

and La Malinche, her descriptions effectively convey how the artists construed these women.

Preachers, ministers, and lay educators often necessarily synthesize complex individuals or groups to convey an idea or moral. Consider how Pharisees<sup>¾</sup>historically a complex, respected, diverse, and progressive group of interpreters of Mosaic law<sup>¾</sup>are repeatedly reduced to symbolic caricatures of an oppressive legalism, with supersessionist and anti-Jewish implications. What is at stake in interpreting significant persons from the past to illuminate our present? That we will be unable to capture all their complexity is a given. But whether we can be responsible both to their original sources and contexts and to the implications our interpretations have for people today is Pietz's challenge to us in this superb book.

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**WOMEN AND THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION: A GLOBAL HISTORY**, by Jennifer Hornyak Wojciechowski, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2022. 272 pages. \$39.00.

The third edition (1970) of Williston Walker's *A History of the Christian Church* (revised by Robert T. Handy) was the textbook in my general church history class in college in the mid-1970s, as it had been for hundreds of students since the first edition was published in 1918. The American religion course textbook, Sydney E. Ahlstrom's massive *A Religious History of the American People* (1972), was newly published. Neither author was particularly interested in gender, and women were given very little space. At the time, I do not think I noticed what was missing. When I read E. Clifford Nelson's *Lutherans in North America* (revised edition, 1975) in seminary, I was more alert to the nearly total absence of women. Female abolitionists were the subject of my master's thesis. When I began doctoral study, I was determined to focus my research on women. I audited an informal course taught by Rosemary Radford Ruether; there was no textbook, although she and Rosemary Keller were at work on their three-volume, documentary anthology *Women and Religion in America* (1981–86). Barbara J. MacHaffie's *HerStory: Women in Christian Tradition* (1983; second revised edition, 2006) appeared in time for me to assign it in one of the first courses I taught.

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I have rehearsed my experience to place Jennifer Hornyak Wojciechowski's account of her own experience as a student into a slightly longer historical narrative and to put *Women and the Christian Tradition: A Global History* (2022) into its historiographical context. Like *HerStory* and Susan Hill Lindley's *You Have Stepped Out of Your Place: A History of Women and Religion in America* (1996), this book gathers up the fruits of many scholars' labor and makes it available to a wider audience. It draws upon an additional decade and a half of scholarship since MacHaffie's revised and expanded edition, and it has a deliberately larger geographical scope. Wojciechowski not only fills in the holes left by earlier generations of textbook writers; she helps readers reconsider what stories are necessary. Women's stories are the subject, but those are instructively framed by the larger history of Christianity and broad cultural movements. Novice readers will be well introduced to the whole sweep. Others are likely to encounter something new to them. No doubt this book will provide the foundation for courses focused on women in Christianity and will enhance broader courses, like those I took in college. Its extensive bibliography guides readers to a wide array of resources for further exploration, both works specific to women and more general ones. These include primary sources, contemporary interpretive works, reference works, websites, and popular media. (While I was pleased to find my own book included, the error in its title is indicative that this volume would have benefited from more rigorous copyediting, particularly of its citations.)

That there is now so much material about women available that choices must be made is, of course, a reason to be glad. But by necessity, this genre of scholarship is selective. An understandable desire to include as much as possible can lead to a superficial listing of one thing after another. Wojciechowski acknowledges this, noting, "There is no easy or simple way to summarize the experiences and faiths of the numerous and disparate groups of people who lived in Latin America prior to Columbian contact" (122), and, "These stories are fragments, parts of a complicated and unruly whole. But through these glimpses, you can see determined women shaping their own destinies and the world around them" (164). These two quotations point toward what appear to be two principles of selection. First, in keeping with recent trends in Christian historical work, this book includes women from Asia, Africa, and Latin America in far greater numbers than previously. This commitment contributes to an unavoidable, uneven treatment that reflects the varying development of scholarship about women in different eras and locations. Second, this

book “highlight[s women’s] resilience, not their oppression” (4). Other themes identified in the introduction and developed throughout include how to evaluate various types of sources, and changing understandings of holiness.

Wojciechowski does not conceal the tensions within the overarching story she tells. Rather, she is explicit, for example, about the ambiguous, even contradictory effects of the Reformation on women’s lives. Similarly, she engages in the fraught discussion of how to evaluate mission work that was sometimes oppressive and sometimes liberating for both missionaries and their audiences. Students will benefit from being invited into these debates rather than merely being given conclusions. The author’s engagement in them renders her more visible to her readers than Walker or Ahlstrom or Nelson was to me. And it requires her to be more direct about her interpretive thesis than they were. A small change in the book’s title would make that thesis evident from the outset. “Women ARE the Christian Story” would signal Wojciechowski’s contention that without women, there would be no past story, and that women are vital to there being a future story.

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**WOMEN REFORMERS OF EARLY MODERN EUROPE: PROFILES, TEXTS, AND CONTEXTS**, edited by Kirsi I. Stjerna, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2022. 395 pages. \$45.00.

Far too often the story of the Protestant Reformation is focused on the actions and theology of men. Just about anyone could tell you Luther and Calvin were major reformers. A more attentive student of the Reformation would be able to tell you about other men who shaped religious thought and policy throughout the sixteenth century. However, I have found it is uncommon that women are brought up at all. Perhaps Luther’s wife, Katharina von Bora, is mentioned, just as a reminder that women were there, but there is often little acknowledgment that women took part in this major societal and religious shift. *Women Reformers of Early Modern Europe*, however, brings the stories of women center stage. As the introduction states: “Women were an integral part of the tumultuous landscape of the sixteenth-century European reformations. Women

exercised their voice and agency in creative ways in their own social locations. Whether receiving, defending, transmitting, applying—or even rejecting—reformation teaching in early modern Europe, women participants provide an enthralling perspective on the larger story’s many twists and turns” (xix).

*Women Reformers of Early Modern Europe* is an excellent resource regarding women’s activities during the Protestant Reformation. The book is edited by Kirsi I. Stjerna, who is a professor of Lutheran history and theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. In addition, there are more than thirty contributors, including both international and interdisciplinary scholars, who bring their particular interests and knowledge to a variety of topics. The book consists of eight sections that include from two to six chapters each. The sections are: Women Theologians and the Printed Word; German Women Leading the Reforms; English Women for the Protestant Faith; French and Italian Women for the Protestant Faith; Dutch, Swiss, and Anabaptist Women for the Reformations; Protestant Women and Their Bible; Protestant Teachings and Women’s Agency; and finally, Women Negotiating the Reformations in Different Contexts and Spaces.

As is apparent from the list of sections, the women featured in this book represent a wide variety of experiences. There were theologians, printers, hymnwriters, biblical interpreters, writers, those who ministered to others, and even some who were persecuted for their beliefs. Most of the biographical chapters include a section called “In Her Own Voice,” which includes primary-source documents written by the featured woman. I found this to be a helpful addition to each chapter, and it is a good reminder that women were writers and scholars who were actively influencing their world. Not all chapters are biographical—some feature themes, such as Marriage in Protestant Europe or Working Women in Poor Relief, which cover larger issues for women during the era; these are equally important for the larger study of women in the sixteenth century.

Since about the 1970s, there has been an increased interest in women’s history, so this is certainly not the first or only book on women in the Reformation. However, I found it to be a particularly useful resource written and arranged by talented scholars. Some of the women featured in the book may be familiar to you, such as Katharina Schütz Zell, Marguerite of Navarre, or Jane Grey, but other women featured will likely be new; these stories expand our understanding of what it was like to be a woman during the sixteenth century and help us gain a more inclusive picture of the Reformation.

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in early modern European history, Reformation history, or women's history. In the final analysis, the book does an excellent job of bringing women front and center; it provides high-quality scholarship on a variety of people and topics related to Reformation studies, and I found the inclusion of primary-source documents written by the women featured in the book to be a highly useful addition.

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