



BOOK REVIEW

Lucy Moffat Kaufman. *A People's Reformation: Building the English Church in the Elizabethan Parish*

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Most studies of the Reformation Churches are top-down, with a focus on monarch/elector/magistrates, followed by bishops and notable clerics. Lucy Moffat Kaufman notes that such studies ignore the experiences of the masses of the population and the crucial part played by the laity. *A People's Reformation: Building the English Church in the Elizabethan Parish* therefore attempts to cover some of the gaps as applied to the Elizabethan Church. Kaufman's primary focus is the role of the churchwarden in the parishes who had to oversee a transition from Marian Catholicism to the Protestant identity of the Elizabethan Church. This is no easy task to discern, since the Elizabethan Church was something of an eclectic mess, with many parish priests still in place from the Henrician Church as well as the new iteration of Catholicism of his daughter Mary, joined by younger clerics wishing for a more radical Protestant settlement along the lines of the Reformed traditions. Transition and evolution are appropriate words, with certain reforms taking place immediately, and others being more leisurely and achieved over time. In this process, the central person in the parish was the churchwarden. As Kaufman demonstrates, it was through the churchwardens that the Reformation was policed, governed, financed, managed, administered, and implemented.

Through episcopal visitations and archdeacon's courts, the churchwardens were instructed on their duties and obligations regarding the moral behavior of their neighbors and their religious observances. Kaufman draws on churchwarden accounts, as well as visitation records, and also on a wide range of secondary sources which have previously delved into some of the relevant material. Churchwardens were responsible for the upkeep of the nave of the Church, while the rector was liable for the chancel. The rector may have been the incumbent, but where there was a vicar, it was the rector—often the lay owner of former monastic lands—who was responsible. Kaufman notes that the Elizabethan visitation records reveal that most parishes were successful in the upkeep and repair of the church fabric. Given the cost to parishes between the iconoclasm of Edward and the Catholic restoration of Mary, layfolk were reluctant to remove and destroy vestments and furnishings in case these would once again have to be newly purchased in the event of a change of monarch. Finances were mostly from tithes, and there were not infrequent legal disputes over unpaid tithes. The churchwarden and vestry were responsible for policing morality in the parish and for reporting breaches—adultery, incest, prostitution, as well as drunkenness and usury. Receiving holy communion was the method of showing conformity to the national church, and failure to receive was taken as a sign of recusancy. Parishioners who were excommunicated tended to quickly make amends to remove this social stigma.

While Kaufman keeps to the legal and social implications, she argues a solid and convincing case. However, when she turns to liturgical topics, there are some unfortunate errors and misunderstandings. The book begins with an account of Jeffrey Whitaker who returned a cope, which his family had hidden at the beginning of the Elizabethan Settlement, to his parish church. The parish sold it. Kaufman pronounces that this was because use of the cope was illegal. This of course is incorrect. The Elizabethan Advertisements required the use of copes for the communion service in cathedrals, and Elizabeth insisted on copes being worn in her Royal Chapel (see, e.g., the Old Cheque-Book of the Chapel Royal, Easter Day 1593). A plain cope was not illegal. Since, however, in most Elizabethan parishes, communion was celebrated only three times a year, and since many clergy even resented wearing the surplice, it is no surprise that the Whitaker cope was sold. For Elizabethan Eucharistic piety, Kaufman draws on Christopher Sutton's *Godly Meditations*, 1601. The problem with this is that Sutton drew on the Italian Jesuit Luca Pinelli's *Meditatione brevi del sanctissimo sacramento*, and Sutton himself was more aligned to the piety of Lancelot Andrewes, and he was not representative of the more typical "godly" churchmen. The term "Calvinist" is used very broadly to a point of being unhelpful, since the sacramental theology of Elizabethan churchmen, though Reformed, differed widely. It is unfathomable how Kaufman came to the conclusion that the 1559 text of Cranmer's 1552 rite was influenced by John Calvin. Cranmer's favorite reformation theologians were Oecolampadius and Zwingli, and Cranmer's symbolic memorialism, which spills over at times into the symbolic parallelism of the early Bucer and the mature Bullinger, was not the symbolic instrumentalism of Calvin. There is simply no textual evidence that Cranmer's liturgical texts were inspired by the Genevan reformer. The bibliography lacks any references to liturgical studies, and had some been consulted, these errors could have been avoided.

There is also some curiosity lacking when Kaufman cites what in her own argument is an obvious anomaly. In parish accounts for Shipdham, Norfolk, in 1564, there are records of wine purchase for communion for obvious festivals, but also for Candlemas, Corpus Christi, and St. Faith. Given that communion was normally only three times a year, what was going on here? In the 1559 Prayer Book, St. Faith was a black letter day and not marked liturgically; the 2nd of February is called the Purification, not Candlemas; and Corpus Christi has been abolished. Was the churchwarden a closet Catholic, or was wine being purchased for some undisclosed reasons? Unless the priest was a hold-over from the Henrician and/or Marian Church, it is hard to explain these entries, but some attempt is needed. Kaufman rightly notes the flexibility allowed to parishes to make some adjustments, and the change in terminology in accounts may have much to do with a change of incumbent or churchwarden. The "godly" Richard Rogers, Vicar of Great Dunmow, Essex 1561–64, probably allowed far less of the old terminology and customs in his parish than was allowed by Christopher Trychay of Morebath. How the laity played a part in trying to preserve older customs and terminology would be an interesting sequel to this book.