Introduction: Globalizing Protestantisms

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Abstract

The articles in this Special Issue shed new light on the global dimensions of the Protestant Reformation from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century. Drawing upon a range of historiographical debates and methodological approaches, they examine the variety of identities and perspectives that made up post-Reformation religious cultures. Contributions uncover the ways in which multiple forms of Protestantism shaped and responded to global patterns of knowledge and practice, movement and migration, colonization and empire, commercial ventures, and cultural encounters. They reveal the role of Protestant beliefs and practices in expressing and recalibrating changing attitudes towards race, gender, and sexuality, as well as shifting cultural perceptions of the world and its history. This Introduction frames the articles featured in the Special Issue and situates them in historical context. It also reflects upon key themes and concepts as well as recent historiographical developments.

Keywords

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These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their gene-
alogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad
on the earth after the Flood.

> Genesis 10:32[1]

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All these are peoples of India, unknown to us, because India is
least known to us of all the parts of the entire earth; otherwise
perhaps the similarity of the names might give some clarifica-
tion, although these, too, are being changed by the seafarers in the
present age.

> Martin Luther, c. 1536[2]

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Introduction

Luther's campaign against the perceived corruption of religion inaugurated a
prolonged and often tumultuous period of reform that reshaped the early mod-
ern religious landscape. Historians have often confined the study of these devel-
opments to Europe. Yet, the global dimensions of the Protestant Reformation
and its legacies increasingly inform research. As Luther's interpretation of the
postdiluvian diaspora suggests, European contact with the Americas, Africa,
and Asia profoundly shaped the Protestant view of history and the world. His
remarks point towards a growing recognition during the early modern period
that Christian ideas about the world were constantly evolving even as they
reflected a sacred historical framework. While religious migration and colonial
expansion generated new knowledge that could illuminate God's creation, it
might also unleash new kinds of uncertainty and disruption. The very names
that Europeans attributed to the world and its peoples were fluctuating as
mobility and communication continually unsettled assumptions and invited
new interpretations. This tension between the all-encompassing, eternal truth

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1 As given in Jaroslav Pelikan ed., *The Works of Martin Luther*, Volume 2: *Lectures on Genesis*
   (Saint Louis, 1960), 207.
2 Ibid. For the dating of Luther's lectures on Genesis, see Jaroslav Pelikan ed., *The Works of
   Martin Luther*, Volume 1: *Lectures on Genesis* (Saint Louis, 1958), vii–x.

of scripture and the fluidity of a new, unfamiliar, and unknown world caught Luther's attention and would preoccupy generations of Protestants after him.

Martin Luther was not alone in contemplating his place in this vast and changing landscape. In his commentary on the Acts of the Apostles dating from 1560, the reformer John Calvin (1509–1564) observed that preaching could point the way towards sacred universality amidst cultural differences around the world. The Bible recorded that, despite lacking a shared language or culture, different peoples were able to understand the Word of God. As Calvin explained, "For although they lived here and there in exile in far countries, and being one far from another, did, as it were inhabit divers worlds, yet did they hold among themselves the unity of faith."[3] The implications of this remark extend beyond the worldwide potential of evangelism. It suggests that a "world" could signify cultural as well as geographical spaces in which people adopted coherent identities and shared experiences amidst disruption and fragmentation on local and global scales.[4]

In the English context, Protestant divines soon harnessed the disruptive and connective possibilities of global space to elucidate points of theology, sacred history, empire, and evangelism. While some of these usages were primarily figurative, they nonetheless provide glimpses into the globalizing dimensions of Protestant thought. In 1595, explaining the spiritual sense in which Christ was the head of the Church, the prolific English Calvinist divine William Perkins (1558–1602) drew upon the metaphor of "a man hauing the partes of his bodie disioyned farre asunder, his head lying in Italy, one arme in Germanie, the other in Spaine, and his legges with us in England …"[5] This man possessed a single soul that connected his constituent body parts and activated them all simultaneously. According to Perkins, "the distance of place doeth not hinder the coniunction," and it was in this way that "the head of the Mysticall bodie Christ our Sauiour" could vitalize members of the Church in places "many thousand miles asunder …"[6] This allusive discussion was confined to Europe, but Perkins contemplated tangible interactions with people in America and Asia in a work published in 1604. Advocating the training of preachers from among non-Christian peoples, Perkins wrote that, "If in

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3   John Calvin, "Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles," in *John Calvin: Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (Oxford, 1975), 542–559, 547–548, quote at 548.

4   For changing cultural conceptions of the "world," see Ayesha Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers: Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago, 2015).

5   William Perkins, *An exposition of the Symbole or Creed of the Apostles according to the tenour of the Scriptures, and the consent of orthodoxe Fathers of the Church* (London, 1595, STC 19703), 482.

6   Ibid.

Turkie, or America, or els where, the Gospel should be receiued of men, by the counsell and perswasion of priuate persons, they shall not neede to send into Europe for consecrated Ministers, but they haue power to choose their owne Ministers from within themselues: because where God giues the word, he giues the power also."[7] Once again, language was a necessary tool of religious expansion, but these remarks also signaled the Protestant conviction that universal qualities of faith endured amidst global diversity.

These remarks reflect a growing interest among Protestant writers of varying doctrinal persuasions in recording and reconciling the many differences they perceived among peoples and places throughout the world. Published posthumously in 1630, a text attributed to the bishop Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626) exemplified the ways in which this process took on spatial connotations that helped Protestants to comprehend the plurality of the global in sacred historical terms. Discussing different approaches to understanding God, the work argued that there were "4 waies: (1. That the heathen which continue in America & in the East Isles and a great part of Tartary, 2. That the Turke, 3. That the Iewes, 4. That the Christians) walk in …"[8] Of course, Andrewes emphasized that "there is but on[e] true, and all the rest false," before investigating the errors of each non-Christian category. However, the text also noted the need "[to] apprehend the truth, and not [to] hang our Religion on our countrey, where wee were brough[t] up."[9] For Protestants, acknowledging a diversity of religious perspectives in different parts of the world could be a means to assert the supreme divine truth of Christianity and contemplate its trajectories.

These ideas were developed in a later edition of the same work published in 1650. In this version, Andrewes developed and reorganized his observations into a "Quadrivium, or way that hath four turnings," in which he discerned "four principal religions of the world" that had "sought God."[10] The work rendered these four ways of seeking God as follows:

1. That of the Heathen in America, and in the East Indies and […], and in a great part of Tartary, who worship the Creatures, &c. and this is called Paganisme.

2. That of the Jews scattered through the world, and this is called Judaisme.

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7   William Perkins, *A commentarie or exposition, vpon the fiue first chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Cambridge, 1604, STC 19680), 35.

8   Lancelot Andrewes, *A patterne of catechisticall doctrine wherein many profitable questions touching Christian religion are handled, and the whole Decalogue succinctly and judiciously expounded* (London, 1630, STC 603.3), 66.

9   Ibid.

10   Lancelot Andrewes, *The pattern of catechistical doctrine at large, or, A learned and pious exposition of the Ten Commandments* (London, 1650, STC Wing A3147), 34.

3.   That of Turks and Saracens in Asia, part of Africa, and Europe, and this
      we call Turcisme or Mahometanisme.
4.   That which Christians hold, which is called Christianity.[11]

This kaleidoscopic framework encouraged the reader to recognize and con-
front religious difference. It indicates determined efforts among Protestants to
construct global scales of Christian and non-Christian identity that steered the
development of their own doctrinal positions, ecclesiastical policies, spiritual
communities, and devotional practices.

Turning from the written word to visual culture further illuminates the
global context in which religious ideas were increasingly embedded, as well as
the role that Protestants themselves had played in shaping the worlds around
them. Attributed to the Dutch etcher Gillis van Scheyndel (fl. 1622–54; d. before
1679), the illustration adorning the frontispiece for a publication dated 1625
resonates with the quadratic structure of Andrewes's observations and, like
Calvin, laid out a Protestant vision of universal evangelism that encompassed
expansive and distinct, yet intersecting worlds (Figure 1).[12] It depicts pastors
on four continents – Europe, Asia, Africa, and America – "preaching the gospel
throughout the world," while also alluding to the Protestant belief that this
process was predicated upon the conversion of the Jewish people.[13] This illus-
tration offers important evidence for the vitality and intricacy of Protestant
attitudes towards religious expansion throughout the world.

It also reveals something more fundamental about the ways in which
Protestants sought to gather and stabilize knowledge on a global scale. In
some respects, there is an effort in the etching to compartmentalize and to
establish a standard, formalized rendering of unifying Protestant interaction
with the wider world that is equally applicable to each continent. For instance,
each of the four circular scenes appears to reproduce particular aspects of
the composition or staging of evangelism. The position of the pastor is in the
top-right quarter of each spherical scene (except in America, where the pastor
is situated on the left, near-symmetrically opposite to the pastor in Africa, who
sits towards the right in that scene). Meanwhile, gathered crowds of potential
converts encircle the pastors, occupying the foreground and extending out to fill

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11   Ibid.
12   I am grateful to Ulinka Rublack for suggesting this image. For Scheyndel, see Christiaan
      Schuckman, "Scheyndel, Aegidius [Gillis] van," *Grove Art Online* (2003). Accessed 16 June
      2020: [https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T076508].
13   Robert M. Healey, "The Jew in Seventeenth-Century Protestant Thought," *Church History*
      46 (1977): 63–79, 74–76; N.I. Matar, "The Idea of the Restoration of the Jews in English
      Protestant Thought, 1661–1701," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985): 115–148; Elisheva
      Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500–1750* (New Haven, 2001).

FIGURE 1   Gillis van Scheyndel, *Predikanten in vier werelddelen* (Haarlem, 1625), in Johann
             Peil, *Tabula processum seu ordinem ultimi divini et criminalis judicii exhibens*
             (Kleve, 1625), 8. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

the bottom half of each scene. At the same time, the etching is replete with
difference, disruption, and the overlapping of boundaries. The environments
in which the preaching takes place are very different. In Europe, the pillars of
civilization shelter the attentive crowd, but elsewhere propagating the Gospel
takes place outside, in the wildernesses of Asia, Africa, and America, under
the shadows of mountains and before species of trees and patches of heath.
The near-concentric globular borders dividing each continent subtly imply an

awareness that these seemingly separate worlds could intersect, harmonize, or even clash with one another both conceptually and physically.

Renewed efforts to consider these global dimensions of Protestantism are emerging at the intersection of several important historiographical developments, including efforts to move beyond the traditional European focus of scholarship on the Reformation, recent innovations in research on global Catholicism, a new emphasis on Protestant empire and evangelism, and the need to develop a more connected, global perspective on the trans-Atlantic trajectories of Puritanism. The articles that follow emerge in part from a shared scholarly recognition that the history of Protestantism has developed in predominantly European and national contexts. Perhaps the most resonant historiographical basis for this is the confessionalization thesis. According to this view, the emergence of distinct confessions along Lutheran, Catholic, and Reformed lines in the wake of the Reformation not only reflected, but also strengthened the relationship between religious identity and political authority, thereby reinforcing the process of state formation and hastening the advent of modernity. Viewed through this interpretative lens, confessional identities can appear more internally coherent, and the political and religious boundaries that separate them appear stronger and more stable, than they were in reality. As an interpretation of Western political boundaries and religious identities, the confessionalization thesis offers a Eurocentric view of the Protestant Reformations.[14]

Bringing social, cultural, and intellectual history to bear on the political dynamics of confessional identity, recent scholarship has argued that these characterizations obscure the significance of confessional co-existence, multi-confessional communities, and cross-confessional interaction. Contesting the founding assumptions of confessionalization, its privileging of national boundaries and its anticipation of modernity, these studies have unsettled the artificial imposition of supposedly stable confessional identities and clearly defined political borders. They have also observed that the confessionalization framework can be inattentive to marginalized and minority religious groups.[15] Emphasizing global contexts allows historians to locate Protestantism more firmly in spaces where pre-existing European frameworks were less obviously

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14   For an incisive account of confessionalization and its European limits, as well as subsequent historiographical reassessments, see Ulinka Rublack, "Introduction," in *Protestant Empires: Globalizing the Reformations*, ed. Ulinka Rublack (Cambridge, 2020), 1–29, esp. 1–4. See also Susan R. Boettcher, "Confessionalization: Reformation, Religion, Absolutism, and Modernity," *History Compass* 2 (2004): 1–10, 1–2.

15   Boettcher, "Confessionalization," 3–4.

present and less stable. What forms of Protestantism emerged in distinctive non-European settings? Did the absence of European political structures reshape or reinforce the religious identity of Protestants? To what extent did global forms of knowledge and experience (or the lack thereof) alter the intellectual, cultural, political, and societal trajectories of Protestantism?

The traditional historiographical focus on the European context of the Reformation has already galvanized a lively scholarly reorientation towards the global dimensions of Catholicism. The efforts of missionaries, especially the Jesuits, to convert non-Christian peoples and expand the boundaries of Catholic religion in the Americas and Asia has generated a vast scholarly literature, but historians are also eager to integrate these developments into a deeper examination of the many ways in which intersecting worlds within and beyond Europe, no less than the Reformation itself, fundamentally and fatefully shaped the development of Catholic institutions, identities, and ideas.[16] Reflecting the foundational importance of salvation, as well as the emergence of a robust and far-reaching approach to conversion drawing on newfound mobility, merchant power, and state support, the proliferation of Catholic missionary activity signaled the necessarily intertwined global and theological dimensions of early modern Catholicism.[17] A corollary of this research has been an emphasis on contrasting the far-reaching "success" of Catholic mission with the narrow scope and limited progress of Protestant evangelism, as well as the limited role of Protestantism as a catalyst of imperial expansion, before the nineteenth century.[18]

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16   See Karin Vélez, *The Miraculous Flying House of Loreto: Spreading Catholicism in the Early Modern World* (Princeton, NJ, 2018); John T. McGreevy, *American Jesuits and the World: How an Embattled Religious Order Made Modern Catholicism Global* (Princeton, 2018); Simon Ditchfield, "What's in a Title? Writing a History of the Counter-Reformation for a Postcolonial Age," *Archiv für reformationsgeschichte* (2017): 255–263. Simon Ditchfield, "De-centering the Catholic Reformation: Papacy and Peoples in the Early Modern World," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 101 (2010): 186–208; Karen Melvin, "The Globalization of Reform," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, eds. Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen, and Mary Laven (Farnham, 2013), 435–450; Simon Ditchfield, *Papacy and People: The Making of Roman Catholicism as a World Religion, 1500–1700* (Oxford, forthcoming). For global perspectives on discrete aspects of Catholicism other than missions, see Francisco Bethencourt, *The Inquisition: A Global History, 1478–1834*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 2009).

17   Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge, 2008), 248–257; Luke Clossey, "Merchants, Migrants, Missionaries, and Globalization in the Early-Modern Pacific," *Journal of Global History* 1 (2006): 41–58.

18   Illuminating discussion of early modern Protestant evangelism can be found in Alec Ryrie, "The Missionary Problem in Early Modern Protestantism: British, Irish and Scandinavian Perspectives," in *Northern European Reformations: Transnational Perspectives,*

Where historians of Protestantism have ventured beyond European shores, they have often followed in the wake of the ships that carried godly migrants from England to Plymouth and Massachusetts in the 1620s and 1630s.[19] While a rich literature on the trans-Atlantic history of puritanism continues to demonstrate the value of tracing the trajectories of Protestantism beyond the boundaries of Europe, it too was originally born of a determination to trace the formation of a modern state, in this case the United States of America, as well as the crystallization of its religious identities and boundaries. Conscious of these origins, historians have undertaken important studies of continuity and change in the colonial religious cultures of North America, seeking to interpret contemporary beliefs and practices on their terms.[20] Mirroring developments

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eds. James E. Kelly, Henning Laugerud, and Salvador Ryan (London, 2020), 377–403; Alec Ryrie, "Mission and Empire: An Ethical Puzzle in Early Modern Protestantism," in *Sister Reformations II, Schwesterreformationen II: Reformation and Ethics in Germany and in England, Reformation und Ethik in Deutschland und in England*, eds. Dorothea Wendebourg and Alec Ryrie (Tübingen, 2014), 181–206. For resistance to the notion of a "Protestant ideology of empire," see David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), ch. 3, quote at 63. Cf., Louis B. Wright, *Religion and Empire: The Alliance between Piety and Commerce in English Expansion, 1558–1626* (Chapel Hill, 1942), esp. 5–6, chapters 4, 5. There is an extensive literature on modern Protestant mission. Overviews include Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire* (Oxford, 2008); Andrew N. Porter (ed.), *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880–1914* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2003). For historiographical and methodological approaches to the modern period, see David Maxwell, "The Missionary Movement in African and World History: Mission Sources and Religious Encounter," *Historical Journal* 58 (2015): 901–930; Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41 (2002): 301–325.

19 Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA, 1956); Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620–1675*, 3rd ed. (London, 1995, first published 1965); Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier 1629–1700* (New York, 1969); David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987); Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill, 1988); Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570–1700* (Chapel Hill, 1991); Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1991); Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge, 1992); Francis J. Bremer, ed., *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith* (Boston, 1993); Michael P. Winship, *Godly Republicanism: Puritans, Pilgrims, and a City on a Hill* (Cambridge, 2012).

20 For example, David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, 1990), originally published 1989; Edward L. Bond, *Damned Souls in a Tobacco Colony: Religion in Seventeenth-century Virginia* (Macon, GA,

in scholarship on the Reformation in Europe, others have challenged the sense of homogeneity and binary opposition that has often accompanied traditional studies of trans-Atlantic puritanism by emphasizing internal doctrinal diversity and division, as well as cross-confessional and inter-colonial interaction.[21] Meanwhile, several historians in the field of Atlantic history have called for a refocusing of the lens so that the global scope of the connections between Britain, Europe, the Americas, Asia, and western Africa can be more deeply and fully comprehended.[22] This underlines the need to widen the field of view so that a more diversified, multi-directional, and integrated account of Protestantism in its global habitat can emerge.

Over the last decade, scholars have increasingly reassessed Protestantism through a global lens, fruitfully illuminating the circulation of theological ideas, the development of spiritual networks, and the intersection of religious beliefs and practices with coloniality and empire.[23] These studies have uncovered multifarious ways in which Protestants engaged with the world around them, revealing the entanglement of evangelism with enslavement, the spiritual significance of migration, materiality, and media, and the enduring resonance of the Long Reformation in new locales. Recent research on the intellectual and political history of Protestantism in European and non-European contexts has

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2000); James Van Horn Melton, *Religion, Community, and Slavery on the Colonial Southern Frontier* (Cambridge, 2011).

21   Crawford Gribben and Scott Spurlock, eds., *Puritans and Catholics in the Trans-Atlantic World 1600–1800* (Basingstoke, 2016); April Lee Hatfield, ed., *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, 2004).

22   See Alison Games, "Beyond the Atlantic: English Globetrotters and Transoceanic Connections," *William and Mary Quarterly* 63 (2006): 675–692 and other contributions to the Forum on "Beyond the Atlantic" in the same volume.

23   Ulinka Rublack, ed., *Protestant Empires: Globalizing the Reformations* (Cambridge, 2020); Nicholas Terpstra, ed., *Global Reformations: Transforming Early Modern Religions, Societies, and Cultures* (London, 2019); Brad Gregory, Ute Lotz-Heumann, and Randall Zachman, "The Global Impact of the Reformations: Long-term Influences and Contemporary Ramifications," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 108 (2017): 7–11; Philip Benedict, "Global? Has Reformation History Even Gotten Transnational Yet?," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 108 (2017): 52–62; Charles H. Parker, "Languages of Salvation: Translating Christianity in the Global Reformation," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 108 (2017): 202–211; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "Representations of the Global Impact of the Reformations: How the 'Reformation' Invented Separate Catholic and Protestant Atlantics," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 108 (2017), 245–254; Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Comparisons and Consequences in Global Perspective, 1500–1750," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations*, ed. Ulinka Rublack (Oxford, 2016), 747–764; Charles H. Parker, "The Reformation in Global Perspective," *History Compass* 12 (2014): 924–934; Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2009).

further demonstrated that Protestants were keenly alert to the global implications of their theological precepts and ambitious in their efforts to propagate the Gospel, fostering close connections between imperial and religious expansion through colonization and evangelism.[24] This scholarship suggests that the imperial and evangelical dimensions of Protestantism represent components in a much more complex global confluence of theology, culture, and politics that historians continue to explore.

This Special Issue calls further attention to the increasingly globalized nature of Protestant identities and experiences during the early modern period. As well as illuminating underappreciated geographical and chronological frameworks, the articles widen the scope of enquiry by deploying fresh conceptual frameworks and approaches to analysis. Joel Harrington examines the ways in which German Protestants constructed and responded to captivity narratives, focusing on themes of providence, martyrdom, and conversion in the printed account of Hans Staden's experiences among the Indigenous peoples of Brazil. Interpreting the experiences of Mennonites through the lens of past, present, and future, Katherine Hill's article traces the negotiation of spatial experience, memory, and identity among diasporic communities as they moved from the Netherlands to Polish Prussia, Russia, and Ukraine. Investigating Protestant attitudes towards different categories of heterodoxy in early colonial Virginia, my contribution reveals efforts to reassert religious hegemony and political order at an unstable and precarious, yet sacred frontier of expansion. Examining the religious and political divisions that festered in the wake of the English Civil Wars and the Restoration, Gabriel Glickman argues that efforts to convert non-European peoples were contingent upon entangled, often conflicting ideas about empire and Christian cohesion. Reconstructing the social and familial dynamics of the Quaker household in Britain and Philadelphia, Naomi Pullin's article shows that the biological and spiritual identity of motherhood enabled women to publicly assert authority in their religious community. Focusing on the relationship between providence and conversion, Charles H. Parker explores ideas about religious identity, salvation, and the

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24   For examples of this scholarship, see Charles H. Parker, *Global Calvinism: Conversion and Commerce in the Dutch Empire, 1600–1800* (New Haven, 2022); Simone Maghenzani and Stefano Villani, eds., *British Protestant Missions and the Conversion of Europe, 1600–1900* (London, 2021); Catherine Ballériaux, *Missionary Strategies in the New World, 1610–1690: An Intellectual History* (London, 2016); Gabriel Glickman, "Protestantism, Colonization, and the New England Company in Restoration Politics," *Historical Journal*, 59 (2016): 365–391; Polly Ha, "Godly Globalisation: Calvinism in Bermuda," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 66 (2015): 543–561.

spatial environment that informed Dutch Reformed efforts to facilitate the conversion of non-Christians in Asia.

In drawing together diverse perspectives in intellectual, cultural, and social history, this Special Issue intervenes in an ongoing reconfiguration of prevailing scholarly narratives that have often privileged a history of Protestantism confined to Europe and North America. The articles in this Special Issue shed new light on the global dimensions and trajectories of the Protestant Reformation from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century. Drawing upon a range of historiographical debates and methodological approaches, they uncover the variety of identities and perspectives that made up post-Reformation religious cultures. They demonstrate the ways in which multiple forms of Protestantism shaped and responded to global patterns of knowledge and practice, movement and migration, colonization and empire, commercial ventures, and cultural encounters. They examine the role of Protestant beliefs and practices in expressing and recalibrating attitudes towards race, gender, and sexuality, as well as shifting cultural perceptions of the world and its history. Considering the fruits of recent historiographical emphases on the global aspects of Protestantism in the early modern world, this Special Issue broadly asks: How did Protestants interpret, experience, and move through different parts of the world against the backdrop of globalizing frameworks and processes, from patterns of migration, circulation, and exchange to colonialization, imperial geopolitics, and the all-encompassing, expansionist vision of Reformed theology itself?

Each article addresses this question differently. Whether focusing on individuals or communities, specific locales or multiple regions, linear journeys or multidirectional movement, they share the premise that Protestantism and the global were profoundly entangled in a variety of ways: Firstly, the theological precepts and frameworks that shaped Protestant belief and practice were themselves global in essence, experience, and expression, inviting believers to interpret spiritual phenomena through the lens of universal cosmological processes imbued with sacred historical significance and apocalyptic urgency. Secondly, the divergent geographical trajectories of Protestants testify to the increasingly globalized reach, outlook, and potential of Protestantism during the early modern period. Thirdly, just as Protestants increasingly played a role in global processes, so too did global processes increasingly impinge on the cultural development of Protestantism. From the European metropole to the furthest reaches of imperial territory, the political, economic, legal, military, and environmental dimensions of colonization dramatically and continually altered Protestantism in all its forms, profoundly shaping the experiences and

attitudes of individual believers as well as helping to determine the fates of religious communities everywhere.

These factors combined to ensure that Protestantism was itself global, shaped the global, and responded to the global. Throughout Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa, the Protestant process of acquiring and interrogating unstable knowledge would depend not only on the exploits of seafarers, but also on the experiences and reports of colonial settlers and soldiers, pilgrims and exiles, missionaries and evangelists, diplomats, merchants, printers, poets, and playwrights. Individuals, friends, families, and communities moved, either willingly or reluctantly, through a changing world. Some ventured forth with deliberate purpose while others suffered forcible displacement. In some cases, the world seemed to move around people as old borders shifted or disintegrated and new ones were established in their place. From the sixteenth century onwards, Protestantism interpreted and intervened in this global context. As a contribution to the emerging history of globalizing Protestantisms, this Special Issue provides an opportunity to uncover new aspects of early modern religious culture. It envisages global histories of Protestantism that resist insularity and fixity. When Martin Luther wondered that "seafarers" might rename and thus reframe the world and its inhabitants, he anticipated the multifarious ways in which Protestantism itself would shape and adapt to historical change on a global scale.

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