

## Introduction

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The title of this book – ‘Brethren in Christ’ – is taken from the addresses used in many, if not most, of the letters exchanged during the first half of the seventeenth century between Calvinists who were active in congregations across Europe as elders and ministers, and their, more often than not, unknown colleagues within the sister communities they contacted. The term testifies to the strong sense of identity and belonging of these early modern Calvinists. They had no doubt that they belonged to an easily identifiable group of brethren, signified solely by their faith, and independent of their nationality and culture. They saw themselves as belonging to a group of people whom God had elected as His chosen people – the new Covenanters. As such their obligation was first and foremost to other godly Calvinists, irrespective of their nationality and abode. They were convinced that any other allegiances had to be subordinated to this, their primary duty.

This book is concerned with two closely related issues. Firstly, how an international, Calvinist identity was constructed, and how a network of wealthy merchants assisted by ministers – the ‘Brethren in Christ’ – came into existence, as a consequence of the shared experience of persecution and multiple emigrations in the late sixteenth century. This network of godly merchants and ministers, who served their communities as elders and pastors, played a prominent part in shaping Calvinist identity from the second half of the sixteenth century until the end of the Thirty Years War – the period with which this book is concerned. Together these merchants and ministers exercised extensive religious, social and moral control over the congregations they served, while maintaining contacts with other Calvinists across Europe.

Secondly, the book explores how this network was mobilised and responded to the crisis which engulfed Calvinism in Germany in general and the Palatinate in particular during the Thirty Years War. Among the Reformed communities across Europe events in Germany came to be seen in an apocalyptic light, as historically linked to their shared history of persecution and flight and as an omen for

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what might lie in store for all the Reformed Brethren. It traces how a vast charitable relief operation was set up across Europe among the Reformed churches in Switzerland, the Dutch Republic, France, England, Scotland and Ireland and how it was sustained for more than thirty years. It emphasises the role and significance of groups of religiously committed merchant-elders with extended family and business connections across Europe, established as a consequence of the Reformed diaspora rooted in repeated emigrations, for the conception and success of this large-scale, charitable undertaking for fellow Calvinists.

This international Calvinist network, including the theology which underpinned it, could not, in my opinion, have emerged without the prolonged experience of persecution and subsequent exile which came to characterise early modern Calvinism. It can be argued that John Calvin's flight from France in 1536 to Basle in Switzerland and subsequent move to Geneva became emblematic for the large-scale, Reformed diaspora which followed later in the century. What began as a relatively small-scale emigration, primarily of Protestant ministers, eventually turned into mass religious emigration in the second half of the sixteenth century of lay believers, consisting chiefly of wealthy merchants and highly skilled craftsmen. However, this later mass migration differed from the earlier, small-scale emigration which had been broadly evangelical or Protestant in character, by being predominantly Reformed or Calvinist.

The early emigration had been a consequence of the growing confessionalisation of European states and societies, such as the Habsburg Netherlands ruled by Charles V and France in the reign of Francis I. The city states of Switzerland, especially Basle and Geneva, and Strasbourg in Germany, had provided asylum for these refugees. Among the famous Reformed ministers who, like Calvin, left France in the 1530s and 1540s and sought refuge in Geneva were Pierre Viret, Nicholas des Gallars and Theodore Beza, while Reformed Italians, such as Bernardino Ochino and Peter Martyr, fled to Strasbourg via Basle in the 1540s. A couple of years later Ochino and Martyr arrived in England on the invitation of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. In 1549 they were joined by their former Strasbourg hosts, Martin Bucer and Paul Fagius, who had decided to leave the city in the wake of its acceptance of the Augsburg Interim. Their arrival in England at the beginning of the reign of Edward VI was complemented by the return from exodus on the continent by a number of English Protestant theologians such as John Hooper, who had spent years in exile in Bullinger's Zurich. Briefly, during the short reign of Edward VI, England offered a safe

haven for Reformed refugees on a par with Geneva and the Swiss cities of Zurich and Basle.

This sanctuary proved short-lived and ended with the succession of Edward's sister Mary and the reintroduction of Catholicism into England. Apart from forcing the Reformed exiles to leave the country Mary's accession forced a number of leading English Protestant theologians to go into exile on the continent. It can be argued that without the Marian exile, which saw leading English Protestants such as Christopher Goodman, William Whittingham and Anthony Gilby seek shelter in Geneva, John Jewel in Zurich, John Foxe in Basle and Edmund Grindal in Strasbourg, English Protestantism may not have become such an integral part of European Calvinism. As it turned out, through their exile these English refugees became stakeholders in the Reformed diaspora. On their return to England on the accession of Elizabeth I, they played a prominent part in guaranteeing that the Elizabethan Church and government extended its hospitality to foreign Reformed immigrants throughout the sixteenth century, and allowed the establishment of foreign, Reformed churches in England.

However, Reformed emigration remained modest for nearly a generation after 1540 and was in most cases limited to members of the clergy, though some exceptions can be found, such as the foreign Reformed churches in London, most of whose members fled to the continent on Mary's accession, and the many French refugees who arrived in Geneva.

The mass exodus which followed this first stage of the diaspora began in the late 1560s and continued over the next thirty years. It was predominantly Calvinist in character. Initially, it consisted of a small but important number of refugees from the Netherlands and northern Italy, in particular from the city of Lucca, where Peter Martyr had been active in the years before his flight to Strasbourg. It was followed by a considerably larger number of exiles from France following the outbreak of the Wars of Religion in 1562 until it reached its climax when huge numbers of Reformed refugees fled the southern Netherlands, first as a result of the Duke of Alva's repression of the Dutch Revolt, then after the failure of the Calvinist takeover in the 1580s and the subsequent Spanish reconquest of the southern Netherlands.

From the outset this mass emigration was dominated by wealthy Reformed merchants and highly skilled craftsmen, who had been forced to leave their homes by the aggressive Counter-Reformation policies pursued by the governments in these areas, even if it should be borne in mind that economic considerations, especially among the merchant-elite, played a significant part in the timing and destination of this emigration.

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It has been estimated that the Spanish reconquest and re-Catholicisation of the southern Netherlands under the Duke of Alva and Alexander Farnese caused more than 200,000 people to flee areas such as Flanders, Liège, Tournai and Valenciennes between the repression of the Dutch Revolt in 1567 and the fall of Antwerp in 1585. Add to that the Huguenots or French Calvinists who fled France during the Wars of Religion after 1562, especially in the wake of the St Bartholomew Day Massacre in 1572, and the total number of Calvinist exiles joining the mass exodus could easily have been more than a quarter of a million people.

In the first instance the exiles settled primarily in Germany where they sought refuge in most of the important trading centres such as Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Cologne, Hamburg, including nearby Stade, and to a lesser extent in Aachen, Wesel and Frankenthal, and in England where they demonstrated a clear preference for London and other towns and cities in the south-east, such as Colchester and Norwich. Considerable numbers, especially craftsmen, who were less mobile because of their tools and workshops, only moved to the northern Netherlands, the so-called United Provinces where the cities of Holland and Zeeland, such as Leiden, Haarlem and Middelburg became their preferred destination. Many of the exiles, however, took time to find their final destination. In some cases the hope of being able to return home when conditions improved may have prevented them from settling down permanently; in other cases the exiles moved on, because their chosen destination turned out to be a disappointment in either religious or commercial terms. As a result the Reformed diaspora often consisted of a series of emigrations rather than a simple migration from one place to another. It often turned out to be a complex affair, continuing for more than a generation, in many cases not coming to an end until the first decades of the seventeenth century. The difficulties of making an informed decision of where to seek refuge in the first instance and whether to settle down permanently in their chosen place of exile undoubtedly proved thorny for many exiles, but exactly those aspects served to enhance the international character of early modern Calvinism, while helping to shape and spread the network of the godly for the future.

The motives and character of this emigration, whether it was mainly driven by economic imperatives or religious concerns, has been widely debated by a generation of Dutch and Belgian historians in particular.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See especially the works by J. A. van Houtte and H. van der Wee. For a summary of this debate, and further discussion of the issues, see H. Schilling, 'Innovation through Migration: The Settlements of Calvinistic Netherlanders in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Central and Western Europe', *Social History*, 16: 31 (1983),

Undoubtedly economic considerations played a part in the decision on when and where to emigrate, but such concerns did not exclude religious motives. There is, after all, nothing contrary to good Calvinism in making sound economic choices of when and where to emigrate. As long as one did not compromise one's faith, a sound choice of time and place, making the best use of the resources God had put at the disposal of Man, could, in fact, be seen as an obligation for the godly. Thus, the claim by many economic historians, that the significance of economic motives grew when the exodus of wealthy Reformed merchants and bankers accelerated in the mid 1580s, does not necessarily raise questions about this group's religious commitment. The striking fact about this merchant elite remains its wholehearted commitment to the Calvinist cause. Despite their many financial and entrepreneurial activities, these merchants still found the time to take on the time-consuming roles of deacons and elders, serving for years on end the exiled Reformed churches which the refugee communities established in nearly all the places where they settled. As such they regularly attended the weekly consistory meetings, maintained church discipline, raised money for their congregations, corresponded with sister communities and undertook often delicate negotiations with the local and central authorities of their host countries.<sup>2</sup>

Even if questions may be raised about the initial religious commitment of some of the wealthier emigrants, the effect of having joined the Reformed diaspora must have reinforced their sense of religious identity. In other words, the social experience of emigration and displacement cannot but have served to reinforce the Reformed faith of those who undertook it, even if their religious commitment at the outset had been less apparent. The Bible, of course, served to reinforce this commitment, especially the Old Testament. When reading that, the refugees could construe their personal experience as a direct consequence of God's providence and view themselves as included in the New Covenant. As these refugees settled in most of the major urban centres of north-western Europe they came to form an international Reformed network, perhaps less through their Calvinism, which often differed on the finer points of doctrine, than through their shared conviction of being God's chosen people.

7–33; see also H. Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten im 16. Jahrhundert*, Gütersloh, 1972 and J. I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585–1740*, Oxford, 1989, 35–7.

<sup>2</sup> See for example O. P. Grell, *Dutch Calvinists in Early Stuart London*, Leiden, 1989, 16–26 and 149–75.

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This conviction had been reinforced through their experience of displacement and minority existence within foreign, and in many cases not always compassionate, host populations. This social experience of persecution and exile, reinforced by Calvinist theology, undoubtedly proved the most significant characteristic of the international Calvinist network. The network was further enhanced by the tendency of the Reformed exiles to intermarry and to form close and repeated partnerships in both trade and finance.

Calvin himself, of course, read the Bible as a refugee drawing on his personal experiences of persecution and exile. He addressed his readers as fellow-emigrants who were on a dangerous journey towards the eternal city and salvation. Furthermore he considered his own time to be deeply troubled and afflicted because the true religion, i.e. the Reformed faith, had become the sole concern of only a few, a chosen few, who persevered despite persecution and exile.<sup>3</sup>

These international networks were buttressed by the foundation of a number of Reformed universities and academies in the second half of the sixteenth century, starting with the Academy of Geneva in 1559. For the Reformed ministers, in particular, this development acquired special significance and served to link them into the international Reformed network. In this respect Calvin's Academy in Geneva, which was created in order to provide a centre for the education of Reformed ministers, proved a resounding success from the outset in 1560, attracting more than 300 students from across Europe.<sup>4</sup> By the 1570s the Genevan Academy was gradually losing its leading position in the education of Calvinist ministers with students for the ministry showing a preference for the University of Heidelberg and a number of newly founded academies, such as Ghent (1578–83) and Herborn (1584). They were later supplemented by the new universities in the United Provinces, of which Leiden (1575) became the most famous, and at the turn of the century by the French Reformed academies of Sedan and Saumur. By then the *peregrinatio academica*, visiting the most famous Reformed seats of learning, was gradually becoming the norm among the more privileged Reformed students of theology. It is noteworthy that all these academies and universities continued the Genevan tradition of attracting large numbers of students from abroad, adding another international aspect to early modern Calvinism, through the

<sup>3</sup> Heiko A. Oberman, 'Europa Afflicta: The Reformation of the Refugees', in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 83 (1992), 102–7.

<sup>4</sup> G. Lewis, 'Calvinism in Geneva in the Time of Calvin and Beza, 1541–1608', in M. Prestwich (ed.), *International Calvinism 1541–1715*, Oxford, 1985, 39–69.

many contacts and friendships which developed between students who later returned to their communities to become ministers, and between them and their university teachers.

The story told here is centred primarily on three generations of four wealthy merchant families, the Calandrinis, Burlamachis, Diodatis and Turretinis, who fled their home city of Lucca in Tuscany in the 1560s because of their Reformed faith. They offer a particularly pertinent case study of how the Calvinist network arose, grew and got reinforced through repeated and extensive emigration over fifty to sixty years. They provide well-evidenced examples of how repeated persecution, exodus and flight stretching over two to three generations shaped and reinforced a strong sense of Calvinist identity, helping to rationalise religious issues such as predestination, election and providence for those living in exile. Simultaneously, the examples of these exiled families from Lucca provide insight into how repeated waves of Calvinist emigration from Italy, France and the Netherlands became interconnected not only through their shared experiences and faith, but also through intermarriage and close financial and commercial cooperation and, perhaps even more importantly, their shared experiences of serving their local Reformed refugee communities as elders and ministers.

Not surprisingly, early modern Calvinism became preoccupied with providential history; it was, after all, a way of making sense of the often traumatic experience of persecution, exodus and diaspora. Calvin himself had emphasised how God was particularly concerned for those Christians who suffered persecution and exile. Like Zwingli, he had no doubt that those persecuted for their faith would find assurance of their salvation in Scripture and comprehend that biblical history was, in fact, their history.<sup>5</sup> A similar view was provided by the three major martyrologies of Reformed Protestantism written by Jean Crespin, Adriaan van Haemstede and John Foxe, who all offered afflicted Calvinists pertinent examples from history which might serve to sustain the godly during persecution. Not only were they the first Reformed works to promote providentialism to a wide audience, but these works all grew out of their authors' personal experiences of persecution, flight and exile.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> B. Gordon, 'The Changing Face of Protestant History and Identity in the Sixteenth Century' in B. Gordon (ed.), *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, vol. II., *The Later Reformation*, Aldershot, 1996, 1–22, especially 21.

<sup>6</sup> See O. P. Grell, 'Merchants and ministers: the foundations of international Calvinism', in A. Pettegree et al. (eds.), *Calvinism in Europe 1540–1620*, Cambridge, 1994, 254–73, especially 267. For Crespin and Haemstede, see D. Watson, 'Jean Crespin and the Writing of History in the French Reformation' and A. Pettegree, 'Adriaan van Haemstede: the Heretic as Historian' in B. Gordon (ed.), *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, vol. II, 39–58 and 59–76.

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The Calandrini, Burlamachi, Diodati and Turretini shared the experiences and values of Crespin, Haemstede and Foxe and took a considerable interest in providential history. Several family members wrote detailed histories of their flight from Lucca and subsequent tribulations in exile, in particular in France during the Wars of Religion, not to mention their time in the Netherlands and Germany. These family histories were conceived as providential histories, mapping out God's plan for his elect, while recording not only events, positive and negative, but also in many cases the religious awakening of family members. They were copied, translated and distributed among the wider family groups, who eventually settled in Switzerland, Germany, the United Provinces and England, where they were read and retold, reinforcing both family and religious connections. The aim of these family histories, as well as most Reformed works of history from this period, was, of course, to work out and understand God's will and plan for his elect people. Next to the study of the Bible, the study of time and history, including one's own family history, was of paramount importance to these Calvinists.<sup>7</sup>

The minister, Cesar Calandrini, son of Giovanni and brother-in-law of the prominent London financier Philip Burlamachi, spent the years between 1620–6 in London, assisting Archbishop James Ussher in the latter's great historical scheme, the *Bibliotheca Theologica*, an elaborate attempt to write a providential history of the 'True Church', i.e. the Reformed, based on the best available sources. When he was appointed minister to the Dutch Reformed Church in London in 1639, Cesar Calandrini continued the work on the providential history of the London Dutch community – the *Gheschiedenissen* – originally begun by his predecessor Simon Ruytinck, who had served the church until his death in 1621, which had lain dormant since Ruytinck's death.<sup>8</sup>

In order to fully understand why so many members of these prominent patrician families left Lucca, the book takes its departure in the 1540s, when Protestant ideas first began to be disseminated in Lucca, identifying the significance of the combined effects of the Italian Counter-Reformation and the experience of Reformed preaching in Lyon where members of these families spent time working in the merchant-banking

<sup>7</sup> See in particular S. Adorni-Braccesi (ed.), *Libro di Ricordi degnissimi delle nostre Famiglie*, Rome, 1993, passim, for the family histories written in Italian and preserved in Geneva; three copies of the memoirs of Pompeo Diodati in English, in Kent County Archives, Papillon of Acrise Place MSS U1015, F8; one copy in French of Pompeo Diodati's memoirs and one copy of Renée Burlamachi's memoirs in Trinity College, Dublin, see T. K. Abbott (ed.), *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin*, London, 1900, no. 1152, VIII.

<sup>8</sup> Grell, 'Merchants and ministers', 266–8.

houses belonging to their families. While Counter-Reformation initiatives brought increasing pressure to bear on the magistracy in Lucca, making life increasingly difficult for Protestants within the city, the inspiration received while in Lyon from the Reformed community there eventually caused them to leave for France, briefly settling in Lyon. Primarily for mercantile and financial reasons the exiles quickly acquired the castle and estate of Luzarches close to Paris where most of them settled while the rest moved to Paris. Owing to the Wars of Religion and the St Bartholomew Day Massacre, their residence in and around Paris proved temporary and troublesome, and eventually they ended up in internal exile first in Sedan; later, some moved to Muret, while others finally made their way to Geneva – ‘the new Jerusalem’ – which had been the destination some of them had aspired to all along.

Thus France proved anything but a safe haven for the Reformed exiles from Lucca. While the older generation either belatedly headed for Geneva or struggled on in Sedan and Muret until their death, their offspring headed for the larger commercial cities of Germany and the Netherlands which offered greater tolerance of the Reformed faith. This renewed exodus differed from the first by being far more diverse. No longer did the families travel together in large groups, settling in the same place, often sharing the same properties. The second generation proved not only more mobile, but also less constrained by family considerations and began to marry outside the narrow confines of the refugee Lucchese families. Consequently the Reformed network grew exponentially.

Two of Guiliano Calandrini’s three sons, Giovanni and Cesare, who had initially stayed on in Lucca after their father, uncle and other immediate family had left for Lyon, in order to sort out the remaining financial affairs of the family, exemplify how this widening of the network worked. Together with their many children – they had no less than eleven and thirteen children respectively – Giovanni and Cesare Calandrini are exemplars of how the Reformed network expanded across north-western Europe from the 1570s. Like so many of their fellow co-religionist refugees from France and the southern Netherlands, they settled in major European cities such as Frankfurt, Stade, Antwerp, Nuremberg, Amsterdam and London, often living for a few years in some if not all of them before reaching their final destination. In the process of this chain of migrations they and their children managed to create new financial and commercial enterprises with other prominent Reformed, refugee merchants, while establishing new marital links with prominent Reformed, Dutch and Walloon refugee, merchant families. Even so they still found time to be fully engaged in the foreign Reformed

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churches where they settled, not only as members, but as deacons and elders, as can be seen from the example of Giovanni Calandrini who served the three Walloon Reformed churches of Antwerp, Stade and Amsterdam as an elder.

Without the existence of this Calvinist network, steeped in the shared experience of persecution and exile, reinforcing their Reformed faith, anchored in their considerable shared commercial and financial undertakings and further underpinned through inter-marriage, little or nothing of the large-scale relief operation for suffering co-religionists from the German Palatinate would have been possible in the early seventeenth century. The target for this considerable charitable endeavour among ‘Brethren in Christ’ was the refugee Reformed ministers, schoolmasters and their families from the Upper and Lower Palatinate who had been expelled from their land in the wake of the Elector Palatine’s defeat at the White Mountain outside Prague, which proved to be the start of the Thirty Years War. Among Reformed communities across Europe whose faith was rooted in the memory of Catholic persecution and subsequent exodus, the effects of the occupation by Habsburg forces on the Upper and Lower Palatinates, the introduction of Counter-Reformation measures and the subsequent dismissal and expulsion of the Reformed ministers, schoolmasters and their families from the two Palatinates, not only reminded them of their own history, but served as a warning of what might lie in store for them.

The collections for the Reformed refugees from the Palatinate which followed were undoubtedly the most extensive to be conducted among the Reformed communities of northern Europe in the early modern period, even if they were not the first of their kind. Geneva – the Calvinist Jerusalem – had first used the appeal for assistance from fellow Reformed communities to good effect, initially in 1583, when the city had been threatened by the army of Charles Emmanuel, the Duke of Savoy, and later in similar circumstances in 1590 and finally in 1603. Playing on Geneva’s symbolic and real importance to the Reformed communities across Europe as the great citadel of the godly, its civic leaders successfully raised large sums from Reformed communities from Scotland to Hungary. However, the Genevan appeals for support were of a different nature to the collections for the Reformed refugees from the Palatinate. The religious charitable elements in the Genevan collections were inseparable from political considerations. The money was after all for the defence of the city and not for assistance of suffering ‘Brethren in Christ’. Not surprisingly, the Genevan authorities directed their appeals for assistance to sympathetic rulers, as well as to