INTRODUCTION

Religion on the Margins is a colonial story set against an ostensibly anticolonial cast of characters. This book examines the complexities of early modern Moravians as a transatlantic, cosmopolitan community pursuing an eschatological global vision while having to negotiate diverse cultures and, most importantly, the institution of slavery. Moravian believers and missionaries wandered to the edges of the known world, not in search of political power, profits, or conquest but to seek tolerance, strengthen their relationships with God, and communicate the message of Christ's saving grace to those who had not heard it. Their status and reputation as ultraradical Pietist dissenters in Europe and the Americas inclined them toward a collective identity, not as agents of imperial expansion and colonization but as an oppressed and marginalized group who carried a religious message of hope to other persecuted peoples. "The very act of moving around" the Atlantic world, however, "changed people and their beliefs."[1] Pursuing these lofty and charitable goals in settlements and mission fields located on the colonial peripheries generated unintended consequences for themselves and the peoples—African, Indigenous, and European—they sought to convert to the faith. The labyrinthine machine of empire, as the believers in this history would learn, sometimes reluctantly and sometimes willingly, constrained their choices and forced them, in important ways, to become complicit in the European imperial project.

Historians have long recognized religion's distinctive power to shape the contours of the Atlantic world and processes of early modern colonization. The Americas became a "sacred space" where the long-awaited realization of apocalyptic hopes and millennial expectations would also serve the hegemonic purposes of European expansion.[2] This was true for Catholic mendicant orders in the sixteenth century—the Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans in colonial New Spain and then the Jesuits in French Canada—as much as for the many Protestant groups, including the Moravians, who began pursuing

missions to non-European peoples much later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Carla Pestana has identified three fundamental areas in which Protestantism supported the European imperial project in this period: the expansion and justification of authority and conquest, the transplantation and circulation of people, institutions, and ideas to new places, and the negotiation of encounters with diverse and unfamiliar peoples and cultures in various regions of the Atlantic littoral.[3] The pages that follow speak most directly to the latter of these three. Elevating the historical gaze to the level of the Atlantic world and the imperial forces that operated within and beyond it has done much to combat arbitrary Eurocentrism, nation-centered perspectives, and ethnic absolutism—historiographic issues that characterized the field of early American history for most of the twentieth century—in favor of transnational and intercultural approaches.[4] There is much to be gained from histories that provide regional and panoramic overviews of prominent figures, groups, and institutions in the contexts of clashing European empires and their seemingly unquenchable ambitions for power, territory, and resources. However, these sweeping histories tend to essentialize the people on the ground who performed the real work of creating the conditions necessary to make large-scale transformations possible. As a result, the agencies exerted by colonized and nonelite peoples have, until recently, been deemed unworthy of note. Their individual and collective contributions, for better or worse, collapse into a caricature of assumptive conformity, uniformity, and shared motivation. This study will demonstrate that the Moravian Atlantic world mission, though born in a conscious spirit of critique against cultures of religious intolerance and traditional power structures that supported the Protestant confessions and the European imperial project, succeeded, in the end, because of the ordinary believers and missionaries who became ensnared with, within, alongside, and sometimes even against these very power structures and institutions. The colonized, despite their beneficent intentions, became colonizers.

Stories the Moravians and their chroniclers have told about prominent figures resisting the designs of empire for the sake of God's kingdom have inspired popular religious mythologies that shaped Moravian self-perceptions and those of outsiders. Among the most famous is the story of Leonard Dober and David Nitschmann's first transatlantic mission to the Danish Caribbean island of St. Thomas. In the traditional story, Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf—the religious and political leader of the Moravian Church—attended the coronation of Christian VI in Denmark in 1731 to shore up his relationship with the Danish royal family and secure support for his plan to establish missions in the New World. He reported in his diary that he felt "a clear conviction that God has a secret purpose in this journey which will come to light in

His own time."[5] After arriving in Copenhagen, he met an enslaved African man named Anthony (Anton) Ulrich, who worked for Christian's master of the horse. Zinzendorf spoke at length with Ulrich and interpreted his stories about the willingness and longing of his family and other Africans on St. Thomas to hear the gospel as "a genuine message from God."[6] Zinzendorf arranged to have Ulrich visit the Moravian town of Herrnhut in the wake of these conversations, where his story inspired Nitschmann and Dober to become the first Moravian missionaries to the New World.[7]

Carrying only the "bundles on their backs" and looking "more like pedlars than preachers," Dober and Nitschmann departed for the West Indies in 1732. The stormy, two-month sea voyage over the Atlantic and the rambunctious behavior of the sailors onboard the ship made landfall in St. Thomas seem like a welcome homecoming. A successful first sermon delivered to some local Africans following their disembarkation apparently made "it clear that Christ had died for blacks as well as whites" and convinced Dober that the enslaved Africans had absorbed the Christian message even if they had not fully comprehended his words. In any case, the seeds of conversion had now been sown, and "the great work of the Moravian Missions had begun." In the months that followed, Dober and Nitschmann struggled to communicate in Dutch and Dutch Creole, the languages of daily life among the planters and enslaved Africans. They labored to convince the minority White European planters (Africans outnumbered Europeans on St. Thomas by about ten to one) on the island, who "regarded the slaves as a pack of dangerous animals," that exposing the enslaved to Christ's teachings outweighed "the danger that they would rise in rebellion" against them. Dober, who did most of the preaching, also struggled to convince potential African converts about the truth of Christ's saving grace and persistently "gave the Gospel a mixed reception." And why should they believe him after regularly observing White Europeans attending "Church on Sunday and committ[ing] adultery on Monday"? Beset by difficulties and disappointments on all sides, Dober soon faced the prospect of destitution when Nitschmann, who had provided a living for them both by working on the island as a carpenter, suddenly returned to Herrnhut in April 1733. Dober first "appealed to the negroes and offered to work for them," an offer they firmly refused because it was not only against the law, it was absurd to think that the plantation elite would allow the social subordination of a White person. So Dober took a job as a household steward on the plantation of Governor Philip Gardelin in order to make ends meet. His new post, and the life of relative comfort that came with it, however, "did the holy cause" of evangelizing the local enslaved population "more harm than good." For as long as he "lived in the Governor's house, the slaves regarded him with suspicion."

He wrote in a letter about feeling ashamed that he had "not been able to carry out my original design of becoming a slave."[8]

Anecdotes about Dober's willingness to work for enslaved Africans and his apparent plan to sell himself into slavery have been passed down the generations and entered the realm of religious folk legend, and common historical misconception, where Dober and Nitschmann (who had already left the island) actually sold themselves into slavery for the cause of Christ. The supposed sacrifice of their social freedom transformed them into heroic martyrs for the Christian faith. Dober and Nitschmann, according to one history, "left in August 1732 for St. Thomas via Copenhagen with only a Dutch Bible and about six dollars between them, prepared to sell themselves into slavery if that was the only means by which they could preach to the slaves."[9] Elements of this story continue to appear in more recent scholarship in ways that remain problematic. Dober and Nitschmann, for example, are depicted as the fatherly architects of the overseas mission of the Moravian Church and the fount of Moravians preaching "the gospel to the enslaved Africans" in the New World in accordance with "their Philadelphian ideas" and "their eschatological expectations."[10] Another history marshals this story to make the case that "a characteristic stamp of Zinzendorf and Moravianism" in this period consisted of Moravians being "primarily interested in the potential salvation of souls, regardless of racial or ethnic identity."[11] Yet another recent history extends the historiographic reach even further by portraying these men as the kindly archetypes of nineteenth-century Moravian missionaries who were destined to usher in an era of empowerment for women when "single sisters were sent to the mission for the first time, who, as deaconesses, were responsible for nursing and also established themselves in the area of preschool education."[12] To be clear, Dober and Nitschmann were indeed the first transatlantic Moravian missionaries, an accomplishment that chronologically preceded innovative missionary expansion initiatives, progressive opportunities extended to women, and Moravian contributions to the emergence of African Christianity in the American South. And historians are correct to point out these subsequent achievements. However, uncritically situating Dober, Nitschmann, and especially Zinzendorf at the substantive nexus of this history has the historiographic effect of mythologizing and universalizing the thoughts and actions of White men while collapsing the important contributions of women, Africans, and Indigenous peoples, reducing them to secondary status.[13] The mythic stature of these stories has shaped the reputation of Moravian missionaries, constructed by apologists and professional historians alike, as benevolent, sympathetic, and atypical guardians of African souls, African humanity, and even female agency in the midst of an

increasingly crowded field of early modern Christian missionaries who did not adhere to these values.

Less visible figures tell a more complex, diffuse, and nonlinear story about the triumphs and consequences of Moravians pursuing mission work in the New World. Sometime in the 1740s, Johanna Rosina Micksch (née Kühn) embarked upon a harrowing journey across the Atlantic Ocean to Pennsylvania, where she found personal and spiritual fulfillment for herself through the power of the written word. She composed a letter to the "Honorable and Dear Congregation of the Cross and Blood," located in Marienborn, a Moravian community located northeast of Frankfurt, in order to impart a clear sense of her "whole mind" to her Moravian coreligionists and help them understand the "entire intention" for her decision to travel to Pennsylvania. She asked for their "constant thoughts before the Lamb" as she learned to adapt familiar Protestant religious rituals and practices to new circumstances beyond the confines of her home congregation and community. Surviving the ordeal of traversing the British shipping lanes that connected the American colonies to the European continent ultimately strengthened her relationship with God and her connection to Moravians everywhere. "The Savior has made [his grace] clear to me" and "I bow in the dust before Him when I think of everything that I have been." She answered the call to mission in order "to live for [Jesus] and his blood alone." The *Heiland* (Savior) would "give strength and [anything that was] necessary from his bloody wounds" in her absence from family and friends. Christ's blood and wounds became a spiritual compass that would guide Micksch through an imperial European world filled with hardship and uncertainty. "Nothing can be known without the Heiland," she wrote, "and I do not ask for anything else than what our slaughtered Lamb will teach me. The doctrine of the Cross and death of the Lamb is the only element by which my spirit lives and finds rest."[14]

Writing became an improvised, grassroots form of ritual piety that conferred upon ordinary believers like Micksch the power to produce and shape Moravian religious culture for themselves. Invoking Moravian cross piety—the ritual glorification of Jesus and the wounds he received during his passion and crucifixion as the cornerstone of Christian faith—her letter reads like an unstructured and somewhat repetitive stream of consciousness, as if she struggled to articulate something words could not easily capture.[15] Supernatural intervention and the unfathomable complexity of divine grace, instantiated in the wounds of Christ, lay beyond the ken of mere humans to fully comprehend. The informality of the letter nevertheless exemplifies piety and devotion to Christ in her own words, which perform the work of ascribing meaning to spiritual and physical experiences on her expedition. She wrote

to the congregation in Marienborn using the same language of gratitude, petition, supplication, discipleship, and praise that she would use to speak to God in prayer. In doing so, composing this letter became a new way for Micksch to practice her faith beyond the traditional customs of Moravian devotion. Prompted by acute changes in physical location, social settings, and spiritual conditions, Micksch's experience demonstrates *in nuce* how Moravian believers appropriated religious idioms "as they need them, in response to particular circumstances" as they navigated the opportunities and hardships of moving through the imperial worlds of the Atlantic.[16] The narrations of her experiences, and those of other common Moravian believers and missionaries, are thus significant in their own right and do not necessarily require references to traditional Moravian origin stories about the mission program to be historiographically legible. No two experiences, however commonplace, would be the same.[17] And that diversity would have cumulative effects.

John Montgomery, father of the author and poet James Montgomery, traveled to Barbados, the sugar-producing jewel of the British Empire, with spiritual hopes just as high as those of Johanna Micksch, Leonard Dober, and David Nitschmann. Answering the call to mission, Montgomery aimed to care for the souls of enslaved Africans on the island and nurture them as his own. In an August 1784 letter he explained to Samuel Liebisch, a member of the Unity Elders Conference (UEC), which oversaw the Moravian Atlantic world mission, that his motives were pure and that he would employ evangelistic methods that reflected an ethic of tolerance and understanding. He would be the one to finally "remove those lets and hinderances which have hitherto stood in the way, and have kept the poor Negroes from coming to the knolege [*sic*] of the truth as it is in Jesus."[18]

Immersion in the violence and bigotry of colonial society in the English Caribbean, however, quickly rubbed off, and the tell-tale signs of traditional European racial prejudice reared their ugly head. One of the biggest "hinderances" to the mission, he wrote, consisted of the "base inclinations" and suspect morality of the Africans, "wether in wrathful revenge, or gratifying the flesh." Montgomery could not fathom why enslaved Africans did not show "any seign of remorse" for what he believed was vulgar physical behavior and, more seriously, their stubborn resistance to the gospel message. The weight of his Christian convictions, however, had not yet been completely overshadowed by worldly realities. In his early years as a missionary, Montgomery exhibited a sense of conflict between a clear association of Africans with what he considered effeminate incivility and corruption and a belief that the fault for this behavior did not lie entirely with the Africans themselves. "When one Speaks with them Concerning the need . . . of having our Sinful & Guilty Souls washed in the Cleancing Blood of God our Creator," many "acquiesce; & own it all to be true."

Though, "at the Same time," Montgomery wrote, "I Believe they [the enslaved Africans] reather in their hearts join in with & imbibe the Delusive Spirit which actuates their overseers the white[s]: who are Called Christians."[19]

Within these statements lie the ambivalences and asymmetries of doing mission work in early modern imperial spaces. At this early stage of his missionary career, Montgomery could still see that "Whites" (excluding himself, of course) in the English Caribbean were the real culprits because their barbarism toward enslaved Africans substantively deviated from the spirit of activist evangelism.[20] His youthful naivete and inability to comprehend the dehumanizing objectives of English plantation culture elicited a sense of incredulity at the idea that these Englishmen could forsake the charitable Christian spirit in favor of perpetuating a society where White European superiority functioned as the most important organizer of social relations.[21] And contrary to the standard Protestant narrative of the innate depravity of human nature and the physical body—attributed to the original fall of Adam in the biblical book of Genesis—Montgomery faulted the *soul*'s power to delude for "actuating" the wicked behavior of Whites and deceiving the souls of the Africans. Despite the supposed immorality of their "base inclinations," Montgomery did not believe Africans to be innately depraved people incapable of transformation. White European colonials played a crucial role in perpetuating their spiritual delinquency. Observing the actions of bodies provided the physical evidence that allowed him to assess the influence of the souls involved negatively. Montgomery also, however, implied that Africans "imbibed the delusive spirit" willingly with no acknowledgment of their lack of freedom to choose. His insufficient awareness of (or perhaps deliberate blindness to) the racially stratified social realities in Barbados suggests a much more equivocal stance toward the physical and psychological destructiveness of the master-slave relationship and the larger institution of slavery.[22] The tactics he employed for gaining converts in this harsh environment, in urgent anticipation of the coming of Christ's millennial kingdom, would slowly change over time based on his experience of these circumstances. And his transformation would have grave consequences for the enslaved Africans within his reach.[23] Was John Montgomery an atypical anomaly who simply deviated from a pervasive norm exemplified by Johanna Micksch? Or does he symbolize what the Moravians would become?

Transcending the Zinzendorf Paradigm

Historians tend to neglect individual contributions from believers like Johanna Micksch and John Montgomery in favor of highlighting the influence of more visible figures like Dober and Nitschmann. Whether for reasons of apparent

triviality (as with Micksch) or what would become their seemingly outlandish exceptionality (as with Montgomery), the varied nature of their experiences has rendered them either unworthy of note or, at least, too complicated to neatly categorize. As such, the history of the Moravians in the eighteenth century, in many ways, has become synonymous with the history and legacy of one man: Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf.[24]

Zinzendorf has dominated the attention of historians, advocates, and critics of Moravian religious and social culture alike since the earliest Pietist rumblings about the arrival of Czech refugees on his estate in the German-controlled region of Saxony in 1722. Gisela Mettele observed that "most of the previous work on the Moravian Church has focused on the person of Zinzendorf, or has delved into specific congregations or the developments in countries where the Moravian Church was active."[25] Early histories of the Moravians focused on the traditional topics of apologetically oriented church history, especially the theology and ecclesiastical institutions established by Zinzendorf, and generally portrayed the Moravians as insular radicals who only conformed to mainstream Protestantism when forced by the circumstance of Zinzendorf's death. These studies examined the economic, geographic, and social isolation of the most prominent Moravian communities that began to stabilize and thrive in eastern German territories in the late 1720s as well as southeastern Pennsylvania, the Shenandoah Valley region in northwestern Virginia, and the Carolina Piedmont in the 1750s and 1760s.[26]

Though still organized around the administration of Zinzendorf and the Moravian Church leadership, Beverly Smaby's *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem* (1988) initiated a new era of critical scholarship on the Moravians that straddled the pre- and post-Zinzendorf divide (defined by his death in 1760) by tracking the official transformation of the Moravian congregation in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, from a communal to a private economy.[27] Smaby's now-standard study of the Moravian "choir system," where individual family members lived apart from each other in "choirs" organized according to age, gender, and marital status, reignited historical interest in Moravian institutions during the communal period. Moravian choirs existed in all major settlement congregations that possessed the population and resources to construct and support them, including Herrnhut, Marienborn, Herrnhaag, Bethlehem, and Wachovia, some smaller congregations, like those in Christiansfeld and Nazareth, and even at some mission stations like the one in Greenland. Choirs operated as a primary site of religious education and social interaction for believers during the communal period (which lasted until 1762), and more recent research has shown that choirs developed in regionally specific ways as a result of both Moravian interactions with Indigenous peoples and the

dictates of local commercial markets.[28] The pedagogical and productive capacity of Moravian choir houses, as they developed in different places, operates as crucial institutional context for grasping the significance of the people examined in this study.

The intensive scholarly focus on Zinzendorf and the religious movement he built is certainly justifiable (and remains, it should be noted, a valuable historical objective).[29] His widespread influence over the Moravian Church and Protestant religious culture in central Europe and the Atlantic world, both during his lifetime and after, would be difficult to overestimate. Zinzendorf embodied, at one time or another, a deeply devout Christian with a short temper. He moved in courtly European circles as a political insider and, later, an outcast. He was a theological innovator and, at times, a religious outsider. He famously "challenged the prevalent Western Christian Trinitarian theology that taught the Father as creator, the Son as redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as sanctifier."[30] He led a successful radical Pietist movement. He failed in a transatlantic quest to achieve pan-Protestant ecumenical unity. He founded most of the early Moravian *Gemeinde* (settlement communities) around the Atlantic world. Herrnhut—and the religious and social formations Zinzendorf introduced there—became the template for most other early Moravian settlement communities, including Bethlehem, and served as the setting for the church's renewal as a whole in 1727.[31] Zinzendorf then orchestrated what would become the Moravian global mission in 1732, one of the first Protestant mission enterprises to touch all four continents bordering the Atlantic. And even his death in 1760 became the catalyst for both sweeping institutional changes and efforts to carry forward his devotional legacy. Many others could be added to these few select examples. His influence, however, and that of other church leaders has largely overshadowed the myriad contributions to Moravian religious culture made, both individually and collectively, by ordinary believers like Johanna Micksch, John Montgomery, and countless others in the eighteenth century.[32]

The present study challenges that imbalance. It examines Moravian history from the bottom up, tracking the transformation of believer cultures in Europe, British North America, the Caribbean, and Greenland on two co-constitutive levels. First, rank-and-file members and missionaries, significant in their own right, appropriated grassroots forms of authority and created their own agencies within an ecclesiological framework that consciously nurtured a movement of believers. Second, at an institutional level, the actions and behaviors exhibited by believers and missionaries served as a salient element of argumentative discourse and provided the earliest educated historians of the various missions and church officials alike with an evidentiary basis for projecting a public image

of conservative Protestant orthodoxy, cosmopolitan sophistication, and both informal and formal conformity to European imperial culture, particularly with regard to the institution of slavery, in the eighteenth century.[33] Analyses of these intersecting strands operate on the basis of two core premises. First, the Moravian laity (the "people in the pews") and missionaries, the vast majority of whom were ordinary, nonclerical believers themselves, exerted significant influence upon the structure and content of Moravian beliefs, practices, and institutions. And second, the source of their transformations can be traced to foundational interactions between the authorized tenets of Moravian theology and praxis, and the struggle to make them meaningful and comprehensible in the persons and experiences of the believers who actually performed the work of establishing a culture of unity among communicants spread over vast distances and diverse religious and social environments. The Moravian faith, and the mission program especially, thus reflected the experiences and innovations of believers. The analysis builds upon Edita Sterik's *Mährische Exulanten in der erneuerten Brüderunität im 18. Jahrhundert* (2012), which moved away from the Zinzendorf paradigm by examining the influence of ethnic Moravian exiles upon the emergence of the renewed Moravian Church and reexamined this period (1722–1755) from the perspective of these Czech immigrants.[34] The present book examines different facets of this early history, extends the geographic and chronological scope to the end of the eighteenth century, and situates believers and missionaries as an interpretive key to understanding how the Moravians slowly but steadily responded—individually, collectively, and politically—to the mixing of peoples and cultures wrought by the expansion of Protestant European empire.

Investigating emergent agencies, experiences, and practices alongside the discourses that made use of Moravian believers in colonial spaces invites a methodological application of the "lived religion" paradigm in order to explore, as Robert Orsi has argued, "the unfolding interplay of religious idioms and immediate circumstances that constantly reconfigure" the character and content of Moravian piety in the early modern Atlantic world.[35] How did the religious experiences and practices of Moravian missionaries and ordinary believers like Micksch and Montgomery—religion as it was lived in daily life—directly influence official belief structures, ecclesiastical institutions, political alignments, theological discourses, and official representations thereof? In older church histories, members of the male (usually) educated elite—whether theologians, devotional writers, charismatic leaders, or trained and ordained clergy—produced theologies, liturgies, hymnbooks, sermons, prayers, and devotional tracts on pious behavior (the traditional evidentiary basis of church histories) that believers are uncritically assumed to have followed

uniformly. Histories that engage with Moravian religious practices, including *Community of the Cross* (2004), Craig Atwood's masterful study of colonial Bethlehem, also tend to employ this traditional "trickle-down" model that has governed church histories for some time. Though these works occupy a well-deserved place in the historiography, "historians have long represented religious leaders and followers like this, setting them within religious contexts in which everyone does what he or she is supposed to do, in which authority is obeyed and ritual rubrics carefully followed."[36] Believers, therefore, are stripped of any agency to shape the religious cultures in which they participated. The practitioners assembled in this study challenge prevailing historical narratives, even in many recent church histories and histories of religion, that subsume the religious beliefs and practices of ordinary believers under a presumption of universality and unchanging continuity as a result of influences from clergy, ecclesiastical institutions, theologians, or church leaders.[37]

The letters, diaries, community/congregational reports, and printed histories of the church and mission left behind by the Moravians speak directly to these historiographic issues and provide unique insight into the avenues of influence exemplified by the lives of Protestant believers in the eighteenth century. Stipulating at the outset that Zinzendorf and the Moravian leadership exerted a high degree of influence upon Moravian believers, this study will directly confront the elite/popular categorial dichotomies that drive the scholarly literature on "popular religion."[38] However, the evidence will demonstrate that Moravian believers, and members of the Moravian leadership in their capacity *as believers* practicing the faith, also had a profound effect upon the structure of Moravian religious practices, church administration, intercommunity/interethnic relations, and how the church represented itself to the Protestant public. Expressions of belief and ritual behavior as performed by believers—the effects and consequences of official church policies and theologies in the real world—should possess generative significance in scholarly representations of religious cultures alongside the ideas, intentions, political motivations, and work product of theologians, clergy, and church leaders in their official capacities. Studying believers, however, does not consist simply of trying to locate some essential "Moravianism" within grassroots articulations of belief and acts of piety outside of traditional ecclesiastical boundaries or official representations thereof.[39] Instead, this study observes transformations of Moravian culture from the frequently untidy vantage points of the Moravians who actually practiced it in the eighteenth century—in the absence of a totalizing assumption of complete conformity—and documents their influence upon official efforts to mobilize their accomplishments for political purposes. Prioritizing believers and missionaries will thus yield fresh perspectives on

core historical narratives of Moravian religious culture, the trajectory of its mission program, and the history of Protestant imperialism in the Atlantic world on the issues of ecclesiastical authority, ecclesiology, expressions of Pietist and evangelical heart religion, and the significance of gendered and racialized bodies.

German Pietist Individualism and Experiential Piety

The creative authorities exercised by Moravian believers can be attributed to significant individualizing tendencies within German Pietism, a movement that grew out of the crucible of religious, social, and intellectual transformations occurring in the early modern period. The Moravians emerged in the 1720s and 1730s as a controversial constituent of the Pietist movement that consisted of a kaleidoscopic spectrum of groups reaching back to the 1670s who developed varying positions about how best to reform the Lutheran and Reformed Protestant Orthodoxies in anticipation of Christ's second coming.[40] These communities counted themselves among a cohort of dissenting Protestant supporters of revealed religion who felt the Reformation remained incomplete. Defining German Pietism remains a matter of ongoing scholarly debate because of the movement's substantive, demographic, and geographic diversity.[41] "The Pietism movement," as Douglas Shantz, Johannes Wallmann, and others have argued, "introduced a new paradigm to traditional German Protestantism, one that encouraged personal renewal and New Birth, conventicle gatherings for Bible study and mutual encouragement, social activism and postmillennialism, and ecumenical cooperation—in contrast to the polemical Protestantism that gave rise to the Thirty Years' War."[42]

The movement can generally be divided into two broad camps. The "confessional" or "churchly" Pietists, led by Philipp Jakob Spener in Frankfurt and August Hermann Francke in Halle, defined the movement's mainstream. They sought to rescue Christianity from perceived deviations and adulterations of the spirit of the Protestant Reformation without separating from the established institutional churches. Churchly Pietists advanced reform programs centered upon a collective turn toward a "religion of the heart" and a fundamental embrace of religious experiences. Spener organized the *collegia pietatis* and initiated Pietist participation in conventicles meant to edify believers outside of the direct supervision of trained clergy—in contravention of Reformation-era Lutheran theology—while also trying to remain in the good graces of the German nobility in Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden, their Pietist allies in the Netherlands, and the royal court in Copenhagen.[43] Pietists in

Halle, at the behest of Francke, also advocated for comprehensive social reforms in the areas of poor relief, access to medical care, and childhood education under the auspices of the *Franckesche Stiftungen* (Francke Foundations) and the famous *Waisenhaus* (Orphanage).[44] In addition, Halle Pietist missionary expeditions to Tranquebar and other locations on the Indian subcontinent became a model for Zinzendorf's mission program in the New World.[45] Radical Pietists, on the other hand, believed the Protestant Orthodoxy to be terminally corrupt and pursued reformatory schemes from the outside by formally separating from the confessional establishments. The radicals, Moravians included, developed "heterodox" doctrines, nurtured the thought and theologies of Continental mystics, spiritualists, esotericists, and alchemists, and tended toward more radical eschatologies based upon urgent, chiliastic, and hyperliteral readings of the book of Revelation as proffered by charismatic figures like Gottfried Arnold, Johann Amos Comenius, and Jane Leade.[46]

Churchly Pietists and confessional Protestants alike considered the Moravians to be dangerous radicals, despite their having never formally advocated separatism, because of their many contacts and associations with other radical Pietist groups, their "unorthodox" theologies, doctrines, and rituals, and their unconventional social arrangements, especially the idiosyncrasies of the choir system in Moravian settlement congregations and mission communities.[47] In British North America and the German territories of Europe, the Moravians quickly found themselves the target of an outpouring of Protestant polemical literature that decried their radical beliefs about the Holy Trinity, marriage, sex, and alternative family structure in the wake of revolutions and religious upheavals that had occurred over the previous century in the British Isles and the European Continent.[48] The success of the Moravian expansion into New World mission fields fueled these polemics and ensured Moravian entanglement in two of the most significant events that would engulf the early modern Atlantic world: the Enlightenment and the evangelical revivalism movement.

German Pietists of all stripes cultivated an ambivalent, though symbiotic, relationship with the Enlightenment by strategically appropriating the turn toward the individual human senses as the foundational source of Christian experience while simultaneously repudiating the enlightened "fostering of humanity" and the secular "control of nature" at its philosophical core.[49] Pietist critiques of the Lutheran and Reformed Orthodoxies targeted a theological culture of legalism they blamed for a catastrophic collapse of Christian piety and devotion into a series of lifeless, mechanical statements of confessional faith.[50] Churchly Pietists agitated against religious skepticism and emerging secular philosophies of human goodness in the state of nature through the

implementation of an individualized religious program of personal regeneration that emphasized the New Birth, launched far-reaching missionary outreach programs, and constructed a postmillennial eschatology that supported a generalized hope for "better times" in this world "that departed dramatically from the traditional Lutheran expectation of God's imminent judgment." Radical Pietists supported these efforts with their own apocalyptic visions of the end times and marshaled the reformatory initiatives of churchly Pietism toward issues of religious toleration in the German territories, new social and religious roles for women, and outspoken resistance against entrenched ecclesiastical authorities.[51] In addition, radical groups and individuals produced an array of alternative translations of the authorized Luther Bible in the eighteenth century in a collective attempt to rescue Scripture from the traditional constraints of confessional theology and stave off rationalist challenges to the epistemological authority of divine revelation. However, it would be wrong to make blanket statements about German Pietists, including the Moravians, as backward-looking reactionaries who did not participate in the emergence of modernity. Radical Pietist Bible translations made critical contributions to what Jonathan Sheehan has called the "Enlightenment Bible."[52] And Christina Petterson has more recently shown how the communal system that organized early Moravian communities "can be seen as a symptom or ideological precondition of the fledgling abstraction and fragmentation of not only the individual, but also civil society," a process that facilitated the socioeconomic transition toward modern capitalism.[53] Martin Gierl once quipped, along these lines, that "wherever Pietism went, modernity had always got there first."[54] In any event, enlightened-like expressions of distrust toward both confessional Protestantism and secular Enlightenment ideas about the ultimate source of human knowledge fueled German Pietist contributions to the erosion of traditional social and political authority under the ancien régime.

As cultural architects and champions of a new form of heartfelt, experiential piety, German Pietists and Moravians also made critical contributions to the revivalism movements that swept the Protestant Atlantic into evangelical awakening and ecclesiastical controversy in the eighteenth century.[55] Protestant evangelicalism emerged from a cauldron of social, economic, psychological, intellectual, and religious changes occurring in early modern Europe, Great Britain, and the Americas.[56] The first rumblings of evangelical awakening appeared within scattered pockets of Presbyterian laity and liberal-leaning clergy in seventeenth-century Scotland and Ireland.[57] Revivalist traditions also emerged on the Continent in Silesia, Brandenburg-Prussia, Austria, Switzerland, and various locations along the Lower Rhine River in the seventeenth- and early eighteenth centuries. In British North America, the Great

Awakening in the 1730s and 1740s closely mirrored the European revivalist tradition and represented the culmination of sporadic and isolated outbreaks of religious awakening in the colonies.[58] Like their German Pietist forebears, early evangelicals rejected Enlightenment philosophical attempts to question and reduce the authority of the Bible and denounced the dangers of a religious life rooted in rational intellectualism rather than a more affective, sensory, and spirit-based empiricism. Evangelicals responded by stressing the primacy of divine revelation and individual experiences with the Holy Spirit and the Christian supernatural, in agreement with Moravian and Pietist theology and practice, which stood at the foundation of both human knowledge and religious faith. A true believer obtained God's saving grace by enduring the humbling-then-liberating personal transformation of the New Birth and, in doing so, affirmed the role of individual experience as the cornerstone of both evangelical and Enlightenment epistemology.[59] As spiritual children of the New Birth, crusaders for holy living, opponents of philosophies promoting innate human goodness, active missionaries, professed humanitarians, and devoted disciples of cross theology rooted in the Bible, Moravian believers shared the beliefs, practices, and transatlantic networks that consolidated the vitality, longevity, and integrity of the early evangelical movement.

Pious Bodies, Gendered Then Raced

The restorationist impulse that prioritized the experiences of individuals also fostered an enhanced Moravian awareness of the variety of ways that human bodies mediated the Christian message and became crucial sites of religious and social meaning-making.[60] This study situates bodies and the embodied nature of Moravian faith as a significant factor in the construction of individual and collective identities. The term "embody" will operate on three different, though often intersecting, analytical levels. First, "embodied" religious practices connote physical acts of devotion, whether traditional (prayer, singing, worshipping) or innovative (letters, diaries, mission reports, and histories). Second, Moravian believers participated in a process of religious "embodiment" where they visualized, articulated, and reflected upon their religious beliefs, practices, and immediate surroundings using language that implicated physical bodies, whether the body of Christ or those of humans, in various ways. Third, Moravian believers "embodied" their interior mystical piety and religious devotions through writing and thus gave tangible form (and, for us, observational access) to elements of piety that would have otherwise remained sequestered in the mind.[61] Embodiment and various

notions of physicality operated in tandem with practical, conceptual, rhetorical, and substantive frameworks for analyzing how followers and enemies of the Moravians alike understood, performed, and re-produced their Christian faith.

Bodies, in this formulation, do much more than merely express religious belief or house the divine soul. The Spirit channeled transformative heavenly wisdom through human bodies and physical media—writing especially—to accommodate human cognitive limitations. Correctly interpreting and then enacting divine lessons required believers to feel God's grace rather than simply know of it. Bodies defined the parameters for how the faith operated in the physical world.[62] Jesus Christ, the Son of God, embodied the scriptural promise of salvation in human form, and his physical body became the centerpiece of all Moravian spiritual beliefs and practices. Believers spent their lives cultivating intimate relationships with the divine body of Christ, whose sacrificial death on the cross redeemed their fallen souls from eternal punishment under the law of Moses.[63] The embodied power of the cross, in conformity with Pietist eschatological hopes, could also sanctify the realm of worldly existence. Blood-and-wounds piety served as a Christocentric framework for experiencing the sacraments and other embodied religious practices, such as baptism, communion, marriage, foot washing (*Pedilavium*), and the kiss of peace (*Der heilige Kuß des Friedens*).[64] Gazing upon Christ's lacerated body inspired believers to have faith and to make the world a better place through conscious acts of virtue and caring for others, a sincere Moravian aspiration that was consistently circumscribed by the constraints of daily existence. Put simply, bodies animated the sacred forces of the Christian divine as somatic "centers of transcendent faith" while remaining ever subject, as Janet Lindman has argued, "to material demands based on societal expectations and individual experiences."[65]

The intense concentration upon corporeal pieties shaped both inclusive and exclusive Moravian conceptions of gender and race that concurrently supported and challenged the traditional norms of European and British North American society.[66] A high regard for feminine spiritualities—especially devotional practices cultivated by and for women—and more formal ecclesiastical contributions of women stood at the foundation of Moravian faith and ecclesiology. Autonomous roles in church administration and governance for women—the ordained female preachers and overseers of female choir houses, for example—partially emerged out of theological constructions of Jesus performing tasks typically associated with femininity in the early modern period, such as nurturing, affectionate caregiving, and teaching.[67] Moravians also famously understood the Holy Spirit as "mother" because she performed a maternal pastoral

role in their lives. The Holy Spirit was the "true mother of Jesus" and the "mother of all living things" because of the centrality of her involvement in creating the world and, most importantly, as the mother of the church on earth.[68] Gendered renderings of the body of Jesus, the other two persons of the Holy Trinity, and people in the world served as an attributional process that allowed Moravian believers to infuse their spiritual and temporal experiences with deep religious meanings.[69] Feminine pieties and palpable female influences also made the Moravians distinctive among the Atlantic community of Protestants.

Masculinities, however, also permeated the Moravian faith community and steadfastly reinforced male spiritual and ecclesiastical authority. Jesus and God the Father remained primarily male and masculine figures in Moravian settlement communities and mission fields.[70] Though retaining his full divinity, Jesus incarnated as a human man who possessed male sexual organs. Zinzendorf proclaimed in his *Einundzwanzig Diskurse über die Augspurgische Konfession* (1748) that "a man must either deny his own manliness or he must accept that the manliness of Jesus was as natural, complete, and simple as his own which he carries on himself."[71] Moravian men derived a sense of patriarchal responsibility from their intimate, embodied affinity with the king of kings.[72] Jesus's righteous and bloody sacrifice on the cross also made him the husband of all believers, both men and women, in mystical marriage.[73] As feminine "brides of Christ," Moravian believers collectively assumed an exalted position in the spiritual Christian family. And yet only men occupied the highest positions of ecclesiastical authority despite the pastoral leadership opportunities that Moravians accorded to women. Peter Vogt and other scholars have pointed to Moravian masculinities and male authority as evidence that complicates Aaron Fogleman's thesis about Moravians in the eighteenth century believing that Jesus was female.[74] The "presence of female attributes in Moravian Christology," Vogt argues, did not diminish Jesus's masculinity or maleness. These attributes "express the pastoral intent to show that the redemptive power of Christ transcends the lines of gender."[75]

The gender-neutral intent underlying the Moravian doctrine of salvation contributed profoundly to their sense of identity. Gisela Mettele has argued that Moravian believers constructed a religious sense of self based upon an ever-present dialectic of individual and communal conversion that "did not lead toward personal perfection, but toward a radical acknowledgment of human imperfection."[76] In the realm of the soul, this comprehensive declaration of human corruption produced an ethic of ostensible equality. All human souls stood equally flawed before God, and therefore all could be considered equally

capable of receiving God's saving grace regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity.

The principle of equality that applied to souls, however, did not translate to bodies. For Moravians, as in the broader culture of Europe, physical bodies existed within relatively stable hierarchies of social power embedded in early modern class structures that seamlessly incorporated early demarcations of "Whiteness" and "Blackness" as a collective result of two centuries of European discourse concerning the perceived levels of civilization and cultural sophistication of colonial subjects.[77] Though they often spoke about Indigenous and African converts through tropes of genuine love, humanity, and hope, Moravian missionaries also participated in the process of transporting traditional European bias against "darkness" to mission stations all over the Atlantic world.[78] In addition, prolonged exposure to racially and ethnically stratified societies gained through imperial conquest reinforced assumptions about the normativity of European civilization and culture. Moravians struggled to reconcile the reality of these social conditions with their religious leitmotif of spreading what they considered to be an inclusive message about the salvific power of Christ's body and the neutral soteriology that flowed from it. The imperial system would make its mark nevertheless as Moravian evangelists and their contemporary chroniclers began to exhibit paternalistic attitudes and social orientations that emerged alongside inclinations to feminize and exoticize non-European converts and their cultures. From one perspective, observations of African and Indigenous bodies and behavior in this context empowered the missionaries to revolutionize strategies for gaining converts by astutely adapting them to local circumstances. However, patriarchal evaluations of bodies, as will become evident from the examples of John Montgomery and others, also informed attempts to impose religiously inflected, though distinctly European, ethics of "civilized behavior" upon African and Indigenous converts in various locations, sometimes even by force.

Developments of this kind appear to be related to the institutionalization of the Moravian mission program, particularly in the latter half of the eighteenth century, a process that coincided with a gradual shift away from the more radical aspects of their millennial eschatology. Thus, the potential for radical transformation of society in anticipation of Christ's return transmuted into a desire to maintain the existing racial order.[79] Subjected to external pressures, then, the gendered religious hierarchies that structured Moravian communities—that is, the pattern of valuing feminine pieties and female pastoral roles while simultaneously situating the highest spiritual and ecclesiastical authorities in masculine/male figures—would inform, however unevenly, a social framework that supported the emergence of embodied,

patriarchal expressions of racial consciousness and advanced a fundamentally colonialist objective.[80] The overarching goal of the Moravian mission was to change the beliefs, cultures, and lifeways of African and Indigenous peoples into something that more closely resembled European Christianity and society. Compassionate and deeply felt religious intentions toward non-European peoples did not always produce equitable social relations, especially in places dominated by the institution of slavery.[81] Moravians would develop an elaborate verbal and written lexicon that called attention to the physical attributes of non-White bodies and endorsed race-based behavior and conceptions of human difference as a consequence. Through these pathways, religious conceptions of gendered and sexed bodies, conditioned by outside influences and despite inclusive pastoral intentions, also fostered a culture of vertical social distinctions that would lay the groundwork for the emergence of racial formations in Moravian mission fields. Although the direct line of causation was never straightforward or clearly articulated, the analyses in this book will suggest that bodies—spiritual, physical, mystical, rhetorical—served as a hierarchical, organizational link that broadly connects gender to race in eighteenth-century Moravian religious culture.[82]

Racial Formations on the Edges of Empire

This history places what Moravians *did* at the center, rather than their *thoughts* or *intentions* as Christians. Shifting the perspective toward the actions of believers and missionaries will more accurately align the Moravians with current scholarly understandings of European behavior and sensibilities in the early modern period. By exploring inherently unstable, fluctuating, fragmented, and uneven constellations of meaning-making through embodied action that existed both within and outside of traditional sites of authority, discipline, and pastoral oversight, this book illuminates the spiritual and corporeal worlds that Moravians made together.[83] The analyses demonstrate how Moravian believers shaped elite German Pietist discourses; unintentionally exercised new forms of authority for themselves at *Gemeintag* meetings; intentionally improvised new embodied religious practices in the pages of their travel diaries; took seriously things that they outwardly disparaged, such as elements of occult magic and alternative forms of the supernatural in the mission field; and neglected things they claimed to care deeply about, as with the bodies of their African and Indigenous converts. In these moments, Moravians created new identities that emerged experientially among believers and operated in social environments where German Pietist ethics of individualism

both presented new opportunities and pushed them toward adopting European imperial dispositions that prevailed in those places.

Believers and missionaries thus exhibit a distinctive malleability at the core of Moravian religious culture, a mutable Moravian "self," that allowed them to adapt within the diverse colonial societies in which they existed and to which they contributed. Ambiguities in how John Montgomery and other Moravian missionaries articulated their preconceptions about racial characteristics reflect this elasticity. Historians, however, have typically read these ambiguities as proof that the Moravian mission program was exceptional because of a self-professed ethic of inclusivity and empathy toward the African and Indigenous peoples they encountered. In addition, Moravian involvement in the rise of African Christianity in the eighteenth century, coupled with the pervasive belief that all souls were equal before God, has been interpreted as rare evidence of racial tolerance in a New World overrun by arbitrary racial hierarchies and imperialist economic, political, and social institutions. Moravians working to convert enslaved Africans, initially allowing them to join their congregations, and, most importantly, acknowledging "black humanity," has served as justification for historical narratives that emphasize an atypical Moravian compassion and treatment of non-European peoples.[84] Jon Sensbach has argued that for Moravians, "there were only the saved and the unsaved, a condition upon which skin color had no bearing."[85] Souls and spirituality, in other words, ostensibly mattered much more than bodies.[86] Sensbach does not neglect or simply ignore incidents of Moravian insensitivity or violence against Africans.[87] However, he tends to portray instances of racial contempt as fleeting aberrations in a larger story about Moravian love and respect for their African coreligionists. "At some profound level, [Moravian] slave and master became brother and brother, sister and sister."[88] He supports this claim by pointing out that Moravians did not begin establishing separate congregations for their African followers or officially discontinue certain interracial religious practices—such as integrated worship services, foot washings, and the kiss of peace—until the 1790s. Only then, according to Sensbach, did Moravian church leaders begin responding to outside pressures to conform to traditional social authority structures in the context of the emergence of the new American republic.[89]

Sweeping changes of this variety in cultural attitudes and institutions, however, do not occur because of a history of mutual respect and admiration. Nor do they occur overnight. The latter chapters of the present volume document Moravian racial and ethnic antipathies and, in some cases, propensities for racially motivated violence that developed steadily over the eighteenth century in colonial outposts and established European societies that spanned

the latitudinal length and breadth of the New World from Greenland to South America. Highlighting the circumstances that caused the transformation of some European Moravian missionaries into agents of colonization will revise and provide a necessary supplement to Sensbach's pioneering examination of the experiences of enslaved Africans with and within the Moravian Church.

This book argues that the success of the Moravian mission—won as a result of a professed ethos of tolerance, practical attempts to comprehend cultural differences by moving into Indigenous and African communities and learning their languages and customs, formulating syncretic cultural translations of supernatural power, and facilitating the emergence of Christianity among colonized peoples—came at the cost of pursuing strategies of nonresistance toward oppressive regimes of social power and the adoption of cultural attitudes that supported them. A vivid illustration of what Winelle Kirton-Roberts has called "the paradox of the Moravian Mission in the West Indies," the spirit of benevolence that accelerated their ability to win converts, and often fanned the flames of opposition from other Protestant groups, also facilitated the construction of an early form of protoscientific racism in the late eighteenth century.[90] This "Great Paradox," as Hastings and MacLeavy have argued, "remains a blot on the pages of Moravian history" that must be further examined.[91] Though never crossing the boundary of "innate depravity"—the conceptual threshold that marked the fully articulated "scientific" or "biological" racism that only emerged in the nineteenth century—Moravian missionaries still collected, catalogued, and made use of information about what they considered to be "peculiar" physical characteristics (head shape, nose length, and hair quality, for example) and untoward behaviors exhibited by African and Indigenous peoples that supported the emergence of proslavery ideologies outside of the American South. Incidents of racially motivated violence perpetrated by Moravian missionaries occurred as a result.

Placing believers, practices, and experiences on the edges of empire at the center of the historical narrative will enhance our understanding of European and North American knowledge formations by reconstructing a far-reaching segment of the early modern German-speaking Atlantic. The chapters that follow document significant transformations in German culture in Europe wrought by the colonial world while also providing new insight into the influence and experiences of Germans in British North America, the Caribbean, and Greenland. A more nuanced awareness of the European colonial project emerges through the stories of travelers and settlers in the New World who, like the Moravians, did not hail from Old World countries that labeled their homelands on maps. The printed books and correspondence networks that connected Moravian settlements over vast distances became an engine of

practical knowledge production that demonstrates how extended exposure to a wide variety of Atlantic world cultures and ethnicities reinforced their embrace of certain radical religious beliefs and practices—including the blood-and-wounds piety, love feasts, public confessions, and notions of gender and race—that made the Moravian Church and its Atlantic world mission both a resounding success as well as a significant threat to the balance of power in plural religious environments in the Americas. The analyses that follow connect Moravian communities, which have typically been studied in isolation, across the Atlantic basin with competing European narratives of identity formation, gender, race, ecclesiastical authority, and the evangelical body in the New World.

The book follows a roughly chronological progression from 1727 to 1790, with various measures of overlap among individual chapters so that certain periods, especially the period of far-reaching changes implemented after Zinzendorf's death from 1760 forward, can be examined from multiple viewpoints and from the perspective of different types of sources.

Chapters 1 and 2 examine little-studied institutional and cultural practices that would help to establish the Moravians as a transatlantic movement of believers during the period from 1738 to 1765. Individualist ethics of Pietist devotion facilitated empowering internal assertions of agency and authority by Moravian believers from outside the context of settled congregations. The category of gender also played a crucial role as the Moravian embraced feminine pieties and female pastoral roles while also working to establish ultimate spiritual and ecclesiastical authority in masculine and male figures. These chapters thus explore Moravian religious devotions, rituals, morality, and mysticism through detailed analyses of *Gemeintag* meetings, travel literature, and various forms of circulating correspondence.

Chapter 1 considers the impact of early colonial pieties, from 1738 to 1746, on the Continental European congregations that believers left behind through the lens of the *Gemeintag* (Congregation Day) and the circulating intercommunity reports of these prayer meetings called the *Gemeintagsberichte* (Reports of the Congregation Day). Instead of relying on a singular message delivered exclusively by Moravian preachers, the calculated structure and content of *Gemeintag* meetings and the circulation of the *Gemeintagsberichte* reinforced core (but often controversial) elements of Moravian culture by integrating mediums of communication into gatherings for corporate prayer. The skillful mobilization of ordinary Moravian believers from various Atlantic world locations, including Europe, Greenland, the Caribbean, and British North America, to articulate the Moravian message accorded these believers new

measures of ecclesiastical authority in congregations back in Europe. The contents of *Gemeintag* meetings reveal how Atlantic world expansion, correspondence as a form of spiritual testimony, and Moravian blood-and-wounds mysticism became integral to Moravian religious identity.

Chapter 2 examines personal and travel diaries from 1735 to 1765 to identify how ordinary Moravians appropriated and further transformed traditional forms of piety. While *Gemeintag* services communicated notions of spirituality and proper religious behavior from the top down, Moravians who made the journey across the Atlantic, both to and from the New World, found themselves reinterpreting many of these teachings based on new and exotic experiences. The peoples, meetings, songs, poetry, and descriptions of devotional ceremonies believers recorded in their diaries operated as improvised forms of personal religious devotion that vividly illustrate the central role believers attributed to the body as a mediator of religious culture. As manuscript copies circulated to Moravian congregations on both sides of the Atlantic, travel diaries symbolically elevated the religious authority of ordinary believers and alleviated the uncertainties of navigating imperial frontiers.

Chapters 3 through 6 expand the conceptual range of believer and missionary authorities. Collectively, they weave together manuscript and printed sources in order to highlight the points of intersection between the actions of believers and missionaries on the ground and the Moravian Church's efforts to reconstitute itself in the wake of Zinzendorf's death and conform more closely to the contemporary European Protestant mainstream. Each of these chapters addresses the period from 1760 to roughly 1790 from a different vantage point. In this period, the character of innovations in religious praxis fostered by believers as a result of transatlantic travel, documented in the previous chapters, changed as glimmers of patriarchal intolerance and imperialist attitudes began to appear and reinforce patterns of increasingly race-based apprehensions. As a consequence, the Moravians became embroiled within Atlantic world slave societies and the institution of slavery.

Chapters 3 and 4 broaden the previous discussions of mysticism in Moravian spirituality and practice by exploring more directly the range of supernaturalisms that illuminated religious experiences and pedagogies in the mission field during the period from 1765 to 1790. Moravian missionaries venerated European Christian constructions of the supernatural over and above those of non-Europeans, and the church strove to communicate this position to the larger Protestant public.

Chapter 3 addresses Moravian engagements with the Protestant supernatural in the mission fields of Greenland, British North America, and the Caribbean. Manuscript correspondence and printed histories of the missions

in these places demonstrate that the missionaries, most of whom possessed no formal ministerial training, improvised didactic strategies based on a form of "heightened supernaturalism" that allowed them to accommodate the Christian message to local circumstances and forge a shared consciousness with both non-European peoples who did not share their values and culture, and conservative evangelical Protestants who did. Chapter 4 calls attention to previously neglected aspects of the printed histories of Moravian missions. It examines how these histories portray the activities of missionaries as a concerted effort to expand their knowledge about the mechanisms of providentialism and heightened supernaturalism beyond that espoused by Europeans. They did so by engaging in detailed studies of animistic belief structures, magic and occult practices, and non-European understandings of nature and medicine as a method of connecting with converts whom they considered social and cultural inferiors. Emphasizing the primacy of the Christian supernatural while simultaneously offering exoticized and often disparaging portrayals of non-European religious cultures in print bolstered public Moravian rhetorical claims of adherence to the European Protestant mainstream.

Chapters 5 and 6 explore the rhetorical and physical consequences of prejudices—those imported from Europe and those that appeared as the result of New World experiences—against non-European religions, nationalities, and ethnicities, which developed into racial antipathies in imperial spaces. The grassroots cultivation and public mobilization of traditional individualist agencies and authorities contributed to racialized conceptions of religious and social superiority asserted by Moravian missionaries and exerted distinctive influences upon the character of Moravian missions on the edges of empire.

Chapter 5 analyzes the development and official representations of protoracial rhetorics among Moravian believers and missionaries in the Danish and English Caribbeans who engaged in a deliberate process of documenting and instilling early concepts of White superiority in their roles as missionaries. Chapter 6 returns to manuscript archival sources to consider the behaviors and religious practices that emerged on the ground alongside this exclusionary, racialized missionary lexicon. Beyond their revocation of enslaved African access to education due to social pressure from the Caribbean planter elite, Moravian missionaries contributed, in much larger and more subtle ways, to a configuration of religio-social power relations that Katherine Gerbner has termed "Protestant Supremacy."[92] Tensions between their missionary objective to convert Africans to Christianity, the moral dictates of the Christian supernatural, and the necessity of legitimizing their work to both Moravian Church authorities and a larger Protestant slave-owning public manifested as embodied, race-based discriminatory prejudice. A genuine desire to attain the respect

of White European elites had the effect of tempering the potency of their missionary zeal and the purity of their devotion to the ideal of spiritual equality.

A concluding epilogue will briefly reflect upon the examples of Rebecca Protten, the decline of Moravian devotion to pacifism, and racially integrated congregations in early national North Carolina as a method of linking the developments chronicled in this book—concerning the themes of personal piety and empowerment, heightened supernaturalism, and the intensification of Moravian assimilation into the world of slave-holding and racism—with those of antebellum America. Belief in the humanity of enslaved Africans, as Claus Füllberg-Stolberg has observed about Moravians in the nineteenth century, did not temper the fact that many "Moravians were apologists of the political and social status quo" with regard to the institution of slavery and the European imperial project.[93]