R. Po-Chia Hsia ed., *Christianity Reform and Expansion 1500-1660* (*The Cambridge History of Christianity*, Vol. 6), Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 749.

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This publication forms part of an encyclopedic nine volume history of Christianity published by Cambridge University Press. The first volume appeared in 2006 and covered the period from Christianity's origins to the time of Constantine the Great. The last book of the series, published a few years ago, ended this epic intellectual journey. The volume under review here (number six in the series), addresses one of the most turbulent periods in Christianity's history. Its editor, Professor Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, succinctly sums it up as "the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic response". The 30 essays by international scholars of which it is composed, opportunely reflects the ecumenism that main religions and Christian denominations have been trying to achieve in more recent time. This modern attempt at finding common religious ground makes the harsh lessons to be gleaned from the Reformation relevant today (see, for example, the essay by Nicolette Mout in the book). As the subject has already been the centre of deep enquiry through several centuries, it is also pointed out in the Preface that the aim of the book is to provide, "an authoritative and balanced exposition" of the question. For these and similar reasons *Christianity Reform and Expansion* is an updated look at the historical, social and cultural sundering that the Reformation brought on Christendom in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the wake-up call that it signified to what has since been called Roman Catholicism.

Different facets of the subject are clustered by themes in six parts, whose findings are authenticated by a breathtaking bibliography at the end. Parts I and II present a reassessment of the Protestant Reformation as a whole, beginning with the rebellious figure of Martin Luther (1483-1546), the German Augustinian monk who, readers are informed, unintentionally started the process of reform in 1517. By now the arguments of apologists of the Catholic response to the Reformation are starting to resemble well-trodden paths that appear firm, but which nonetheless leave lingering doubts of slippery slopes. If the Church had indeed begun to self-renew long before 1517, as is often argued, why did the Reformation flare up? Simon Ditchfield, formerly with the Warburg Institute, writing in Part III on the cult of saints after the Council of Trent, partly answer the question, stating that one should focus on what Roman Catholicism *did* during this period of internal reform, rather than what it *was*. Several of the essays in this part, aptly entitled "The Catholic Revival", do just that, providing ample evidence of the religious organizations and the remarkable men and women that formed the Catholic reaction.

Essays in Part IV tackle difficult theological, philosophical and moral questions. Among the excellent subjects treated is a developing area of research concerning church discipline. Why is one not surprised to learn in Ute Lotz-Heumann's essay on this subject that the response of Catholicism to church discipline after the Council of Trent was simply to intensify medieval practices rather than find new procedures? Discipline in Protestant denominations was more diverse, but could be dictatorial and harsh, as in the case of Calvinist consistories or the Kirk of Scotland. The mutual religious persecution and martyrdoms that to a certain extent characterize the Reformation are inevitably

included in this section. So is what is termed here the Mediterranean Inquisition, almost rehabilitated in William Monter's outstanding study, which argues that the numbers of "live" victims burnt at the stake in Europe is much smaller than imagined, especially in Spain. Unfortunately, that still does not make the practice less palatable for many of us, especially if one learns of Spanish and Portuguese kings presiding over numerous *autos*, or execution spectacles that only evoke morbid images.

As is true of the other engrossing essays included in this book, mention cannot be made of all of those in Part V, which look at aspects of religion, society and culture. The one by Lee Palmer Wandel, an expert on early modern Christianity, discusses the effect that the Reformation had on the visual arts. She has already published valuable articles and books on the Reformation (including *The Reformation: Towards a New History*, published this year by Cambridge University Press). Here she considers the effect that the dogma of the Incarnation had on the art of the time. She points out that even for the more radical iconoclasts—which, contrary to what many of us thought, did not include Martin Luther, Zwingli or John Calvin—the condemnation against religious images was not about aesthetics. It concerned rather what Protestants considered the true nature of Christian worship and the correct way to honour God. This is exemplified by the new status that the Reformers accorded to religious works of art, where they acquired a function and meaning different from those bestowed on them by Roman Catholics. For the latter, religious works of art were not only devotional, but also served as tools to propagate the faith in Europe, as well as "among the Inca, Aztecs, Chinese, and other indigenous peoples of the Americas and Asia".

Some of the most original contributions of this publication come in the last part, entitled "Christianity and Other Faiths", which turn to the complicated historical and religious developments that took place among non-Christians at the time of the Reformation. Essays here examine the enmity or coexistence between Christians and Jewish, Andean, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist communities. From a Christian's point of view there was the quite reasonable conviction that pagan religious practices—in their eyes little more than idol worship—had to be stamped out for the salvific work of the Christian message to take effect. For today's art historians the destruction of works of art, for whatever reason, often signifies a tragic and irreparable loss. R. Po-Chia Hsia emphasizes in his brilliant study on the encounter of Christian missionaries with Buddhism in China, the well-known fact that even the Jesuits remained unsympathetic to a religion so unlike theirs. The texts of Kenneth Mills, Nicolas Standaert and Ines Zupanov, expand the argument, elucidating how these assumptions were strongly challenged overseas, where events did not always develop as Christian missionaries imagined or planned. What sometimes took place was coercion, synthesis or accommodation, as seen in the examples of India, China and Peru.

None of the mentioned developments overseas are new in the history of Christianity, but what makes them novel is that they happened in historical and cultural frameworks vastly different from those of the West. It was in these distant lands that Roman Catholic missionaries (and later Protestants), had to face even greater moral and religious dilemmas than those raging in Europe, a conclusion that together with the topics considered in its six main parts, makes this book required reading for specialists and a captivating read for the general reader blessed with much time and patience.