CHURCH HISTOR
DEC 2012

BOOK REVIEW FORUM

doi:10.1017/S0009640712001953

The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society. By **Brad S. Gregory**. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012. 574 pp. $39.95 cloth.

Professor Gregory first gained the attention of the historians' guild in 1999 with his magisterial study *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press). In that book he departed from the traditional approach to sixteenth-century martyrology by focusing not merely on martyrs of the Radical Reformation, but on Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Catholic martyrs as well. Against assorted modern social and psychological interpretations of martyrdom, he pointedly argued that martyrs, of whatever ecclesiastic stripe, shared the conviction that their lives were secondary to their commitment of fidelity to the God who had redeemed them to eternal life. Sixteenth-century martyrs were living embodiments of their faith.

Gregory's new book, equally magisterial, displays on over 500 pages, including almost 150 pages of notes and bibliographical references, very much of the characteristics of his first: impressive scholarship; commanding intellectual and bibliographic scope; wide learning; and a candid display of opinions. This latter characteristic, expressed in several extensive ruminations on the present state of cultural affairs in Europe and North America, makes The *Unintended Reformation* more than a work of scholarship, certainly more than a history of the Reformation or Early Modern European thought, no matter how brilliant (though the comment on the dust jacket that the book will take its place alongside Max Weber's *Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism* seems overly enthusiastic, *schwärmerisch*, as the Germans would say). The book is better read as a manifesto, as "a tract for the times," as a historian's clarion call for understanding the historical causes of the postmodern predicament. Unfortunately, the book comes with baffling and precarious conclusions. Nonetheless, it is a deeply moral book that evokes glimpses of the finer spiritual traditions of the Middle Ages and the author's pain over their loss. While this reviewer sees notions of a traditional Roman Catholic

institutionalized worldview informing the book, Gregory does not at all paint a romantic or glorious picture of the medieval church. In fact, he mourns over the failures of the Roman Catholic Church almost as much as he does over the story of the Protestant churches. Nonetheless, he posits an incisive difference: the medieval church existed in the setting of a community of shared values, which disintegrated with the Reformation and led to the malaise of contemporary Europe and North America.

The book begins with a conviction and a question. The former is a Jeremiad, barely subtle, against modernity, while the latter seeks to find the cause (or causes) of the modern malaise with its philosophical ambivalence, moral relativism, and theological confusion. By way of answer, Gregory offers a provocative reflection on European intellectual history from the sixteenth century to the present. Idiosyncratically he argues that a path leads from the religious exuberance of the Reformation to the cultural malaise of the twenty-first century. The Reformation goal of advancing the religious commitment of people and institutions led to the exact opposite, namely a secularized, even anti-religious post-modern society and mindset. As the subtitle of the book aptly puts it: a religious revolution secularized society.

Of course, Professor Gregory is not the first to pronounce on the topic of the historical and cultural significance of the Reformation. Not surprisingly Roman Catholic observers have tended to be deeply negative, finding fault not only with Protestant theologizing but also with its broader effects on European culture. From Bishop Bossuet to Joseph de Maistre to Christopher Dawson, Catholics insisted that Protestantism destroyed a rich and flamboyant late medieval culture without putting new meaning and vitality in its place. Protestants on the other hand, have offered quite different conclusions, seeing in the Reformation the source of all the achievements of modernity, from indoor plumbing to democracy. A century ago Ernst Troeltsch's essay on *Protestantism and Progress: A Historical Study of the Relation of Protestantism to the Modern World* (*Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* [Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1911]) argued that Protestantism had furthered the emergence of the modern world, but had not been its source: the Reformation gave European society freedom to develop in new ways by removing the restrictive obstacles to this development. It provided both a "good conscience" for the conduct of human affairs and also the idea of progress. In our own day, the question of the sources of the postmodern situation has led to the provocative probing of scholars such as David Martin, Michael Gillespie, Charles Taylor, and Alasdair McIntyre. With his *Unintended Reformation* Professor Brad Gregory joins this chorus of voices. He finds that certain notions of the Reformation had consequences that eventually proved to be the cause of everything bad in the contemporary West, from global warming and

consumerism to moral individualism. His thesis is bold and clear (far more so than Max Weber's), though it is more subtle than first meets the eye: Professor Gregory is not arguing that (for example) the Reformation emphasis on *sola scriptura* triggered modern relativism; he is saying that this emphasis had consequences which, in turn, led to our modern malaise.

The book is structured neither chronologically nor thematically. Six chapters —titled provocatively if enigmatically "Relativizing Doctrines," "Excluding God," "Controlling the Churches," "Subjectivizing Morality," "Manufacturing the Good Life," "Secularizing Knowledge"—define the thematic trajectories that collectively have contributed to the present dilemma of Western culture. Gregory calls them "genealogies" to denote their role in transmitting, with generational variations, notions of the sixteenth century to the twenty-first. Each of these "genealogical" chapters begins with reflections on our current cultural state of affairs and then proceeds to track the historical antecedents. This historical backtracking—in itself, a creative methodology—takes the argument of the chapters to the Reformation (and, in a way, the time before).

The first chapter sets the stage for the six-fold argument of the book: "Excluding God" informs the reader of the contemporary scene, the modern intellectual's categorical unwillingness to have a place for God, then focuses on Scotus (d. 1308) and Scotus's argument that both God and humans exist in the same essence, so what applies to humans also applies to God. And vice versa. Scotus's rejection of the radical gap between creator and creation led to the disappearance of substantive religious claims from the exploration of the natural world, claims that had been at the core of the Christian worldview. Reason became dominant in philosophical and theological reflection—and religion, theology, scripture, and religious experience disappeared as sources of knowledge of God.

The second chapter, on "Relativizing Doctrines," declares that the Protestant affirmation of *sola scriptura* as the formal authoritative principle was (as the cliché has it) "dead on arrival." That is to say, rather than finding blissful agreement about the "plain" meaning of scripture, the reformers had to realize quickly that diversity rather than uniformity was the hallmark of Protestant exegetical forays. Most of these scriptural disagreements, such as that between Luther and Bucer, were theologically benign, though others, such as that between Luther and Müntzer, were deeply disturbing and astingly significant.

Chapter 3 tackles church-state relations from the late Middle Ages to the present. The chapter covers familiar ground with the observation that until the sixteenth century the two realms lived in uneasy co-existence, but both always considered themselves part of the same fabric of an all but universally accepted world view. It was a clear consequence of the

Reformation that the state was victorious in its effort to "control" religion, even when it claimed to be neutral by positing a policy of radical separation of church and state. In the sixteenth century the formal implementation of reform would have been impossible without the intervention of government in the religious controversy. Henry VIII and Gustavus Vasa are infamous cases in point.

Gregory describes here a process long antedating the Reformation (note the French Concordat of 1516 or the phrase "Dux Cliviae est papa in terries suis"); in fact, one may argue that the reform movement took advantage of the increasing role of secular authority so that the movement was ultimately successful only where rulers saw the need of greater control over the church. One may wonder though if governments really dictated theology. They interfered mainly when theological polemics broadly seemed to get out of hand, such as in German Lutheran territories in mid-sixteenth century or in Prussia at the height of the Pietist controversy.

The fourth chapter, titled "Subjectivizing Morality," argues that "the bitter disagreements among early modern Christians about the objective morality of the good" led to secular, open-ended expansiveness. In other words, the new vision of the reformers destroyed the norm of an objective morality espoused by the medieval church, the bastion of universally acknowledged and accepted moral norms. Most of the chapter is commonplace or self-evident. More importantly, it overstates the disagreements among the reformers who all held to concrete notions of the "first use of the Law." Reading an utterly subjective "religion of conscience" into Luther was an achievement of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 5 begins with a focus on the modern capitalist ideology of consumption and claims that this had its origins in the Reformation Era awareness that the religious-political conflicts of the time were "fruitless" and it was far better to go shopping than to fight about religion. Finally, chapter 6 relates how the "confessionalization" of the universities, the traditional seats of learning, made them parochial and insulated them from the new knowledge arising all over Europe.

There is much brilliance in these chapters, much impressive learning, and numerous instances of creative summaries of the scholarly consensus. It would be an epochal book were it not for two problems. One has to do with the little word "genealogy," that is, the thesis of ultimate Reformation complicity for the ills of modernity. The second is the way the book understands the dynamic of historical development and change.

Take the claim that the religious revolution of the Reformation secularized society because of the nagging disparity among Protestants in interpreting the meaning of sacred scripture. This is not exactly a new insight (Johannes Cochlaeus called attention to the reformers' disagreements as early as 1523),

except Gregory makes the novel case that modern moral relativism had its origin in Reformation (or Protestant) "hyperpluralism" of scriptural interpretation. Hopeless Protestant divergence about the meaning of scripture, expressed in fierce theological controversies, eventually called into question the truth claims of the Christian religion. The multiplicity of claimants of an authentic reading of scripture, Gregory argues, dramatically lessened the appeal of the Christian faith. Christians instead went shopping or (as did the plain-living Mennonites) built extravagant houses.

Consternation over the Protestant failure of to agree on a clear meaning of scriptural passages may have prevailed among the intellectual elites, but Professor Gregory overstates the relevance of these multiple strands of biblical interpretation for the ongoing story. The English Christian Deists' weariness of traditional understandings of Christianity did not lead them to disavow the Christian tradition but to reinterpret it. The likes of Collins, Chubb, or Whiston did not go shopping (Gregory's intriguing characterization of the Protestants who despaired over the weight of diverse interpretations) but became evangelists for their understanding of the Christian faith. In seventeenth-century Saxony scriptural claims aggressively advanced by Calvinists and Crypto-Calvinists were dismissed by Lutheran divines as "abomination" and heresy. The confrontation between Puritans and the Anglican establishment in England brought few if any Puritan to despair of the Christian truth because of the Church of England's unwillingness to modify the *Book of Common Prayer.* Gregory dismisses too blithely the importance of the ancient ecumenical creeds as consensus builder for all Protestant traditions. He also fails to appreciate that Luther's repudiation of papal and conciliar authority was first of all a historical rather than a theological judgment: history showed that popes and councils had contradicted each other, and thus were no reliable source of authority.

In focusing on what he considers the disastrous consequence of *sola scriptura* and the resulting cacophony of Protestant voices, Gregory touches on but largely ignores two developments that had little to do with the Reformation and yet impinged on the traditional role of the Christian faith more than anything else: the early modern European encounters with other religions and the scientific revolution. Here lies, in my judgment, the ultimate reason of the disappearance of a shared framework for the integration of knowledge, which Professor Gregory so deeply laments.

Of course, Christians had not been completely ignorant prior to the sixteenth century that there were other religious claims and religions; the "heathen" were an ever-present reality in theological reflection, though few Europeans had ever put their eyes on them. The military threat of the Ottoman Empire in the late fifteenth century meant extensive reflections, generally hostile, on the religion of Islam. But the "heathen" was an abstraction rather than a reality,

and it was not until the age of the so-called discoveries that Europeans began to be aware of the rich conglomeration of religions around the globe, raising the perturbing question on what grounds Christianity could be taken to be the only authentic religion. Philippe de Mornay's *Traité de la vérité de la religion chrétienne contre les athées, épicuriens, payens, juifs, mahométans et autres infidèles* (1581); Herbert of Cherbury's *de Veritate* (1624) and Hugo Grotius's *de veritate religionis Christianae* (1627) offered suggestions how to understand this religious diversity and yet find a pivotal place for the Christian religion. It took "my man Friday," in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to verbalize deep puzzlement about the religious diversity of humankind, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Parable of the three Rings in his play *Nathan der Weise* to conclude that all three religions "of the Book" were "deceived deceivers."

At the same time, the scientific revolution forced an alteration of traditional affirmations about nature and the cosmos. Nicolaus Copernicus, Robert Boyle, and Galileo Galilei, names representative of many others, changed the understanding of the natural universe because the traditional understanding was found to be empirically incorrect. Newton's apple fell at the same speed for Protestants and Catholics alike. The nagging problem was the traditional connection between the Aristotelian/Ptolemaic worldview and that of the Bible. No matter what the philosophical constructs of Scotus, the sun did NOT move around the earth, and the need of European explorers to have ever more precise instruments to navigate vast and far-away oceans was a societal factor more crucial than Scotus's philosophizing.

The treatment of these topics in the book reveals Professor Gregory's somewhat idiosyncratic way of utilizing sources. In his discussion of Christian Deism in England, for example, he does offer comments about John Toland, but the more important Herbert of Cherbury, Louis Cappel, or Thomas Woolston receive no mention. And one can hardly talk about the English scene without noting that Bishop Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion* (1736) silenced the Deist impulse in England (and forced it onto the Continent) for more than a century while the Wesleyan Revival proved to be a significant religious and moral force in eighteenth-century England. In short, the fastidious focus on certain theological and philosophical developments in Early Modern Europe, with lip service to societal developments, caused Professor Gregory to pay scant attention to those forces and developments of the larger societal picture. The puzzle pieces that he offers leave quite a few blanks, and we wind up with a fallacious understanding of the European cultural dynamic during the past 500 years. It was not the Reformation but a congeries of intellectual, economic, and political forces unrelated to the Reformation that increasingly marginalized Christianity and brought about a painful process of secularization.

Gregory's way of looking at the time from Martin Luther and John Calvin to Richard Dawkins and Global Warming leads, perforce, to a rather gloomy view of the figures. Not surprisingly, toward the end of his book, Professor Gregory informs us that medieval Christendom failed; that the Reformation failed; that confessionalized Europe failed; and that Western modernity is in the process of failing. That is hardly a comfortable view to hold. "I wish this book could have had a happier ending" he opines (381). However, the book might have had such a happier ending had he removed his spectacles and also told us boldly that the subtitle of his book is a *simplification terrible* and that a more judicious approach to the contemporary world that he so ominously describes is in order. After all, infant mortality has been eradicated in the societies he desires; child labor prohibited; slavery abolished; illiteracy ended; education made a right not a privilege. The Inquisition is no more and women are no longer burned as witches. Of course, these instances are but part of the broader and more complicated characteristics of post-modern Capitalism, but an indispensable part nonetheless.

Is it not more accurate to observe that during the past three centuries all Christian traditions, the old as well as the new, struggled to relate to a brave new world, and did so with successes as well as failures? The good and the bad are always intermingled in human affairs; that surely was St. Augustine's message over a millennium ago. And if it were to turn out that consumerism and greed and ethnic rivalries will make our planet earth uninhabitable before too long, or that the efforts to give the Christian message meaning in a postmodern world remain unpersuasive, it will surely be a curious explanation that it all started 500 years ago with an Augustinian friar who quite simply yearned to be reconciled with his God. Of course, Professor Gregory would say, consistency has rarely been the hallmark of historic events.

Hans J. Hillerbrand
Duke University

doi:10.1017/S0009640712001965

The Unintended Reformation is a deeply provocative book that advances an indictment of modernity, as well as of the Reformation, to which Professor Gregory attributes many of the developments that he regards as characteristic

of our contemporary scene: the denial of God's agency in the world; the compartmentalization of Christian theology and its segregation from other modes of knowledge; the proliferation of different points of view and personal moralities; and the ascendancy of rampant capitalism or "the goods life," as opposed to a life oriented toward the substantive good that was formerly anchored in a broadly shared Christian culture. The book bristles both with erudition and with social commentary that is frequently partisan in its tone. It is this conjunction of a scholarly history of the Reformation and of secularization with a strongly anti-modern polemic that will strike many readers, as it did this one, as the book's defining feature and the source of a number of its strengths and weaknesses. Gregory certainly cannot be accused of shying away from controversy, nor of retreating into the type of micro-history that is most comfortable for specialists in the historian's profession. *The Unintended Reformation* should provoke an intense debate. No matter what position one takes in this controversy, the book demands and repays careful reading.

The book's main thesis is that the Reformation, against the intentions of those who inaugurated and prosecuted it, contributed to a decline in the prestige and social currency of Christianity that enabled the rise of doctrinal and moral relativism, or what Gregory refers to as "hyperpluralism" (11, 21, 369), meaning the limitlessly individualistic and voluntaristic culture we inhabit today: "Doctrinal disagreement—along with its multiple social, moral, and political effects—is the most fundamental and consequential fact about Western Christianity since 1520" (45). Controversies between Protestants and Catholics and among Protestants themselves exposed a lack of agreement that discredited the authority of religious as opposed to scientific knowledge, facilitating the redefinition of religion as private, the segregation of religious institutions from other domains of society, and the replacement of shared religious motivations with individual definitions of the good, including in terms of the pursuit of wealth or what had formerly been condemned by Christians as avarice.

These developments were "unintended" because Protestants had sought to establish a firm basis for Christian truth by affirming a scriptural standard and extending the process of confessionalization. But such efforts merely exposed the inadequacy of "scripture alone" as a guide to the Bible, which Protestants themselves interpreted in multiple and conflicting ways (92). The doctrinal controversies and bloody battles of the Reformation justified increasing state control of the churches and faculties of theology, and the exclusion, for purposes of maintaining the peace, of religion from civic and economic life. All of this led to consequences that had been very far from the minds of the Reformers, who had much more in common with the Catholicism that they helped to dismantle than with the society to which they unwittingly gave birth (272).

The adjective "unintended," while central to the book's argument, is intensely problematic. It implies a measure of control on the part of individual historical agents over the longer-term consequences of their actions, and over large-scale social processes, such that these agents may be held responsible for these consequences. This is despite Gregory's disavowals of "teleological" views of history (12). There were, of course, many other factors beyond theological commitments that contributed to secularization. Not all of these factors are emphasized sufficiently in the book. For example, it was not merely "metaphysical univocity" or a naturalistic conception of God's being and agency that led to the discrediting of miracles, as Gregory argues in chapter 1. The increasingly obvious success of scientific explanations that required no recourse to the hypothesis of God's existence surely played a significant role, as did other developments, some of which are addressed below. Gregory's argument that the Reformation introduced pluralism not only renders the medieval Church too monolithic, but appears patently inadequate as an explanation for our contemporary diversity. Our pluralism comes from being part of a global culture, one that includes increasing numbers of non-Christians. Similarly, economic life had its own internal engines that were neither intended nor even reckoned with by either the Church or its Protestant detractors.

What Gregory seems to be arguing is that the Reformation undermined the Roman Catholic Church to the extent that it could no longer serve effectively as an antipode and foil to the forces of modernity, could no longer "put the brakes on things," so to speak. However, secularization, like the Reformation itself, was just as much unintended by the Church. Should we then blame the Church for failing to maintain its own coherence and hegemony, despite its powers of persuasion and punishment? Gregory's admission that, "judged on [its] own terms . . ., medieval Christendom failed" (364) takes away much of the force of his indictment of the Reformation.

Gregory's argument is framed as something of a *reductio ad absurdum*: because science cannot disprove the existence of miracles (32, 62–63), and cannot (yet) explain everything within its domain satisfactorily (68), there is room for God in nature; because secular philosophers do not agree, they must all be wrong, and reason (unaided by tradition and revelation) itself has been discredited (126); because the Reformation led to pluralism, despite seeking uniformity, it was a mistake. However, it is also necessary when evaluating such an argument to consider whether the alternatives are any more persuasive. Gregory does not offer a serious philosophical defense of miracles, nor of authoritarianism, which alone might counter the pluralism he abhors.

Gregory's book is reminiscent of another he cites that attempted to outline the theological roots of secularization: Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*

(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007). Yet Taylor deliberately eschewed what he called "subtraction stories" (26–29, 569–79), historical narratives according to which the Reformation led to the loss of a traditional religious culture, rather than to new conformations and different spiritual possibilities. I fear that Gregory has given us precisely such a subtraction story here. He narrates modernity as a slow-motion tragedy and is frankly apologetic in motivation and tenor. In this narrative, the European Middle Ages were anchored on the Church as a true culture, the antipode of what we have become: "late medieval Christianity in all its variety was an institutionalized worldview that influenced all domains of human life" (3; cf. 366). Gregory mourns the loss of this totalizing culture. Despite being counterbalanced by more nuanced depictions of both the medieval Church (see, for instance, 83–84, 157, 250) and the Reformation, the shadow of this vanished, monolithic culture hangs over the entire book, defining its tragic trajectory. Even though the concluding chapter cautions "Against Nostalgia," Gregory's account evinces a desire to return to a time when we were not abandoned to a culture of "hyperpluralism" where the prevailing sentiment is "whatever." It is therefore fair to point out that his narrative, in addition to offering no viable (or palatable) alternative to such pluralism, largely ignores questions of power and authority that were central to many of the developments we group together under the rubric of secularization (see, however, 385).

For example, it was not merely the inability of "metaphysical univocity" to reconcile naturalism with God's action in the world that led to a mechanistic conception of the universe, the decline of belief in miracles, and the retreat from a "sacramental view of reality" (41–43). The Deists, who are not discussed in adequate detail on this point (cf. 41), challenged miracles, together with revelation and the "merely positive and arbitrary" commands of Mosaic ceremonial, as the evidences of an arbitrary and capricious God with whom they could not identify (for instance Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as Creation: Or, the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* [London, 1730], 118). They rejected the model of political authority that was expressed in such doctrines in favor of a God who acted in accordance with natural and moral law, which alone they regarded as an adequate basis for securing the integrity and autonomy of human reason. The theological debate over miracles, as Carl Schmitt recognized, had as much to do with politics as with epistemology (*Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Theory of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005], 36–37). The radical Reformation entailed the rejection of heteronomy in favor of autonomy. Of course, the Deists may have failed to secure the claims of a universal natural reason, and Gregory rightly highlights the role that Immanuel Kant's *sapere*

aude played in bringing about the culture of "hyperpluralism" that we inhabit (118–19). But the alternative, as both Kant and the Deists correctly identified, was authoritarianism. Neither Gregory's account of the Golden Age of Christianity nor his condemnation of contemporary cultural and moral relativism adequately acknowledges the dangers of this alternative, and the role that it played in precipitating the Reformation. How would one begin to impose a uniform culture now without (or even with) coercion?

Gregory's presentation of modern culture appears one-sided at other times as well. While he highlights the rise of religious skepticism, moral relativism, and economic greed, he pays much less attention to the development of the rule of law, individual freedoms, human rights, and the culture of benevolence that, paradoxically, seems to be flourishing most in some liberal social democracies where the influence of traditional religion is least evident (cf. 177, 289, 375). Despite Gregory's use of the term "hyperpluralism" as a pejorative—like its synonyms "hermeneutical anarchy" (95) and "pullulating pluralism" (111), the term carries moralizing overtones—many Americans would not regard the diversity of belief systems, occupations, and forms of the "pursuit of happiness" as anything other than positive. By tracing secularization to theological disagreements initiated by Protestants, and condemning values pluralism, Gregory seems to be condemning the very act of dissent itself.

Even capitalism is treated unfairly. Under capitalism, "Practices once regarded as dangerous and immoral because detrimental to human flourishing and to the common good have in a dramatic reversal been redubbed the very means to human happiness and to the best sort of society" (242). The seventeenth-century Dutch Tulip craze (277), as well as the financial collapse of 2008 (284), are cited as examples of the fallacy of this reversal. But one might feel compelled to ask: What did human flourishing mean under an authoritarian, feudal system with an otherworldly salvation ethic (criticized most famously by Friedrich Nietzsche) that condemned many to lives of physical hardship while promoting both ascetic deprivations on the one hand and, on the other, the expenditure of money on gold ornaments for churches (rather than on tulips)? Capitalism needs to be regulated in the interest of real human needs, but even Gregory does not deny that it has led to an unprecedented standard of living for an unprecedented number (238).

Gregory's desire to present secularization as a tragedy, as something "unintended," leads him to neglect the positive dimensions of the Reformation as a progressive unveiling of new spiritual possibilities grounded in a reinterpretation of traditional Christianity. Quite a number of the developments he outlined would be described more aptly as "intended" by Christians. One of the causes of both the privatization of religion and the

decline of the "sacramental view of reality" was the redeployment by Protestants of Paul's valuation of spirit over flesh, grace over law. Protestant anti-ritualism, including that of the Deists, deepened complaints against Jewish ceremonialism as well as Catholic sacramentalism. The notion that Christian salvation meant precisely freedom from such modes of tradition influenced economic rationalization, as Weber already argued (*The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*, trans. H. H. Gerth and Don Martindale [New York: Free Press, 1958], 37–38, 112). It also influenced ideas of religious toleration, as we see in Roger Williams, whose arguments were based largely upon earlier Christian typological views that, under the Gospel, true religion ceased to be a matter of external ritual performance (Robert A. Yelle, "Moses' Veil: Secularization as Christian Myth," in *After Secular Law*, eds. Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Robert A. Yelle, and Mateo Taussig-Rubbo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 23–42 at 30–31). Gregory occasionally acknowledges the contribution made by such theological ideas (132, 161, 215), while also dismissing the "hyper-Pauline" views of certain Protestants (148); but by not granting these ideas enough of a historical role, he is bound to read such developments as the rise of toleration and the privatization of religion as a subtraction rather than a consummation of Christian ideals.

Ironically, Gregory plays into the hands of those secularist narratives that sideline Christianity and present modernity as the triumph of scientific reason over religious superstition. He rightly criticizes the evolutionist assumptions of such "supersessionist" narratives (9, 14, 307). But one source of such narratives, and of the idea of disenchantment, was the Christian supersessionist claim that, with the Crucifixion, the rituals of the old (Jewish) law were no longer binding, and the pagan oracles had been silenced (see Robert A. Yelle, *The Language of Disenchantment: Protestant Literalism and Colonial Discourse in British India* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2013], 18-22; Yelle, "Moses' Veil"). Extending these narratives, Protestants argued further that, with the coming of Christ, miracles, magic, and mystery had ceased. It was Romantics who later reported these events in a tone of mourning and loss. Such narratives also influenced the secular Enlightenment. Thomas Sprat, historian for the scientists of the Royal Society, argued that experimental science was "a *work* well-becoming the most *Christian Profession*. For the most apparent effect, which attended the passion of *Christ*, was the putting of an eternal silence, on all the false oracles, and dissembled inspirations of *Antient Times*" (*History of the Royal Society* [London, 1667], 362–63). Science would complete the work of Reformation by progressively disenchanting the world. This lends force to Robert Merton's argument that Puritanism gave impetus to the nascent scientific movement in seventeenth-century England (*Science,*

Technology & Society in Seventeenth Century England [New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970]). From this perspective, it can scarcely be claimed that secularization was "unintended." Whether we tell this history in a mood of celebration, resignation, or despair is an open question.

Robert A. Yelle
University of Memphis

doi:10.1017/S0009640712001977

In 2011, Stephen Greenblatt published *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York: W. W. Norton). In that book, Greenblatt argues that Poggio Bracciolini's 1417 rediscovery of an ancient Epicurean poem by Lucretius helped kindle the Renaissance and ignite the modern world. At nearly the same time that the Pulitzer committee was announcing that Greenblatt had won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Non-Fiction, Brad Gregory's book *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* was itself hitting bookstore shelves. Each sees in a particular event the fulcrum upon which the medieval world pivots towards the modern. As their titles might display, they see this pivot in starkly different lights. Where Greenblatt sees (most especially in a deeply personal preface) this emergence in largely positive terms, Gregory is not nearly so optimistic. Gregory's book is deeply serious and rather dark in its tone. It seeks to understand the modern secular world by exploring how contemporary realities "have been *and are still being shaped* by the distant past" (15, emphasis original). For Gregory, the emergence of the secular world is largely negative. It has bequeathed to us polarized politics and culture wars, rampant and overly acquisitive consumerism, and the abandonment of the idea of objective truth. Contemporary culture wars threaten the heart of our democracy. Consumerism destroys the natural world and threatens our existence via global warming. The abandonment of Truth portends a future in which morality is cut loose from ethics and becomes a mere construction. These contemporary predicaments have a past, the "ideological and institutional shifts that occurred five or more centuries ago remain substantially necessary to an explanation of why the Western world today is as it is" (7), and prime movers: Martin Luther and John Calvin. Though they did not intend to bequeath us this world (thus "unintended" in the title), nevertheless the Reformation lies at the heart of modernity's ills.

In six tightly argued chapters, Gregory employs what he calls a genealogical methodology (3–4) to explore the modern world's connection to its Reformation past. Though it is not as simple a task as identifying a common pair of ancestors and tracing their lineage forward, Gregory does state that "the basic idea is that we will misgauge the character of the Western world today—in both its extraordinary pluralism and its hegemonic institutions—unless we see . . . how its differentiated branches are the progeny of the Reformation era" (4). It lies beyond the scope of this short review to examine all six chapters, they are simply too dense to do them each justice. Thus, I shall explore two in more depth.

The opening chapter, "Excluding God," looks at the ways in which the Reformation came to marginalize—in what Gregory recognizes must be one of the great ironies of history—the place of God in people's lives. Gregory begins the genealogy of the secular world's displacement of religion with science by looking back centuries before the Reformation to the work of the Franciscan scholastic theologian John Duns Scotus (d.1308). According to Gregory's genealogy, the displacement of religion began when Scotus argued against the *analogia entis* of Henry of Ghent directly and Thomas Aquinas indirectly by positing a metaphysical univocity of being which tied God to creation in a way that an analogy of being did not. To Gregory this domesticated God's transcendence. When this domestication of God was combined with Reformation era doctrinal disputes about the nature of God's actions and the meaning of Christianity a path opened "that would lead through deism to Weberian disenchantment and modern atheism" (41). Gregory recognizes that this is a complex path but one he, nevertheless, sees quite clearly. Gregory sees evidence of the path towards modern atheism in Zwingli's attack on transubstantiation, "Protestant denials of the natural world as the theater of God's grace" (46), and the "post-Presbyterian" David Hume's argument for the autonomy of the natural world from God.

There are a number of significant problems with the genealogy of this pathway, however. First, is the implication that Scotus represents an aberrant rather than Catholic approach to theology. To do this, Gregory first quotes his Notre Dame colleague Stephen Dumont approvingly when Dumont states that Scotus "broke with the unanimous and traditional view" of God and then secondly via a rhetorical sleight of hand wherein Gregory questions Scotus's orthodoxy: "Although his idea was not condemned as doctrinally heterodox, it was a critical departure from the inherited Christian notion of the relationship between God and creation" (39). In this telling, Scotus breaks something fundamental to Christianity from its origins—the *analogia entis*—and these broken shards were further pulverized by the Reformers who followed Scotus. The historical record is not this clear however. Not only was Scotus never condemned for heterodoxy but the opposite is

actually the case. As recently as a general audience in July 2010, Pope Benedict XVI lifted up the centrality and importance of "Blessed Duns Scotus" in Catholic theology—most especially relating to the doctrines of the immaculate conception of Mary and the incarnation of Christ (Benedict XVI, General Audience, July 7, 2010). The appellation, "Blessed" is not without importance as it speaks to one who has been beatified by the Church. Certainly, Scotus's ideas were debated, modified, and argued over. But this would make him no different than any other medieval theologian. As to the appropriation of Scotus by Protestants, the centuries that separate Scotus from Luther and Calvin make this a terribly complex problem. What is not complex is the idea that the Reformers rejected the world as the "theater of God's grace." As Susan Schreiner has amply pointed out, this can be seen as a central tenet of Calvin's thought (see, *The Theater of His Glory: Nature and the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin,* Studies in Historical Theology 3 (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth, 1991). Likewise, Luther once remarked in a sermon that all of creation is "our house, home, field, garden, all these things are our Bible, such that God not only preaches through these wonderful works (*Wunderwerck*) but also taps upon our eyes, moves within our senses, and shines in our hearts at the same time" (WA 49:434). Thus, the path up to Scotus is not quite a clear-cut as Gregory would like us to believe. Nor is the path from Scotus to the Reformation to modernity.

In the third chapter, "Controlling the Churches," Gregory examines the ways in which the Reformation led first to the control of the churches by the state and then much later to separation of religion from politics. There are aspects of this story that are indeed positive, the freedom of religion primary among them, but Gregory also sees a far darker side to this coin. A side in which politics is freed from the moral claims of Christianity and thus left unfettered to annihilate those it deems as an enemy—whether the Jews of Germany or those caught in Stalin's erratic and disturbed sight. As with the other chapters, Gregory seeks to trace the genealogical heritage of this state of affairs. He begins with a model of medieval life in which the church and the various civil states were involved in a complex dance over the power and the control of social life. At times, the church exerted itself at the expense of secular authorities. At other times, the reverse was true. But at no time "was the Latin church either coextensive with or absorbed by any secular political entity, both because of historical contingencies and out of fidelity to Jesus's own words: Render unto Caesar" (136f). This began to change, according to Gregory, with the Reformation and most especially following the 1525 Peasants' War which convinced secular leaders that "biblical ideas could be dangerously subversive" (149). The solution was to begin to exert tight control of religious expression while simultaneously using the externals of religion for social control. This, then, aligned the state with the church and vice-versa.

The first consequence of this realignment was the fact that the continuation of the Reformation in any geographic location depended upon the goodwill of the state. Ironically, even the papacy fell to this power relationship since—as Henry VIII pointed out most clearly—if they did not toe the line, Catholicism could be dissolved and replaced. A second consequence of this realignment was the *de facto* blessing of the state's actions—most notably its power to make war. Beginning as early as the Schmalkaldic War in 1547, the state could bless its actions by appealing to the greater glory of God. Exhausted by more than a century of religious war, revolution, and destruction, new ideas regarding the role of the state began to emerge. Not surprisingly, religion was moved to the periphery. Christianity, which had been the center of moral and social life, was shunted aside and politics separated from religion.

As with chapter 1, the grand narrative of this chapter is compelling and yet breaks down when examined in its particulars. Part of this is definitional. Gregory asserts that Latin Christianity was never subsumed by the state. This is most certainly true. It is also true that German or Swiss or English authorities did take over control of churches within their realms following the Reformation. However, here we are comparing a universal with a particular. In the first case we speak of Latin Christianity in the second we speak of Saxon, or Swiss, or English churches. One can find repeatedly throughout the medieval era kings, princes, and lords of various stripes using and controlling the church in their lands in the very same manner that their descendants did following the Reformation. Neither did secular leaders need the Reformation to bless their ambitions or sanctify their bloodlust. Gregory alludes to this when he mentions the Crusades, the Albigensian Crusade, and the *Reconquista* of Iberia. What he does not do is acknowledge how this changes his narrative. Though he does not mention Milvian Bridge, Christianity has been used by secular authorities to bless their political and violent aims since at least the fourth century. On this count, the Reformation is no different from the eras that preceded it. Just as importantly, Gregory does not take into account in his survey of the Wars of Religion the means with which those wars were fought. Simply put, for nearly a thousand years (or more) before 1618, warfare looked very similar and had a similar scope. It was not religion that made the Thirty Years' War so deadly; it was the dramatic advancement in the technology of war. In the sixteenth century, the city of Magdeburg withstood every attack launched at her by the imperial army. The cannons used in that siege were insufficient to destroy her walls or in many cases even reach them. A little less than a century later, Magdeburg became emblematic of the force and fury of the Thirty Years' War. Much improved cannons destroyed the walls and the city. In autumn 1630, there were nearly 30,000 inhabitants in Magdeburg. By the end of the

siege, less than 5,000 lived. The damage to the city was so severe that most of those who survived left for other places.

The failure to acknowledge the importance of technological advancements to the story of the Thirty Years' War is an example of perhaps the most important flaw in this otherwise substantial work: a failure to look at his narrative with a wider lens. In the opening chapter of the book, Gregory faults many in the history profession for a myopic worldview that has engendered a supersessionist view of the Reformation. However, by focusing so sharply on intellectual history, Gregory has missed the broader cultural world in which the Reformation's intellectual jousts took place. There is no mention, for example, of the importance of the printing press. For all the discussions of the ways in which the Reformation changed various aspects of the medieval worldview, there is almost no recognition that what separated Martin Luther from Jan Huss was not simply the protection of his secular lord. It was also his ability to tell his own story, to broadcast his theology, via the printing press.

In the end, both Greenblatt and Gregory offer a story to explain the modern world. They both wish to point to a single moment and declare that it was at this moment in time when things changed. Ironically, both stories begin in a German monastery separated by exactly a century. What I think both amply detail, however, is actually the exact opposite. In both, the grand narrative breaks apart when one looks at the specifics of the argument because both demonstrate how the ideas they examine had lives and influence long before the fulcrum moment they describe. In this, perhaps they are most correct. The interesting thing about genealogy is that regardless of the pair of ancestors that you pick it is always an arbitrary choice, for each of them had two parents, who also had parents, who also had parents.

David M. Whitford
United Theological Seminary

doi:10.1017/S0009640712001989

Readers who make it past the first sentences of this book realize that it has a strong point of view. But unlike many supposedly "historical" books with a strong point of view, this one is for real—exhaustively researched, clearly argued, and with research transparently displayed to support the argument. In

my judgment as a Protestant historian of generally Augustinian convictions, I believe that it powerfully demonstrates the summary conclusion offered near the end: "Judged on their own terms and with respect to the objectives of their own leading protagonists, medieval Christendom failed, the Reformation failed, confessionalized Europe failed, and Western modernity is failing, but each in different ways and with different consequences" (365).

Because Gregory has provided an especially effective account of the partially realized ideal of Christianity set forth in early medieval Christendom, my critique of the book requires a brief account of the three interlocking facets of the ideal. First was affirmation of a non-univocal relationship between God and the world. Gregory defines non-univocal as the approach taken by the best Christian theologians from the Cappadocian Fathers and Augustine through Thomas Aquinas. Because God represented a different order of being than the creation, human accounts of God might catch glimpses of what God was actually like, but humans could never presume to know God in his transcendent essence in the same way they could learn about the immanent creation.

Yet, second, this same ineffable deity had revealed himself to human creatures on human terms by freely choosing to enter the created realm as a person. In the incarnation of Christ, the infinitely hidden God became the particularly revealed God. The great emblem, instantiation, and reenactment of God's saving work was the Eucharist, the jewel of the sacramental approach to life that Christ ordained in order to maintain his perpetual presence in the world. The Eucharist was also the mysterious intersection of the transcendent and the immanent, the eternal and the temporal, the divine and the human.

That combination of non-univocal metaphysics and sacramental realism undergirded the third facet of ideal medieval Christianity, its embodiment as "an institutionalized world view" (3, 21, 44). Because God-in-Christ was the redeemer of bodies as well as souls, communities as well as persons, the religion that Christ's followers practiced necessarily entailed ecclesiastical organization, economic transactions, political order, family relationships, and every other aspect of daily life. The practice of Christianity, as interpreted most clearly in Augustine's works, reflected the divine *caritas*, but it also included divinely revealed principles of order.

This is the ideal of Christianity that, according to Gregory, was developing from patristic practices and authors like Augustine, and then in a long line leading to a richly various culmination in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. My critique concerns neither his glowing account of the ideal nor his assessment of the late-modern alternatives. Instead, it concerns the historical rendering of how human kind got from there to here. Gregory has mis-titled his book, which should be "The Inconsistent Middle Ages and the

Unintended Reformation: The One-Two Punch that Secularized Society." The extent to which the medieval ideal was already compromised before 1519 defines the extent to which Protestant reformers subverted the ideal after 1519.

The life of Martin Luther provides a useful tool for making this critique. The book's first chapter explains in considerable detail how extensively Roman Catholic theology of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had embraced univocal metaphysics and the theological nominalism it entailed. As scholars like Louis Bouyer and Heiko Oberman have argued, the torment of soul that Martin Luther long experienced was demonstrably worsened by his training in nominalist, univocal theology. Either God peremptorily chose those who would be redeemed or humans eager for salvation really could do what lay within themselves to move toward God. Luther was reasoning about divine salvation as if God were within the framework of nature; his soul was tormented by a contradiction in terms. Luther needed a theology of salvation that explained how God could be both infinitely powerful and infinitely loving. Yet when Luther in the Augustinian cloister at Erfurt asked for bread, formal Catholic theology gave him a stone. When his passionate struggle to discover a merciful God led him to attack indulgences and so to disturb Rome, the Archbishop of Mainz, and the Holy Roman Emperor, late-medieval Christendom was reaping what its own univocal theology had sown.

Luther's case also requires a slight, but significant adjustment to Gregory's claim that debates over authority and the Bible "*were* [my emphasis] the most fundamental questions of the Reformation" (89). Luther's biography suggests instead that although these issues *became* the most fundamental questions of the Reformation, in the beginning the presenting question was soteriological —how he could experience "the righteousness of God" as a blessing instead of a curse. Similarly, for many others among the first Protestants—the early Ulrich Zwingli; Robert Barnes, John Frith, even William Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer in England; Patrick Hamilton in Scotland; and many more —salvation was the first concern, and only consequently authority.

In late October 1517 Luther's Ninety-Five Theses attacked the traffic in indulgences, but referred only incidentally to scripture. Five months later in April 1518, one of the first public meetings to debate the broader implications of Luther's attack on indulgences convened at Heidelberg under the auspices of his Augustinian order. In formulating theses for debate at Heidelberg, Luther made a stronger appeal to scripture, but his principal concern was to differentiate between what he called "a theology of glory" that brought death and "a theology of the cross" that brought life.

Formal questions of authority only became explicit when in October 1518 Luther was called to Augsburg and a meeting with Cardinal Thomas Cajetan, who had been dispatched by Pope Leo X to rein in this German wild boar. Those questions about authority became even more explicit the

next July, 1519, in a lengthy public meeting at Leipzig where Luther disputed over many days with the papal champion John Eck about the questions that had proliferated in the wake of Luther's initial challenge to the indulgence trade. *The Unintended Reformation* refers several times to the extensive claims about the authority of scripture that Luther made at Leipzig, and also, by implication, about the ability of individual believers to find in scripture a common message concerning salvation, the sacraments, church authority, and much more—if only they would forsake corrupt ecclesiastical interpreters and read the text for themselves.

Significantly, however, the meetings at Augsburg and Leipzig featured one element that had been mostly absent when Luther proposed the Ninety-Five Theses for university debate and only marginally present when he and his fellow Augustinians debated soteriology at Heidelberg. That element was the coercive fact of Christendom. Cardinal Cajetan was in Augsburg because that is where the German imperial diet was meeting, and the pope needed his diplomat to carry on high-level negotiations with the German princes. Whatever the ecclesiastical reasons for Cajetan's interview with Luther, it also occurred because the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I, had complained to Pope Leo about Luther's attack on the indulgence traffic. Delicate diplomacy was necessary because in late 1518 the Emperor was not only worried about Luther's bad influence but was also dying. As a consequence, the entire edifice of papal Christendom was scrambling to prepare for the election of a new Emperor. Then, between the time of Luther's audience with Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg and when he took up the cudgels against John Eck in Leipzig, Maximilian died; the very week that Eck and Luther began their debate the Empire's electors chose the young king of Spain, who became known as Charles V, to succeed Maximilian. Because of how intimately the affairs of state and church had become interconnected in the centuries before 1520, Pope Leo X was involved up to his eyeballs in the maneuvering that led to the election of the new Emperor. Far more important than pastoring the renegade Augustinian monk from Wittenberg was the need to protect the Papal States and its revenues through complicated power politics.

This brief summary sketches the backdrop as Luther's protest exploded into a full-scale challenge to late-medieval Catholicism; it indicates what kind of ecclesiastical embodiment the Christianity of western Christendom was enduring in the early sixteenth century. The Catholic response to Luther would not have been inconsistent with the medieval ideal if it had balanced coercion with *caritas* in trying to recall him to that ideal. In actual fact, it acted toward Luther with almost total disregard for *caritas* and an all-out commitment to coercion. Luther had to be declared a heretic because he complicated papal relations with the Emperor, he threatened the income

stream required from indulgences, and he undermined the architectural ambitions of the Renaissance Papacy.

The one-time head of the Augustinian order, Johannes von Staupitz, was also worried about the implications of Luther's outbursts because he loved the church, he loved Christ's gospel, and he loved Martin Luther. Staupitz tried to rein in Luther with a balance of *caritas* and coercion. Staupitz also drew on the best non-univocal theology of the ideal medieval Christianity when he urged Luther to "view predestination in the wounds of Christ." But Staupitz's efforts never had a chance against the rush to pure coercion that motivated pope, cardinal, bishop, and the Dominicans who went after the Augustinian monk in order simply to put him down.

The key thing, with respect to the arguments of *The Unintended Reformation*, was that the overwhelming deployment of coercion had long since become standard Catholic practice. Gregory mentions at one point that egregious instances of coercion driving out *caritas* extended back to the twelfth century, but they can traced much further, for example, to Augustine himself when in the early fifth century he abandoned efforts to bring the Donatists back into the Catholic fold through persuasion and turned to military force exercised by imperial legions. As it was for Augustine who articulated the ideal of an embodied church blending *caritas* and coercion, so it was through the centuries that followed. If gold rust, what then will iron do?

The pages of *The Unintended Reformation* define the problem clearly. By the sixteenth century, Catholic "ecclesiastics and secular leaders never succeeded in consistently combining *caritas* with coercion in the exercise of power" (196). And with respect to the generation confronted by Luther's challenge: "In multiple ways and with supreme irony, the ecclesiastical prelates with whom [Machiavelli] rubbed shoulders had themselves in fact modeled the separation of morality from politics" (200).

The problem that came to expression in the early sixteenth century was more the result of a corrupted system than corrupt individuals. The medieval Christian ideal had become a Christendom where the sword drove out the shepherd's crook. Without dissenting in the main from Gregory's conclusions about the morass created by Protestant appeals to *scriptura sola*, the fundamental structural problem of the Reformation was not disagreement over principles of doctrinal authority; it was, rather, the church's institutional recourse to violence to quash challenges that threatened the power structures of late-medieval Christendom. A pope who relied on the coercion of Charles V deserved a reformer who relied on the protection of Frederick the Wise.

No one has documented with greater force the fraught legacy that coercion without *caritas* bequeathed to Europe than Brad Gregory in *Salvation at Stake* (Camridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999). The disputes that tore Christendom apart and thus made way for modern secularism were disputes

over authority that Protestant movements were certainly responsible for propelling. But the way those disputes were embodied in coercive regimes was a legacy of the Catholic middle ages.

Evidence supporting this claim is stronger than counter-factual speculation since we know what has actually happened since the Second Vatican Council and the full Catholic embrace in *Dignitatis Humanae* of *caritas* over coercion. That bold move at Vatican II has resulted in an era of constructive mutual edification between Catholics and Protestants not witnessed since the 1520s, indeed not even imaginable less than a century ago. My conclusion from this recent history is that if medieval Christendom, and then Europe's confessional churches, had discovered a way to favor *caritas* over coercion (a task of admittedly great difficulty), the extraordinary range of convictions that Catholics and most Protestants continued to share after 1520—the Trinity, Christ understood by the Nicene Creed, scripture as inspired, the Ten Commandments—would have perhaps allowed Christian communities to hold back the tides of secularization more successfully.

In sum, the late-medieval turn away from non-univocal metaphysics as well as the practice by Christendom's central institutions of coercion over *caritas* cut the channels in which the effects of Protestantism would run. The Reformation would not have secularized the West if medieval Christendom had not already fatally undermined the medieval Christian ideal.

Mark A. Noll
University of Notre Dame

Author's Reply

doi:10.1017/S0009640712001990

I am grateful to these four colleagues for their reviews of my book. I also thank the editors of *Church History* for this forum and the opportunity to reply to the reviews. *The Unintended Reformation* is unconventional, demanding, and wide-ranging; it is also unnerving, with arguments that some readers are unlikely to like. That is unavoidable, because methodologically, theoretically, and substantively the book challenges much that is often considered settled. What matters intellectually, however, is not whether it is misliked but whether it is mistaken in its historical analysis or description of

contemporary realities. Any book must be comprehended before one can essay counterarguments against it. As I state repeatedly, the six chapters of *The Unintended Reformation* comprise a whole and must be understood together (20, 24, 365–66). The book was written with care and must be read with care to be understood.

I am therefore especially grateful to Mark Noll for his review. Aware of my attention to the late medieval church's endemic problems, he sees the centrality to my argument of the "gulf" or "chasm" (my words) between the ideals and realities of medieval Christendom (21, 85, 139–44, 195–98, 202, 244, 250, 253–60, 366–67). It is thus puzzling that Robert Yelle thinks the book expresses nostalgic yearning for a supposed medieval "Golden Age of Christianity." I am also gratified that Noll, such a distinguished Protestant historian and keen observer of present-day society, thinks the book "powerfully demonstrates the summary conclusion offered near the end" about the respective (and different) failures of medieval Christendom, the Reformation, and confessionalized Europe, as well as the failing of modernity underway.

Because Noll understands the book's argument and agrees with its core conclusion, my disagreements with his review are relatively minor. As crucial as was the Luther affair for what became the Reformation, one cannot extrapolate from it to the church as a whole in the late 1510s. Much recent research has shown how vibrant Christian *caritas* was then, evident across Latin Europe in a wide range of concrete charitable works: care for the sick, prayers for the living and dead, spiritual counsel, and so forth. Some ecclesiastical authorities were harsher than others in handling heresy suspects, their actions varying depending on the case. More than simply a matter of coercion in the service of prelates' pecuniary and political interests, Luther's treatment also reflected the implicit challenge to papal authority that some theologians already perceived in the Ninety-Five Theses. Luther's quest indeed concerned salvation rather than authority per se, but insofar as he justified justification by faith alone and arrived at it with reference to specific Pauline passages, the two are inseparable; there was no "Reformation" yet when Luther expressed *sola scriptura* at Leipzig in July 1519, and by early 1522 Karlstadt, Müntzer, and others already sharply disagreed with Luther about scripture's meaning and application. Although Luther's response to his treatment is understandable, it was hardly compulsory—many others in analogous situations before and after recanted their views and returned to the Roman church. The sins of late medieval Christians, including popes, did not necessarily mean that the Roman church was no longer what it claimed to be, whatever the inferences drawn by those who rejected its authority. Others then and since have argued that its members' actions could not undo what it was, because the divine promise

embedded in its dominical origins rendered it indefectible on all fundamental matters of Christian teaching. According to the Roman church's defenders, medieval Christendom had not "already fatally undermined the medieval Christian ideal" by 1519—rather, the *ideal* remained no less intact and the church's *teachings* no less true despite egregious failures to live up to them. In their view the solution was to follow the teachings, not to devise new ones contrary to those of the established church.

Hans Hillerbrand's review is more problematic because less comprehending. Any reviewer would seem confused who says a book "is structured neither chronologically nor thematically" yet in his next sentence lists the chapter titles that "define the thematic trajectories" of the book. Only some of Hillerbrand's worst misrepresentations can be addressed, given space constraints.

The Unintended Reformation is not an "intellectual history" with a "fastidious focus on certain theological and philosophical developments" that pays mere "lip service to societal developments." That is a gross distortion. The book is a sustained argument that human beliefs, desires, ideas, practices, and institutions cannot be separated from one another in the history of the Western world between the late Middle Ages and the present: "We cannot content ourselves with a concentration on ideas or institutions, culture or capitalism, philosophy or politics—*all* must be incorporated because of their *combined* explanatory power, itself a corollary of their *interrelated* historical influence" (3, italics in original). Hillerbrand says nothing about the fact that chapter 3 is about the institutional exercise of public power; chapter 4 is about morality in connection to social relationships and politics; chapter 5 is about human acquisitiveness, capitalism, and consumption; and chapter 6 is as much about institutions as ways of knowing in the pursuit and transmission of knowledge. Given this apparent oversight of two-thirds of the book, it is perhaps unsurprising that he overlooks or misconstrues so many of its arguments. Contemporary intellectuals who "have a place for God" are just as modern as those who do not (27–28, 69–72); secular authorities' jurisdictional control of ecclesiastical institutions was underway long before the Reformation (131, 143–44, 367); Reformation-era governments did not "dictate theology" but decided which versions of Christianity to support and suppress (131–32, 149–60, 369–70); Christians' disagreement about a morality of the good led to a formal ethics of rights, not to "secular, open-ended expansiveness" in what is anything but a "commonplace or self-evident" chapter (185, 188, 211–12, 214–20, 340); and doctrinal disagreements divided Protestant reformers socially and politically despite what they shared in common (89–91, 203–6).

Hillerbrand says of *The Unintended Reformation*, "It would be an epochal book were it not for two problems": "the thesis of ultimate Reformation

complicity for the ills of modernity" and "the way the book understands the dynamic of historical development and change." Since neither of these alleged problems is real, perhaps Hillerbrand will revise his assessment. The book repeatedly argues not that today's Western world is the product of "certain notions of the Reformation" promulgated by "those bad reformers," but—as Noll sees—of the Reformation era's doctrinal disagreements and religio-political conflicts that followed medieval Christendom's failures. English deists are *part of* my *conceptually much broader* account of rationalistic Protestantism between the sixteenth century and the present, a point also applicable to Yelle's review (51–52, 105–9). Even had I discussed every individual deist—indeed, devoted a chapter-length excursus to them, and another to Bishop Butler—it would only have strengthened (if distended) my much more encompassing arguments about metaphysical univocity and the fissiparity of Protestantism through more examples and detail. The book does *not* claim that Protestant pluralism contributed to any widespread, secularizing disavowal of Christianity *in the early modern period*, but rather "by the end of the twentieth century" (111). It is difficult to see what Hillerbrand means by "the importance of the ancient ecumenical creeds as consensus builder for all Protestant traditions," having told us two sentences before about seventeenth-century Lutheran divines who dismissed Calvinist biblical claims "as 'abomination' and heresy." Early modern encounters with non-Christian peoples did not compel an inference of relativism from pluralism, as Hillerbrand seems to imagine: the example of early modern Jesuits, whose globe-trotting missionaries collectively encountered a very wide variety of non-Christians in the era, makes this clear (as does Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* today). And Hillerbrand seemingly cannot distinguish cosmological models from metaphysics, and thus fails to see how the rejection of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic universe did not (and does not) affect a non-univocal understanding of the relationship between God and creation (53–55). Hillerbrand's review shows not my "fallacious understanding of the European cultural dynamic during the past 500 years," but rather displays his failure to grasp what the book shows: that the dominant "intellectual, economic, and political forces" of the West since the sixteenth century are not "unrelated to the Reformation," but inextricable from the unresolved doctrinal disagreements and religio-political conflicts that accompanied it.

I am well aware that Western modernity alleviated multiple problems of premodern Europe and "made possible the flourishing of literally billions of human beings" (375; cf. 132, 233, 238, 293, 294). But *by the same means* it has precipitated new problems that we face today. Troeltsch's *Bedeutung des Protestantismus* appeared in 1911 at the height of self-congratulatory European assessments of colonizing imperial progress, before the twentieth

century's cataclysmic wars, genocides, and decolonization. The history and contemporary realities that Troeltsch explained relative to the Reformation were therefore very different from ours. Hillerbrand says nothing about the present-day problems described in my book: that we have no shared framework for resolving moral disagreements, no substantive common good or means of devising one, no grounds for believing that human rights or persons are real based on scientistic naturalism, much evidence that ever-increasing human consumption is apparently contributing to global warming and that undergraduate education is incoherent. Are these not problems? Are they not the product of the past, their making thus rightly analyzed by historians? Is my "candid display of opinions" in articulating them somehow inaccurate? The book is not "a Jeremiad, barely subtle, against modernity"—it *shows how* the institutional arrangements that *solved* problems inherited from the Reformation era, plus modern philosophy's failures and the natural sciences' successes, have in turn *fostered* major current problems. Reminding ourselves about modernity's successes does not alter this reality.

David Whitford draws a parallel between *The Unintended Reformation* and Stephen Greenblatt's *The Swerve*, alleging that we both "se[e] in a particular event the fulcrum upon which the medieval world pivots toward the modern" despite our different assessments of modernity. But unlike Greenblatt's use of Poggio's rediscovery of *De rerum natura*, I nowhere even suggest that the Reformation was a discrete "event." It strikes me as absurdly incongruous to compare one scholar's recovery of a Lucretian manuscript, or even the Renaissance recovery of Epicurean thought in general, with the politically backed rejection by multiple regimes and millions of people of late medieval Europe's most pervasive institution. And Greenblatt's confessionally secularist and neo-Burckhardtian reason-refutes-religion supersessionism is not only empirically inaccurate, but also cannot explain the contemporary intellectual viability of sophisticated religious worldviews or account for the ideological heterogeneity of Western modernity. Lumping *The Unintended Reformation* together with *The Swerve* is hugely misleading, because neither my book's genealogical method nor its emphasis on the Reformation era is arbitrary. *No* credible account of today's world is possible that does not encompass science and its applications, modern philosophy, sovereign states, industrial capitalism and consumerism, and higher education. Therefore my book includes them all. It shows how the Reformation era's doctrinal disagreements and religio-political conflicts are related to them and how they are related to each other.

All historical explanations of the contemporary Western world must begin somewhere. I start in the late Middle Ages because that is how far back we must go to account for the stipulated *explanandum*: the hegemonic institutions that permit and protect our contemporary hyperpluralism of

answers to the Life Questions. But I am well aware that "the institutionalized worldview of late medieval Christianity . . . had itself been over a millennium in the unsystematic making" (4). Therefore I address whatever in the ancient or medieval past was necessary for my argument, in a manner consistent with the anti-supersessionist view of historical change that informs my analytical narrative of the past half-millennium: the biblically rooted, Christian understanding of the relationship between God and creation inherited from late antiquity (29–36); the relationship between Christianity and the exercise of power between the first and the sixteenth centuries (133–36); the teleological view of human nature and moral virtues in ancient and medieval Christianity (195–98); the biblically based condemnation of avarice as a deadly sin and developments pursuant to the eleventh-century commercial revolution (244–55); and the ways in which different types of knowledge were conceived within a medieval intellectual framework (309–17). Whitford is thus much mistaken in declaring that I "wish to point to a single moment and declare that it was at this moment in time when things changed." (Indeed, his own treatment of my discussion of Scotus contradicts his claim.) My book no more states or suggests this than it regards Luther and Calvin as the Reformation's "prime movers." Things are always changing—but with the Reformation they changed *in ways that have proven to be unprecedentedly consequential and remain influential in the present*. My book shows how. Tellingly, none of these reviewers addresses my argument about how different the Reformation looks once we historically reintegrate the radical with the magisterial Reformation without theologically privileging the latter (although Noll refers to "the morass created by Protestant appeals to *sola scriptura*"). For then we see the open-endedness of answers to the Life Questions precipitated by the anti-Roman emphasis on scripture alone, and its latter-day descendant in contemporary hyperpluralism. Depending on one's commitments, that can be discomfiting.

Whitford thinks the narrative of each chapter he criticizes "breaks down when examined in its particulars." In fact, as with Hillerbrand, his criticisms display incomprehension of the chapters' actual arguments. I do not "questio[n] Scotus's orthodoxy"—I say he was a "faithful Franciscan friar" whose views about univocity "were not condemned as doctrinally heterodox" (36). This is no "rhetorical sleight of hand" but simply a statement of fact. That Benedict XVI recently commended "Blessed Duns Scotus" does not change the fact that Scotus innovated with respect to the traditional, inherited view of the relationship between God and creation. More importantly, however, the main argument in chapter 1 depends *not at all* on the relationship of the Protestant reformers to metaphysical univocity or "the appropriation of Scotus by Protestants." Whitford misses this entirely. The point is that the interminable *doctrinal disagreements* that accompanied the Reformation sidelined all

controverted bases for *supra-confessional* discussion of the relationship between God and creation. This left only philosophical reflection or empirical investigation within a *newly important* framework of metaphysical univocity and Occam's razor applied to an either-or understanding of natural and supernatural causality, *if* one wanted to avoid doctrinal controversy (40–41, 43–44, 46–49). Once all natural events were in principle explicable with reference to natural causes, there was no "room" for a univocally conceived (in contrast to a transcendent) God (43, 51–53, 54–56).

Whitford's characterization of chapter 3 is similarly misguided. The Reformation *transformed and intensified* a process of secular authorities' *jurisdictional* control of ecclesiastical institutions that *began long before the Reformation* (143–44), because Reformation-era secular authorities had to make novel decisions about which among *rival* Christian *doctrines and practices* to support. This was a radical shift. Prior to the Reformation, notwithstanding the considerable diversity in late medieval Christianity (83–84, 366), the Swiss, Saxon, English and other churches (outside Hussite Bohemia) all included bishops and priests, male and female religious, confraternities, the celebration of Mass, seven sacraments, veneration of saints, pilgrimages, processions, acknowledgment of papal authority, and so forth. After the Reformation, they did not. I repeatedly note that coercion and violence characterized medieval Christendom (83–84, 141–42, 159, 367), but this had nowhere near the influence of the Reformation era's religio-political conflicts on the makings of modernity. Adding earlier medieval examples would only strengthen my point about medieval secular authorities' exercise of power in support of the faith (137). Advances in military technology during the Thirty Years' War are irrelevant to my argument, which turns not on the war's destructiveness as a *function of religious zeal*, but merely on the wearying *association* of religious disagreements with destructive violence between the 1520s and 1640s (112–13, 160–63, 167, 211–12, 216, 217, 243, 278, 341, 371).

Whitford's accusation that I fail "to look at [my] narrative with a wider lens" is a bit baffling given the lens's width already. The focus of the lens, too, is carefully calibrated, gauged to explain the historical formation of the hyperpluralism and hegemonic institutions of the contemporary West. I have not "missed the broader cultural world" of the Reformation era; it simply is not what my book is about. As a scholar of the period, I am scarcely unaware of it. The introduction expressly disavows any claims of comprehensiveness (4–5), and the conclusion notes that "additional domains of human life have scarcely been mentioned that could have been analyzed in the same manner—sex, marriage, and families, for example, or forms of communication" (365). The latter would include a narrative running from

medieval oral and manuscript culture through the fifteenth-century printing revolution to Claude Chappe's optical telegraph system in France in the 1790s, nineteenth-century telegraphic and twentieth-century telephonic communications, and on to our own digital age. But such supplementary genealogical analysis—including the important relationship between print and the Reformation—would only strengthen my argument about the makings of contemporary hyperpluralism by exploring different media through which truth claims about the Life Questions have been disseminated, contested, and negotiated.

I am pleased that Robert Yelle considers *The Unintended Reformation* an erudite book that "demands and repays careful reading," and I appreciate his fine summary of its main argument in his second and third paragraphs. Nevertheless, his review misrepresents the book in multiple ways. My book is not merely about how "theological commitments" contributed to secularization; the Reformation rejection of the Roman church's authority affected all domains of life because "for good or ill" (2) late medieval Christianity was an institutionalized worldview. The sciences' success in explaining natural regularities was not independent of the Reformation, because the impasses born of early modern doctrinal controversies problematized theology's epistemological status in relationship to science (40–41, 46–48, 339–40). I do not argue that "the Reformation introduced pluralism" into a "vanished, monolithic culture" (which I plainly state was "far from homogeneous" [2; cf. 83, 84, 366]), but rather that it introduced an enduring and unprecedented pluralism *about answers to the Life Questions* in comparison to medieval Christendom (92–95, 110–12, 369). Regardless of Charles Taylor's views, there was indisputably a loss of traditional religious culture due to the Reformation and subsequent modern developments, whether one likes it or not, notwithstanding the fact that many "new conformations and different spiritual possibilities" were also created. And obviously, as I am well aware, our hyperpluralism today is partly due to interactions with different peoples in an ever more globalized world (11, 76). Economic life is the complex product of human ideas, desires, and behaviors in relationship to the natural world, none of which was independent of Christian theology in the Middle Ages or Reformation era (244–69). My book is not an "indictment of the Reformation," but an explanation of change over time *regardless* of one's assessment of the results; and as Noll sees, in my book medieval Christendom's failures are also critical to that explanation. The book's narrative hardly "ignores questions of power and authority" related to processes of secularization, considering the entirety of chapter 3 in relationship to chapter 2. It was Christians involved in the Peasants' War, not me, who dismissed "the 'hyper-Pauline' views of certain Protestants" (148–49). And given my arguments about the compatibility of

all possible scientific discoveries with some religious worldviews (71, 384), and about the normative impotence of the natural sciences for human life (19, 79–80, 227, 380), it strikes me as bizarre to claim that "Gregory plays into the hands of those secularist narratives that sideline Christianity and present modernity as the triumph of scientific reason over religious superstition."

I see nothing problematic—much less "intensely problematic"—about the term "unintended," nor how it allegedly impinges on my non-teleological explanation of change over time. The point is not that any historical agents have (perhaps) *any* control over the "longer-term consequences of their actions, and over large-scale social processes," but simply that (as it happens) not all human actions are equally consequential and some have greater unanticipated effects than others. These seem to be unobjectionable banalities. One task of historians is to show which actions (as it happened) turned out to be especially consequential. This in no way affects the contingent character of human decisions and actions or the complexity of unforeseeable consequences (365–66). Nor is such analysis incompatible with recognition of the many *intended* consequences of human actions, including those enacted by early modern Protestants or by those who later wanted to exclude religion from public life. The Protestant reformers intended to instill new Christian beliefs and practices, for example, and in time Protestant authorities largely succeeded through efforts of confessionalization (156–57); late nineteenth-century American elites sought to exclude religion from higher education, and they also succeeded (354–56); and so forth. Many human actions have both intended and unintended consequences, and historians should be alert to both.

The *historical analysis* of *The Unintended Reformation* is distinct both from its *description* of contemporary social, moral, economic, intellectual, and political realities, and from its *assessment* of some of them as problematic. One could, for example, think that my book inaccurately describes our situation, and thus with Yelle refer to what "[Gregory] regards as characteristic of our contemporary scene," as if this was somehow a function of my idiosyncratic allegations. In this case, I have wrongly described ever-increasing levels of consumerism, for example, or modern philosophy's failure to answer any Life Questions in a consensually persuasive way. Or one could think the *descriptions* are accurate, but what is described is unproblematic: the apparent contribution of human consumption to potentially dangerous climate change, or open-ended pluralism pertaining to *all* human beliefs and behaviors, or our lack of any shared means of resolving moral disagreements. What is noteworthy about Yelle's review, and Hillerbrand's, is the absence of any counterevidence or counterarguments whatsoever pertaining *either* to my descriptions *or* my assessments. They

seem not to like them, but offer nothing to suggest they are respectively inaccurate or unproblematic. My book acknowledges that modernity has contributed to the flourishing of billions of people. But the very solutions to early modern problems have also led to the situation in which we find ourselves. Reminding ourselves of modernity's benefits does not make our problems chimerical, nor does it make my book "a strongly antimodern polemic" for explaining how we arrived at them. *The Unintended Reformation* is not "frankly apologetic in motivation and tenor"; it assumes no substantive religious views whatsoever, nor does it evince any desire to return to the past, which is impossible anyway.

In keeping with its non-teleological conception of historical change and insistence on the non-determined character of human behavior, however, the book does counterfactually imply—in ways that seem consistent with Noll's review—that the past might have been quite different and less destructively coercive if medieval Christians high and low had better practiced what they preached. "Institutionally and ideologically, materially and morally, we need not have ended up where we are" (12). For without the pervasiveness of late medieval Christianity's problems, an Augustinian friar's anxieties might not have prompted the emphasis on scripture that seemed to some like an answer to *their* problems, thus unintentionally contributing to the eventual secularization of the troubled Christian world it sought to fix.

Brad S. Gregory
University of Notre Dame

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES

doi:10.1017/S0009640712002016

Witness of the Body: The Past, Present, and Future of Martyrdom. Edited by **Michael L. Budde** and **Karen Scott**. The Eerdmans *Ekklesia* Series. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2011. x + 228 pp. $22.00 paper.

This volume seeks to present martyrdom in terms comprehensible to a world where the word conjures up images of fanaticism and murder. In order to do so, the contributors have first presented papers discussing the phenomenon of early Christian martyrdom. Among these, Stephen Fowl's close reading of Pauline witness through bodily suffering in Philippians is excellent, and Ann Astwell's discussion of the trial of Joan of Arc is well done, but the collection really gets going with two essays on early modern Europe. Brad S. Gregory brilliantly differentiates between prosecution of heresy and martyrdom during the Reformation, while William T. Cavanaugh explodes traditional narratives of the Wars of Religion, arguing that, far from preventing religious violence, the rising states of Europe transferred its purview from church-oriented societies to apparently secular governments. These sophisticated essays set up Michael Budde's probing exploration of how twentieth-century Christians could conspicuously set nationalistic agendas ahead of faith commitments. A final group of essays looks forward, consistently pitting the witness of Christian martyrdom against the tacit assumptions of much contemporary political and social theory. Admittedly, the book's great weakness is that the essays by Tripp York and Joyce Salisbury unfortunately lacked historical precision. I would recommend this book for anyone interested in theologies of martyrdom, Reformation, and early modern European history, or, most especially, those looking at religion in contemporary American politics. It is on this point that the essays not only speak of martyrdom as a "sign spoken against," but themselves silently enact that sign, repeatedly witnessing to the problems that arise when a particular nationalism is conflated with or prioritized over the faith commitments of Christians. This book makes me