

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910820306503321
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Titolo	Christ's churches purely reformed : a social history of Calvinism // Philip Benedict
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Haven, Conn. ; ; London, : Yale University Press, 2002
ISBN	9786611740795 1-281-74079-9 0-300-12722-7
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (697 p.)
Disciplina	284.2409
Soggetti	Calvinism - Europe - History Social history
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- CONTENTS -- ILLUSTRATIONS -- TABLES -- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- CONVENTIONS -- INTRODUCTION -- PART I. The Formation of a Tradition -- 1. Zurich contra Wittenberg -- 2. The Second Generation: Switzerland and Germany -- 3. The Second Generation: Calvin and Geneva -- CONCLUSION TO PART I Cooperating Allies, Contrasting Models of Christian Community -- PART II. The Expansion of a Tradition -- 4. France: The Construction and Defense of a Minority Church -- 5. Scotland: A Revolutionary Reformation -- 6. The Netherlands: Another Revolutionary Reformation -- 7. The Empire: Further Reformation by Princely Fiat -- 8. England: The Unstable Settlement of a Church "But Halfly Reformed" -- 9. Eastern Europe: Local Reformations Under Noble Protection -- Conclusion to Part II. The Reformed Churches at the End of the Sixteenth Century -- PART III. The Transformations of a Tradition -- 10. Theological Disputes in the Age of Orthodoxy -- 11. Changing Political Circumstances on the Continent -- 12. British Schisms -- Conclusion to Part III. Reformed Europe at the End of the Seventeenth Century -- PART IV. New Calvinist Men and Women? -- 13. The Reformation of the Ministry -- 14. The Exercise of Discipline -- 15. The Practice of Piety -- Conclusion to Part IV. Final Reflections on Calvinism and the Making of the Modern World -- Notes -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

This sweeping and eminently readable book is the first synthetic history of Calvinism in almost fifty years. It tells the story of the Reformed tradition from its birth in the cities of Switzerland to the unraveling of orthodoxy amid the new intellectual currents of the seventeenth century. As befits a pan-European movement, Benedict's canvas stretches from the British Isles to Eastern Europe. The course and causes of Calvinism's remarkable expansion, the inner workings of the diverse national churches, and the theological debates that shaped Reformed doctrine all receive ample attention. The English Reformation is situated within the history of continental Protestantism in a way that reveals the international significance of English developments. A fresh examination of Calvinist worship, piety, and discipline permits an up-to-date assessment of the classic theories linking Calvinism to capitalism and democracy. Benedict not only paints a vivid picture of the greatest early spokesmen of the cause, Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin, but also restores many lesser-known figures to their rightful place. Ambitious in conception, attentive to detail, this book offers a model of how to think about the history and significance of religious change across the long Reformation era.
