spaces.

As a scholar of the Radical Reformation, I was particularly pleased to see Wandel devote a significant amount of attention to Anabaptists throughout the

book. Her treatment of Anabaptism suffers from a few minor flaws; most notably, she overstates the relative equality of men and women within Anabaptism. It is a little misleading to refer to Anabaptism as “the only Church in which women were permitted to preach” (131). This obfuscates the differences between the many sixteenth-century Anabaptist sects, which adopted a variety of attitudes towards women and their ministries, and de-emphasizes the patriarchal mindset that was, by and large, as prevalent among Anabaptist leaders as it was among leaders from other Christian groups. When Anabaptists did codify their beliefs on the roles women could play within the Church, they tended to restrict them; women on Hutterite colonies, for instance, were not expected to teach the faith to anyone older than a preschool-aged child, and the official teachers of the Word were uniformly male. The few surviving references to Anabaptist female preachers lack detail and are mostly found in hostile sources, facts that call into question their reliability. That many Anabaptist women enthusiastically adopted and sought to propagate their faith is clear, but to call their efforts preaching is to adopt a liberal definition of the word that also applies to the missionary efforts of Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic women. Minor quibbles aside, however, Wandel’s treatment of Anabaptism is generally excellent and the Brill *Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism*, which she includes in her list of resources for further reading, will satisfy any curiosity her treatment piques.

Seasoned scholars of the Reformation, while they will doubtless be familiar with the material in Wandel’s book, will find value in her approach. Undergraduate students and non-specialists, however, will be the primary beneficiaries of this accessible and evocative introduction to a crucial period in the history of Western Christianity.

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