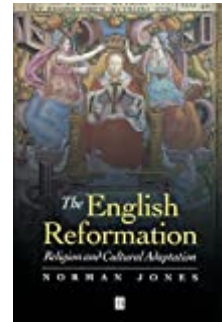
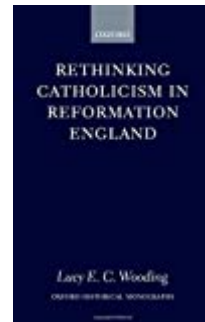


Norman L. Jones. *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaption.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002. xv + 253 pp. \$119.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-631-21042-9; \$48.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-631-21043-6.



Lucy E. C. Wooding. *Rethinking Catholicism in Reformation England.* Oxford Historical Monographs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. x + 305 pp. \$70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-820865-5.



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Conflict and Consensus

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The last decade has seen a flowering of Reformation scholarship. Susan Brigden, Caroline Litzenberger, Patarick Collinson, Diarmaid MacCulloch, John Bossy, Eamon Duffy, Ian Green and others have shown us that the Reformation was a rich and complex process. Indeed there was, it seems, a plethora of different Reformations. Reformations in church government, in doctrine, liturgy, preaching, architecture, personal piety, and eddying counter-trends that flowed back and forth.

These different Reformations were adopted and assimilated with more or less effectiveness according to chance and geography. Historians grapple with the idea of when the Reformation started and ended. And just as early modernists have come to terms with the idea of the “long eighteenth century,” so we are adjusting to the ideas of the “long Reformation” stretching from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Indeed historians like Jeremy Gregory suggest that some eighteenth-century churchmen consciously saw themselves as completing the Reformation. In spite of Tudor emphasis on uniformity, and

the relative stability of Elizabeth's reign, the religious and political disputes of the seventeenth century from the Hampton Court to the Savoy Conference prevented the sediment of the sixteenth century from settling into a firm and homogenous Reformation foundation.

Norman Jones's *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation* is a study of how "a nation of habitual Catholics turned into Protestants" (p. 2). This was both an acute and a chronic process. Loss of the monasteries and changes in liturgy may have happened quickly, but the impact of the Reformation on families, education, economics, and wider culture took more time. Chapter by chapter, Jones evaluates the impact of the Reformation. In the case of families, "the blow of the Reformation cracked families" (p. 33): authority was challenged, opportunities to support dead relatives with masses, etc. were gone, families turned away from religion as hereditary occupations and preoccupations, and kinship was strained by differing responses to the Reformation. In such circumstances, Jones argues, people sometimes had to choose between their family and their faith. Usually they chose the former, and thereby forced religion into a subordinate position. In this way, the Reformation loosened the ties that bound men and women to their church. If the Reformation "cracked" families, it provided a balm of financial self-interest in the form of the dissolution of the monasteries. While there were plenty of the faithful who mourned the passing of monastic religion, there were individuals and corporations which benefitted from the dissolution. Some who enriched themselves also gave assets back to the community, but such civic virtue was a product of self-interest.

The mental landscape of Reformation folk also had to change. They learned to hate their former co-religionists, to enjoy or endure executions and the persecutions of recusants. This was the micro-scale, of which the macro form was institutional change. Livery companies abandoned their copes, vestments, and corporate religious life, including care for the souls of deceased members. Universities often benefitted from the acute changes occasioned by the dissolution of the monasteries, but they also absorbed the changing ideas about religion and spirituality. Some colleges willingly abandoned singing in hall; elsewhere divisions were rife. Inevitably closely watched for signs of heterodoxy, universities and colleges experienced high tension and in some cases the amendment of statutes to consolidate the new religion. The same was true of the inns of court, though there remained a more conservative and restrained regime in most of them.

Communities, towns, and villages, witnessed the public choice of those who conformed, and those who did not. They had to reconcile themselves to denouncing or ignoring recusants; often this meant allowing or preventing other tensions—social and economic—from exploiting religious divisions. Suddenly magistrates, jurors, churchwardens, and members of corporations found that their decisions often had a religious dimension, or presented the opportunity to exploit one. Even recreational activities, especially on holy days, could carry religious overtones, and allude to conformity or dissent. Such public circumstances seemed to open a window onto the individual's conscience. But, as Jones shows, the Reformation did not change the discipline that the church required should be exercised over consciences. Catechizing and conformity were the means by which consciences were restrained. But new educational ideas, especially Calvinism, taught of the importance of conscience.

If there is a theme in Jones's excellent book, it is that the Reformation contributed to the diversity, the untidiness, and the discomforts of English society. Hierarchies were weakened, institutions had to change, and individuals had to reconcile themselves as much to their consciences as to their co-religionists. The implication that lies behind the case studies that Jones considers is that to survive the Reformation required flexibility: Bacon had it, More did not. To push Jones beyond his own argument, perhaps the Reformation gave English society a flexibility that gave it long-term adaptability? By the end of the sixteenth century England possessed a "multi-theological" culture that had narrowed its ultramontanist loyalties into Anglican nationalism.

Jones's theme of strength through adaptability is one that also occurs in Lucy Woodings's study, *Rethinking Catholicism in Reformation England*. Wooding suggests that Catholicism, and Catholic identity, was more complex, mercurial, and diverse than had been considered hitherto. Moving on from Alexandra Walsham's work on *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 1993), Wooding focuses as much on Catholic thought as on practice. In the world of turbulent ideas and circumstances that Jones depicts, Wooding shows how English Catholics could be simultaneously loyal to Henry VIII and to their faith, and could be committed to their faith while ambivalent about institutional Catholicism under Mary, or martyrdom under Edward or Elizabeth. The underlying assumption of Wooding is that the Reformation need not be regarded as a clash of Catholic and Protestant. Rather there was a mutual syncretism

that enabled Catholicism to embrace Renaissance ideas, and for a “reformed” Catholicism to emerge by the end of the sixteenth century. In this way, argues Wooding, Catholicism was not a brittle die-hard recusancy, but a flexible and regenerative faith. Henry VIII, for Wooding, encouraged a Catholic Reformation, and under Mary Catholic writers expounded a ductile faith than translated Catholic thought into parish practice. As a result, Wooding’s view of the Reformation is one in which Catholic or Protestant shared reformed Humanism, and therefore in which consensus was as apparent as conflict. This is compelling and important argument. It builds on ideas of familiar Henricanism and advanced Edwardian and Marian liturgies keen to capture popular Erasmusian trends. And while Woodings’s ideas are largely derived from printed sources, nevertheless they have a coherence that presents a convincing case.

Much of what Jones and Wooding consider can be compared and contrasted. Jones’s turbulent world of changing institutions and families, in which individuals grappled with their consciences, was—for Wooding—a period in which many of the intellectual strands of Catholicism and Protestantism were shared. Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth made changing doctrinal and liturgical demands, but these were demands that drew on Renaissance Humanism and which accommodated each other. In this sense, Jones’s Protestant world, that emerged after three generations, was as diverse and adaptable as Woodings’s Catholicism. Both denominations emerged by 1600 as rich and eclectic in character, and stubbornly refused to submit to national demands for uniformity. Perhaps therefore, in a wider historiography, Jones and Wooding show the complexity of Christianity after the Reformation and the breadth of the intellectual inheritance of the seventeenth century.

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