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Prodigal sons: Indigenous missionaries in the British Atlantic world, 1640--1780

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PRODIGAL SONS:
INDIGENOUS MISSIONARIES IN THE BRITISH ATLANTIC WORLD, 1640-1780

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
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the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
History
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To the memory of my father
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the hundreds of black and Native American preachers who worked as Christian missionaries in the early modern British Atlantic world. While scholars have generally accepted the convention that most missionaries were white Europeans who knew little about the native peoples they were trying to convert, there were practical and theological explanations for why native preachers not only became ubiquitous, but often outnumbered their white counterparts in Protestant missions. The language barrier, the opportunity to tap into extensive kinship networks, and early modern interpretations of black and Indian bodies all catalyzed the formation of an indigenous evangelical corps from Iroquoia to India. Protestant missionaries also looked back to early Christian history to explain how “gospelization” might advance alongside their own rapidly expanding world. They believed that the gentiles – or unconverted nations – were central to their own conversion during the initial spread of Christianity and they incorporated this model of early Christian evangelization into their own approach to missionary work among black slaves, Africans, and Native Americans. Situated as they were between British missionaries and unconverted natives, indigenous missionaries also found themselves at the center of transatlantic conversations about race, empire, spiritual authority, and the place of Native Americans and Africans in Western Christendom. The dissertation begins by shifting the focus away from English missionaries and instead exploring the native preachers who oversaw the religious development of Indian praying towns in Puritan New England. It then traces the debates concerning indigenous missionaries in the Anglican Atlantic – specifically over slavery and the recruitment of Indian “royalty” in North America – while simultaneously examining the rise of Anglican-backed native preachers in southern India.
during the first decades of the eighteenth century. While the problematics of slavery and racial tension discouraged the employment of black preachers in the early eighteenth century, by the 1740s a wave of transatlantic evangelical revivalism forced Protestant denominations to develop new ways to employ slaves as teachers and preachers in their missions. At the same time, this revivalism sparked the formation of separate nativist churches under Amerindian pastors, a prospect that white ministers found both socially destabilizing and theologically problematic. The last half of *Prodigal Sons* considers three distinct but interrelated events in the 1760s and 70s: Philip Quaque’s mission to the Cape Coast, eastern Indians’ mission to the Iroquois, and John Quamine’s failed mission to Africa. These three chapters illuminate how native preachers used their unique identities to recast the relationship between missions and empire, narrate unconverted Africans and Native Americans into a sacred, expansive, and inclusive history of Christianity, wrestle with the problems of race, slavery, and dispossession, and foster direct connections between Native American missions and African ones. In sum, the centrality of indigenous preachers, teachers, and evangelists to British Atlantic missions demands that we reconceptualize the historical relationships between missionaries and neophytes, imperial colonization and Protestant evangelization, and Christian doctrines and indigenous spiritualities. *Prodigal Sons* thus enriches and complicates our understanding of cultural interaction between Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans in the most formative period of those encounters.
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INTRODUCTION

PRODIGAL SONS:
INDIGENOUS MISSIONARIES IN THE BRITISH ATLANTIC WORLD, 1640-1780

The spring of 1765 was an extraordinary time for Philip Quaque. On May 1st of that year, he was ordained as an Anglican minister by the Bishop of London in the breathtaking Chapel Royal at St. James Palace. This had been a long time coming, for Quaque had been training for this very moment since he first set foot on English soil nearly a decade before. The newly ordained preacher probably spent the rest of the day mingling in elite clerical circles, reminiscing about his training, and discussing the obstacles he would face in his future career as an African missionary. The following day must have been even more emotional, for on that day Quaque married a young English girl named Catherine Blunt in an Anglican ceremony officiated by the very person who tutored him for nearly a decade.¹

Within only a few months, he and his English wife set sail for West Africa’s Cape Coast Castle, one of the many African forts that constituted the backbone of the British transatlantic slave trade. Quaque would stay there for half a century, trying to convert Africans, monitoring the religious piety of English merchants there, and witnessing the horror of African slavery firsthand. The dozens of letters he wrote back to his Anglican sponsors complained bitterly about the irreligion of English traders, the depravity and barbarity of

¹ Margaret Priestly, “Philip Quaque of Cape Coast,” in *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans From the Era of the Slave Trade*, ed. Philip D. Curtin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 107. Priestly notes on page 112 that Quaque’s second and third wives were African rather than English. Quaque was also known by the name “Kweku”. Although his name became Anglicized as “Quaque,” “Kweku” or “Kwaku” actually meant “born on Wednesday” in most Akan-speaking African groups.
African natives, and the haughty attitude of the mixed race population of the Cape Coast. Quaque characterized Africa as a “barren land” and a “barren country” that begged for the introduction of the gospel to save it from its own primordial sins. Although his white wife, English training, and critical comments about Africans might have situated him as one of the hundreds of white missionaries sent throughout the Atlantic world in the eighteenth century, Quaque was actually a native-born West African trying to convert the very people from which he sprang. As the first African ordained in the Anglican Church, Quaque became a walking paradox; a literate, English speaking, well educated African preaching in a place where the denial of African intelligence helped justify the slave trade that surrounded him.

As an African preaching among Africans, Quaque was certainly not alone. He was but one of the hundreds of African, black slave, and Native American evangelists who attempted to evangelize blacks and Indians throughout the British Atlantic world during the early modern era. These native missionaries – meaning, native to the people they were evangelizing – became absolutely central to the intercultural exchange between Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans during the most formative years of their encounters. James Axtell found that there were at least 133 ordained native preachers in the mainland colonies by the era of the American Revolution, and many more informal teachers and church office holders. My estimates, which include black slave, African, Afro-Moravian, and Amerindian preachers throughout the Atlantic world and beyond, puts the number well over 300, roughly the same number of “white” missionaries that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

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2 Quaque was sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), founded in 1701, so most of those letters (though not all) were addressed to that organization.

3 Philip Quaque to the SPG, undated but probably written in the fall of 1767; and Quaque to the SPG, 6 August 1782, both in Philip Quaque, Letters of the Rev. Philip Quaque of West Africa (East Ardsley, England: Micro Methods Ltd., 1980-1985).

in Foreign Parts (the largest missionary organization in the eighteenth century) employed in the American colonies. By the nineteenth century, 85% of the people working for British missions were not actually British.\textsuperscript{5} In the Travancore state of southern India during the turn of the twentieth century, for example, there were 50 European missionaries stationed among 882 native ones.\textsuperscript{6} Nearly 900 native missionaries left Fiji, Somoa, the Cook Islands, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga to act as Christian missionaries on other Pacific Islands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{7} Historians of nineteenth century missions have already recognized the importance of native preachers to the development of Christian evangelical enterprises in the Great Plains, Central Africa, East Asia, and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{8} Historians of the early modern Atlantic, however, trail far behind in that regard. Although a handful of literary scholars and historians have provided a few biographies of some of the most celebrated and documented indigenous missionaries of this era (such as the famous Samson Occom), no scholar has undertaken a systematic study of how native Christian preachers as a whole fit into larger problems of race, authority, and the debate over the future

\textsuperscript{5} This statistic was estimated by Jeffrey Cox when he served as Chair of a panel entitled, “Religion, Empire, Indigenous Worlds,” at the November 2006 meeting of the North American Conference on British Studies.


of Indians and Africans in Western Christendom. Perhaps most importantly, no one has yet employed an Atlantic approach to this subject. In doing so, this dissertation demonstrates that native preachers from Iroquoia to India, Carolina to the Caribbean, and West Africa to Narragansett were vital participants in an increasingly global Protestant missionary effort.

Philip Quaque’s exceptional history was therefore a product of an Atlantic-wide attempt to use Native Americans, black slaves, and Africans to evangelize people like themselves. Just as Edmund Morgan identified the simultaneous development of slavery and freedom as the “central paradox” of American history, this study of indigenous missionaries presents its own paradox: during a period characterized by Native American dispossession, the expansion of the British transatlantic slave trade, the institutionalization of racial slavery, and the creation of the concept of race itself, British missionary groups invested a tremendous amount of time, effort, money, and spiritual authority into hundreds of native

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10 The term “native,” of course, is somewhat problematic. Here I use the phrase to describe non-white Christian evangelists who were intended for missionary work among their own people. Although there were a few famous exceptions to this rule – such as when Eleazar Wheelock sent eastern Algonquian Indians among the Iroquois in the 1760s – this definition of “native” and “indigenous” still applies to most of my subjects. Peggy Brock, an expert in British missionary history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, prefers to use the phrase “New Christians.” And yet, her essays still use the words “native” and “indigenous,” while “new Christians” precludes the possibilities of generations-old traditions of indigenous Christian preaching. See Brock, “New Christians as Evangelists.”
peoples in the hope that they would spread the gospel among others.\textsuperscript{11} This dissertation not only explains why, but also investigates what these native preachers meant for the history of cultural interaction, the development of indigenous Christianities, and the relationship between missions and empire.

\textbf{The Historiography of Missions}

Historian James Ronda once observed that the reputation of missionaries is in many ways analogous to the volatile stock market: “bullish and up one day, bearish and down the next.”\textsuperscript{12} In fact, historians of missions and missionaries have generally approached their topic in three unique but mutually conversant ways. The first scholars to draft the histories of Christian missionaries often provided hagiographic descriptions of their physical trials, evangelical efforts, and occasional martyrdoms at the hands of recalcitrant natives. These historians – many of whom were churchmen and missionaries themselves – invariably cast missionaries as godly saints who heroically spread the light of Christianity even when natives preferred to stay in darkness.\textsuperscript{13} For these historians, the active presence of native preachers –


\textsuperscript{13} The work of Kenneth Scott Latourette exemplifies these tendencies. See especially Latourette, \textit{A History of the Expansion of Christianity}, 7 Volumes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937-1945). In his presidential address to the American Historical Association, Latourette suggested that all scholars pursue what he called a “Christian understanding of history.” See Latourette, “The Christian Understanding of History,” \textit{American Historical Review} 54 No. 2 (January 1949): 259-76. See also the work of Bishop Stephen Neill, especially Stephen Neill, \textit{A History of Christian Missions} (New York: Penguin Books, 1986). Andrew Porter suggests that this missionary-as-martyr interpretation is still alive and well within the circles of church historians. He notes that their “own evident confessional commitment, the tendency to hagiography or institutional piety, the study of the missionary past with the commitment of the determined reformer intent on future success, both seem almost as strong as ever.” See Andrew Porter, \textit{Religion versus Empire? British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700-1914} (Manchester: University of
people who were “native” to the group they were trying to convert – threatened to undermine the religious and racial purity of Western civilization’s narrative of progress. Even more importantly, it also threatened to reveal the kind of syncretism, hybridity, and creative adaptation of Christianity that orthodox evangelists abhorred. Thus, when scholars did mention indigenous preachers, they tended to focus on the ones who appeared to have undergone the largest transformation from “pagan” to converted Christian, such as Samson Occom and Philip Quaque. And yet, the historiographical process of highlighting their exceptionality, uniqueness, or “genius” only served to underscore the recalcitrance of the rest.\(^{14}\) In this view, native peoples were not subjects, but rather objects of the “white man’s burden” to spread Christianity and civilization across the globe.

Beginning in the middle of the twentieth century, a period marked by civil rights movements, anti-colonialism, and a growing suspicion of institutionalized Christianity (at least among academics), missionaries assumed a different form.\(^{15}\) Scholars such as Francis Jennings, Neal Salisbury, and Robert F. Berkhofer presented Christian evangelists as arrogant and rapacious imperialists who paved the way for cultural disintegration, social enslavement, 

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\(^{14}\) Two good examples are Samson Occom and Philip Quaque, both of whom had been memorialized as completely converted Christians by the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, and both were frequently characterized as “celebrities.” For some of these tendencies, see William DeLoss Love, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1899). For Quaque and other Christian African celebrities, see Rev. S.R.B. Attoh Ahuma, *Memoirs of West African Celebrities, Europe, &c. (1700-1850). With Special Reference to the Gold Coast* (Liverpool: D. Marples & Co., 1905).

and territorial dispossession. In the words of historian David Silverman, the scholars of the 1960s and 70s usually characterized Christian missionaries as “ideological shock troops for colonial invasion whose zealotry blinded them.” Christianity was now seen as a monolithic and imposing entity that colonists forced upon native peoples even as they violently resisted Christian imperialism. While emotionally appealing to many, this interpretation was not completely intellectually satisfying. As James Axtell noted, this imperialist view was “little more than the familiar Eurocentric plot turned on its normative head.” Missionary heroes became the villains, indigenous victims became the new heroes, and Christianity and indigenous religions were once again viewed as mutually incompatible. In the later, imperialistic interpretation, native preachers were cast as race traitors, “deracinated

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sycophant[s]” who forfeited their Indian and African identities to ameliorate their own
temporal circumstances. Native preachers, therefore, were rarely taken seriously by either
group of scholars because they were not orthodox enough for one and not “authentic” enough
for the other. Both the missionary-as-saint and missionary-as-imperialist framework
therefore left little interpretive space for the hundreds of native preachers who actively
participated in British evangelical efforts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The missionary-as-imperialist interpretation has exhibited considerable staying
power. In 2004 Laura M. Stevens proclaimed that “it is well known that the missionary and
imperial aspirations of early modern Europe were intertwined.” Stevens and other scholars
have identified the ways in which missions, and the native neophytes who accepted
Christianity, helped craft a colonial, imperial identity. Alden T. Vaughan even recently
called missions “a handmaiden of colonial diplomacy.” Perhaps, but the past two decades
have witnessed yet another fluctuation in the historical reputation of missions. Instead of


21 Terence Ranger is right to note that scholars have too frequently employed circular reasoning to mark out
the boundaries that define indigenous peoples as “authentic” or not. He suggests that scholars have defined
anti-Christian, anti-imperial societies as authentic ones, leaving little room for any sense of indigenous
Christians – in America or in Africa – as “authentic.” See Terence Ranger, “Christianity and Indigenous
more on the problem of authenticity in native voices, see the introduction to Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing
Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: University of
Massachusetts Press, 2000), 1-16. Rachel Wheeler has also criticized previous scholars’ search for
“authentic” voices and argues that focusing on religious practice, rather than belief, helps to avoid getting
entangled in that thorny conceptual problem. See Wheeler, “Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican

22 Laura M. Stevens, “Gold for Glasse: The Trope of Trade in English Missionary Writings,” in *The
233.

23 Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776* (New York:
Cambridge University Press, 2006), 150. For excellent and recent analyses of how Protestant missionary
rhetoric helped fashion imperial identities, see Laura M. Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries,
Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); and
Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians and Colonial American Identity* (Ithaca,
outposts of civilization or the advanced guard of an avaricious imperialist program, historians now see missions as sites of contestation as well as conversation and cultural negotiation. As such, the relationship between religion and empire becomes messier and more ambiguous than the imperialistic school might have it. British and Australian scholars like Andrew Porter and Norman Etherington have cast doubt on the view that missions were, in Etherington’s words, “a reflex of imperialism.”

Brian Stanley, a leading scholar of British missions in the nineteenth century, has recently attacked what he called the “unquestionable” orthodoxy that “the Bible and the flag” traveled together during the history of Western imperial expansion. Andrew Porter concluded that missionaries’ engagement with empire “more often than not took the form of bitter experience,” leaving them feeling “deeply ambiguous at best.” In fact, even some of the architects of the imperial school of missionary studies began to publish articles that emphasized ambiguity over imperialism, negotiation over resistance, and exchange over violence. To invoke Richard White’s seminal study of intercultural relations in the Great Lakes region, historians over the last few decades have begun to examine the very important and quite sizeable “middle ground,”

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where Christian missionaries and indigenous peoples negotiated with one another, exchanged ideas, and tried to create a world of accommodation rather than one of violence.  

Native preachers inhabited that physical, metaphorical, and cultural space in between, and the recent turn in missionary scholarship away from the imperialist school owes much to the study of indigenous Christianities from Africa to the Americas. As Norman Etherington has recently asserted, “the greatest difficulty faced by those who have tried to argue that Christian missions were a form of cultural imperialism has been the overwhelming evidence that the agents of conversion were local people, not foreign missionaries. None of them were coerced into believing and very few were paid.”

In the meantime, established scholars like Lamin O. Sanneh, T.O. Ranger, Peggy Brock, and others have demonstrated the ways in which Christianity was “translated” into African, Indian, and Asian cultural contexts by indigenous preachers like Samuel Crowther, Arthur Wellington Clah, and Moses Tjalkabota. Literary scholars and historians of early America have also begun to portray

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28 Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). It should be noted, of course, that the middle ground gave way to empire during the age of revolution, thus it was just as important as it was tenuous. For a book that emphasizes this process of division and the erosion of negotiation, see Alan Taylor, The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

29 Etherington, ed., Missions and Empire, 7.

missions as sites of conversation between religious systems, with indigenous peoples playing a central role in those conversations.\(^{31}\) The end result is a growing understanding that Christianity is not, and was never intended to be, an exclusively white man’s religion. Instead, Christianity was experienced as a set of evolving, organic, and translatable concepts and practices from which all peoples could appropriate what they pleased while disregarding the rest.\(^{32}\) Native preachers sought to detach Christianity from its white, Western moorings and insert it into their own religious, historical, and social worlds.


Translation and appropriation—rather than diffusion and conversion—is therefore a more appropriate framework for understanding indigenous encounters with Christianity. There is little doubt that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most indigenous peoples from Native America to Africa expressed either apathy or disgust at the Christian missionaries who appeared in their lands, villages, and homes. At the same time, hundreds of Indians and Africans voluntarily became preachers to their own peoples. Their diverse and wide-ranging motivations are explained in the following chapters, but many of them shared the belief that Christianity offered an opportunity to amass new spiritual power. They usually did not see their appropriation of Christianity as a complete rejection of their indigenous past, but rather one of several alternatives for understanding and explaining their world. Some even understood evangelical Christianity as but one component of a larger native revitalization movement. Their choices were not expressive of a complete surrendering of their cultural traditions but rather a “highly conditional and selective acceptance” of some elements of Christianity. While these preachers were certainly not “representative” of their indigenous populations, they were nevertheless essential to the ways

33 Recent studies have correctly suggested that complete and total “conversions” to Christianity were extremely rare. Indeed, Carla Pestana has argued that, “Because native spirituality was flexible in allowing the incorporation of new concepts and novel spiritual beings, Indians could adapt some of the new religion brought by Christians without rejecting their own traditions.” See Carla Gardina Pestana, “Religion,” in The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 81. For more on the problem of conversion in a comparative context, see Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, eds. Conversion: Old Worlds and New, Studies in Comparative History Series (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003). For more on the difference between diffusion and translation, see Sanneh, Translating the Message. Neal Salisbury has recently suggested that conversion itself is a bogus phrase and should no longer be used as a framework for understanding indigenous identities during this period of contact. See Salisbury, “Embracing Ambiguity”: 257.


in which some Native Americans and Africans appropriated and translated Christianity. For them, translation was a two-fold process. On the one hand, translation was a literary project whereby native preachers translated sacred texts into indigenous languages. On the other hand, translation was also an intellectual exercise of translating Christian concepts into indigenous spiritual frameworks. Good Peter, Old Isaac, and Deacon Thomas, for example, were three Oneida Indians who translated Presbyterian Christianity to other Oneidas and Mohawks in the middle of the eighteenth century. These preachers could “conceive and relate Christian precepts in Oneida terms to aid nation members in grasping basic concepts. Whenever they spoke to friends and relatives, these Oneidas were especially effective in transferring biblical teachings and images into established Oneida constructions of reality.”

Native preachers were therefore absolutely central not only to the rise of the Protestant missionary enterprise, but also to the creation of indigenous Christianities during this period.

While I have tried throughout the dissertation to avoid jargon-laden theorizing, I should note that there is certainly no lack of theoretical models to help us understand native preachers in the early modern British Atlantic. Scholars like Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Paul Gilroy have all provided conceptual frameworks for understanding the nature and boundaries of resistance, identity formation, and the “inescapable hybridity” of cultural encounter in the early modern and modern eras. In fact, some of these missionaries could accurately be classified as “cultural brokers” or even “Atlantic creoles”: people who lived

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36 Joseph T. Glatthaar and James Kirby Martin, *Forgotten Allies: The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 62. Good Peter was also in the business of literal translation, for he could also knew Mohawk as well as Oneida and English.

between the worlds of Western colonialism and indigenous traditionalism. And yet, not all of them were cultural brokers or Atlantic creoles, for those terms themselves are simply too reductionist to explain the multiplicity of identities that missionary encounters created. A cultural broker, for example, is usually defined as a person between Western and indigenous cultural systems who attempted to negotiate the economic, political, social, and cultural (including religious) relationships between them. From our perspective, native preachers certainly fit the bill. And yet, from the perspective of a third-generation Christian preacher at Martha’s Vineyard or Mashpee, Indian Christianity was not an alien religion but an organic experience that was deeply engrained into Wampanoag culture. They were therefore not negotiating between cultures because Christianity had become a central part of theirs. At the same time, “Atlantic creoles” cannot possibly explain all of the black preachers who participated in Atlantic world missionary efforts. While Ira Berlin has described an Atlantic creole as someone who spoke both English and their native tongue, one African missionary, at least, lost his native tongue in his effort to become Anglicized in the 1750s and 60s. In other words, native preachers could be Atlantic creoles, highly Anglicized Africans, cultural brokers, full-fledged Christian evangelists, conniving opportunists, and everything in between. Since these native evangelists exemplified the multiple levels of hybridity, they simultaneously reinforce and challenge the conceptual models of cultural exchange that characterize our understanding of this period.38

This dissertation in no way intends to serve as an apologia for Protestant missions, and it does not seek to return to the hagiographic approach by painting native preachers as innocent saints or culture heroes. Indigenous evangelists believed they had access to spiritual power, but their roles as native preachers often left them abysmally poor, socially ostracized, psychologically depressed, and spiritually anxious. They frequently lived, worked, and died in social isolation, and the letters we do have from them reflect a sincere concern for the souls of the people they were trying to save as well as their own. At the same time, their position as sometime cultural intermediaries also gave them unique opportunities to oppose empire, situate indigenous peoples into a longer history of Christian brotherhood, and use scripture as a rhetorical weapon to secure a place for themselves and their people in the physical, spiritual, and discursive landscape of the early modern British Atlantic world.

Sources and Organization

Fortunately, theologians, ministers, and missionaries were among the most literate and conversant of all Atlantic world characters. Missionaries left an enormous documentary trail of both published and manuscript sources that chart the role of native evangelists in cultural interaction. Because most Anglo-American missionary history has often sought to elevate or immolate white missionaries, the role of indigenous peoples has usually been relegated to the background. But it was rarely erased. Instead, the stories, choices, and experiences of native missionaries are often deeply embedded in the manuscript and printed texts they left behind. My strategy has therefore been to examine most, if not all, of the extant missionary literature of the period, fully understanding that a dramatic reconsideration of early modern missionary history would inevitably entail a comprehensive review of all the primary literature. I have therefore examined every tract produced by Puritan New England missions, every publication by Eleazar Wheelock’s native evangelical program, nearly every
annual sermon and proceeding of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign
Parts, and essentially every piece of missionary literature published from 1640 to 1780 in the
British Atlantic world. Although these missionary sources are highly mediated, usually
formulaic, and generally problematic, they still – when used cautiously and when cross-
referenced with other sources – provide a wealth of information about cultural exchange in
the early modern era. Like Emma Anderson, I view the complexity of these primary
materials as “a positive feature to be embraced rather than as a daunting hurdle foreclosing
further exploration.” Missionary writings were certainly complex and problematic, but they
were far from “fiction in the archives.”

At the same time, I have privileged indigenous voices in telling this story, and there is
a surprising wealth of material on native Christians produced by their own hands. Philip
Quaque wrote several dozen letters - totaling nearly 200 pages - that detail his mission to
West Africans for over half a century. Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, whom I examine in the
fifth chapter, collectively wrote hundreds of letters, sermons, and diary entries. Their

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41 American Indian scholars have urged other academics to include indigenous voices in their studies of native peoples, and I have sought to do that effectively. I do not, however, rely upon oral traditions, simply because the wealth of written material and the flexibility of oral historical narratives of eastern American Indians. For more on this argument, see Devon A. Mihesuah, “Introduction,” and Angela Cavender Wilson, “American Indian History of Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History,” in *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing About American Indians*, ed. Mihesuah (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 1-26.

42 There is a major debate, of course, about the value of missionary sources. While some scholars have described them as malleable and flexible (and therefore unreliable), others have found that few editorial changes actually took place when they made the transfer from on-site recording to actual publication. See, for example, Kenneth M. Morrison, “Discourse and the Accommodation of Values: Towards a Revision of Mission History,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53 No. 3 (September 1985): 365-382; Anderson, *The Betrayal of Faith*, 235-241; Kristina Bross, “Come Over and Help Us: Reading Mission Literature,” *Early American Literature* 38 No. 3 (September 2003): 395-400; Erik Seeman, “Reading
mission to the Oneidas alone produced nearly 100 letters that detail their work among the Iroquois, their relationship with their hosts, and the conflicts that their evangelism engendered. Native preachers thus left a surprisingly robust trail of manuscript and published material to track their movements, ideas, challenges, and strategies for converting indigenous peoples. As I explain in the first chapter, their writings, sermons, and songs might best be understood as “autoethnographic texts.” While scholars have traditionally viewed indigenous Christianity as passive subjugation to imperial and colonial authority, native preachers would have thought otherwise. Indeed, they used their sermons, letters, writings, and even identities as fulcrums against empire, colonization, dispossession, and racial slavery, and they employed Christianity as a spiritual and rhetorical weapon to fight that battle. These autoethnographic texts were therefore opportunities for native preachers to “represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms.”

We should not be so quick to dismiss native preachers as pushovers simply because they never took up the musket or tomahawk against white colonists. They instead turned to narration, the discursive power to frame reality through words rather than weapons. “The power to narrate,” Edward Said reminded us, “is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them.” Native preachers were quite unique in that they had the narrative power to destabilize and redraw those connections between culture and empire along lines that they saw most fit. Privileging these texts while simultaneously using them in

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43 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 7. Hillary Wyss also employs Pratt’s concept of autoethnographic as well as transculturation to discuss Indian texts in *Writing Indians*. “Transculturation” was first coined by Fernando Ortiz in his *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1947).

44 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xiii.
conjunction with printed sources offers an amazing opportunity to outline the ways in which native preachers understood Christianity, carved out a space for indigenous peoples within a larger Christian history, employed their spiritual authority to lobby for indigenous rights and protection, and fabricated their unique identities as indigenous Christians during a period of intense cultural contact, exchange, and conflict.

In order to address these historical problems, I have organized Prodigal Sons into six chronological and thematic chapters. While the first chapter establishes the centrality of native evangelists to the seventeenth century Puritan New England missions, the second explores the lingering debates about using Native American and black evangelists in the Anglican Atlantic. It discusses the ways in which Anglicans supported an interdenominational native mission to India while simultaneously failing to cultivate an indigenous missionary corps in their own Atlantic realm. The third chapter situates Afro-Moravianism in the Caribbean, South Carolina slave education, and Amerindian separatism into a larger context of transatlantic evangelism from the 1740s to the 1760s. The fourth chapter is an analysis of an African Anglican’s mission to West Africa. Based upon nearly 200 pages of letters he produced in fifty years of missionary work, this chapter explores Philip Quaque’s narration of Christian African identity as well as his conceptualization of empire and slavery. Chapter five investigates the mission of Eleazar Wheelock’s Algonquian pupils to the Iroquois Indians in the 1760s. I argue that this mission produced unprecedented conflicts between Wheelock and his pupils, his pupils and other native missionaries, and his pupils and the Oneidas they were trying to convert. By the late 1760s, Wheelock had conceded that native missionaries were ineffective, even if most ministers throughout the Atlantic vehemently disagreed. In fact, Wheelock’s experiment greatly influenced the development of a failed native mission to Africa by former slaves in 1773. My final chapter looks at the ways in which Native American missionary history, as well as transatlantic Afro-
evangelism, formed the foundation of an ambitious mission to West Africa on the eve of the American Revolution. It aims to show not only the comparisons between Native American and African missionary histories, but also the deep entanglements therein. The conclusion summarizes my findings while forecasting how black and Indian Christian leadership formed the basis for autonomous communities from New York to Sierra Leone in the post-Revolutionary era. Each of these chapters takes on a different conceptual problem as well, including the themes of war, imperialism, religious translation, slavery, the boundaries of the Atlantic world, evangelical revivalism, native Christian perceptions of other natives, and connections between Indians and Africans. Collectively, these chapters demonstrate that black and Indian evangelists were central to the development of Christian missions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

**Pragmatism, Sacred Genealogy, and the Centrality of Native Missionaries**

Native evangelists have always been a vital component of Christian missionary activity. Writing about the rise of native clergy in the Philippines, Jesuit scholar Horacio De La Costa noted in 1947 that “one of the most important tasks of the missionary, if not the principal one, is the formation of native priests who can eventually receive from his hands the administration and propagation of the Catholic Church in their own country.”  

De La Costa went on to quote from French scholar Pierre Charles to assert that “the native clergy, therefore, is not the coping stone of the missionary edifice; it is the foundation stone. The truth is, that as long as it does not yet exist, the mission itself does not exist either.”

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De La Costa was writing about Catholic missions, the same could also be said for Protestant ones. In spite of the centrality of native agents to the history of Christian evangelism, the conventional image of a Protestant missionary as a white Anglo-American completely unfamiliar with indigenous cultures has maintained a remarkable persistence. In spite of the overwhelming corpus of scholarship on white missionaries, native preachers usually outnumbered the white ones working beside them. A mission simply could not exist without native participants.

Protestant missionaries had always been compelled to train indigenous peoples to preach to other indigenous peoples. There were many reasons for this, but we can identify several main advantages that native missionaries had over English ones. The most important was language. Native preachers could act as literal and cultural translators between English church officials and indigenous audiences. In spite of the best efforts by divines like John Eliot, John Cotton, and Roger Williams to understand and publish texts in indigenous languages, native missionaries’ ability to speak local dialects gave them an advantage that no English minister had. As early as 1642, Thomas Lechford contended that, if Puritans were to instruct Indians, it “must be in their owne language, not English.” John Eliot compared the useless effect of English preaching with the efficacy of Indian preaching: “An English young man raw in that language, coming to teach among our Christian-Indians, would be

47 See Roger Williams, A key into the language of America, or, An help to the language of the natives in that part of America called New-England [microform] : together with briefe observations of the customes, manners and worshipes, &c. of the aforesaid natives, in peace and warre, in life and death : on all which are added spirituall observations, generall and particular, by the authour ... / by Roger Williams .. (London: Gregory Dexter, 1643); and Anne G. Myles, “Dissent and the Frontier of Translation: Roger Williams’s A Key into the Language of America” in Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

48 Thomas Lechford, Plain dealing: or, nevves from New-England. A short view of New-Englands present government, both ecclesiasticall and civill, compared with the anciently-received and established government of England, in some materiall points; fit for the gravest consideration in these times. By Thomas Lechford of Clements Inne, in the County of Middlesex, gent. (London: W. E. and I. G., 1642), 53.
much to their loss; there be of themselves such as be more able, especially being advantaged
that they speaketh his own language, and knoweth their manners.”49 Eliot even admitted that,
“as for my preaching…I see that it is not so taking, and effectuall to strangers, as their own
expressions be, who naturally speak unto them in their own tongue.”50 The apparent
diversity of indigenous languages did little to dissuade church leaders, as they assumed that
any Indian who knew his own could easily pick up as many as 20 different languages in a
few years and be serviceable to as many as 40 different Indian nations.51 The importance of
indigenous languages is best demonstrated by Philip Quaque’s lack of it: when his Anglican
sponsors discovered that Quaque had lost his West African dialect during his decade of
training in England, they emphatically urged him to “recover his own language.”52 The
variety and complexity of indigenous languages made native peoples vital to any missionary
project.

The second major advantage that indigenous missionaries had over English ones was
the ability to tap into existing networks of kinship, trade, and friendship to spread the gospel

49 John Eliot, A Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Among the Indians of New England. (Boston:

50 Henry Whitefield, Strength out of weaknesse; or a glorious manifestation of the further progresse of the
Gospel among the Indians in New-England: Held forth in sundry letters from divers ministers and others to
the corporation established by Parliament for promoting the Gospel among the heathen in New-England:
and to particular members thereof since the last treatise to that effect, formerly set forth by Mr. Henry
Whitfield, late Pastor of Gilford in New-England. Published by the aforesaid corporation (London: M.
Simmons, 1652), 6.

51 See Matthew Mayhew, The conquests and triumphs of grace: being a brief narrative of the success
which the gospel hath had among the Indians of Martha’s Vineyard (and the places adjacent) in New-
England: with some remarkable curiosities, concerning the numbers, the customs, and the present
circumstances of the Indians on that island : further explaining and confirming the account given of those
matters, by Mr. Cotton Mather, in the Life of the renowned Mr. John Eliot (London: Nath. Hiller, 1695),
11-12.

52 SPG Journal in Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Records of the Society for the
to thank Mark Thompson for his insightful suggestion that Quaque’s loss of language might have been a
self-conscious way to fashion a new, English Christian identity. Although it made him less valuable as a
missionary, he might have intentionally lost his language to make him more English than African.
along those lines. Peer pressure, in other words, made Indians attractive missionaries. This perplexed many New England Indians, for they often asked whether they should abandon kinship ties if they were Christian and their relatives were not. John Eliot asked a group of Indians about this problem in 1649, and they replied, much to Eliot’s satisfaction: “when a strange Indian comes among us whom we never saw before…if he pray unto God, we do exceedingly love him: But if my own Brother, dwelling in a great way off, come unto us, he not praying to God, though we love him, yet nothing so as we love that other strangers, who doth pray unto God.”

Although this vignette suggests that Indians might have abandoned some kinship ties, it would be foolish to assume that all did so as soon as a native preacher came knocking. In fact, Indians had questions about how they could fuse an understanding of their new relationship to their preacher with traditional ideas about native kinship. One group even asked, if a wise Indian who teaches “good things” came among them, whether that Indian was to be “as a father or brother unto such Indians he so teacheth?”

Some missionaries embraced Christianity simply because their kin did so. When Anthony, a Christian minister at Natick, Massachusetts, gave an account of his own Christian awakening, he told of how his brothers “prayed morning and evening; and when they eat, and on Sabbath dayes…then I thought I would do so: but it was not for love of God, or fear of God, but because I loved my brothers.”

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53 Henry Whitfield, The light appearing more and more towards the perfect day. Or, a farther discovery of the present state of the Indians in New-England, concerning the progresse of the Gospel amongst them. Manifested by letters from such as preacht to them there. (London: T. R. & E.M., 1651), 22.

54 Thomas Shepard, The clear sun-shine of the gospel breaking forth upon the Indians in Nenv-England. Or, An historickall narration of Gods wonderfull workings upon sundry of the Indians, both chief governors and common-people, in bringing them to a willing and desired submission to the ordinances of the gospel: and framing their hearts to an earnest inquirie after the knowledge of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world. / By Mr. Thomas Shepard minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ at Cambridge in New-England (London: R. Cotes, 1648), 35-36.

55 John Eliot, A further account of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England: being a relation of the confessions made by several Indians (in the presence of the elders and members of several
existing loyalties and kinship networks, shoehorn native missionary work into traditional ideas of kinship, and sometimes even fashion new forms of identity based upon a sense of Christian community and identity. Compared to English missionaries, for whom they had no such loyalty, this was a very attractive advantage.

Native preachers were also more cost-effective than English ones. Ordained Anglican preachers usually demanded anywhere between 40 and 100 pounds English sterling per year, depending on the circumstances. By contrast, Petrus Paulus, a Mohawk Indian who catechized, read prayers, and directed religious services at New York’s Fort Hunter when Anglican preachers were absent, only cost about 7 pounds annually.\(^{56}\) Native preachers who left their homes to be educated in English schools were significantly more expensive than local catechists such as Paulus, but they were still more cost-effective. One Presbyterian missionary organization ran the numbers in 1767 and found that it would cost about 120 pounds to give a native preacher seven years of education among the English. It would then cost another 50 pounds annually (20 for salary, 30 for maintenance) to support that native preacher in his mission. The Presbyterians anticipated that an English missionary would cost about 100 pounds for one year, while an interpreter would charge about 50 pounds. English preachers were definitely cheaper in the short run, but native ones were more cost-effective down the stretch. Therefore, and in spite of the time and money spent on his education and re-introduction among native peoples, a native preacher could actually provide a return on a

missionary organization’s investment just after his first year of service.\footnote{The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, \textit{Recommendation By The Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, In favour of the Academy established by Mr Eleazar Wheelock, of Lebanon, in Connecticut, in New England, For the education of Indian Missionaries} (Edinburgh: s.n., 1767), footnote on page 2.} This was an attractive proposition for Protestant missionaries and it helps explain why Protestants kept turning to native preachers, even when dozens of them left the schools, turned “apostate,” or created their own religious followings. Their cost-effectiveness, combined with a general propensity among English clergy to “decline the Difficulties and Dangers” of missions to Indians and Africans, only made native preachers all the more indispensable.\footnote{Kenneth White, \textit{The Lets and Impediments in Planting and Propagating the Gospel of Christ. A Sermon Preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, At Their Anniversary Meeting, In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; On Friday the 15\textsuperscript{th} of February, 1711/12} (London: J. Downing, 1712), 41.}

The very poverty, wandering, and scattered living that Protestant ministers often found in Amerindians and Africans was the final pragmatic reason why native peoples seemed ideal for missionary work. Few English ministers could learn the Indian language, but fewer still would bear “going native,” moving out to the frontier, and living with the same Indians they hoped to save. “Experience has taught us,” Eleazar Wheelock proclaimed in 1763, “that such a change of Diet, and manner of Living as Missionaries generally come into, will not consist with the Health of many \textit{Englishmen}.”\footnote{Eleazar Wheelock, \textit{A Plain and Faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and Present State of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut} (Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper, 1763), 27.} John Eliot, writing several generations before Wheelock, noted that missionary work in New England was difficult, “not only in respect of the language, but also in respect of their barbarous course of life and poverty; there is not so much as meat, drink or lodging for them that go unto them to preach
among them, but we must carry all things with us.” Eliot believed that this Native American depravity rationalized his preference for native missionaries over English ones. He admitted that he found it completely “hopeless to expect English Officers in our Indian Churches; the work is full of hardship, hard labour.” “Men have bodies,” Eliot wrote, and it was pointless to expect an army of English missionaries to volunteer their efforts when the challenges of eking out a living and providing for their own families demanded nearly all their energies. A missionary’s life, Eliot claimed, was “Nothing but poverty and hardships, unsupportable in a constant way by our cloathed and housed nations.” Indians, who were members of “Their own nation” and had been reared in the rigors of Indian lifeways, would therefore be “the most likely instruments to carry on this work.” Unlike white ministers, who would find the uncultivated climates of the American frontier unsuitable to their constitutions, native preachers would simply “return to what they were used to from their Mother’s Womb.” Protestants expected that native missionaries would gladly take the burdensome and demanding evangelical jobs that English missionaries shunned. After all, their bodies seemed particularly well suited for to do so.

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60 Letter from John Eliot to Unknown, 12 November 1648, in Edward Winslow, The Glorious progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England manifested by three letters under the hand of that famous instrument of the Lord, Mr. John Eliot, and another from Mr. Thomas Mayhew, Jun., both preachers of the word, as well to the English as Indians in New England ... : together with an appendix to the foregoing letters, holding forth conjectures, observations, and applications, by I.D. ... / published by Edward Winslow. (London: Hannah Allen, 1649), 10.

61 Eliot, A Brief Narrative, 5.


63 Wheelock, A Plain and Faithful Narrative (1763), 27.

African bodies also made Africans particularly useful for the hard work of traversing the West African, Caribbean, and Carolinian landscapes, but in unique and distinct ways from Native American bodies. Not only were Africans understood to be more physically adept at surviving in the tropical climates of those places, they were also seen as much less vulnerable to the epidemiological havoc that tropical diseases could wreak on English bodies. These pragmatic reasons for employing native missionaries were probably the most ironic component of early modern cultural interaction. In fact, the very attributes that many English commentators began to perceive as cultural liabilities for Indians and Africans (language, difficult living, mobility, and strong bodies), ironically created opportunities for native preachers to amass and exercise a tremendous amount of spiritual authority as preachers. In other words, the same cultural characteristics that served to justify transatlantic slavery and Indian dispossession paradoxically generated openings for Indians and Africans to perform as native preachers. Because of their linguistic skills, access to kinship networks, cost-effectiveness, and durable bodies, native preachers would eventually become vital components of the early modern Protestant missionary enterprise.

There was more than mere pragmatism at work, for Protestants also looked back to the days of early Christian history as a model for evangelization. This phenomenon can be partially explained by a concept I call “sacred genealogy,” which I define as the myriad ways in which Protestant neophytes were cast – and cast themselves – as part of a larger Christian lineage that was both spatially expansive (part of a universal global church) as well as temporally encompassing (stretching back to the early days of Christianity and looking...
forward to the conversion of the entire world). This is more than just repackaged millennialism. While Christian millennialism assumes that the world’s gentiles would be recipients of the gospel, “sacred genealogy” – as I use it – is more concerned with the ways in which indigenous peoples were vital participants in missionary work. Sacred genealogy involved an intellectual exercise whereby understandings of scripture and early Christian history created a space for Native Americans and Africans to gain access to Christian spiritual authority as preachers. At the same time, native preachers participated in this process of narrating themselves and their congregations into the history of Christianity. They thus found ways to detach Christianity from its Western moorings to give it a uniquely syncretic identity.

The employment of scripture in missionary discourse goes much deeper than citing the book of Matthew to remind Christians to go “teach all nations” or using the Acts of the Apostles, which said “come over and help us,” to justify English missionary work among the Indians. In fact, Protestant understanding of scripture and the early history of Christian expansion in the first century both underwrote and explained why native missionaries would not only be common, but ubiquitous in their missions throughout the Atlantic world. Early modern ministers understood the discovery the New World and Europeans’ dominion over it

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66 Historians of Christianity in Africa have been particularly helpful in conceptualizing the ways in which Christianity became appropriated and translated by indigenous peoples. The literature on this topic is overwhelmingly broad, but some important examples are Lamin O. Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity?; Sanneh, Translating the Message; Ranger, “Christianity and Indigenous Peoples: A Personal Overview”: 255-271; and Brock, ed., Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change.

67 Matthew 28:19 and Acts of the Apostles 19:45. Throughout this dissertation I use the King James Bible, a version with which Protestant minds would have been conversant. Kristina Bross has also argued that Ezekiel 37, a passage where dry bones are resurrected by the word of the gospel, was also an important metaphor for understanding missionaries’ role in converting native peoples. See Bross, Dry Bones and Indian Sermons.
as, in the words of one Anglican minister, “a second remarkable period in the Gospel-progress.”

The first, of course, was when preachers like Paul and Barnabas traveled through and evangelized the Mediterranean in the years after Christ’s death. This first age of Christian evangelization was therefore universally understood as a model for future gospelization, especially in the early modern Atlantic world. Consider language, for example. Although language was a pragmatic advantage that native preachers naturally possessed, Protestant divines called upon scripture and their understanding of early Christian history to explain why native languages were a central component of missionary work. John Eliot, for example, invoked the spread of Christianity in the first century and compared it to native evangelical missions in Massachusetts, noting that “God is wont ordinarily to convert Nations and peoples by some of their owne countrymen who are nearest to them, and can best speake, and most of all pity their brethren and countrimen.” For Eliot, Wheelock, and other missionary organizers, the cultivation of native preachers was not just a pragmatic policy, but actually part of God’s divine plan.

This position derived partially from Protestants’ perception of their place in sacred history. They often referred to the earliest days of the church as the “age of miracles,” a period when God participated directly in the evangelizing process by giving the first apostles access to certain spiritual powers that were unavailable to everyone else. These included not only the nifty gift of healing, but also the “gift of tongues,” or the ability to speak in any language extemporaneously. Yet most early modern Protestants lamented the fact that the

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age of miracles had passed, and that human means were now necessary to accomplish the “gospelization” of the world. St. George Ashe suggested that, since the gift of tongues was absent and the age of miracles over, Anglicans should focus their energies on creating native teaching colleges to “improve further the Natives so initiated, and such as may be judged most capable of being useful in the Work of the Ministry.” Because of their linguistic skills, native preachers were expected to perform the same functions that God’s miracles did in ages before.

Sacred genealogy also implied a kind of spiritual equality even as missionaries described indigenous peoples as savage and barbarous. Joseph Leng invoked sacred genealogy when he noted that all peoples who participated in the advancement of Christ’s kingdom were “Fellow-heirs” to Christ’s legacy. “The Gentiles,” he observed, “are now by the Gospel capable of the same Privileges and the same Title to Salvation as the Jews, without any Difference.” As spiritual descendents of Christ himself, each member was a congregant in a universal church where national distinction and even ethnicity did not matter. Leng concluded, “The church or mystical Body of Christ is but one, made up of the Faithful of all Nations, Jews and Gentiles, of which Christ is the Head, and all true Christians are members.” Experience Mayhew also made this point when he cited chapters 34 and 35

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71 St. George Ashe, A Sermon Preach’d before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday the 18th of February, 1714 (London: J. Downing, 1715), 15.

72 John Leng, A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At the Parish-Church of St. Mary-Le-Bow, on Friday the 17th of February, 1726. Being the Day of their Anniversary Meeting (London: J. Downing, 1727), 20-23. Joseph Butler suggested a similar approach to missionary work when he noted that all people were fundamentally of the same human creation, therefore they were of the same Christian family. See Joseph Butler, A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting
from the Acts of the Apostles to remind his readers that, in spite of the lurid tales of Indian barbarity that emanated from Boston’s printing presses in the wake of King Philip’s War, Indians were nevertheless part of a larger Christian family. He noted that God was “no Respecer of Persons,” for he had made each human equally. As equal products of God’s divine will, “all nations stand on one common Level before God, both in the Duty and the Privilege of Sanctification: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free.” Again, this missionary worldview was fundamentally predicated upon their sense of sacred history. John Egerton, for example, reminded his Anglican audience that, although Native Americans might seem barbaric in their eyes, they must remember that the English, too, were formerly just as barbaric and savage before they were exposed to the saving light of Christianity. Any man who engaged in the project of taking stock of Indian barbarity must, Egerton concluded, “lead him to think with humility on the former condition

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73 Jill Lepore has estimated that over 15,000 copies of firsthand accounts of King Philip’s war glutted the New England book market in the years after the war. See Lepore, The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity (New York: Knopf, 1998), 52.

74 Experience Mayhew, All mankind by nature equally under sin : a sermon preach’d at the public lecture in Boston, on Thursday, Dec. 3, 1724 / by Experience Mayhew, M.A., preacher of the Gospel to the Indians in Martha’s Vineyard (Boston: B. Green, 1725), ii. Interestingly, Cotton Mather uses exactly the same language when discussing African slaves’ right to Christian instruction. See Mather, The Negro Christianized An Essay to Excite and Assist that Good Work, The Instruction of Negro-Servants in Christianity (Boston: B. Green, 1706), 24-25. Finally, William Fleetwood argued in 1711 that Indians, Africans, and Europeans were “equally the Workmanship of God, with themselves; endued with the same Faculties, and intellectual Powers; Bodies of the same Flesh and Blood, and Souls as certainly Immortal: These People were made to be as Happy as themselves, and are as capable of being so; and however hard their Condition be in this World, with respect to their Captivity and Subjection, they were to be as Just and Honest, as Chast and Virtuous, as Godly and Religious as themselves: They were bought with the same Price, purchased with the same Blood of Christ, their common Saviour and Redeemer.” See William Fleetwood, A Sermon Preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, At the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, on Friday the 16th of February, 1710/11,Being the Day of their Anniversary Meeting (London: J. Downing, 1711), 13.
of his own country.” Access to Christ was not solely based upon a national or ethnic identity. God could bestow his grace upon anyone he chose. While native missionaries might not have been as well groomed as their English counterparts, the fundamental belief of universal spiritual equality by virtue of God’s creation (as well as their equality under sin) gave them access to membership in a larger Christian church.

According to Protestant writers, God’s omniscience and omnipotence also helped validate the use of native agents in Protestant missions. One metaphor that was frequently used in missionary discourse was that of the instrument. Protestants agreed that instruments were vessels of God’s will, even if they could not understand their place in God’s divine plan at that time. They believed that God’s knowledge and power could create suitable instruments as God saw fit, even when such an act seemed irrational or illogical to English eyes. “One single Savage,” an Anglican divine proclaimed in 1760, “may perhaps, thro’ the power of the living God…be rendered an Apostle to the rest, and an instrument of turning thousands from the ways of Darkness.”

When Ezra Stiles and Charles Chauncy squabbled over the propriety of sending African missionaries to Annamaboe in the 1770s, Stiles reminded his colleague that God can make use of whatever instruments he desired. He noted that God could “endow those whom he intends for Singular usefulness in the world especially those whom he designs for propagating the Gospel among the benighted Heathen & enlarging & building up the Kingdom of the blessed Emmanuel.”

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75 John Egerton, *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; On Friday February 18, 1763* (London: E. Owen and T. Harrison, 1763), 11. Joyce Chaplin has argued in a similar vein for the nostalgia that English observers viewed in Indian archery. See Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, 79-115.

76 For the ways in which Christian theology supported a monogenetic, or common creation, interpretation of humanity, see Kidd, *The Forging of Races*.

77 Smith, *A Discourse Concerning the Conversion of the Heathen Americans*, 18.
and seemingly despicable Instruments,” Stiles concluded, “God has often accomplished great things though often undertaken in *spem contra spem* [hope against hope].”78 In spite of contemporaries’ concerns about the innate “capacity” of Indians and Africans, many missionaries still believed, or at least suggested, that God could fashion a native ministerial elite if he ultimately saw fit. This was how (Protestant divines believed) the gospel was spread in the earliest days of Christianity, and they applied the same evangelical model to their own era in history as well.

Protestant theologians thus articulated an interpretation of early Christian history, as well a belief in God’s infinite knowledge and power, to reveal how native missionaries could gain access to Christian spiritual authority. The symbolic process of ordination was another way in which sacred genealogy connected indigenous preachers not only to the early days of the Christian church, but also to Christ himself. During a typical ordination ceremony, the clergy would participate in the practice of laying their hands on the new minister.79 Although this might seem like a fairly insignificant moment, the act of putting one minister’s hand on the future preacher signified a transfer of spiritual authority. Two Wampanoags from Martha’s Vineyard participated in this ceremony, with John Cotton, Jr., and John Eliot being the hand-givers. When one of them (Japhet Hannit) used his newfound spiritual authority to secure William Simmons’ position as Dartmouth’s Indian preacher, he did the same.80 Although the laying on of hands might appear as an arcane ecclesiastical formality, the performance solidified in the minds of the new preacher, the ministers, and the congregation

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79 This was a Judeo-Christian tradition that found expression in the Acts of the Apostles, chapters 6 and 8.

that Simmons (like Hannit before him) had been initiated into a global community of preachers; a community that traced its spiritual lineage back to Christ through the ceremony of laying on of hands. This practice was repeated in 1759, when Samuel Buell ordained a Mohegan named Samson Occom. After praising Occom’s piety, modesty, and Christian conversion, Buell placed his hand on Occom and urged the new minister to “Go in the Spirit of an Apostle, go do the Work of an Evangelist; Go lift up your voice in the Huts of Savages, and cry aloud to the People that dwell in the gloomy Shades of Death!”⁸¹ As a newly ordained minister, Occom had just been accepted into a sacred community that traced its lineage back to the apostles. In fact, by virtue of his ordination, Occom had become one of them.

Native preachers did not necessarily need this official process of ecclesiastical ordination to participate in the propagation of the gospel. Although Puritans and Anglicans alike assumed that the church-based ministry was the backbone of the Christian community, they also understood that evangelism could not happen without a certain degree of itinerancy. Some even noted that itinerant preachers, rather than settled ministers, could more accurately be called the successors to the famous apostles. In 1733, Joseph Sewall claimed that “Evangelists, or Preachers of the Gospel and Gatherers of Churches among the Heathen, are much more properly and strictly, the Successors of the Apostles, than the stated Bishops or Elders of particular Churches: the Office of the former much more resembling that of the

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⁸¹ Samuel Buell, *The Excellence and Importance of the Saving Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel-Preacher; plainly and seriously represented and enforced: And Christ preached to the Gentiles in Obedience to the Call of God. A Sermon Preached at East-Hampton, August 29, 1759; At The Ordination of Mr. Samson Occum, A Missionary Among the Indians. To Which is Prefixed, A Letter to the Rev. Mr. David Bostwick, Minister of the Presbyterian Church, in New-York, giving some Account of Mr. Occum’s Education, Character, &c.* (New York: James Parker and Company, 1761), 32.
Apostles, than the Office of the latter.” Indians who set out on the road to preach to other Indians – such as Hannit, Occom, and even unordained teachers and preachers – were therefore acting as latter day apostles. All of this is to say that, even as missionary writings provided the rhetorical ammunition for dispossession, enslavement, religious violence, and the creation of British imperial identities, there were a few unique ways in which missionary discourses opened a window for native preachers to gain access to spiritual authority. The decision to use native preachers was therefore not just a pragmatic one, for most missionary minds looked to the early days of Christianity to explain how the gospel could be spread through the rapidly expanding Atlantic world.

**Missionary History as Atlantic History**

Any attempt to convert indigenous peoples in the early modern era was but part of a larger transatlantic, and even Supra-Atlantic, process, one that involved Europeans as well as Native Americans, Africans, and even subcontinental Asians. Christian missionaries and ministers were the most learned, connected, literate, and letter-obsessive people in a period that had seen its highest rates of literacy up to that time, and by the eighteenth century they had built integrated and complex networks of correspondence and information throughout the

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82 Joseph Sewall, *Christ Victorious over the Powers of Darkness, by the Light of His preached Gospel. A Sermon Preached in Boston, December 12, 1733. At the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. Stephen Parker, Mr. Ebenezer Hinsdell, and Mr. Joseph Seccombe, Chosen by the Commissioners to the Honourable Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge at Edinburgh, to carry the Gospel to the Aboriginal Natives on the Borders of New England* (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1733), 42.

83 At the same time, there was a great debate about indigenous itinerant preaching, most Protestant divines also understood that the rise of separate Indian congregations threatened to undermine the unity and purity of Protestant Christianity. See Linford Fisher, “Traditionary Religion: The Great Awakening and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Southern New England, 1736-1776,” (Phd Dissertation, Harvard University, 2008), 210-266.

Atlantic world and beyond. Ezra Stiles, who planned an African mission in the 1770s, spent his days writing to friends as far away as Surinam, Mexico, and Russia. Philip Quaque, an African missionary stationed on the Cape Coast, wrote to colleagues in London, New York, and Boston. In the first decades of the seventeenth century, Puritan divine John Winthrop was receiving news about Catholic missions in India and Japan from a friend in Bermuda. Cotton Mather contributed money and books to a German Lutheran mission, sponsored by Danish Royalty and funded by Anglicans, to southern India. While Susan M. O’Brien has correctly argued that the First Great Awakening cultivated a “transatlantic community of saints,” the revivals of the 1740s only crystallized pre-existing networks of communication. In other words, missionary networks from Native America to Europe, Europe to India, Africa to London, and from the Caribbean to New England, “increasingly reinforced each other as settlers, preachers, and religious literature passed to and fro between” these spaces. Most Protestant missionary activity was centered on North America. And yet, that region became both a model for and a product of other missions in the Caribbean, West Africa, and India. Even as Euro-American preachers hoped to use imperial backing to advance Christianity, they also understood that the “geographical empire of faith” usually outstripped national,


geopolitical ones. This is certainly not to say that the Protestant missionary enterprise was a homogenous, united, and monolithic venture. Missions were highly localized phenomena, governed by their own local circumstances, problems, and exigencies, and I highlight these problems throughout the dissertation. In fact, the history of these missions is ultimately the history of tension between ideas, people, empires, generations, and cultures. Nevertheless, the global nature of Christian evangelization, as well as the networks of correspondence that knit these missions together, ensured that, no matter how isolated, every mission was viewed by contemporaries as a component of a much larger effort. I have therefore followed their evangelical efforts – focusing specifically on the native preachers employed by these missionary organizations – throughout the Atlantic world and beyond. As such, this dissertation could accurately be classified as what David Armitage calls a “Circum-Atlantic” history, one that follows its subjects beyond geographical and political borders and into the zones of religious exchange and cultural contact.

My invocation of Atlantic history is not simply because it seems to be in vogue right now, but rather because the subjects of this dissertation, the native peoples who tried to evangelize their kin, were products of a global effort to spread Protestant Christianity. In fact, of traders, empire-builders, and missionaries, missionaries were the only group whose overriding ideology (to convert all nations) was truly global in nature. Merchants had to battle the seas and competitors while empires had to battle one another, and world domination by either traders or nations was unrealistic and implausible. Christian

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87 Etherington, ed., Missions and Empire, 1.

88 David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History,” in The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800, 15. Armitage contends on page 16 that Circum-Atlantic history is “the history of the Atlantic as a particular zone of exchange and interchange, circulation and transmission...It is the history of the people who crossed the Atlantic, who lived on its shores and who participated in the communities it made possible, of their commerce and their ideas, as well as the diseases they carried, the flora they transplanted and the fauna they transported.”
missionaries of the early modern era, however, sincerely believed that global evangelization was not only possible, but actually inevitable. Catholics and Protestants agreed that the world outside Europe was like a “sacred garden” that only Western Christianity could cultivate and transform into God’s acres.\textsuperscript{89} As Anglicans noted in 1706, Christianity was never meant to be “confined to one People or Nation, but to be Preach’d, and to prevail thro’ the whole World.”\textsuperscript{90} Early modern missionaries understood the age of exploration not as an end in itself, but rather a preparatory moment in the eventual gospelization of the world, and they viewed their world in millennial terms: the faster they could spread the gospel, the quicker Christ would return.\textsuperscript{91} Every mission, no matter how far away, was therefore connected to every other mission by a sense of a shared sacred history and a common millennial future. One publication even took its readers on a virtual tour across the globe and beyond the Atlantic, giving its audience a view of the progress that the gospel had allegedly made from the West Indies to the East: “FROM viewing the joyful Progress of Christianity among the Aboriginal Natives in the West-Indies,” the publication narrated, “it may be a suitable Transition to pass over the Atlantick Ocean thro’ the Continents of Europe and Asia, in a straight Course, about 10,000 miles, to view the happy Progress of the same Religion

\textsuperscript{89} Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, \textit{Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). For more on the idea of the American colonies as a religious periphery, see Charles L. Cohen, “The Colonization of British North America as an Episode in the History of Christianity,” \textit{Church History} 72 No. 3 (September 2003): 553-568. Laura Stevens has argued that missionaries also frequently employed commercial tropes, as well as metaphors relating to husbandry, to explain and articulate Christian evangelical motives. See Stevens, \textit{The Poor Indians}, 34-61; and Stevens, “Gold for Glasse.”

\textsuperscript{90} Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, \textit{An Account of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Established by the Royal Charter of King William III. With their Proceedings and Success, and Hopes of continual Progress under the Happy Reign of Her Most excellent Majesty Queen Anne} (London: Joseph Downing, 1706), 1. Lamin Sanneh has also reminded us that Christianity was never meant to be just a “white man’s” religion. See Sanneh, \textit{Whose Religion is Christianity}.

among the *Aboriginals* at *Bengal, Cormandel, Malabar*, and the Islands of *Ceylon*, and
*Batavia* in the *East-Indies.*”

Protestants made explicit and direct connections and comparisons between missions in Native America, Africa, and the East Indies, and this dissertation takes seriously Peter Coclanis’ call for “the growing number of scholars studying Indians in the West to pay a bit more attention to the Indians in the East.”

No group was more ambitious in scope than missionaries, and native evangelists would prove to be central to Protestant evangelical activity throughout the Atlantic and beyond.

Furthermore, Protestant missionaries actually believed that the gospel had already been spread in places where it did not thrive in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Anglican divine John Wynne asked rhetorically in 1725, “How many large Countries are there in *Asia* and *Africa*, where, in former Ages, the Gospel universally prevail’d, and was in a flourishing Condition, that have now scarce any Footsteps of it left?”

The answer to that question, according to Wynne, was all of them. Protestant missionaries understood that the key agents of returning these peoples to the fold of the church – or “reducing” them, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’ sense of the word – would be the future native converts who already lived there. This explains why I chose *Prodigal Sons* as my title. Protestant missionaries believed that, like the subject of the 15th chapter of Luke, the indigenous peoples of the world had strayed from Christianity, and it was incumbent upon native preachers to bring them back home.

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94 John Wynne, *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; On Friday, the 19th of February, 1724* (London: J. Downing, 1725), 25.
This dissertation does not limit itself to Native Americans or Africans, but rather integrates the history of native preachers from Native America, Africa, and even India. Scholars of the Black Atlantic and Native America, however, have perpetuated the assumption that Africans and Indians had “diametrically different experiences” with European encounters. There is little doubt that African and Native American experiences with European expansion and colonization were distinct, unique, and different, but they were not always diametrically opposed. Missions to black slaves, Native Americans, and Africans were connected through direct comparison as well as actual historical entanglements.

Contemporary missionaries acknowledged these connections and entanglements between indigenous peoples throughout the world, and particularly between Africans and Indians. As one Anglican minister noted in 1760, preaching to Indians, white settlers, black slaves, and Africans were “but different parts of the same undertaking.” Part of this was, of course, grounded in a fundamental ignorance of the subtleties of indigenous religions. Anglican Thomas Bray, for example, sent over a copy of evangelical instructions originally intended for South Africans to some of the parishes in the colonial American colonies. His reasoning was because Africans were “as to Religion, and their Way of Living…exactly like your

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95 Alison Games, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *American Historical Review* 111 No. 3 (June 2006): 751. There are exceptions to this rule, of course. See Brooks, *American Lazarus*. Part of this debate stems from the problems of identifying the nature and boundaries of what scholars have called the “Amerindian Atlantic.” For more on that problem, see Paul Cohen, “Was There an Amerindian Atlantic? Reflections on the Limits of a Historiographical Concept,” *History of European Ideas* 34 Issue 4 (December 2008): 388-410. See also Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters*, for examples of Amerindians who crossed the Atlantic.


American Indians.” Bray concluded that Anglicans should “shew your Christian Zeal in
Converting the one, as well as the other.” “Both the American and African Indians,” Bray
suggested, were “upon the same Level, as to Matters of Religion.” Any evangelical effort,
therefore, may be “as proper to be pursu’d in the instruction of the one, as well as of the
other.” According to Bray, “African Indians” – an interesting phrase in and of itself – had
much in common with their indigenous counterparts in the Americas. This overriding, if
ignorant and shallow, attitude towards indigenous religions ensured that Protestants would
use similar methods when trying to convert non-Christians throughout the Atlantic world.
Native preachers would be central to these efforts. In spite of our natural propensity to divide
the history of blacks and Indians into distinct sub-fields, the missionary histories of the Black
Atlantic and Native America were inextricably intertwined.

John Eliot and Eleazar Wheelock, for example, are most famous for their evangelical
work among Indians, but both had also preached to New England’s blacks while trying to
boost their missionary credentials. As I argue in Chapter 3, evangelical revivalism had

98 “A Memorial Relating to the Conversion, as well of the American Indians, as of the African Negroes. To
the Reverend Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Wilkinson, Commissaries, and the Rest of the Reverend Clergy of
Maryland,” in Thomas Bray, Missionalia: Or, A Collection of Missionary Pieces Relating to the
Conversion of the Heathen: Both the African Negroes and American Indians (London: W. Roberts, 1727),
19. See also Morgan Godwyn, The Negro's [and] Indians Advocate : Suing for their Admission to the
Church: or A Persuasive to the Instructing and Baptizing of the Negro's and Indians in our Plantations.
Shewing, That as the Compliance therewith can prejudice no Man's just Interest; so the wilful Neglecting
and Opposing of it, is no less than a manifest Apostacy from the Christian Faith. To which is added, A brief

99 Bray, Missionalia, 14.

100 “A Memorial Relating to the Conversion, as well of the American Indians, as of the African Negroes,”
in Bray, Missionalia, 56.

101 See Cohen, “Was there an Amerindian Atlantic?”: 388-410; and Vaughan, Transatlantic Encounters.

102 Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South (New York:
Oxford University Press, 2004), 109; Patricia U. Bonomi, Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society,
similar effects on Afro-Moravian communities in the Caribbean as it did on Native American Moravian ones in the Mid-Atlantic. John Quamine’s failed mission to West Africa, which I examine in Chapter 6, was profoundly influenced by Native American missionary history. Furthermore, and although European, Native American, and African religions were different, they were neither mutually exclusive nor completely irreconcilable. All believed in an omnipotent higher, supreme God, all contained creation stories that traced their origins back to primordial battles between good and evil, all believed that good forces and evil forces were actively involved in the natural world around them, and all provided a way of understanding and extracting meaning out of human existence. Thus, Native American, African, and even subcontinental Asian preachers – as different as they were – shared similar dilemmas of religious translation, recasting their identities as indigenous and Christian, navigating the problems of evangelical revivalism, positioning themselves in between empires and indigenous peoples, and using Christianity as a tool for cultural, territorial, and spiritual preservation. It is therefore essential for us to examine the ways in which the connections and entanglements between Europeans, black slaves, Native Americans, Africans, and even subcontinental Indians fashioned the Protestant missionary enterprise in the early modern era.

**Native Missionaries in a Global Context**

Just as Protestant ministers looked to early Christianity’s first apostles as a model for how indigenous evangelization might unfold, they were also enormously interested in how other groups – particularly the Catholic nations of France, Spain, and Portugal – dabbled with indigenous preachers. For every missionary enterprise created by European powers, native agents would play a central role, and not only in the attempt to propagate Christianity in the *terra incognita*. Native missionaries would be at the crux of several imperial debates about the relationship between indigenous capabilities and spiritual authority, the best methods for
spreading the gospel, and even the nature of empire itself. The Catholic Church led the way by consistently maintaining the official policy of attempting to foster a native pastorate. This received its most earnest expression when Pope Urban VIII founded a seminary, known generally as the Propaganda Fide, for the training of both European and native missionaries in the 1620s. The secretary of the college, Francesco Ingoli, agreed with Urban that because indigenous peoples were still men, they were “consequently able [to understand] Religion, and among them there must be some who are apt to be promoted to priesthood.”

The Propaganda Fide and the handful of other seminaries that developed around it were designed to serve as the hub of an international, intercontinental missionary thrust from which native preachers would commence converting the world. The college contained a polyglot mix of students, cultures, and languages. A multilingual printing press churned out sacred texts in a panoply of languages, and during the Epiphany one could hear sacred speeches being delivered in “Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, English, German, Polish, Russian, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Persian, Chinese, Japanese and in diverse dialects of India.”

Pope Urban even offered several sees in Greece to native Greek preachers. Yet the impact of this policy had been severely circumscribed by previous bargains the Vatican had struck with Iberian powers during the age of exploration. In a series of papal bulls dating from 1493 to 1508 Popes Alexander VI and Julius II granted the Catholic Iberian royalties


105 Luca Codignola talks at length about the Catholic Church’s proposals for spreading the gospel, calling the Propaganda Fide the “least Eurocentric agency of the church” on page 217. See Codignola, “The Holy See and the Conversion of the Indians.”
the authority to establish churches, ordain the clergy necessary to operate those churches, and spread Catholicism in the New World. Although this ensured that Iberian Catholic missionary work would have the patronage of royal authority, the agreement also implied that Rome itself had surrendered the ability to dictate the specific policies that Portuguese and Spanish missionaries would adopt. Rome’s role would only be an advisory one. While the Catholic Church actively supported the creation of a native ministry, the Iberian powers would be much more ambivalent about the propriety of such a policy.

The Portuguese had long understood the necessity of native pastors but consistently kept them in subordinate positions. In their exploratory journeys of the early sixteenth century, they brought back to Portugal several West Africans for missionary training. One Congolese was Lisbon-educated and even ordained as titular Bishop of Utica (in present day Tunisia). The Pope himself urged the Portuguese to ordain any “Ethiopians, Indians, and Africans” that might be particularly suited for such work. By the middle of the seventeenth century, one Portuguese cleric reported that the Cape Verde Islands had “clergy and canons as black as jet, but so well bred, so authoritative, so learned, such great musicians, so discreet and so accomplished, that they may be envied by those in our own cathedrals at home.”

Seminaries were formed for the education of a native pastorate in Cape Verde, São Tomé, Principe, and Angola in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. When the Portuguese opened up a native seminary in Mozambique in 1761, they looked to those previous institutions as models for how to successfully recruit, train, and prepare native clergy for the rigors of missionary work.

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Portuguese missionary policy in Asia, on the other hand, was fraught with ambivalence. Because the Franciscan missionary Frei Rodrigo complained that his outpost in Goa, India did not have enough evangelists, the Franciscans decided to open a school solely for non-European students in 1541. By 1556 there were 111 students there, consisting of mestizos, Malabarians, Canarins, Chinese, Bengalis, Peguans, Africans, Armenians, Moors, Abyssinians, Gujaratis, and “5 boys from the Deccan sultanates.” And yet, some Portuguese officials began to question whether a fully ordained native pastorate was a wise expedient. The problem, of course, was race. It was alleged that Portuguese colonists would never attend religious services if they were conducted by someone other than a pure-bred Portuguese. The Jesuits responded to these pressures in 1579 by banning native clergy in India, though they made a few exceptions for clergy in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and China. This was the official policy of the Jesuits in Asia until the 1760s, when the Portuguese empire began to crack down on Jesuit practices and reopen the door for the ordination of native priests. Unlike the Jesuits, Franciscans and other orders still allowed a select few natives to receive ordination if they possessed the right qualities. Yet the handful of native preachers that emerged out of this messy situation faced an incredible amount of racism, not only from Portuguese settlers but also from other clerics. After Pero Luis, a Christian Brahmin, was ordained in 1575, he unsuccessfully spent the rest of his life trying to get other native preachers like himself ordained. 108 Another Christian Brahmin named Matheus de Castro was refused ordination by the Archbishop in Goa. Seeing no other alternative, the neophyte trekked overland from India to Rome in 1625, finished his theological studies, was ordained a priest, and then was consecrated Bishop of Chrysopolis and appointed Vice-Vicar of Bijapur. When he proudly returned back to India years later, the Jesuits accused him of

forging his ecclesiastical documents and declared that he could never be little more than “a bare-bottomed Nigger.”\textsuperscript{109} Years later, the brother of an East African chief would travel to Goa to receive religious instruction and ordination. Yet an Italian missionary would report home that, in spite of the fact that this African Dominican was a “model priest,” he still faced intense discrimination. As the missionary sadly reported, “not even the habit which he wears secures him any consideration whatever in these places, just because he has a black face. If I had not seen it, I would not have believed it.”\textsuperscript{110} The Portuguese empire began their missionary drive by embracing native pastors, but intense racism had ensured that only a few indigenous peoples in their empire would be ordained. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Portuguese returned to their original policy of allowing indigenous peoples to be ordained within the Catholic Church. The result was that of the 200 Catholic missionaries operating in India in 1835, only 16 were European.\textsuperscript{111} Indeed, by 1939 over 2,000 fully ordained Chinese priests were attempting to spread Roman Catholicism throughout the world’s most populous nation.\textsuperscript{112}

Clerics in Spanish America expressed a similar ambivalence about the propriety of employing native missionaries.\textsuperscript{113} As in other evangelical enterprises, the language barrier necessitated the use of cultural brokers who could translate the word of God into indigenous languages. Bernardino De Sahagun, for example, would not have been able to publish his

\textsuperscript{109} Boxer, “The Problem of a Native Clergy,” 99.

\textsuperscript{110} Boxer, “The Problem of a Native Clergy,” 97.

\textsuperscript{111} Boxer, “The Problem of a Native Clergy,” 89,102.

\textsuperscript{112} Horacio De La Costa, S.J., “The Development of a Native Clergy in the Philippines,” Theological Studies 8 No. 2 (June 1947): 222.

Psalmodie Christiana, the only Catholic songbook in Nahuatl, without the guidance of four Mexican assistants who helped translate these sacred texts into the indigenous vernacular.  

Some theologians believed that the church could never be truly founded in the New World unless indigenous agents formed its cornerstone. Rodrigo de Albornoz wrote back to Spain requesting support for such a plan, anticipating that native preachers “will be of greater profit in attracting others to the Faith than will fifty [European] Christians.”  

Another missionary observed that he and his colleagues were absolutely dependent upon indigenous preachers. He recalled that native interpreters would hear his own sermons, put on their clerical surplices, and then preach to Mexican audiences “with so much authority, energy, exclamations, and spirit, that it made me very envious of the grace that God had communicated to them.” “It was they,” the missionary conceded, and not he and his Spanish colleagues, “who carried the voice and sound of the word of God, not only in the provinces…but to all the ends of this New Spain.” These attitudes helped catalyze the opening of a college for the indigenous elite in Mexico City during the 1530s. The College of Santiago Tlatelolco annually had about 60-70 indigenous students taking classes in grammar, music, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, and even “Indian Medicine.” They lived a monastic life, reciting the prayers of the Virgin Mary, attending Mass, and gaining enough fluency in Latin to speak it “with the elegance of Cicero,” as one commentator put it.

115 Boxer, “The Problem of a Native Clergy,” 90.
116 Gerónimo de Mendieta, Historia Eclesiastica Indiana (Mexico: Antigua Libreria, 1870). I want to thank Barry D. Sell and Cristián Roa de la Carrera for assistance on translating this text.
117 Ricard, The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico, 220.
118 Ricard, The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico, 222.
Although the school had the nominal support of some of New Spain’s ministers, it was constantly under fire by settlers, government officials, and even Catholic clerics from the moment it opened its doors. There were two reasons for this. The first had had to do with developing racial ideologies. There was a growing suspicion in New Spain that Indians could never learn biblical truths because their intellectual capacity, and therefore their spiritual acuity, was minimal at best. In his *Historia Eclesiastica Indiana*, Father Gerónimo de Mendieta suggested that most native Mexicans “are not fitted to command or rule, but to be commanded and ruled. I mean to say that they are not fitted for masters but for pupils, not for prelates but for subjects, and as such they are the best in the world.” He even claimed that if he could only get backing from a king, he could “have a province of 50,000 Amerindians” who would obey him and become Christian.\footnote{Boxer, “The Problem of a Native Clergy,” 92.} Another commentator simply stated that Indians “cannot and should not be ordained, because of their incapacity.”\footnote{Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, 228.} Racial lines hardened in New Spain during the sixteenth century, leaving the promise of a native clergy a relic of the past. The second reason why the school in Mexico City became defunct was a universal anxiety about religious heresy. Some clerics observed that it was “an error fraught with dangers” to teach Indians and “put the Bible and all the Holy Scriptures into their hands to be read and interpreted as they pleased.”\footnote{Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, 225.} Several skeptics even suggested that reading about the polygamy of Old Testament patriarchs would only provide scriptural justification for the Indian practice of having more than one wife. Offering literacy and spiritual authority to Indians would naturally produce immeasurable challenges to the Catholic orders that operated the missions of New Spain. At the First Council of Mexico in

\[\text{References:}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 119 Boxer, “The Problem of a Native Clergy,” 92.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 120 Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, 228.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 121 Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, 225.}\]
1555, Catholic leaders agreed that Indians, Africans, mestizos or any other mixed-race peoples could never be fully ordained in the Catholic Church. Although this would be tempered somewhat by later councils and royal decrees, the point was clear: the Spanish had briefly experimented with a native priesthood, and the experiment had apparently gone terribly wrong. A few Indian preachers were operating in the countryside in the seventeenth century, but they were never ordained and were often relegated to the “inferior posts” and “thankless work” of preaching to poor mission villagers.

Native preachers in New Spain – even though they were unordained – helped to produce an à la carte version of Mexican Christianity from which natives would pick and choose the scriptures, doctrines, and beliefs that grafted most easily onto their existing spiritual practices and needs. Steven Hackel has recently noted that even as Catholic missionaries in California carried devastating diseases while initiating a massive cultural offensive on indigenous traditions, native peoples still maintained a significant amount of control over the character and development of the missions themselves, serving as alcades who kept Christian rules in place and overseeing the quotidian operations of the California mission stations. Even without the creation of a native pastorate, Christian ideas, beliefs, rituals, and practices could still be freely adopted in indigenous societies, as native peoples merged these elements with their own religious traditions.

Like their Catholic counterparts to the south, the Jesuits who arrived on the shores of New France also used native catechists regularly to help Indians learn the fundamentals of

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122 This history of native missionaries in Mexico repeats itself in the Philippines, where the contest between racial ideology and the need for native pastors also developed along similar historical trajectories. See De La Costa, “The Development of a Native Clergy”: 219-250.

123 Ricard, The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico, 235.

Catholic theology. Claude Chauchetiére recalled how, after the Jesuits had given some Indian catechists a picture book that summarized Catholic history and practice, the neophytes not only read them “with pleasure and profit” but also “preache[d] long sermons” from the pictorial text.\textsuperscript{125} In 1637 two Montagnais girls were sent to Paris, baptized as Carmelite nuns, and shipped back to Canada in the hope that they would assist Catholic missionaries by acting as “dogiques,” or catechists, in the Catholic seminaries.\textsuperscript{126} The Jesuits also manipulated the life experiences of certain converts to generate hagiographic symbols that would implicitly urge other Indians to convert as they did. The most famous of these was Catherine Tekakwitha, who Chauchetiére and Pierre Cholenac turned into a veritable symbol of the Virgin Mary after Catherine died. In fact, Catherine eventually had 300 hagiographic texts written about her life, conversion, and alleged salvation at the hands of God.\textsuperscript{127} This strategy, of course, had its risks as well as its rewards. Recollect missionaries spent a tremendous amount of time and money on one Innu named Pastedechouan, who was sent to France, trained as a missionary, and then returned home to convert other Indians. The tension between the two cultures, however, eventually caused him to be despised by other Indians and distrusted by the French, and he died a lonely death as a cultural and religious outcast.\textsuperscript{128}

Historians have noted that the Jesuits became more flexible in their approach to missionary activity after 1640, allowing more indigenous rituals and customs to penetrate

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\item \textsuperscript{125} Allan Greer, ed., \textit{The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America} (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), 150.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Codignola, “The Holy See and the Conversion of the Indians,” 217.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Greer, \textit{Mohawk Saint}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
into native Christianity and attempting to find common ground between native religions and their own.\textsuperscript{129} Ironically, this flexibility did not translate into a recruitment of native preachers. As late as 1832, when two Ottawas were sent to Rome to become Catholic missionaries, there were still no native priests in Canada. We can only speculate about the reasons for this general ambivalence towards native missionaries. Perhaps the Catholic emphasis on martyrdom, a cup from which Protestants did not so freely drink, ensured that there would be a steady stream of European missionaries in the New World. Whatever the reasons, and in spite of their many attempts to employ native evangelists in their missions, not one North American Indian was promoted to the Catholic priesthood during the first few centuries of cultural encounter.\textsuperscript{130} Perhaps learning from these missed opportunities, Protestant missionaries would take a different approach.

The Dutch, in fact, proved to have the biggest influence on English attempts to use indigenous missionaries in the Americas. In 1691, Cotton Mather boasted that “our Examples had awakened the Dutch to make some noble Attempts for the Furtherance of the Gospel in the East-Indies.”\textsuperscript{131} Mather was either a liar or a bad historian, for the Dutch had been using indigenous missionaries in the East Indies well before the English began training them on the North American continent. A Scottish emigrant to Holland named Junius undertook a missionary trip to the Dutch East Indies from 1631 to 1643. Working in and around Taiwan, Junius claimed to have learned the languages of the indigenous peoples of the East Indies. By the time he returned to Holland in 1643, he guessed that he had “taught Six Hundred Schollers to Reade and to Write and that instructed, as well the elder as younger


\textsuperscript{131} Cotton Mather, \textit{The triumphs of the reformed religion}, 94.
persons, in the Rudiments of Christian Faith.” These teachers, Junius hoped, would continue spreading the gospel while he traveled home to teach others the indigenous language so he could return with an even stronger missionary corps. The Dutch, like the Spanish and French, radically overestimated the success of their missionary work in the East Indies. By 1650 they claimed to have converted 5,900 Indians, by 1671 the number was 17,000, and by 1702 it was up to about 300,000 converts on Taiwan, Sri Lanka, and other islands. The ministers who carried on this work in the seventeenth century were probably “utterly ignorant of their language,” so they relied extensively upon indigenous “School-Masters who teach them, The Lords Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, a Morning Prayer, an Evening Prayer, a Blessing before Meat, and another after.” The French, Spanish, and the Dutch were therefore all very dependent upon indigenous agents in their overseas missions.

Ironically, the first English effort to employ indigenous missionaries in the Americas was in tidewater Virginia, not Puritan Massachusetts. The first charter of Virginia in 1606 claimed that one of the colonists’ motivations was to spread Christianity “to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God.”

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132 Caspar Sibelius, *Of the conversion of five thousand and nine hundred East-Indians, in the isle Formosa, neere China, to the profession of the true God, in Jesus Christ; by means of M. Ro: Junius, a minister lately in Delph in Holland. / Related by his good friend, M.C. Sibellius, pastor in Daventrie there, in a Latine letter. Translated to further the faith and joy of many here, by H. Jessei, a servant of Jesus Christ. With a post-script of the Gospels good sucesse also amongst the VWest-Indians, in New-England.* Imprimatur, Joseph Caryl (London: Iohn Hammond, 1650), 8.

133 For these statistics, see Sibelius, *Of the Conversion of Five Thousand Nine Hundred*; John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues, For Their Instruction in that Great Service of Christ, in calling home their Country-men to the Knowledge of God, And of Themselves, and of Jesus Christ* (Cambridge, MA: Marmaduke Johnson, 1671); and Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*.

134 Mather, *The triumphs of the reformed religion*, 94.

In fact, one of Pocahontas’s travel partners to England was a Powhatan Indian named Nanamack, who was sent to England purportedly for baptism, a college education, and missionary training. Although groomed as a future evangelist to the Powhatan Confederacy, Nanamack died before he was even baptized.\textsuperscript{136} Since the English failed to bring such Indians across the Atlantic to an English college, they decided to build an English college for them in Virginia instead. This was precisely Sir Thomas Dale’s plan for a settlement at Henrico, only a few miles up the river from Jamestown. By the 1610s Dale was trying to establish the settlement as both “an impregnable security against foreign invasion” and a springboard for cultural diplomacy with Native Americans.\textsuperscript{137} He dreamed that the more scholarly of the Indian students would transform into “fitt Instruments to assist afterwards in the more generall Conversion of the Heathen people.”\textsuperscript{138} Dale’s ambitious plan had major flaws. Although he intended to pay ministers 40 pounds a year – plus room and board – he had trouble securing them. Colonists who were recruited early to settle there were irate at the lack of urgency in constructing the settlement, as Indians shot at unsuspecting settlers from behind the forest’s trees. Furthermore, no indigenous peoples seemed willing to part with their children and place them in Dale’s English school. He had neither teachers nor students, so it was no surprise that, by 1622, the college had yet to be built. In that year Opechanganough’s violent uprising effectively destroyed Dale’s utopian scheme just as swiftly as Indians and English destroyed one another on Virginia’s riverbanks. The history of Catholic, Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Dutch use of native preachers was therefore


\textsuperscript{137} Land, “Henrico and Its College”: 462. For a quick summary of the Henrico project, see Jennings, \textit{The Invasion of America}, 53-56; and Axtell, \textit{The Invasion Within}, 179-180.

\textsuperscript{138} Cited in Land, “Henrico and Its College”: 491. Dale’s plan was not only to educate a native pastorate; he also hoped to build a hospital in this utopian community.
fraught with ambivalence, contradiction, and missed opportunities. British missionaries would remember these missionary failures vividly, even as they often threatened to repeat them.

The English missionaries and native evangelists who comprise this story were never completely isolated from these events, for their leading divines were quite aware of the missionary histories of other nations. Transatlantic networks of printing and correspondence ensured that they would always be tied into larger developments happening in other regions throughout the Atlantic world and beyond. For example, Patrick Copeland, a former employee of the East India Company and preacher in Bermuda, wrote to Massachusetts patriarch John Winthrop in December of 1639. Winthrop had lately sent Copeland about a dozen Indians who had taken part in the Pequot War and were stranded in Providence. The letter indicates that the Indians had not yet arrived safely, but that Copeland had a grand design for when they did. He told Winthrop that he would have “trained them up in the principles of Religion; and so when they had been fit for your Plantation, have returned them againe to have done God some service in being Instruments to doe some good upon their Country men.” Copeland was quite optimistic that this strategy would work wonders in the Puritan missions, for he had witnessed firsthand the success of such a policy along the littoral of the Indian and Pacific Oceans while working for the East India Company in years prior. He explained that the Dutch employed indigenous evangelists effectively in what is now Ambon, Indonesia, where they had native preachers and schoolmasters who would disseminate biblical truths in the “Molaya” tongue. “By these meanes,” Copeland reflected, “many thousands of them are converted to the Christian faith.” Copeland also told Winthrop that the Jesuits did the same thing in Nagasaki, Japan, through which method they “poisoned thousands” with their Catholic fopperies. Copeland thus served as a kind of informant,
linking not only Atlantic, but also Indian and Pacific world missionary enterprises. Protestants were quite aware of which missionary strategies were working in other places, even when they seemed a world away. Therefore, when Protestants began to consider missionary work among Africans and Indians in the British Atlantic, they looked to scriptural history as well as other missionary enterprises throughout the world as models from which to guide their own efforts. Practical considerations, an understanding of early Christian history, and an acute awareness of what their religious competitors were doing all led to one conclusion: native preachers would be central to any Protestant evangelical enterprise they undertook.

139 Letter from Patrick Copeland to John Winthrop, dated 4 December, 1639 in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Winthrop Papers, Volume IV, 1638-1644* (Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1944), 157-158. I would like to thank Shona Johnston for this reference.
CHAPTER ONE

APOSTLES TO THE INDIANS, 1640-1700

The sermons delivered to a small Massachusetts congregation in November of 1658 were part of a longer period of fasting and prayer that was organized “because of the great raine, and great floods, and unseasonable weather, whereby the Lord spoileth our labours.”

Ruined crops, cattle on the brink of death, and rampant disease had ravaged the community. These were dark times. God clearly seemed upset with the congregation, and the first sermons of the morning made it all too evident that they had to repent for the sins which brought this terrible fate upon them. One preacher, described elsewhere as a “bashful man,” appeared none too bashful when he chastised the praying community for their lackluster spiritual piety.

He drew upon the 22\textsuperscript{nd} chapter of the Book of Genesis to explain how Noah, like Nishokon’s own congregation, had to make sacrifices to God in order to be preserved. The comparison with Noah made sense, for the torrential downpours they experienced that autumn drew obvious parallels to the flood that Noah providentially escaped. This preacher

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1 John Eliot, A further accompt of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New-England, and of the means used effectually to advance the same set forth in certaine letters sent from thence declaring a purpose of printing the Scriptures in the Indian tongue into which they are already translated : with which letters are likewise sent an epitome of some exhortations delivered by the Indians at a fast, as testimonies of their obedience to the Gospell : as also some helps directing the Indians how to improve naturall reason unto the knowledge of the true God (London: M. Simmons, 1659), 14-15.

2 John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, Tears of repentance: or, A further narrative of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New-England setting forth, not only their present state and condition, but sundry confessions of sin by diverse of the said Indians, wrought upon by the saving power of the Gospel; together with the manifestation of their faith and hope in Jesus Christ, and the work of grace upon their hearts. Related by Mr. Eliot and Mr. Mayhew, two faithful laborers in that work of the Lord. Published by the corporation for propagating the Gospel there, for the satisfaction and comfort of such as wish well thereunto (London: Peter Cole in Leaden-Hall, 1653), 53.
exclaimed, “God has chastised us of late, as if he would utterly Drown us; and he has Drowned and Spoiled and Ruin’d a great deal of our hay, and threatens, to kill our Cattel. ‘Tis for this that we Fast and Pray this Day.”\textsuperscript{3} “We must by repentance purge our selves,” he continued, “and cleanse our hearts from all sin.”\textsuperscript{4} If they were sufficiently penitent, the preacher claimed, God would “with-hold the Rain, and Bless us with such Fruitful Seasons as we are desiring of him.”\textsuperscript{5} The message of repentance during a time of trial was a classic Puritan jeremiad: repent for your sins lest your soul (and your society) descend into an infinite pit of hellfire.

In spite of the similarities with typical Puritan sermons, these were not typical Puritans. Instead, the audience was a group of Massachuset Indians. Most importantly, their preachers were also Indians. That Nishokon, the “bashful” Indian evangelist who implored his audience to repent for their sins, chose the story of Noah is no coincidence. Although the parallel with the torrential downpours was obvious, Nishokon had another agenda in mind. In fact, his sermon can be read against the many debates and tensions inherent in the effort to bring the Christian gospel to Native Americans during the earliest periods of cultural encounter. While some historians have interpreted Indian preaching as an expression of passive subjugation to imperial authority, I argue that Nishokon consciously chose Noah’s story because he was situating Native American trials and experiences into a larger, sacred

\textsuperscript{3} Cotton Mather, \textit{The triumphs of the reformed religion, in America. The life of the renowned John Eliot: a person justly famous in the church of God, not only as an eminent Christian, and an excellent Minister, among the English, but also, as a memorable evangelist among the Indians, of New-England; with some account concerning the late and strange success of the Gospel, in those parts of the world, which for many ages have lain buried in pagan ignorance} (Boston: Benjamin Harris and John Allen, 1691), 119.

\textsuperscript{4} Eliot, \textit{A further accompt}, 10.

\textsuperscript{5} Cotton Mather, \textit{The triumphs of the reformed religion, in America}, 119.
history of the Christian commonwealth. The Bible claims that, after the famous flood, Noah’s three sons populated the earth. Japhet went to Europe, Shem to Asia, and Ham (the one failed to cover up his father’s nakedness in a tent) went to Africa. Nishokon’s diatribe established a subtle but ironic connection between Old Testament history and Native American Christianity by employing a biblical story that offered no place for Native Americans in the sacred geography of the world.

Nishokon’s sermon can be read in two ways, though both are not mutually exclusive. The first is to characterize it as what Mary Louise Pratt has dubbed an “autoethnographic text,” or an instance “in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms.” “Autoethnography,” Pratt has argued, “involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror.” The sermon was therefore an attempt to use Christianity as a rhetorical device through which the Indian preacher could establish his congregation as legitimate heirs to Christ’s salvation. By analogizing Indian trials with those of Noah, Nishokon sought to carve out a space for indigenous Christians within a larger community of believers. On the other hand, the sermon was more than a text, for its orality also identified it as an act of sacred performance. As Joshua Bellin has recently argued, performances like Nishokon’s discourse constituted “a (more or less conscious) act of surrogation, a reinvention of a prior original.”

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7 For more on the invention of the story of Noah and the creation of geographic identities, see Benjamin Braude, “The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” The William and Mary Quarterly 54 No. 1 (January 1997): 103-142.

8 Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (New York: Routledge, 1992), 7.

of having an Indian preach the gospel, in other words, meant that Nishokon, like other native preachers, became an active participant in the process of constantly reinventing and translating the meaning of the gospel message. In placing Indians within a sacred genealogy that connected them not only to Christ but also to the ancient patriarchs of the Old Testament, Nishokon assured his listeners that Native Americans did have a place, and a central one, in the history and future of Western Christianity.

Explorers, printers, philosophers, and missionaries all wondered how Indians got to where they were by the time Europeans arrived, and many searched for biblical evidence of their origination. The result of these searches, more often than not, was the assertion that “these are the children of Shem as we of Japhet…yea it seemeth to me probably that these people are Hebrews, of Eber, whose sonnes the Scripture sends farthest East…certainly this country was peopled Eastward from the place of the Arks Resting.” Several commentators wrote extensive tracts, including the cleverly titled Jews in America, to prove that Native Americans were one of the lost tribes of Israel. If this was true, of course, the significance

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12 Thomas Thorowgood, Jews in America, or Probabilities, That Those Indians are Judaical, Made More Probable by Some Additionals to the Former Conjectures. An Accurate Discourse is Premised of Mr. John Eliot...Touching Their Origination, and his Vindication of the Planters (London: Henry Brome, 1660); Manasseh ben Israel and Moses Wall, The Hope of Israel (London: R.I., 1650).
for Indian and English preachers could not be overstated, for it was believed that the rediscovery and conversion of the Jews would lead to the eventual conversion of the world, which “may be as a preparatory to his own appearing.” This was, in the words of one historian, a “radically millennial” view: if Native Americans could be converted, Christ’s return would be hastened, the days of judgment would begin, and the truths of God’s revelation would finally be revealed to all humankind. The stakes were high. Protestant ministers believed that the creation of American missions would be a seminal moment in the sacred history of Christianity, rivaling that of Christianity’s rapid expansion in the first century. They also believed that native preachers would be as central to the expansion of Christianity in the early modern Atlantic as they were when the first apostles set out from Jerusalem. And yet, in spite of their centrality to the hopes of ministers and the daily practice of native Christian communities, indigenous evangelists have remained an overlooked component of cultural encounter in seventeenth century Puritan New England. This chapter seeks to fill that gap.

Historians of early American missions have often depicted English missionaries as greedy, land-grubbing, and ethnocentric imperialists who simply used missionary activity to mask imperial designs. In this interpretation, New Englanders appeared as early modern mafiosos, using duplicitous strategies to pursue their “missionary racket” and shake down

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13 Edward Winslow, *The Glorious progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England manifested by three letters under the hand of that famous instrument of the Lord, Mr. John Eliot, and another from Mr. Thomas Mayhew, Jun., both preachers of the word, as well to the English as Indians in New England ... : together with an appendix to the foregoing letters, holding forth conjectures, observations, and applications, by I.D. ... / published by Edward Winslow* (London: Hannah Allen, 1649), 17.

monetary funds from benevolent donors. They sought “complete control” over the indigenous population and demanded that Indians commit “cultural suicide” to be admitted into a second-class and segregated Christian community. Natives who did convert, at least in this narrative, simply did so because they had no other options other than to ally themselves with the English colonists who now seemed to dominate them. One scholar even described the cultural disintegration of one Christian Indian group as “pathetic.” Over the past two decades, however, historians influenced by the emphasis on agency within the fields of social history and postcolonial studies have begun to reassess indigenous Christianities and understand them as part of several viable options for dealing with, resisting, and encountering European colonialism. This more recent scholarship has emphasized negotiation, appropriation, and cultural translation in precisely the same places where older studies saw opposition, imposition, and imperialism. Recent studies have also attacked previous


18 The most comprehensive overview of missionary work in early America is James Axtell’s The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), which examines English, French, and Indian attempts to convert one another. Axtell’s work, in particular, bridges the literature on invasion and cooperation. Although Axtell concedes that English missionaries were certainly out to “reduce” indigenous peoples through Christianity, he notes that they ultimately failed.
interpretations of culture change because they usually perpetuated the “erroneous assumption that it was imposed.”

As David Silverman has recently argued, “Puritan missions, no less than Catholic ones, were sites of conversation between two dynamic religious traditions, rather than the imposition of a monolith.”

This chapter embraces the latter interpretation of intercultural exchange by exploring the origins of indigenous missionary activity in New England, its appropriation by native peoples, the tensions it created, its demise during King Philip’s War, and its resurgence shortly thereafter. It demonstrates that indigenous missionaries were central agents in both the Christian missionary enterprise as well as larger cultural encounters played out on the stage of early American history. This chapter therefore places native preachers, who have usually been relegated to supporting roles, center stage in this drama.


19 Brenner, “To Pray or to Be Prey”: 135.

**Puritan Missions as Indigenous Missions**

Historians who have traced the history of early New England missions have usually focused their attention on the writings and activities of the ubiquitous John Eliot. With the volume of biblical texts he translated into indigenous languages as well as his creation of an ambitious network of Indian praying towns, Eliot was certainly a key figure. But he was not the only missionary in the field. There were a handful of other English missionaries operating in early New England, including Richard Bourne, Thomas Mayhew, and John Cotton, Jr. There were also Indian preachers. In fact, the Indian evangelists outnumbered the English ones. From about 1640 to 1700, New England held 24 ordained Indian ministers and many more native teachers, deacons, and informal missionaries.\(^{21}\) By the time of the American Revolution, over 130 indigenous preachers had worked as evangelists to other Native Americans in the American colonies.\(^{22}\) Decentralizing Eliot and declassifying him as the most important figure in early American missionary activity helps move away from the kind of New England exceptionalism that has plagued early American studies.\(^{23}\) As important as he was, Eliot was just one actor in a long drama of Christian missionary activity among New England Indians. In fact, most of the main players in this drama were not actually English.

New England Puritans expressed a complex range of impressions about Indian culture and religion. On the one hand, many agreed with the convention that the region’s

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\(^{22}\) Axtell, “Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions”: 36.

indigenous peoples were, as Cotton Mather put it, “infinitely barbarous.” however, for a group of religious believers who contended that the wily power of Satan reached everywhere, and for all of their rhetoric about the barbarity of Indians, Puritan ministers from John Eliot to Jonathan Edwards still believed that Indians were ultimately redeemable. Although there were major religious differences between Indian and Puritan spiritualities – the Puritan emphasis on sin and literacy were novelties to New England Indians – there were some general similarities. Both Puritans and indigenous New Englanders believed that God (or multiple forces) and Satan (or an evil counterforce to God) were active in peoples’ everyday lives. Daniel Gookin even remarked in 1674 that indigenous religion was akin to the religion of the primitive Christian churches. He claimed that natives had some nascent ideas of God and Satan. “Generally they acknowledge one great supreme doer of good,” Gookin explained, “and him they call Woonand, or Maunitt: another that is the great doer of evil or mischief; and him they call Maupand, which is the devil; and him they dread and fear, more than they love and honour the former chief good which is God.” Unlike Gookin, John Eliot painted Indian religion as nonexistent, as a

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24 Mather, The triumphs of the reformed religion, in America, 80.

25 Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, or The Ecclesiastical History of New England, From its First Planting In the Year 1620, Unto the Year of the Our Lord, 1698. Vol. I. (Hartford: Silus Andrus, 1820), from the epistle dedicatory.


tabula rasa that Puritan theology would inscribe with its own meaning. He claimed that New England Indians had no fundamental principles of religion at all, thus they “most readily yield to any direction from the Lord, so that there will be no such opposition against the rising Kingdome of Jesus Christ among them.” Nevertheless, Eliot, Gookin, and other Puritan ministers agreed that Indians were savage but salvageable, riddled with barbarity but ultimately redeemable.

Indian redemption was allegedly one of the driving forces behind Puritan colonization in the first place. Like the Spanish missionaries working to their south, New England see David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Knopf, 1989).

England Puritans understood the New World as a sacred garden that civilization and Christianization would ultimately cultivate. Converting the native inhabitants of the New World was vital to such acts of sacred gardening.\footnote{29} The First Charter of Massachusetts, drafted in 1629, contended that one of the primary motives of colonization was that Puritans “maie wynn and incite the Natives of Country, to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Savior of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth.” This, it proclaimed, was “our Royall Intencon” and “the principall Ende of this Plantacion”\footnote{30} The Massachusetts Bay Colony’s official seal even had a Massachuset Indian at its centerpiece, invoking the 16\textsuperscript{th} chapter from the Acts of the Apostles and imploring English Christians to “Come Over and Help Us.”\footnote{31} By the 1640s, however, little had been done in the way of missionary activity, a point that Thomas Lechford noted in his notorious tract, \textit{Plain Dealing}. Lechford assaulted Puritan leaders for not going out and preaching in Indian country, exclaiming, “They have nothing to excuse themselves in this point of not labouring with the Indians to instruct them, but their want of a staple trade, and other business taking them up.”\footnote{32} Lechford’s criticisms highlighted English laxity in preaching to the natives. In fact, the first Christian missionary to Indians in Massachusetts was not John Eliot, but rather a Massachusetts native who traveled to a minister’s house in Salem, heard stories from the Bible, and then “went out amongst the


\footnote{31} Acts 16:9 (New American Bible)

\footnote{32} Thomas Lechford, \textit{Plain dealing: or, Nevves from New-England. A short view of New-Englands present government, both ecclesiasticall and civil, compared with the ancienly-received and established government of England, in some materiall points; fit for the gravest consideration in these times. By Thomas Lechford of Clements Inne, in the County of Middlesex, gent.} (London: W. E. and I. G., 1642), 21. Richard Cogley has argued that the late start was a product of an “affective model” of missionary activity, or the idea that conversion would begin slowly, eventually, once Indians conceded that they were ready to hear the gospel. See Cogley, \textit{John Eliot’s Mission to the Indians Before King Philip’s War}, 5.
Indians, and called upon them to put away all their wives save one, because it was a sinne."³³

Indian evangelists thus began the work of Christian evangelization while Puritan ministers dragged their feet.³⁴

Even John Eliot, whom historians recognize as the most famous apostle to the Indians, did not express interest in missionary activity until the 1640s, and he had been in Massachusetts since 1631. Exactly why he took up the call to preach to Indians is still heavily debated, but we do know that he began learning indigenous languages in 1643, most likely from an Indian who was taken captive during the Pequot War.³⁵ Far from an expert in native languages, Eliot felt that by 1646 he knew enough Massachuset to try to convert some Indians, so he organized a series of camp meetings in the fall and early winter of that year. They took place in the hut of an Indian named Waban, a man who previously held no office or position of honor in indigenous society. The choice of Waban as a go-between is worth exploring. English missionaries usually tried to cultivate an indigenous spiritual leadership among existing native political leaders to graft a new, Christian hierarchy onto what they perceived as an already well-established indigenous one. When they failed to do so, they

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³³ Anonymous, New Englanes first fruits in respect, first of the conversion of some, conviction of divers, preparation of sundry of the Indians, 2. of the progresse of learning in the colledge at Cambridge in Massacusetts Bay : with divers other speciall matters concerning the country (London: R.O. and G. D. for Henry Overton, 1643), 4.

³⁴ Letter from John Eliot to Thomas Shepard, September 24, 1647, in Thomas Shepard, The clear sun-shine of the gospel breaking forth upon the Indians in New-England. Or, An historicaall narration of Gods wonderfull workings upon sundry of the Indians, both chief governors and common-people, in bringing them to a willing and desired submission to the ordinances of the gospel; and framing their hearts to an earnest inquirie after the knowledge of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world. / By Mr. Thomas Shepard minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ at Cambridge in New-England (London: R. Cotes, 1648), 23-24.

³⁵ Letter from John Eliot to Edward Winslow, December 2, 1648, in Edward Winslow, The Glorious progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England manifested by three letters under the hand of that famous instrument of the Lord, Mr. John Eliot, and another from Mr. Thomas Mayhew, Jun., both preachers of the word, as well to the English as Indians in New England ... : together with an appendix to the foregoing letters, holding forth conjectures, observations, and applications, by I.D. ... / published by Edward Winslow (London: Hannah Allen, 1649), 19.
simply worked with whoever was willing to work with them, as was the case with Waban. The meetings that Waban and Eliot established were informal gatherings, but Eliot used them as opportunities to ask Indians questions concerning religion, deliver a series of lectures (one of the main themes was the scattering of peoples after Noah’s flood), and even draw support for a praying town in Noonatomen, near present day Watertown. Waban was installed as a kind of Justice of the Peace there, and the town had a series of behavioral codes that included cutting one’s hair, avoiding alcohol, shunning local shamans, and even refusing to “lie with a beast” upon penalty of death. Waban began using his newfound authority to set out on his own and preach among Indians near Concord, Merrimack, and other destinations north and west of Boston. His most important accomplishment, according to English officials, was to encourage others to take up the mantle of also spreading the gospel. One Puritan divine even recalled that he produced a veritable cadre of skillful indigenous evangelists, as there were “now many others whom he first breathed encouragement into that do farre exceed him in the light and life of the things of God.” Puritan preachers imagined Christianity as a kind of spiritual virus, one that could be transmitted most effectively through indigenous hosts. As Waban and other native preachers began the work of evangelizing other Indians, Puritan commentators began to boast of the progress of Christian evangelism in their own city upon a hill. Thomas Shepard, the popular Puritan divine and Eliot’s personal friend, even proclaimed that the early evangelical triumphs of Eliot and Waban should “move bowels, and awaken English hearts to be thankfull.”


In spite of Shepard’s optimistic, if quirky, assessment, church officials understood that praying towns alone would not spread the gospel to the rest of New England’s indigenous population. The praying towns that Puritan missionaries established were simply the skeletal system of this new Christian community. Native missionaries, on the other hand, would be the muscle, sinew, and tendons that connected the body of newly converted Christian Indians together. Historians have suggested that praying towns were quite similar to the famous reducciones of the Spanish and Portuguese empires, though they were much smaller and involved forced migration only after King Philip’s War. Yet scholars have rarely acknowledged the tremendous degree of autonomy that was so characteristic of many growing Christian Indian communities. Although Eliot was the central figure in their creation, the offices of church leadership were almost always filled with Native Americans, and usually along genealogical lines. The ascension of Native Americans into positions of secular and spiritual authority therefore meant that the quotidian operations of Puritan missions were left to the Indians themselves. In transferring that spiritual authority to Indians, Puritan missionaries created opportunities through which native preachers could exercise an incredible degree of cultural and spiritual autonomy.

The most famous praying town was Natick, founded in 1651 and based upon a Mosaic system of civil rulers and spiritual pastors and teachers. But, if Natick was the most

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40 John Huxtable Elliott, Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 74. Many of these towns became virtual Indian reservations after King Philip’s War; a Massachusetts law restricted any Indian from living outside of these communities.

41 A comparable autonomy was felt in the Spanish mission of California in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Steven W. Hackel, Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

42 Brenner, “To Pray or to Be Prey”; 142-144.

43 For this plan see Exodus 18. See also John Eliot, The Christian Commonwealth: Or, The Civil Policy of The Rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ (1657).
celebrated praying town, it was also the most atypical, as it was large, close to English settlements, and frequently visited by English officials. Natick’s Indian residents built English-style houses, wore English clothes, and sported shortly cropped haircuts, mainly because English ministers believed it was “absolutely necessary” for their Indian charges to “carry on civility with Religion.” However, Natick’s status as an Indian city upon a hill made it just as much a point of departure for native missionaries as it was a destination. Just as Waban set out from Noonatomen, praying Indians who lived in Natick and other towns also traversed the Indian frontier, using the towns as bases of operations. Cutshamoquin, for example, traveled all the way from Natick to Narragansett Country to try to convert the Indians of Rhode Island. When Daniel Gookin and Eliot began establishing a second wave of praying towns in 1673 and 1674, they usually installed native preachers who lived, learned, and prayed in Natick as teachers and preachers in the new towns. Eliot bragged in 1673 that many of these missionaries could “read, some write, sundry able to exercise in publick,” and that many of them “doe every lecture day.” In other words, the praying towns, especially Natick, were designed to serve as the multiple hubs of an integrated indigenous missionary network that stretched to southern New Hampshire, Cape Cod, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and even Long Island. When Indians set out on this missionary road,

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45 Undated letter from John Eliot, probably written in the summer of 1650, in Whitfield, Strength out of Weakness, 10. Unfortunately, Cutshamoquin only brought back “strong water” instead of converts. When he returned to his praying town, the congregation “suffered not him to teach; only he began the day with confession of his sinne, and made a short prayer, wherein he confessed, Satan acted in his heart, begged pardon.”

they were usually on their own.\textsuperscript{47} If this might have created tensions in the Protestant missionary model, Eliot never mentioned it. For Puritan and other Protestant theologians, the parish-based community was the locus of religious activity, and bands of wandering Indians could certainly challenge that model of Christian community.\textsuperscript{48} Puritan divines probably realized that Indians had to hit the trails as itinerant preachers if they were to pull other Indian tribes into the orbit of Puritan Christianity. Ironically, Puritans believed that it took a wandering Indian to keep other Indians from wandering and persisting in lives of darkness, mobility, and savagery.

Each of the seven praying towns that were firmly established by 1670 had their own indigenous ministers, church officers, deacons, and rulers. Hassanamesitt, near present day Grafton, had a teacher named Joseph Tackupawillin, whose father had previously been a deacon of the church there.\textsuperscript{49} Okommakamesit, near Marlborough, employed a hard-drinking teacher before Solomon, a “serious and sound Christian,” took over and restored order.\textsuperscript{50} There were also Indian preachers at Nashope (near Littleton), Wamesut (Tewksbury), Magunkukquok (Hopkinton), Panatuket, and Ponkapog (Stoughton).\textsuperscript{51} Samuel Danforth noted that, in Little Compton (in present-day Rhode Island), “They have pastors and elders of their own, ordained sometimes by the hands of English Ministers, and sometimes by the

\textsuperscript{47} Elise M. Brenner argues, correctly, that praying towns were characterized by autonomy and self-sufficiency. See Brenner, “To Pray or to Be Prey”: 140-141.

\textsuperscript{48} This tension between parish and itinerant preaching was a major theological controversy in seventeenth and eighteenth century ecclesiastical history. For more on this tension, see Timothy D. Hall, Contested Boundaries: Itinerancy and the Reshaping of the Colonial American Religious World (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994).

\textsuperscript{49} Gookin, Historical Collections, 45. It should also be noted that, in traditional New England fashion, place names (and even people names) had multiple spellings.

\textsuperscript{50} Eliot, A Brief Narrative, 8.

\textsuperscript{51} For more on these individual towns see Gookin, Historical Collections, 40-45; and Eliot, A Brief Narrative.
hands of Indian Ministers in the presence of the English." By 1674 there was only one English missionary working in Cape Cod among a handful of Indian ones. The New England Puritan missionaries who traversed the frontiers, supervised the praying towns, and connected thousands of praying Indians through an interlocking web of native relations were Native Americans, not English colonists. The praying towns were thus not the most important or effective aspect of Puritan missions: the native evangelists who administered them were.

Massachusetts Indian praying towns were certainly important, but native preachers operated all over New England, within and outside of the institutional structure of the praying town. The tacks represent all the places where native preachers operated in the first 100 years of religious contact. Image courtesy of Google Maps. An interactive version of this map, including other native preachers in other places, can be found at http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=111088942994730993369.00045afa8f752f7b46b26&ll=23.563987,-61.523437&spn=77.563987,112.5&z=3/.

If the missionary effort on the Massachusetts mainland was fundamentally dependent upon indigenous agents, efforts on the island of Martha’s Vineyard, which the Wampanoags who lived there called Nope, were even more so.\textsuperscript{53} In fact, while Eliot was learning the local language and preparing to preach in the early to mid 1640s, a nascent Indian Christian community was being formed around a handful of charismatic Wampanoag leaders. This development happened simultaneously with, but separate from, the missions that were being established on the Massachusetts mainland. When Thomas Mayhew, Sr. settled on the island around 1642, he and his son began to learn the Wampanoag dialect and peripatetically instruct Indians in Christian literacy. Although the younger Thomas would die tragically in a mysterious shipwreck in 1657, by that time the mission was in the hands of the native preachers whom he and his father had trained. The Mayhews were merely catalysts. As historian David Silverman noted, indigenous agents, “not the Mayhews or [John] Cotton, were the most active missionaries on the island.”\textsuperscript{54}

The first of these was Hiacoomes, a man who became perhaps the island’s most celebrated Christian Indian. About 23 or 24 years old by the time the Mayhews arrived, Hiacoomes was described as a “sad and sober spirit” who had few friends and even less to say in his community.\textsuperscript{55} Writing in the 1720s, Experience Mayhew (grandson of Thomas Mayhew, Sr.) recalled that Hiacoomes’ “Descent was but mean, his Speech but slow, and his Countenance not very promising.” Chiefs and other local men of import thought him “scarce


\textsuperscript{55} Whitfield, \textit{The light appearing}, 3-4.
worthy of their Notice or Regard.”

Faced with disrespect from the Indian community, Hiacoomes probably viewed the arrival of the Mayhew family as an opportunity to recast his identity as a person of repute. He approached the English family, befriended them, asked for Christian instruction, and began fashioning a new identity for himself as a Christian Indian. From 1643 to 1646, Hiacoomes studied scripture with the Mayhews, coming to understand his own sinfulness, the love and wrath of God, the inner depravity of man, and other classic Puritan doctrines. He got his big break, however, when his neighbors got sick.

Disease, which would later prove to be a major disadvantage to the indigenous missionary movement in other places, actually worked in favor of missionary Indians on Martha’s Vineyard. The Vineyard Indians had experienced periodic illnesses, but few were worse than the series of epidemics that swept the island from 1643 to 1645. Miraculously, the small band of converts who were beginning to listen to Hiacoomes’ preaching were hit less hard than the rest of the population by this wave of diseases, and Hiacoomes and his family suffered not at all. Hiacoomes cleverly seized the moment to rail against indigenous customs, especially the use of medicine men and shamans (also called pawwaws) to cure sickness. When his neighbors inquired about his apparent immunity to diseases, he replied that he no longer needed medicine men or the spirits with which they tried to court favor. He explained, “I have throwne away all these, and a great many more some years ago, yet am preserved as you see this day.”

He openly declared his faith in Christianity, doing so in excessive “Zeal and Boldness,” attacking the pawwaw system, and exhorting his neighbors to

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56 Experience Mayhew, Indian converts, or, Some account of the lives and dying speeches of a considerable number of the Christianized Indians of Martha's Vineyard, in New-England [microform] / by Experience Mayhew ; to which is added, some account of those English ministers who have successively presided over the Indian work in that and the adjacent islands (London: S. Gerrish, 1727), 1-2.


repent for their sins lest another epidemic wipe them off the face of the island. Hiacoomes’ charismatic preaching and alleged immunity to English diseases helped him to cultivate a sizeable following, even as other Christian Indians emerged as new spiritual leaders to challenge the traditional religious authority of local shamans. When one of his own children died from disease, Hiacoomes used the heartrending event as an opportunity to try to extirpate Wampanoag funerary practices and embrace Puritan ones. As Experience Mayhew recalled, “at the Funeral there were no black Faces or Goods buried, or howling over the dead, as the manner of the Indians in those Times was, but instead thereof a patient Resignation of the child to him that gave it.” At least for Hiacoomes, his embrace of Christianity remade him into a new man who accrued temporal and even epidemiological advantages from his transformation. While disease was a scourge to native peoples, it also seemed to provide tangible evidence of the English God’s redemptive and saving powers for Hiacoomes and his followers.

Although Hiacoomes remained a student of the Mayhews, who still instructed him and offered weekly advice on how to deliver compelling sermons to the Island Indians, by the 1650s he had become a leader of impressive standing in his own right. Henry Whitfield, a Puritan visitor, traveled to the island in 1651 and desired greatly to meet Hiacoomes, whom he declared to be “a man of prompt understanding, of a sober and moderate spirit, and a man well reported of for his conversation both by English and Indians.” In Hiacoomes’ view, Christian teaching offered a chance to shake off a life of isolation and inconsequence to begin a new one characterized by leadership, social importance, and spiritual power. By the 1660s,

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his sacred transformation seemed complete. Experience Mayhew summed up Hiacoomes’
spiritual and social journey eloquently when he said, “tho formerly he had been a harmless
Man among them, yet he had not been at all accounted of, and therefore they wonder’d that
he that had nothing to say in all their Meetings formerly, was now become the Teacher of
them all.”62 When Hiacoomes attended a Puritan service in Boston during one of his
missionary trips to the mainland, the Puritan Congregation politely offered to “receive that
good Indian into one of their pewes,” not an insignificant gesture considering the rigid
hierarchy with which Puritans ordered their seating.63 A formerly forsaken Indian,
Hiacoomes now found himself sitting shoulder to shoulder with Boston’s elite.

It was propitious timing for the indigenous missionary movement on Martha’s
Vineyard. Disease forced the residents to explore alternative explanations for their trials
while Hiacoomes’ sudden transformation from quiet outcast to respected leader provided a
model and catalyst for future Christian indigenous leaders. They came in droves. Mittark, a
sachem at Gay Head, embraced Christianity in 1663 but was shunned by his own people. He
went off to the other side of the island and, like a prodigal son, eventually returned to his own
people as a preacher. Cotton Mather even gave Mittark sole credit for making the Gay Head
Indians “all Christians by profession.”64 John Tackanash, a more scholarly Indian
missionary, was “reckoned to exceed the said Hiacoomes, both in his natural and acquired
Abilities.”65 He preached with Hiacoomes at Edgartown, but when the church became too
big, it split into two congregations, Hiacoomes taking the small island of Chappaquiddick

62 Mayhew, Indian Converts, 5.

63 Letter from John Wilson, October 27, 1651, in Whitfield, Strength Out of Weakness, 13-14.

64 Mather, Magnalia Christa Americana, 378. See also Mayhew, Indian Converts, 21-23.

65 Mayhew, Indian Converts, 14.
and Tackanash heading the one at Edgartown. Japhet Hannit, another famous Indian preacher on the island, seemed destined for greatness since his birth. His mother had experienced several failed pregnancies before finally forsaking her pawwaws. One day, when she was pregnant with Japhet, she slipped off into a field and had an epiphany that there was only one true God, the God of the Englishmen. Her child was miraculously delivered without a hitch and ended up becoming a Christian preacher “who not only is pastor to an Indian church on Martha’s Vineyard, consisting of some scores of regenerate souls, but also has taken pains to carry the gospel unto other Indians on the main land with a notable effect thereof.” In addition to these major leaders, there were dozens of other preachers, deacons, and ministers in Wampanoag churches. These included Momonequenm, John Nahnosoo, Wunnanauhkomun, William Lay, Janawannit, Paul (or Mashquattuhkooit), Joshua Momatchegin, and nearly 50 others. Like their counterparts on the mainland, native preachers were the backbone of Christian missionary activity on Martha’s Vineyard.

The island’s women also played a central role in Wampanoag translation of Christianity. Historian James Ronda has argued that, far from giving women a marginal role, Christianity actually gave native women important roles as wives, mothers, and public figures who could serve as Christian models for other women. In a kind of Christian twist on the later concept of “republican motherhood,” Wampanoag women contributed to the community publicly by raising their children as devout Christians. For example, Experience Mayhew took special notice of Sarah Hannit (Japhet’s wife), who “was careful to bring up her Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, frequently gave them good

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66 Mather, *Magnalia Christa Americana*, 384. This miraculous birth is also recounted in Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 16-17.

Instruction, and would faithfully reprove them when they did amiss; and did also frequently exhort them to the great Duties of Religion, and particularly of that of secret Prayer to God. Even though they never acted as official preachers, women still performed as important agents in the adoption of at least some elements of Puritan Christianity among New England’s native population.

By the mid-1670s Martha’s Vineyard had become a veritable city on a hill for Christian Indians. As on the mainland, positions of Christian Indian authority descended through genealogical lines, creating what James Ronda has called “Generations of Faith.” Of the 30 native church officials operating in Massachusetts by the end of the seventeenth century, well over half of them came from the families of chiefs, elders, or other elite lineages. These native Christian leaders also merged secular positions and spiritual offices. Japhet Hannit was a magistrate before he became a minister. William Lay used both religious authority and civil power to punish transgressors. Experience Mayhew recalled that Lay’s “Way was first to apply himself to them as a Minister of Religion, or of the Word of God, of which he was a Preacher, and endeavour to convince their Consciences of the Sins of which they were guilty, and then bring them to a humble Sense and Confession of their Faults.” If Christian supplication did not work, Lay would change his tune and “severely chastise them for their Offences, making them know what Stripes for the Backs of Fools do

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69 Ronda, “Generations of Faith”: 369-394. David Silverman also argues that using maintaining traditional native leaders, but just installing them as Christians, was central to the process of “religious translation,” or fitting Christianity into indigenous systems of thought and power. See Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation”: 146.

70 Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation”: 167. In this respect Hiacoomes was the exception to the rule, a walking anachronism that both defied most social patterns while simultaneously embodying the transformative power of Puritan Christianity.
intend.” Through their identity as Christian leaders, their apparent immunity to devastating diseases, and even through physical force, Lay, Hannit, Hiacoomes, and other native preachers jealously guarded their authority as spiritual and social leaders even as they sought to carve out a space for native Christians in a colonial world.

**Saints Out of “Savages”**

New England’s Puritan missions were more dependent upon indigenous actors than historians have previously recognized, but how did indigenous missionaries perceive that relationship and conceptualize their own place in the history of Western Christendom? The answer to this question is, of course, difficult to ascertain because they left few records. And yet, the narratives of Indian conversion that John Eliot and other English missionaries recorded do give us a sense of why at least some native preachers found Christianity appealing and compelling. Far from being forced into embracing Christianity, native preachers became evangelists for multiple reasons, and on their own terms. As historian James Axtell has noted, indigenous peoples did not accept Christianity simply because of its “inherent rational superiority.” Instead, “Christianity provided a better – comparatively better – answer to the urgent social and religious questions that the Indians were facing at that particular juncture in their cultural history.” In other words, Christianity was not forced upon the converts, but was one of several systems of meaning, including indigenous ones, that native evangelists could draw from to explain their past and provide hope for their future.

On the micro level, Native American conversion narratives – recorded by English observers, of course – run the gamut from the compelling and sincere to the bizarre and likely

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apocryphal. John Speen, a preacher at the famous praying town of Natick, recalled that he knew little of, and cared less for, Puritan doctrines of sin and the afterlife when the missionaries first came knocking. In a confession taken down in the 1650s, he admitted that “When I first prayed to God, I did not pray for my soul but only I did as my friends did, because I loved them; and though I prayed to God, yet I did not fear sin, nor was I troubled at it. I heard that when good men die, their souls go to God, and are there happy, but I cannot say that I believed it.”

John’s brother, Anthony, who began praying because his brothers prayed, never expressed a belief in the Christian gospel until one day, as he was building a house, a hefty piece of lumber fell from above and crashed directly on his skull, splitting it open. Anthony survived, but he always remembered the winter that “God broke my head” as a seminal moment in his spiritual transformation, for he believed that this incident was a sign that he needed to undergo a dramatic spiritual transformation to survive in this new cultural landscape.

Nishokon, the supposedly bashful man who gave that emotional sermon on Noah’s flood, admitted at first that he only did what was fashionable in order to increase his chances with the ladies. Cutting one’s hair was essential to living in a Christian community (it was illegal to keep one’s hair long), but Nishokon said, “If I cut my hair, it was with respect to lust, to please women; if I had long hair, it was with respect to lust, and all I did was with respect to lust and women.”

Nishokon’s first exposure to Christianity and English civility, then, was not predicated upon a profound spiritual longing, but rather an attempt to stay up on the latest fashions. A few native ministers probably became Christians in name

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73 For more on Indian conversions, see Wyss, Writing Indians, 25-29.
74 John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, Tears of repentance, 28.
75 Eliot, A further account, 10. Historian James Axtell also uses this quote as an epigraph to begin chapter nine of The Invasion Within.
76 Eliot, A further account, 4.
only and began preaching just for the money. It is impossible to determine how often this happened, but being a preacher certainly had its temporal rewards. By 1671 Hiacoomes was paid 10 pounds a year (half as much as an English minister), John Tackanash made 5, and Mittark made 3. There is little doubt that some New England Indians became preachers simply because the money was right.

And yet, other native missionaries might have had more weighty motives. For Monequassum, his acceptance of Christianity was heavily dependent upon his sense of place. He confessed that he initially rebuked the Christian message he heard in his town at Cohannet. As the town became Christianized he even considered running away. Yet he eventually agreed to become a Christian because, “I loved to dwell at that place, I would not leave the place, and therefore I thought I will pray to God, because I would still stay at that place, therefore I prayed not for the love of God, but for love of the place I lived in.” Love of place, rather than love of Christ, motivated many indigenous evangelists. Other confessions taken down by John Eliot and his son suggest many more reasons, including an anxiety about sin (a novel but increasingly problematic concept for Indian religions), an attempt to gain the upper hand against Indian enemies, or even to protect oneself from the wrath of English military forces. One Indian named Wequash became a preacher out of fear. A captain during the Pequot War, Wequash witnessed an English slaughter of the Pequots, “where divers hundreds of them were slaine in an houre.”

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78 Eliot and Mayhew, Tears of Repentance, 12.

Connecticut, Wequash warned Indians of the apparent power that Englishmen had by virtue of their relationship with God, telling of their successes in war and admonishing his neighbors to cast off their sin, lest they share the same fate as their Pequot neighbors.

Indigenous Christianity was also a matter of power. Many indigenous peoples began to believe that traditional methods alone could no longer serve as efficient responses to the novel conditions of disease, colonization, and war that the English presence had wrought. Accepting elements of English religion, therefore, was not a marker of complete and total subservience, but rather a way to appropriate Christian power, command it, and use it to guide future Indian affairs. Indians were seeking manitou, defined by Neal Salisbury as “great resources of supernatural power,” and many did not necessarily see Christianity as a form of cultural suicide, but rather as a spring of spiritual power.\footnote{Neal Salisbury, “Religious Encounters in a Colonial Context: New England and New France in the Seventeenth Century,” \textit{American Indian Quarterly} 16 No. 4 (Autumn 1992): 502.}

Hiacoomes was an idealized example of this phenomenon. The Martha’s Vineyard Indian who appeared completely powerless suddenly had access to great reserves of manitou that even the traditional pawwaws could not break. He and his family were generally immune to diseases, he was now a person of great repute, and in his preaching he “gave so great a measure of faith and confidence in his power that he [was] soon beyond the fear of concealing his contempt of their gods.”\footnote{Matthew Mayhew, \textit{The conquests and triumphs of grace: being a brief narrative of the success which the gospel hath had among the Indians of Martha’s Vineyard (and the places adjacent) in New-England: with some remarkable curiosities, concerning the numbers, the customs, and the present circumstances of the Indians on that island:} further explaining and confirming the account given of those matters, by Mr. Cotton Mather, in the Life of the renowned Mr. John Eliot (London: Nath. Hiller, 1695), 23-24.} Pawwaws who tried to harm him were ineffectual. Hiacoomes, some Indians now believed, clearly had access to new forms of spiritual authority by virtue of his covenant with the English God. As one scholar has recently noted, Indians embraced Christianity not solely on the basis of politics or convenience, but because “they believed...
they had entered into an alliance with an unprecedentedly powerful spirit whose guardianship renewed their hope for the future without severing their ties to the past.”

At the same time, indigenous preachers expressed varying levels of Christian commitment, appropriated and translated different elements of Puritan theology, and fused Christian beliefs and practices with native ones. Some Indians even saw Christianity as a kind of native revitalization movement, or even a rebirth of spiritual knowledge that the ancestors possessed but had long been forgotten by later generations. An oral tradition taken down in the seventeenth century reminded audiences that, far from introducing novel concepts and cosmologies, Christian missionaries were simply picking up where the ancients had left off. The folktale suggests that the central tenets of the Christian message dealing with “the Commandments of God, and concerning God, and the making of the world by one God” were part of the Indian corpus of spiritual beliefs. In fact, the older Indians had apparently “heard some old men who were now dead, to say the same things, since whose death there hath been no remembrance or knowledge of them among the Indians until now they heare of them againe.” Native preachers therefore rarely saw their adoption of Christianity as a paradigm shift in their spiritual lives, for they sought ways to incorporate Christian beliefs into existing Indian cosmologies and spiritual traditions. And, far from producing a single, monolithic hybrid culture, this spiritual encounter produced innumerable, complex fusions and resulted in multivalent answers for what it meant to be a Christian Indian in New England.

It was one thing to embrace parts of Christianity, but quite another to prepare for the rigors of missionary activity that Puritan officials demanded from native evangelists.


Although indigenous missionaries possessed countless advantages over English ones, including language proficiency, access to kinship networks, and the ability to survive in the difficult terrain of the frontier, not everyone could take on the task, for being a missionary meant being invested with an incredible amount of authority and responsibility. The New England Company for the Propagation of the Gospel, founded in 1649, even rejected English ministers who appeared to have some intellectual skills, but were not so “Godly & soe qualified for the spirtuall parte of this worke.”

For native missionaries, their newfound roles as spiritual leaders sometimes produced in them a crisis in confidence. One such preacher doubted his own abilities and feared that “I am one blind, and when I teach other Indians I shall cause them to fall into the ditch.” Indian missionaries also needed to be well prepared for the onslaught of questions and criticisms they expected to face in the field. Puritan divines often commented on the number and difficulty of such questions, and they interpreted Indian criticisms as both a demonstration of sincere interest in Christianity as well as a real challenge for missionaries who were just learning Christian doctrine. Since such criticisms and complex theological questions made preaching to Indians all the more difficult, a missionary had to be familiar with theological argument and rhetoric. As John Wilson noted, “there is need of learning in Ministers who preach to Indians, much more to English men and gracious Christians, for these had sundry philosophicall questions, which some knowledge of the arts must helpe to give answer to; and without which these would not

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85 Eliot and Mayhew, Tears of Repentance, 6.
have been satisfied.”

Although contemporaries might have doubted the intellectual aptitude of America’s indigenous peoples, Puritan divines looked at the propagation of the gospel in providential terms. If metropolitan audiences ever expressed doubts about Indians’ scholastic abilities, Puritan clerics could simply invoke the infinite power of God, saying that God “can make use of what Instruments hee pleaseth for this work.”

Because Indians were perceived as an essential component of God’s plan for the salvation for the world, their training and education would be central to how the rest of sacred Christian history would unfold. “Seeing they must have Teachers amongst themselves,” John Eliot summarized, “they must also be taught to be teachers.”

It was in this spirit that indigenous missionaries underwent two main types of training. The first was in-school training, and there was no better place to build an “Indian Oxford” than at Cambridge’s Harvard College. By 1656, the New England Company had amassed enough funds to construct a basic structure on campus. One Indian student who graduated from Harvard even before this “Indian College” was built was named John Sassamon, who had served as a preacher at Natick, attended Harvard and eventually became an advisor to King Phillip. His death in 1675 would spark one of the bloodiest wars in American history. Two other students were personally educated by college President Charles Chauncy in the late 50s and early 60s. One was Joel, the son of Hiacoomes, and the other was a very promising

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86 Wilson, The Day-Breaking, 17.

87 Shepard, The Clear Sun-Shine, 36.

88 Eliot, A Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel, 5.


student named Caleb. Chauncy publicly examined the Indian candidates at Harvard’s spring
commencements in subjects they had learned that academic year, especially Latin. If they
followed the traditional Harvard regimen, the future preachers probably would have also
dabbled in logic, medicine, ethics, politics, arithmetic, geometry, and even astronomy, not to
mention Greek, grammar, and etymology. The best students would undergo some training in
Hebrew and other languages in order to access and understand ancient sacred texts. 91 By
1664, Chauncy proudly boasted to Robert Boyle, the famous scientist who headed The New
England Company at the time, that, “I have trained up two of the Indians and instructed them
in Arts and languages until that nowe they are in some good measure fit to preach to the
Indians and doe it w(th) hope of comfortable success.” 92 Sadly, Joel and Caleb’s futures
were not as bright as their successes at Harvard. Joel died when his boat was shipwrecked
during a return trip from visiting his family on the Vineyard in 1665. Caleb, who graduated
from Harvard that same year, died the following winter from tuberculosis. 93 Another
promising young Indian student named Eleazar died right before his own graduation.
Benjamin Larnel, of the class of 1716, did the same. 94 Harvard had a handful of capable
young Indian students, but they seemed to keep dying, perennially putting the indigenous
missionary effort back at square one. 95 Proximity to English education also entailed
proximity to English diseases, and native preachers who went to Harvard or received an

91 Anonymous, New England’s First Fruits, 12.

92 Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the Parts Adjacent in America, Some
correspondence, 10.

93 Company for the Propagation of the Gospel, Some Correspondence, 13-14.


95 John Eliot anticipated that it might cost 10 pounds a year to educate a student, but that was probably well
short of the mark. See Letter from John Eliot to [???], October 29, 1649, in Whitfield, The light appearing,
17-18.
education from white ministers often died in droves. The problem of Indian death became so acute that Harvard eventually abandoned the Indian College and their native missionary project. Only a few years after the Indian College was opened did it get transformed into a printing office. By 1698 the building was torn down without pomp or ceremony to make way for other college offices.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the printing press stored at the Indian College was the same press that began printing thousands of pages of biblical texts in Algonquian in the 1660s and 1670s. The New England Company sent printer Marmaduke Johnson, a man reputed to be “loose in his life and conversation,” to set the type. Eliot had previously published a catechism in 1653, but in the 1660s he published an entire bible, an Indian grammar, and an Indian primer. He also had printed Lewis Bayly’s *Practice of Piety* and his good friend Richard Baxter’s *A Call to the Unconverted*, two texts which emphasized repenting for sin while embracing inward piety. Historians have examined these texts but have neglected the primary reason why Eliot printed them in the first place: to train indigenous missionaries. As early as 1650, when there was dim hope he would have anything printed at all, Eliot asserted, “my chief care is to communicate as much of the Scriptures as I can by writing: and further, my scope [is] to train up both men and youths; that when they be in some measure instructed themselves, they may be sent forth to other parts of the Countrey, to train up and instruct others, even as they themselves have been

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97 Salisbury, “Red Puritans”: 44-45; and John Eliot, *The Indian Primer; or, The Way of Training up of Our Indian Youth in the Good Knowledge of God, in the Knowledge of the Scriptures and in an ability to read* (Cambridge, MA: Marmaduke Johnson, 1669).
trained up and instructed.”98 No text would be as important in pursuing this plan as Eliot’s Indian Dialogues, published in 1671.

John Eliot’s Indian Dialogues consisted of a series of three prolonged, imaginary conversations between indigenous missionaries and audiences who questioned them. Designed to help English and educated Indian evangelists in the missionary field, the dialogues resembled the structure and format of a play, and the line between fact and fiction in these Socratic conversations was not very clear, as Eliot readily admitted. In the preface he conceded that “These dialogues are partly historical, of some things that were done and said, and partly instructive, to show what might or should have been said.”99 While the second dialogue discussed the theological intricacies of Puritan doctrine, the third was an imaginary conversation between King Philip and other indigenous missionaries, with King Philip eventually coming around to the Christian persuasion, of course. The first dialogue, however, represented what Eliot and other English missionaries assumed, or even hoped, a typical meeting between an indigenous missionary and a non-Christian Indian would be like.

In this first dialogue, Piumbukhou, an Indian preacher, visits Kinsman, his long-lost relative.100 They begin with a cordial salutation and Kinsman wishes to hear more of the new religion that Piumbukhou was proselytizing. After only a few minutes, however, Kinsman quickly accuses Piumbukhou of leaving his home, abandoning his identity, and forgetting his old ways. Piumbukhou cleverly responds that his new religion, his new identity, was forged in the light, whereas his former self lived in perpetual darkness. The debate rises in intensity after Piumbukhou is invited into Kinsman’s home to stay the night. Once inside, Kinsman

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98 Whitfield, Strength out of weaknesse, 6.

99 Bowden and Ronda, eds., John Eliot’s Indian Dialogues, 61.

100 This scenario points to the centrality of kinship networks in the reasoning behind the use of native preachers.
asks the obvious question that most Indians wanted to know: what were the material advantages of conversion, and will “your praying to God exempt you from sickness, poverty, nakedness? Will praying to God fill you with food, gladness, and garments?” Piumbukhou immediately notes that all Christian Indians, at least at Natick, were healthy, well-fed, and happy. Yet even as the native missionary answers in the affirmative to these questions, he also contends that material advantages were not the main reason for his own conversion: “If praying to God did bring with it outward plenty and worldly prosperity, then a carnal people would pray to God, not because they love God, or praying to God, but because they love themselves.” Kinsman seems satisfied with the answer – he was, all the while, a fairly easy sell – but his wife and family are less convinced. In order to persuade them, Piumbukhou ups the ante, comparing indigenous religious practices to living like dogs and even invoking the fire and brimstone rhetoric that had become so central to Puritan oratorical practices. Piumbukhou warns his audience to repent, for there were more than lifestyle changes at stake: “Your souls feed upon nothing but lust, and lying, and stealing, and killing, and Sabbath-breaking, and pauwauing. And all these sins are sins which poison, starve, and kill your souls, and expose them to God’s wrath that they may be tormented among devils and wicked men in hell fire forever.” Predictably, Kinsman and his kin eventually come around, acknowledging the inherent truth and logic of Christianity. Although this was a fictional exchange between a neophyte and a potential convert, the lessons that native missionaries in training could take from it were quite tangible: kinship networks could be vehicles for conversion, Christianity did imply some material advantages, traditional Indian

101 Bowden and Ronda, eds., John Eliot’s Indian Dialogues, 65.

102 Bowden and Ronda, eds., John Eliot’s Indian Dialogues, 85.
religion was equated with a life of sin, and different sectors of Indian society would respond differently to native missionaries.

Although it is impossible to assess the success of *Indian Dialogues* in training native missionaries for their work – it was certainly limited to those who could read English, or have someone who could read it to them – the text does shed light on the centrality of indigenous actors to debates about missionary work and exposes the kinds of opportunities and challenges they might have encountered. When historians look at the Puritan missionary enterprise, however, they often focus on Eliot’s translations or the major praying towns (especially Natick) that he established. In fact, we have seen that Natick was not typical but rather quite exceptional, which probably explains why Eliot invoked it so frequently in publications and letters to friends, donors, and colleagues. Cotton Mather, for all of his later effusive hagiography of Eliot, noted that the apostle’s translations were flawed, to say the least. Mather suggested that “There are many words of Mr. Eliot’s forming which [Indians] never understood. This they say is a grief to them. Such a knowledge in their Bibles as our English ordinarily have in ours, they seldom any of them have; and there seems to be as much difficulty to bring them unto a competent knowledge of the Scriptures, as it would be to get a sensible acquaintance with the English tongue.”103 In other words, because Eliot was very rarely in the praying towns he established, and because his Algonquin texts were poorly translated, the connection between Eliot and the scores of Indians he tried to convert was relatively weak. Eliot began the mission, but he was not the mission. In fact, Eliot’s absences and shortcomings placed more pressure on native missionaries even as his rare visits created spaces in which they could operate. Native preachers, not John Eliot, were

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therefore the ones responsible for spreading Christianity to New England Indians in the first stages of cultural encounter.

**Conflict and Contradiction**

Although native preachers became indispensable to Christian missionary work by the middle of the seventeenth century, the role of these indigenous missionaries was still fraught with ambiguity, tension, and contradiction. Missionaries faced many challenges in their new identities as apostles to Indians and were often caught between two societies that regarded them suspiciously. As one native missionary said, “because wee pray to God, other Indians abroad in the countrey hate us and oppose us, the English on the other side suspect us, and feare us to be still such as doe not pray at all.”¹⁰⁴ Some of the challenges native missionaries faced were obvious ones. It was difficult for indigenous missionaries to befriend Indians if the latter felt that they were being victimized by imperialistic and land-hungry English, to whom native missionaries seemed allied. Alcohol abuse, which was forbidden in praying towns and Christian communities, also became increasingly problematic as liquor became more readily available. Many missionaries also forsook their Christian religion and training, using the cultural negotiation skills they learned while at school to try to make a more lucrative living. Daniel Gookin recalled in 1674 that some well-trained evangelists had “entered upon other callings: as one is a mariner; another, a carpenter; another went for England with a gentleman.”¹⁰⁵ There was also a concern that missionaries were not fully supported by the institutions and people that sent them out in the first place. Eliot often complained that the New England Company never paid its missionaries enough (or at all).


¹⁰⁵ Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 33.
He complained in 1671 that “messengers & instruments looke for theire pay. & if y[t] faile the wheele moves very heavly, & will quick stand still….if instruments faile, the work will fall.” Native missionaries also had to worry about challenges from competing religious groups, including Jesuits, Quakers, Baptists, and Anabaptists. The biggest challenges, however, came from three sources: the struggle of enforcing religious orthodoxy, the resistance of the pawwaws, and the affliction of disease.

No moment better exemplified the tension inherent in native missionaries’ position than the Sabbath Day. Every week Indian preachers would gather their congregations at the beating of a drum, and the services would include prayer, singing of psalms, reading from scripture, and, of course, sermons. Indians sometimes asked for assistance from English ministers on their sermons, but they often performed them on their own. Cotton Mather described these Indian sermons as rather formulaic and consisting of several parts: “you may have in their sermons, a, Kukkootamwehteaonk, that is, a Doctrine, Nahrootomtoehceaconk, or, an Answer, a Witcheayeuonk, or, a Reason, with an Ouworeank, or an, Use for the close of all.” It was a perpetual challenge to gather an audience in the first place, for many Indians naturally opted to spend their Sundays in other ways. When one Indian woman went out on a Sunday morning to get some water, she met a friend and began to discuss “worldly matters.” The local native preacher discovered the exchange and took this

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107 Indians at Stockbridge used a conch shell to gather their congregation in the 1750s. See Patrick Frazier, The Mohicans of Stockbridge (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 95.


109 Some Ministers sometimes blamed this laxity on the English for setting bad examples among the Indians they encountered. Thomas Shepard singled out Roger Williams, the famous founder of Rhode Island, as a Sabbath-breaker who clearly embodied “what a stumbling block to all Religion the loose observation of the Sabbath is.” See Shepard, The Clear Sun-shine, 31.
opportunity to organize his entire sermon around respect for the Sabbath, pointing her out and chastising her while confirming the centrality of Sabbath-breaking in the pantheon of sin. Native preachers even employed cautionary tales about breaking the Sabbath. One local chief, for example, tried to stop his men from killing pigeons on a Sabbath day. When they ignored him and climbed high into a tree to get the pigeon, “one of them fell down from off the tree and brake his neck, and another fell down and brake some of his limbs.”

Whether this story was apocryphal is irrelevant: native missionaries could use these cautionary tales to emphasize that Sabbath-breaking was not only sinful, but worthy of God’s quick and decisive punishment. At the same time, while native preachers could use these examples as teaching moments for their Christian Indian congregations, making examples out of Sabbath-breakers also threatened to humiliate and alienate the very people to whom they were trying to appeal.

Indigenous missionaries were not always as orthodox as Puritan clergymen probably hoped. Indeed, there was a great deal of syncretism, or cultural mixing, between Puritan theology and indigenous religious thinking and practice. David Silverman has thoroughly outlined this phenomenon for Martha’s Vineyard’s Wampanoag Indians. Neal Salisbury reminds us that when Indians placed English material objects into the graves of their loved ones, they were “seeking to reinforce [their relationship with traditional spiritual power] by integrating the spiritual power of the newcomers with their own.” Although historians have conceded that Puritans rarely used images, dance, or other rituals to proselytize, native

112 Silverman, Faith and Boundaries; and Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation.”
missionaries made fairly effective use of song. It was in biblical psalms that native missionaries found common ground with indigenous traditions of singing and chanting. Eliot noted that many native evangelists and their congregations expressed their religious devotion by becoming “skilful and graceful Singers.”

John Endecott, the Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, visited Natick in 1651 and heard both the sermons and singing. He recalled that praying Indians sang the psalms “with such reverence, zeale, good affection, and distinct utterance, that I could not but admire it” and admitted that this was “one of the best journeys I made these many years.” If the Sabbath was a point of contention, song was a point of accommodation. English audiences viewed Indian singing as outward expressions of Christian piety while Indian congregations easily incorporated psalm-singing into their religious cosmology because orality and singing were already central to their own religious practices and rituals.

Native missionaries also faced fierce resistance from Indians who felt challenged by the new authority they wielded. These included both sachems and pawwaws, or shamanistic medicine-men. According to the Puritans who represented them in print, these conflicts always ended poorly for the non-Christians. For example, Hiacoomes had a heated rivalry with Pakeponesso, a sachem on Martha’s Vineyard. Pakeponesso invited Hiacoomes to his home, ridiculed him, and even slapped him across the face. Later on, after Pakeponesso ridiculed him again, a bolt of lightning surged through his wigwam and struck him down. As he lay unconscious, his leg remained burning in the fire. He survived, however, and

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114 Bowden and Ronda, eds., John Eliot’s Indian Dialogues, 34.

115 Mayhew, Indian Converts, xvi.

eventually (and predictably) converted to Christianity. Others who resisted God’s word were not so lucky. Japhet, another Martha’s Vineyard missionary, took a trip to the mainland and supposedly converted a large group of Indians there. Yet as soon as Japhet left, one of them mocked the missionary and vowed not to worship God. Coming home from a long journey only a few days later, the man discovered that “His house was consum’d by fire; and his three children, where were all he had, consum’d in it.” He, like Pakeponesso, predictably offered a sincere conversion to Christianity after his affliction.

Unlike sachems and skeptics, pawwaws attacked native missionaries because they represented a direct assault on the traditional religious authority that they had historically possessed. Daniel Gookin described pawwaws as “partly wizards and witches, holding familiarity with Satan, that evil one; and partly are physicians, and make use, at least in show, of herbs and roots, for curing the sick and diseased.” Because many Puritans believed in the power of witchcraft, the occult, and superstition, a pawwaw’s authority was not to be taken lightly, and it was assumed that traditional shamans were in league with the devil. Praying villages even had explicit rules against “pawwawing” as shamans were accused of sending spies to infiltrate Christian communities and even killing native Christians. However, the fundamental tension between pawwaws and indigenous missionaries was less a matter of religious incompatibility and more an issue of competition: both groups demanded obedience, provided explanations for historical and spiritual forces, and both called on


spiritual authorities that could never be proven to actually exist. “Black James,” at least, understood the similarities, as he was a rare pawwaw who converted to Christianity to become a Christian teacher.\textsuperscript{122} Just as Hiacoomes had a showdown with a sachem, he also took on the pawwaws, producing a confrontation which eventually gave him legitimacy on the Vineyard. One of the pawwaws there tried to conjure up a snake to kill Hiacoomes, but that was ineffectual. Others claimed that they could kill him in an instant, but he publicly called their bluff and exclaimed, “Let all the powawes in the island come together, I’ll venture my self in the midst of them; let them use all their witchcrafts; with the help of God, I’ll tread upon them all.”\textsuperscript{123} Some pawwaws even showed up after Hiacoomes had finished preaching on a Sunday and threatened to kill him. Hiacoomes allegedly sat back, relaxed, and said they could do nothing, pointing to his heel and saying that he would crush them underneath it.\textsuperscript{124} Hiacoomes thus not only tried to derail the pawwaws’ power, but also endeavored to publicly humiliate them. Hiacoomes was not alone in attacking the pawwaws. When one Christian Indian name George got sick, he consulted a pawwaw. But his neighbors suspected that the pawwaw had actually made George sick in the first place, so they grabbed the pawwaw and threatened to throw him in a fire. As soon as he felt the heat, the curse was lifted and George felt right as rain.\textsuperscript{125} These victories over pawwaws, of course, were surely not as lopsided as Puritan commentators assumed them to be. Yet this challenge from the pawwaws was both a problem for indigenous missionaries and an

\textsuperscript{122} John Eliot, \textit{The Dying Speeches of several Indians} (Cambridge, MA: Samuel Greeen, 1685), 11-12.

\textsuperscript{123} Mather, \textit{Magnalia Christa Americana}, 516.

\textsuperscript{124} Mayhew, \textit{Indian Converts}, 6.

\textsuperscript{125} Mayhew, \textit{The conquests and triumphs}, 20.
opportunity for them to demonstrate their own authority as new spiritual leaders of indigenous communities.

Disease, however, proved to be as capricious as ever. Just as disease temporarily blessed native missionary efforts on Martha’s Vineyard by preserving Hiacoomes and quieting the pawwaws, it almost destroyed the indigenous missionary movement on the mainland. Caleb, the Harvard graduate trained under Charles Chauncy, died from tuberculosis. In 1652 a massive flux swept through many of the praying towns, killing off missionaries and their family members and casting doubt on their newfound status as God’s chosen people. Some tried to capitalize on disease by using its transmission as an opportunity to highlight those who had become model Christians and admonish those who had not. John Eliot, for example, published a tract called The Dying Speeches of Several Indians, which emphasized that disease, for all its temporal pain, ultimately brought victims to the light of the gospel. One dying victim even rejoiced, “By this sickness God calleth me to repent all my sins, and to believe in Christ. Now I confess myselfe a great sinner, Oh pardon me and helpe me for Christ his sake.”

The famous Waban gave a sermon in 1659 that equated bodily sickness with a lack of faith, which he called “sicknesse in our soul.” In Waban’s view, Christ was not only a spiritual power but also a physician, supplanting the responsibilities of the traditional pawwaws and offering an alternative method for dealing with the demographic and epidemiological implications of European colonization.

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127 Eliot, A Further Accompt, 9.
of these attempts, Puritan ministers could not help but notice that their best missionaries were
dying all around them. A group of ministers complained, “It hath pleased the Lord to frown
upon our endeavours in this kind; taking away by death, at sundry times, six youths or more,
upon whom considerable cost had been expended for their education.”¹²⁸ Puritan divines felt
“great discouragement” at losing so many “pretious instruments” and “hopefull buds” for the
missionary enterprise.¹²⁹ In 1669 John Eliot regretted that, in Natick, “many of our choyce
instruments of this place are dead.”¹³⁰ Martha’s Vineyard, which had experienced periodic
epidemics from the 1640s to 1690, felt the pain of disease more acutely by the end of the
century.¹³¹ Matthew Mayhew lamented that, “of the number of more than one hundred Adult
Persons that dyed, not less than three fourths, were of the Sober Religious Professors.”¹³²
Intimate access to English culture, of course, also meant exposure to English diseases.
Ironically, the very people who claimed to be under God’s protection became the ones
hardest hit by God’s wrath.

**Distressed on Every Side: King Phillip’s War**

Of all the impediments that native preachers faced as brokers of Protestant
Christianity, few were bigger than the conflict that erupted in New England in the middle of
the 1670s. The decade actually began fairly well for the indigenous missionary effort. John

¹²⁸ Letter from the New England Commissioners to Robert Boyle, September 10, 1662, in Gookin,
*Historical Collections*, 77.

¹²⁹ Letter from the New England Commissioners to Robert Boyle, September 8, 1670, in Company for the


¹³² Mayhew, *The conquests and triumphs*, 34.
Eliot and John Cotton had recognized an official indigenous church on Martha’s Vineyard in 1670. Eliot had also published his *Indian Dialogues*, which he expected would serve as a missionary training manual for future evangelists. In the meantime, he and Gookin had taken up the task of traveling even further west and south to establish new praying towns. A fundamental component of that work would be, in Gookin’s words, “to settle teachers in every town.”

Many of those new teachers and preachers were trained and educated in Natick, confirming that town’s status as a nucleus for indigenous evangelical activity. At Manchage, or Oxford, they installed a preacher named Waabesktamin. Joseph, who was a member of the Hassanamesitt (Grafton) church, became the teacher at Chabanakongkomun, or Dudley. In fact, Joseph had actually established this praying village and had been preaching to the inhabitants there well before Eliot and Gookin made him official. An Indian named Jethro became a preacher at Nashaway, near Lancaster. James Speen was from one of Natick’s most prominent Christian families, and he was installed at Pekachoog, near Worcester. Woodstock, Connecticut also became a veritable outpost of praying Indians, as it had several villages with native ministers there, including Daniel and Sampson. The latter was a former alcoholic who had recently abandoned his drinking, patched things up with his alienated wife, and began a life of Christian exhortation. When John Moqua was presented as preacher to the village of Maanexit in Woodstock, his first act was to set and sing a psalm, which he concluded with a prayer. These new praying towns reportedly had sober, well-

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133 Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England.* (Boston: Belknap and Hall, 1792), 49. Gookin first wrote this text in 1674, though I use a later printed version of it.

134 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 43.
established, and active native ministers who were willing to expand the kingdom of Christ. The 1670s thus began auspiciously for native missionary enterprises in New England.\footnote{135}

The rest of the decade would be quite different, and there is no better evidence that native missionaries were central to the relationship between English and Indians than the fact that the man who sparked King Philip’s war was a native missionary. Land greed, competition over trade, and other troubles were the root causes of the conflict between Indians and English, but John Sassamon’s murder was the catalyst. A Christian minister who had been educated at Harvard, taught at Natick, and had also been a teacher at Nemasket, Assawompsett, and Titicut, Sassamon became a personal advisor to Wampanoag chief King Philip just before the war broke out.\footnote{136} Through Sassamon, Philip gained access to not only a skilled interpreter, but also a powerful cultural negotiator who could provide some leverage against the English while ostensibly gaining the support of Christian Indians. For Sassamon, his position as both a Christian evangelist and personal advisor to a sachem who maintained a notorious aversion to Christianity put him in an awkward position. Perhaps Sassamon thought he could strengthen his own hand by acting as Philip’s advisor. Perhaps he thought he could be the native preacher to convert Philip, as forecasted in Eliot’s Indian Dialogues. He would do neither. When Sassamon overheard a plan for Philip to attack English settlements, he informed the English of Philip’s scheme and was then mysteriously murdered. After the war, Increase Mather would argue that Sassamon was murdered “out of hatred

\footnote{135}{The narrative of Eliot and Gookin’s travels to these new towns, including descriptions of the teachers and preachers who presided over them, can be found in Gookin, Historical Collections, 49-53.}

\footnote{136}{Frederick L. Weis, “The New England Company of 1649 and its Missionary Enterprises,” Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts Volume XXXVII (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1959), 168-178. Nemasket and Assawompsett were two separate Indian villages located near present day Lakeville, Massachusetts. Titicut was located near present day Middleborough, Massachusetts. Jill Lepore offers a detailed discussion of Sassamon’s life and eventual death. See Lepore, The Name of War, 21-47. See also Van Lonkhuyzen, “A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians”: 410.}
against him for his Religion, for...he was a Preacher amongst Indians.”137 Although his status as a preacher may not have necessarily sealed his fate, it nevertheless granted Sassamon access to the kinds of abilities and skills that cultural brokers needed to negotiate between two worlds. Unfortunately for Sassamon, when these negotiations broke down, the brokers were often the ones caught in the middle. When three of Philip’s Wampanoag subjects were caught and quickly executed for Sassamon’s gruesome murder, the war officially began.138

On the eve of King Philip’s War there was a handful of praying towns led and operated by dozens of native evangelists. In total, there were as many as 1100 praying Indians in the praying towns and thousands more on the Cape and Islands.139 The war put these Christian Indians and the preachers that led them in an untenable position. In spite of the professed allegiance between Christian Indians and English authorities, many English could not distinguish between a friendly Indian and an enemy one. For example, in 1675 Massachusetts passed a law making it legal for any person to “kill and destroy” any Indian caught walking or “skulking” in any English towns or woods.140 This law must have been problematic for Indians who were on the move. Even as English authorities fantasized about keeping Indians stationary during the war, the conflict catalyzed a horrific cycle of displacement. Preachers and their congregations fled Natick and other praying towns in droves, coalescing in towns like Marlboro and Concord, migrating to Connecticut and New Hampshire, or even seeking refuge in the woods. Eventually, the English would throw

137 Increase Mather, A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England (Boston: J. Foster, 1676), 11.

138 For a general history of the war, see Lepore, The Name of War.

139 Gookin, Historical Collections, 55.

140 Lepore, The Name of War, 183.
hundreds of Christian Indians, like refuse, on Boston’s Deer Island, a “bleake Iland” that was barren, cold, and windswept. There they would find only meager food supplies, tattered clothing, and little shelter or fuel to protect them from the harsh Atlantic winds that pounded this veritable concentration camp in the winter.¹⁴¹

Indian missionaries suffered horribly during the war. John Sassamon’s untimely death was only the most prominent example of a native evangelist being murdered, but there were other preachers and teachers who suffered similar fates. Jethro, the teacher who had been installed at Nashaway, was accused of helping to cause the conflict and was summarily executed by English settlers. His son was killed with him.¹⁴² Natick’s Anthony Speen dealt with his feelings of horror and loss by drinking himself into oblivion and forfeiting his prestigious position as the town’s teacher.¹⁴³ Joseph Tuckapawillin, the preacher at Hassanamesit (Grafton), feared the English would raid his praying town and kill the women and children, so he sent his family into the woods to fend for themselves. When Eliot met with Tuckapawillin during the middle of the war, Eliot recorded what the Indian preacher said to him:

> I am greatly distressed this day on every side: the English have taken away some of my estate, my corn, my cattle, my plough, cart, chain, and other goods. The enemy Indians have also taken a part of what I had; and the wicked Indians mock and scoff at me, saying, ‘Now what is become of your praying to God?’ The English also censure me, and say I am a hypocrite. In this distress I have no where to look, but up to God in heaven to help me; now my dear wife and eldest son are (through English threatenings) run away, and I fear will perish

¹⁴¹ Letter from John Eliot to the Robert Boyle of the New England Company (undated), in Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the Parts Adjacent in America, Some correspondence, 53. The pun is intentional; Boston Harbor’s Deer Island is currently a waste treatment facility.

¹⁴² Gookin, Historical Collections, 85-87. Although this rash accusation was completely false, his acquittal came well after he and his son were dead.

¹⁴³ Eliot, The Dying Speeches of several Indians, 7.
in the woods for want of food; also my aged mother is lost; and all this doth greatly aggravate my grief. But yet I desire to look up to God in Christ Jesus, in whom alone is my help.¹⁴⁴

Tuckapawillin’s complaints demonstrate the fragile position that native evangelists occupied during a period of conflict and displacement. Caught between the English who distrusted them and the Indians who despised them, native missionaries often had to find their own solutions to their problems. Tuckapawillin had good reason to complain to Eliot, and he certainly had reason to fear. Although his family would eventually return to him, his son would die of starvation by the winter of 1676.

Tuckapawillin eventually became one of many native evangelists who enlisted on the side of the English during King Philip’s War (he would be captured by enemy Indians soon into his mission). Although most colonists were vehemently opposed to employing natives as military allies, their skills as scouts, spies, messengers, and warriors eventually became a key factor in the English victory.¹⁴⁵ Ironically, the very treacherous and deceitful attributes that later writers would ascribe to inherent Indian character apparently made Indians valuable spies and scouts. For their own part, native ministers enlisted with the English not only to demonstrate their loyalty (which the English might have assumed was the paramount motivation), but to help their families navigate the troubled waters of war. Job Kattenanit, for example, was a minister of “piety and ability” who had been preaching at Magunkog (Ashland) prior to the war. When he enlisted as a spy, he used the opportunity to spearhead a dangerous rescue mission to help secure the release of his children, who had been taken


¹⁴⁵ For more on the attempt to use Indian military aid as a buffer against hostile native tribes, see Johnson, “The Search for a Usable Indian”: 623-621.
prisoner by hostile Nipmuck Indians in weeks prior.\footnote{Job’s wife had apparently been killed in this raid. It is still unclear whether the Hassanemit Indians were taken.} Paid five pounds and given a pass from the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Kattenanit went off to spy with James Quannapohit, a relative of Natick’s most prominent Christian Indians. Once among the Nipmucks, they encountered Joseph Tuckapawillin, the Grafton preacher who had been captured during his own scouting mission. Joseph relayed that, given James’s pedigree, it was too dangerous for him to stay. Job, on the other hand, waited to secure the release of his children. Relying upon a network of native evangelists, Job organized a rescue mission involving himself, Joseph Tuckapawillin, and Joseph’s father, Naoas, who also happened to be a deacon at Joseph’s church. His children apparently made it to safety, though Job’s own retreat from the enemy Indians was much more tenuous. When he finally returned to the English, and in spite of the fact that he carried a pass from Daniel Gookin and warned the English of an impending attack on Lancaster, he was suspected of being a hostile Indian, shuffled off to the army captain, sent to Boston, and transported to Deer Island.\footnote{The attack on Lancaster did eventually happen, and one woman taken in that attack wrote a detailed narrative of her experience as captive among the Indians during the war. See Mary Rowlandson, The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed. Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson and Related Documents, ed. Neal Salisbury (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1997).} He was only able to leave the miserable island when Thomas Savage began organizing an expedition consisting of native scouts. Of the six Indians the appropriately named Savage chose for his mission, three of them were native preachers. Job Kattenanit was one of them.\footnote{Job’s story can be found in Gookin, An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians, 475-482; and Lepore, The Name of War, 141-143.} Kattenanit’s experiences during the war demonstrate that native missionaries enlisted on the side of the English not just to express their loyalty, but to secure their families, aid other
ministers and praying Indians, and flee English military camps. When Indian preachers fought for the English, they certainly did so on their own terms.

Some praying Indians chose to fight against the English during the war. Although the older praying towns had long-established communities of Christian Indians, the new towns that Gookin and Eliot recently organized in the 1670s seemed much more ambivalent about their allegiances. Gookin recalled that the new praying Indians, “being but raw and lately initiated into the Christian profession…fell off from the English and joined the enemy in war.”149 Neal Salisbury has noted how Christian Indians were involved in both sides of King Philip’s War and that the number of Christian Indians fighting against the English went from an “inconsequential minority” to a “highly visible one” by the war’s end.150 The most “visible” of all the Christian rebels must have been James Printer. The aptly named Printer was best known for setting the type for the famous Indian press, but he was also a native missionary. He lived at Hassanamesit with several other Indian preachers and was assigned to teach at Waeuntug (Uxbridge) from 1669 to 1674, only a few miles off. In fact, his father was Naoas, the deacon in the Hassanamesit Church, and his brother was the same Joseph Tuckapawillin who helped James Quannapohit and Job Kattenanit in their spying missions during the war.151 In spite of, or perhaps because of, his family ties, long history as a Christian minister, and prominent position as a typesetter, Printer chose to side with the Nipmucks when the war hit. Remarkably, after fighting on the side of the enemy Indians, Printer was able to get his old jobs back after the war. He returned to Natick for several years


and eventually returned to his hometown of Hassanamesit, where he remained a teacher from 1698 to 1717. He even took up his old job of typesetting, this time contributing to the expanding market for captivity narratives by printing Mary Rowlandson’s *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God.* James Printer’s choices during the war demonstrate that Christian Indian identity did not necessarily entail a passive subjugation to English authority. Instead, Christianity could be empowering for some Indians in ways that allowed them to choose sides based upon their own sensibilities and not upon an allegiance to a nominally Christian nation. James Printer, like other native preachers who fought against the English, was not abandoning his Christianity. Instead, he probably believed that his Christianity empowered him to fight against the same nominal Christians who threatened to destroy his people.

When faced with such a harrowing decision as choosing between the untrustworthy English or the hostile Indians, some native missionaries opted to remain neutral, leading their congregations out of their towns and into the relative protection of the forest. The praying Indians at Wamesit (Lowell), for example, fled their town out of fear of both Indians and English. The Nipmucks burned their wigwams with the elderly inside while the English executed other residents as traitors or shipped them off as slaves to the West Indies. Mystic George, one of their Christian teachers, died from disease and could not retreat with his people into the forest. When the Wamesit Indians wrote to English officials to explain their plight, they raised the specter of Indian defection to the French by blaming their forced diaspora on the English themselves. They then proclaimed that they were not sorry for leaving, but did regret that “the English have driven us from our praying to God and from our Teacher. We did begin to understand a little of praying to God.”

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152 Lepore, *The Name of War,* 136-149; Wyss, *Writing Indians,* 41-51.

was dead, Simon Beckom led the remaining Wamesit refugees north and into the woods, hoping to find either French or friendly Indians to take them in. During the three weeks that the Wamesit Indians were marooned in the forest, Beckom led three separate Sabbath-day meetings. He later told Daniel Gookin that he “read and taught the people out of Psalm 35, the second Sabbath from Psalm 46, the third Sabbath out of Psalm 118.”

The use of psalms as the scriptural basis for Beckom’s meetings is notable for two reasons. First, the psalms were often the first pieces of scripture taught to indigenous converts. Missionaries could use psalms because they reflected a direct relationship with God, were relatively easy to remember, and were presented in song, or musical, form. They thus represented the first exposure that native peoples often had to scripture. Secondly, Beckom’s careful choice of psalms reveals that native evangelists had a much deeper understanding of scripture than most scholars have acknowledged. Beckom did not choose these psalms randomly. Instead, he deliberately selected specific passages that spoke to the unique experiences of a people who were torn between two choices, forced into exodus, and questioning whether their allegiance should be based upon religion or ethnicity.

The first week Beckom taught from Psalm 35. He could have been preaching about both the antagonistic Indians and the hostile English when he said, “without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.” He continued, “I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not…for they seek not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.” The next week Beckom turned away from the theme of betrayal to preach

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to the displaced Indians about the protection of God during a time of severe trial. Calling on Psalm 46, Beckom reminded his listeners that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble…He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder…Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” Transitioning from God’s power to emphasize God’s mercy, Beckom’s third and final Psalm – 118 – assured his congregation that, in spite of the war waging around them, they still had to remain faithful to God, for God had remained faithful to them. Beckom told his listeners that God’s mercy endures forever, and that “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” “All nations compassed me about,” Beckom proclaimed, “but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.” If he sang the entire psalm, Beckom would have concluded by remarking that “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” In lieu of harping on their present tribulations, Beckom’s invocation of this final line instead looks to the future. Indeed, native evangelists might have believed, as Beckom probably did, that the war was a scourge to cleanse the world of evil, redeem the faithful, and establish a new church built on the back of a truly Christian congregation. Given his invocation of Psalm 118, Beckom probably foresaw his congregation, and perhaps even himself, playing a central part in the construction of this new, post-war Christian order.

If Simon Beckom’s final Sabbath day meeting revealed some measure of optimism about indigenous Christianity in the postwar world, the reality would be very different. Even John Eliot naively hoped that the war would not bring a cessation to native missionary
activities, but an intensifying of them. Yet it was very clear that King Philip’s War had devastated and nearly destroyed the Puritan missionary project. The generation that witnessed this disaster recognized the havoc that it wreaked on Indian populations. As disease and warfare ravaged native communities, produced forced diasporas, created thousands of refugees, engendered persistent poverty and starvation, and soured the already uneasy relationship between English and Indians, several generations of Puritan writers commented in eerily similar ways about the disintegration of native Christian populations. Increase Mather stated that the destruction of native communities represented a “signal blast of heaven,” while his son, Cotton, agreed that there appeared to be a “strange Blast from Heaven consuming them.” The missions, like the English and the Indians during the war, seemed to be dying all around them.

In no place was the death of the Puritan mission more evident than in Natick, formerly the most important of all the praying towns. As a site where generations of native preachers taught dozens of Indian families, as an Indian town that had embraced several aspects of English-style civilization, and as one of only four praying towns rebuilt after the war, Natick was both literally and symbolically significant. The decades after King Philip’s War, however, exposed the challenges of maintaining an indigenous Christian community on a frontier wracked by war. Land was certainly at the center of the conflict, and the constant incursion of English settlers into Natick after the war created social and generational tensions.

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that put the community on edge.\textsuperscript{157} Language and the employment of English ministers, however, proved to be just as problematic for the Christian Indian community. Although they had always thought of John Eliot as a “spiritual father,” Natick Indians were irate when Englishman Daniel Gookin took over the pulpit after the war. Gookin believed that indigenous languages were a major component of native barbarism, so he preached to his new Indian congregation entirely in English. The Indians wisely petitioned the New England Commissioners in charge of the mission and urged Gookin to do his utmost to learn their language. They even praised Gookin’s interpreter and brilliantly invoked Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians to explain that the use of an interpreter and the continuance of native languages had biblical sanction.\textsuperscript{158} By 1687 the Natick Indians got their wish; an Indian named Daniel Takawombpait, whom John Eliot had personally groomed for the pastorate, became Natick’s preacher. Although he could speak the native tongue and exhibited some scriptural knowledge, Puritan divines complained about his “errata” and considered replacing him before realizing that they could not find anyone suitable to take his place.\textsuperscript{159} By the 1710s the Commissioners launched an inquiry into the temporal and spiritual state of Natick, found it to be “languishing and withered,” and blamed its degeneration into “a very lax Procedure” on Takawombpait himself.\textsuperscript{160} Even if the Commissioners considered dismissing

\textsuperscript{157} For more on the problems that Natick’s Indians faced immediately after the war, including Mohawk raids and depopulation, see Van Lonkhuyzen, “A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians”: 424-427. For more on the gradual process of Indian displacement at Natick, see O’Brien, \textit{Dispossession by Degrees}.


\textsuperscript{160} Letter from Cotton Mather to Sir William Ashurst, 10 October, 1712, in “Cotton and Increase Mather Letters, 1713-1726” Massachusetts Historical Society Manuscript Collection, 7; Daniel R. Mandell, \textit{Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 35.
Daniel, they did not have to make that decision. He died in 1716, and John Neesnumin, an Indian preacher from Sandwich, was chosen to replace him. Neesnumin himself died only a few years later, and Thomas Waban of Natick replaced him. By 1721 an English minister named Oliver Peabody became the first-ever minister in Natick who knew absolutely nothing of Indian languages. Not surprisingly, it was around this time that land deeds were being drafted in English more frequently, a new generation of Indian schoolchildren were more comfortable with the English language, and more English settlers began traveling to Natick for religious services.\textsuperscript{161} With the slow displacement of the Massachusetts language from the experience of Christian Indian spirituality, the need for native ministers decreased. The era of Indian spiritual leadership in Natick had come and gone.

As destructive as the war was to towns like Natick, the battle of words to remember the war, and the role of Christian Indians in it, was equally important to indigenous missionaries. Historian Jill Lepore has estimated that the postwar New England book market became glutted with as many as 15,000 copies of accounts of the war and Indian activities in it, most of them describing Native Americans as barbarous savages.\textsuperscript{162} Daniel Gookin used the power of print to highlight the contributions made by Christian Indians to the war while John Eliot desperately did the same to try to rebuild his prized praying towns.\textsuperscript{163} Nevertheless, accounts by military leaders and other Puritan clergy alike emphasized ferocity and brutality while simultaneously blaming Indians for starting this horrific war.\textsuperscript{164} Wildly

\textsuperscript{161} Mandell, \textit{Behind the Frontier}, 104-105. In spite of the fact that he missed his English neighbors and friends, Peabody would stay in Natick until 1753.

\textsuperscript{162} Lepore, \textit{The Name of War}, 52. For more on how the war, and the praying Indians who participated in it, were remembered, see Wyss, \textit{Writing Indians}, 30-51.

\textsuperscript{163} See Gookin, \textit{An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of The Christian Indians}.

\textsuperscript{164} See, for example, Thomas Church, \textit{Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip’s War Which Began in the Month of June, 1675. As Also of Expeditions More lately made Against the Common Enemy, and Indian
popular captivity narratives like Mary Rowlandson’s *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, first published in 1682, crystallized in audiences’ minds the negative stereotypes of Indians as barbarians and irredeemable savages that common New Englanders suspected all along. Although she despised her hostile captors, Rowlandson saved her harshest words for the praying Indians, describing them as treacherous, deceitful, and wicked. Rowlandson blamed them for failing to save English captives and even described one of them as “so wicked and cruel, as to wear a string about his neck, strung with Christians fingers.”165 As these popular texts were sold, printed, and reprinted, the image of the Native American as an irredeemable savage began to contradict the great power and authority that Puritan clerics had invested in native preachers in seasons prior. The war had done its damage, but words about the war might have done a lot more.166

All of this is to say that, naturally, a debate about the propriety and efficacy of native ministers was underway in the years after the war. We have already seen how the New England Commissioners tried to install English preachers at Natick, which Natick Indians resisted until the 1720s. But the postwar period was also characterized by a flurry of new proposals to extend the Christian missionary enterprise, and native evangelists were not always at the center of those plans. Immediately after King Philip’s War, Daniel Gookin

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165 Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 98. Although this might have been meant to demonstrate the military power Indians had over the English, it is also possible that this was an attempt by the Indian to gain access to the Manitou that the English God possessed by wearing fingers of enemy Christians as a kind of protective amulet. See Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 112.

166 For more on the debate over Indian missions after King Philip’s War, see Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 184-186.
proposed to create a series of English-speaking free schools around Marlborough, Massachusetts, where Indians would learn firsthand the benefits of agriculture, civilization, and, of course, the English language. He also hoped to supplement the school with an expansive apprenticeship program that placed Indian children with colonial families in the hopes of reducing them to civility and alleviating the threat of another war. There was no place for native missionaries in Gookin’s scheme. He complained that their training was too costly and ultimately “ineffectual to the ends proposed.” Instead, he argued that native preachers be replaced with English ones, for they were “better to instruct them in substantial and orthodox divinity, than teachers of their own nation, who cannot in reason be imagined to be so sufficient, as if they were learned men.”

Gookin clearly doubted that native preachers were the most effectual method for converting Indians to Christianity after the war. While Gookin and other missionary figures argued that eradicating Indian language and employing English ministers would be the most sensible approach to postwar missionary work, other divines still looked to native tongues and native preachers as instruments of gospelization. Cotton Mather, for example, printed a Christian dialogue in English, Dutch, French, and Iroquois for use among the Indians west of the Connecticut River. Mather also urged the New England mission’s backers to publish another Indian bible in the 1710s, arguing that the propagation of Christianity through indigenous languages was much more

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167 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 32 and 81.

168 Predictably, Gookin and others also believed that these new proposals would ensure the safety of the New England settlements and root out any hostile Indian sympathies by making English the lingua franca of New England’s Indians.

169 Cotton Mather, *Another Tongue brought in, to Confess the Great SAVIOUR of the World. Or, some COMMUNICATIONS of Christianity, Put into a Tongue used among the Iroquois Indians, in America. And, Put into the Hands of the English and the Dutch Traders: To accommodate the Great Intention of Communicating the Christian Religion, unto the Salvages, among whom they may find anything of this Language to be Intelligible* (Boston: B. Green, 1707).
important and feasible than a full-scale civilization plan. Mather’s plans were echoed by
the Mayhew family, who had been serving as missionaries to the Wampanoags on Martha’s
Vineyard since the middle of the seventeenth century. In the postwar period the Mayhews
printed not only accounts of successful Indian conversions and tales of prominent native
preachers, but also Indian Psalters to be used by native evangelists. The Mayhews had
ample evidence to prove the efficacy of native ministers. Facing west from Natick, the war-
torn missionary effort appeared to be in steep decline. Yet the Christian Indian communities
in southeastern New England, Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, and Cape Cod emerged from
the war shaken but not destroyed. A growing cadre of native preachers there would attempt
to redefine Native American identity while securing for Christian Indians a place in the
postwar world.

Native Preachers in a Postwar World

It is often assumed that King Philip’s War not only pushed New England’s Indians
west, but also occasioned “the end of the missionary program as conceived by Eliot.”
Although there was a dramatic diaspora of Massachusetts Indians to the north, south, and
west, there were thousands of Indians who remained, in one historian’s words, “behind the
frontier,” eking out a living and trying to raise their children, protect their lands, and survive

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170 Cotton Mather to Sir William Ashurst, 20 November 1713, in the “Cotton and Increase Mather Letters, 1713-1726” Massachusetts Historical Society Manuscript Collection, 8.

171 Matthew Mayhew, A Brief Narrative of the Success which the Gospel hath had, among the Indians, of Martha’s-Vineyard (and the Places Adjacent) in New-England: With Some Remarkable Curiosities, concerning the Numbers, the Customs, and the present Circumstances of the Indians on that Island. Further Explaining [sic] and Confirming the Account given of those matters, by Mr. Cotton Mather in the Life of the Renowned Mr. John Eliot (Boston: Bartholomew Green, 1694); Experience Mayhew, The Massachusetts Psalter, or, Psalms of David: with the Gospel according to John: in columns of Indian and English: being an introduction for training up the aboriginal natives in reading and understanding the Holy Scriptures (Boston: B. Green, 1709).

in the wake of war. These communities retained a remarkable degree of autonomy in spite of their newborn status as *de facto* reservations. Though only a few thrived, many survived. While original praying towns like Natick seemed to be falling apart, a new generation of native preachers took the helm of Christian Indian leadership in southeastern New England. A quick survey of their communities reveals the extent to which native evangelists were not only prevalent but ubiquitous in Indian villages after King Philip’s War. On Cape Cod and in southeastern Massachusetts there existed 23 Indian villages that hosted over 50 Indian preachers. Mashpee, an Indian town on Cape Cod, was dominated by two Indian ministerial families: the Briants and the Popmonits. Nantucket and the Elizabeth Islands had five congregations led by about 18 Indian evangelists. Martha’s Vineyard became the most illustrious model of Native American Christian leadership, having 12 separate Indian congregations and over 50 indigenous preachers. Even on the mainland, where praying towns like Natick were on the fritz, there were still dozens of Indian preachers and teachers. In all of these Indian villages, native preachers, called *nohtompeantog* in

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173 Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*. Part of this was certainly compulsory. Massachusetts passed a law that any Indian not sold into slavery or pushed westward was to live in the praying towns, thus effectively making them both centers of indigenous Christianity and precursors to modern-day reservations.

174 See Mayhew, *Indian converts*. Many of these narratives include dying speeches of Indians, which are analyzed methodically in Seeman, “Reading Indians’ Deathbed Scenes”: 17-47. See also Wyss, *Writing Indians*, 75-76 for a methodological discussion of deathbed narratives.

175 Frederick L. Weis computed (on page 151) that there were 133 native preachers working in about 60 Indians towns and villages in New England. However, on page 202 he indicates that there were actually 157. Then, on page 202, he lists all of the native preachers and the total number comes to 159. That can be compared with the 118 English preachers working in these towns, many of whom did not remain in their posts for too long. For an analysis of each of these New England towns, see Weis, “The New England Company of 1649,” 134-218.
Massachusett, began to restructure Indian communities, furnish examples of indigenous leadership, and articulate a new sense of Indian identity as both Indian and Christian. Just as Natick became a symbol for the apparent dissolution of the native missionary effort, Martha’s Vineyard became an icon of its success. In fact, the small island off the southern coast of Massachusetts had several advantages that Natick did not: the atrocities of war never came home to the island’s residents, there was a comparatively small number of English settlers there until well into the eighteenth century, and the Islanders enjoyed a tradition of autonomy and independence among Indian churches that dated back to the days of Mittark, Hiaccomes, and other native leaders. By 1687 Increase Mather could boast to a Professor at the University of Utrecht that there were 24 Indian preachers on the Island. By the 1720s the Island churches were still “under the teaching of some English and more Indian Ministers.” These native preachers also reached out to the mainland and even installed Christian preachers on the island of Nantucket. Martha’s Vineyard, not Natick, would eventually become the new “city upon a hill” for indigenous Christianity. As such, the Vineyard became vital for not only providing native Christian leadership, but also acting as a hub for indigenous itinerant preaching throughout New England.

176 “Nohtompeantog” can mean preacher, minister, or teacher in the Massachusett language, suggesting that the term is connected with didactic oratorical speech. Ives Goddard and Kathleen J. Bragdon, Native Writings in Massachusett, Vol. II (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1988), 672.

177 The foremost scholar of the Native American community on Martha’s Vineyard is David J. Silverman. See Silverman, Faith and Boundaries; and Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation”: 141-174.

178 On Martha’s Vineyard during King Philip’s War, see Silverman, Faith and Boundaries, 78-120.

179 Letter from Increase Mather to Dr. John Leusden, July 12, 1687, in Mather, Magnalia Christa Americana, 508-509.

180 Mayhew, Indian Converts, xvii.
Indian preachers were employed by English missionaries who returned to the paths to try their luck among distant Indians in southeastern New England. At the same time, Indians in southeastern Massachusetts cultivated their own practice of itinerancy, with preaching Indians crisscrossing southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod, Nantucket, Martha’s Vineyard, and even parts of Rhode Island to try to cultivate Christian audiences. This was not necessarily unique to native itinerancy, for there were people “always to be found among the Indians” who traveled from village to village to share news. What was distinctive about the preaching Indians was their effort to foster a sense of shared Christian Indian identity. Martha’s Vineyard’s Indians were particularly active in this itinerant missionary work. John Coomes (the son of the famous Hiacoomes) left the island to take over the preaching duties at Assawampsit, near present-day Lakeville. Jonathan Amos moved from the Vineyard to Dartmouth, Zachariah Hossueit often traveled from the island to preach at Mashpee, John Neesnumin went from Sandwich to Natick, and Japhet Hannit set out from the Vineyard to traverse the southern coast of Massachusetts and even attempt to convert the Narragansetts of Rhode Island. In fact, Hannit traveled from village to village, ordaining

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181 When he left Martha’s Vineyard to preach to the Pequot and Mohegan Indians in Connecticut, Experience Mayhew not only relied upon Indian interpreters, but actually attempted to find native preachers to train along the way. He did this with Joseph, his interpreter, and Joseph’s nephew. See Rev. Experience Mayhew, A brief Journal of my Visitation of the Pequot & Mohegin Indians, at the desire of the Honourable Commissioners for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians in New England (1713), from Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the Parts Adjacent in America, Some correspondence between the governors and treasurers of the New England Company in London and the commissioners of the United Colonies in America, the missionaries of the company, and others between the years 1657 and 1712, to which are added the journals of the Rev. Experience Mayhew in 1713 and 1714 [Edited by] John W. Ford [Governor of the New England Company] (New York: B. Franklin, 1970), 102-103 and 126-127.


183 “Account of an Indian Visitation, A.D. 1698.” Copied for Dr. Stiles, By Rev. Mr. Hawley, Missionary at Mashpee, From the Printed Account Published in 1698, in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, First Series, Vol. X (Boston: The Society, 1809), 134.

184 Mandell, Behind the Frontier, 59 and 126; and Mather, Just Commemorations, 53-55.
native preachers whom themselves could establish new churches and further promoting indigenous Christian spiritual authority. One of his new protégés was William Simmons, a Dartmouth Indian whom Hannit ordained in 1695.\(^{185}\) When Simmons accompanied Experience Mayhew through Rhode Island, he opted not to continue the journey to the Connecticut Indians. Instead, Simmons traveled north, on his own, “to a Town of Indians,” where he would ostensibly do the same thing that Hannit had done for him: prepare an individual for the responsibility of establishing and leading a Christian congregation.\(^{186}\) In short, it was not just English ministers conducting itinerant missionary trips to the Indians. It was Indians themselves, most of them hailing from the Vineyard. Even Matthew Mayhew had to admit that, “by the alone Ministry of the *Martha’s Vineyard-Indians*, was the Civilizing and Conversion of the *Indians* on the *Maine land*, at a place called *Succonet*, and parts Adjacent: who as they were Converted by the Ministry, sent from the church of *Martha’s Vineyard*, to the Officers were by them (as likewise were those of *Nantucket*) Ordained.”\(^{187}\) Indian preachers were not only preaching to their own congregations. They were actively forming new ones.

Native ministers were the social thread that knit these postwar indigenous communities together. As such, their personal relationships with one another reflected some of the challenges and opportunities that indigenous preachers faced. First and perhaps most importantly, native ministers were not always friendly with one another. Zachary Hossueit apparently made some kind of “offense” after accepting Solomon Briant’s invitation to preach on a Sabbath day in Mashpee. Trying to heal the rift between the two ministers,

\(^{185}\) “Account of an Indian Visitation,” 130.


\(^{187}\) Mayhew, *A Brief Narrative of the Success with the Gospel hath had, among the Indians, of Martha’s Vineyard*, 31.
Hossueit wrote to Briant and his congregation, assuring them that “I have love for all of you in the name of our God Jehovah and the Lord Jesus Christ. And also I desire that you should be very diligent to pray to our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ…And I desire to protect (‘for them’) true religion before God and the Lord Jesus Christ as long as I live, always.” Hossueit concluded by addressing Briant personally and imploring, “I…your loving brother, I shrink from (?) offending in any teaching or in anything against you.”

Although the initial reasons for the conflict are unclear, Hossueit was wise to maintain diplomatic ties with Briant, for they had collaborated on several important projects together and each represented an important ally to the other. For example, when Briant’s personal debt forced him to ask the New England Commissioners to pay it for him (so he would not have to abandon his post as a native preacher), Zachary Hossueit was the one who helped him write the petition.

Native ministers needed each other just as much as their congregations needed them.

Hossueit and other Indian preachers also frequently utilized their linguistic skills to protect, transfer, and prove ownership of Indian lands. Part of this might have been motivated by blatant self interest, for native preachers like Abraham Speen, Thomas Waban, Job Nesutan, John Thomas, Sr., Daniel Takouwompbait, and a handful of others owned significant tracts of land in their own communities. When Mashpee Indians’ lands were reorganized under the guardianship system (discussed below), a special clause protected


189 “Petition from the native assembly at Mashpee to the Commissioners of the New England Company on behalf of their minister Solomon Briant, and incidentally concerning a proposal to send an English minister to them,” 22 November 1753, from the Massachusetts State Archives (32:427), in Goddard and Bragdon, Native Writings in Massachusetts, Vol. I, 179.

Indian preacher Solomon Briant’s personal property.\textsuperscript{191} Being a native minister, in other words, definitely had temporal advantages. Yet native preachers were also actively involved in land transfers and debates over land among Indians themselves. They were often called on to act as witnesses when wills were executed, a few of them drafted such wills for friends or members of their congregation, they served on juries that debated who maintained proper title to land, and at least one of them even surveyed land under dispute.\textsuperscript{192} Native preachers even helped other native preachers secure their property, as when James Spotso traveled from Natick to Nantucket to ensure that James Momog kept title of the two commons he allegedly owned.\textsuperscript{193} Native ministers were therefore not only landowners, but active participants in the process of selling, transferring, and surveying land.

Not surprisingly, they were also protecting it from colonial land greed. While missionaries have generally been perceived as the advance guard of an imperial effort to displace indigenous peoples and gain access to their lands, native preachers were tirelessly engaged in resisting colonial efforts to displace Indians. In 1746, Massachusetts passed a law that hired white agents to act as “guardians” over Indian lands. Decisions about Indian land use would fundamentally rest in the hands of these white guardians. Indians resisted this guardianship system because of its questionable legality as well as the myriad ways in which the guardians wantonly abused their privileges.\textsuperscript{194} When Martha’s Vineyard Indians drafted a petition to resist this unjust law, the signatories’ names were Ponue, Hossueit, Abram, Sowamog, and Paul – all names of either active native ministers or direct descendents of

\textsuperscript{191} Jack Campisi, \textit{The Mashpee Indians: Tribe on Trial} (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 84.

\textsuperscript{192} Goddard and Bragdon, \textit{Native Writings in Massachusetts}, Vol. I, 81, 85, and 35-37.

\textsuperscript{193} Goddard and Bragdon, \textit{Native Writings in Massachusetts}, Vol. I, 269.

\textsuperscript{194} For more on resistance to the guardianship system, see Mandell, \textit{Behind the Frontier}, 156-157.
people who had been. Native missionaries also marshaled scripture to attack English land
greed while simultaneously casting themselves as pious Christians who truly deserved to
remain on their property. When Massachusetts assigned colonist Elisha Amos to be the
guardian at Gayhead on Martha’s Vineyard, local ministers drafted a petition to resist the
appointment. They urged the Commissioners to rethink their decision, “lest if he should do
this work we would be much more miserable because of this Elisha Amos, just as the word of
God says in Job 34:30.” Brilliantly citing a passage that urges its readers “to keep a godless
man from ruling, from laying snares for the people,” the Island’s Indians tried to position
themselves as legitimate descendents of Christ’s word who were being taken advantage of by
rapacious and ungodly settlers.

Native preachers protected their ecclesiastical autonomy just as jealously as they
-guarded their lands. On two separate occasions New England authorities attempted to install
Experience Mayhew as the Indians’ preacher at one of the Vineyard congregation. Although
Mayhew came from a well-established and friendly missionary family, the Indians chose
Sowamog the first time and Joash Panu the second. A few white preachers administered to
southeastern New England Indians in later years – such as Joseph Bourne and Gideon

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195 Petition by Martha’s Vineyard Indians to the Boston Commissioners, 5 September, 1479, in Goddard
and Bragdon, Native Writings in Massachusett, Vol. I, 173-175.

196 “Petition from the natives of Gay Head to the Commissioners of the New England Company objecting
to the appointment of Elisha Amos as a local Magistrate,” at the Massachusetts Historical Society,
Miscellaneous Unbound Manuscripts, in Goddard and Bragdon, Native Writings in Massachusett, Vol. I,
225. In 1734, a group of Indians in Lyme, Connecticut sent a petition to that colony’s authorities,
indicating that they would accept no minister or be willing to learn to read unless they had “the Bounds of
their Land Settled between them & some of the English, neighbouring upon them.” Letter from Jonathan
Parsons (Lyme) to Benjamin Colman about teaching the Indians at Lyme and settling the question of their
land boundaries, 26 Feb. 1734 in the Benjamin Colman Papers, 1641-1806 – Massachusetts Historical
Society Mss. Wampanoags on Martha’s Vineyard believed, often correctly, that deposing a sachem who
was open to selling lands to the English for his own personal profit was the best way to not only protect
lands, but to protect native leadership itself. See Silverman, Faith and Boundaries, 121-156.

Hawley – but Native Americans usually preferred their own preachers. Such preferences sometimes occasioned institutional schisms in Indian churches, as Indians could move to and from congregations. Such a schism happened on the Vineyard around 1700, when some Indians left their Congregational churches and began attending Baptist ones instead. Although Puritan divines tried to chalk this shift up to Indians being “seduced” by Baptists, it was usually a conscious decision made because of the popularity of the preachers, the influence of other kinship members on their decision, or because they were attracted to Baptist styles of preaching and rituals. Indeed, dozens of Mashpee Indians expressed their rage at the guardianship system by gathering themselves into a new church under indigenous Baptist preachers.

Language was at the root of this anxiety about cultural and ecclesiastical autonomy. A keen knowledge of indigenous dialects was a prerequisite for preaching to these Indians, even though Puritan divines had long argued that urging Indians to learn at least some English was a priority. As Samuel Sewall noted in 1724, the Indians at Mashpee were “very fond of their own nation, and their own Language; Insomuch that Mr. Joseph Bourn [a colonist] who succeeds Simon Papmonnit [an Indian]…can’t prevail with the Indians to assemble on the Lord’s Day, unless he will preach to them in their own Language.” Part of this obsession with language was the concern over its slow demise. There were no sacred texts printed in Massachusett after 1720, and in some places the spoken language itself was

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falling into disuse by the middle of the eighteenth century. As such, Indian congregations embraced native missionaries as defenders of indigenous culture. These preachers would not only protect the lands and physical property of Indians, but they might also guard native culture by preserving Indians’ sense of linguistic and cultural autonomy and re-channeling it through Christianity.

It would be naive to assume that Indian preachers always acted alone. As we have seen, they were in constant correspondence with other native missionaries and often collaborated on social and political projects, such as writing petitions, surveying land, or preaching at one another’s congregations. They also cooperated with English ministers. Cotton Mather assured his readers that Indian preachers “very frequently apply themselves to these English ones, for their Advice, about Instructing their Flocks under their Charge.”

Samuel Treat, an English minister at Eastham, reported that Indian preachers came to his home about once a week for instruction. Although Treat held his pastorship for over 45 years, he admitted that he preached to Indians only about once a month. In the meantime, “the more sober, well-affected and understanding persons among them…duly preach to them, when I am not with them.” It was probably in English ministers’ best interest to emphasize their own participation in native Christianity. Such posturing could help curb any concerns about the indigenization of Christianity while simultaneously bringing glory and esteem to their own reputations. Some English ministers, like the Mathers and the Mayhews,

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might have fancied themselves barons overseeing an empire of native Christians. Nevertheless, and in spite of their cooperation with white missionaries, native leaders were the ones running the quotidian spiritual exercises in these Christian communities.

Most of these native-led religious practices reportedly followed a fairly formulaic pattern. First, Indians would begin with a prayer. Then an Indian minister would conduct a sermon, as discussed below. Then followed a psalm, and English missionaries noted not only the gravity with which the psalms were sung, but also the melodious tones emanating from Indian congregations. One witness observed that Indian singing was “Grave,” “Serious,” and “Attentive,” and that it displayed a “ravishing Melody” and even had a reputation for “outdoing many of the English.”

Psalms, however, were not simply an opportunity for showing off the vocal chords. As Simon Beckom’s Sabbath Day meetings during King Philip’s War remind us, the singing of the psalms represented an important moment for the Christian Indian community to reflect upon their shared problems of disease, population loss, displacement, and cultural change. Just before Isaac Ompany concluded an Indian service with his own prayer, the congregation sang the third psalm, which begins: “O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying to me, ‘There is no help for you in God.’ Selah. But you, O Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head. I cry aloud to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy hill.”

More than just a melody, the psalms were a way for native preachers to utilize scripture and foster a sense of Christian Indian identity during a time of tumultuous change. These services certainly did not represent a wholesale surrender of indigenous religious practices and beliefs, but rather a selective amalgamation of native spiritual traditions and Christian ones.

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205 Samuel Sewall Diary, 1714-1729, Massachusetts Historical Society (on Microfilm), 30.
First and foremost, these services were still conducted in Massachusett. Furthermore, many Indians still smoked tobacco after their religious meetings. As James Axtell has observed, tobacco was often used in native spiritual practices as a way to “appease or open communication with the more powerful spirits of nature.” Smoking tobacco after a religious exercise therefore had precedent. Before and after their selective appropriation of Christianity, Indians used tobacco to mediate between themselves and the powerful spirits that were actively involved in their daily lives.

Because English witnesses rarely attended Indian religious services, and because Indians left few written records, it is difficult to determine exactly what an Indian sermon would entail. According to one English minister, Japhet Hannit’s sermons were “not very accurate.” Yet Hannit made up for his gaffs because his preaching was “very serious,” and his sermons contained “a great deal of good Matter in them.” Hannit even seemed to give his best sermons “when he did not try to oblige himself to any strict Method in them.”

While English ministers always had pre-written sermons prepared for nearly every occasion, Indian preaching was much more self-reflective, personal, and extemporaneous than English preaching. Elisha Paaonut was a preacher at Gay Head from 1683 to 1714 who had a famously superior memory (in spite of his addiction to strong drink in years prior). Experience Mayhew recalled that Paaonut, like Hannit, “used no Notes in preaching, nor did he seem to need any.” This extemporaneous style did not always mean that Indian ministers were wholly unfamiliar with scripture. Paaonut, for example, was much better versed in sacred texts than Hannit, as Mayhew recalled that he “seemed to be the best acquainted with the Scriptures of any Indian that I ever met withal, could most readily turn to almost any Text

206 Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 59-60; and Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 16-17.

that one could mention to him, if a Word or two of it were but named."

Only the most accomplished Puritan divines shared Paaonut’s extraordinary ability to cite scripture so effortlessly.

While colonial commentators offered a sense of native missionaries’ preaching styles, the marginalia that indigenous ministers left in their Indian bibles also reveal hints about their own spirituality as well as the content of their public sermons. Because no sacred books appeared in Massachusetts after 1720, the thousands of Indian primers, catechisms, and bibles that were still in the hands of native preachers were literally read to shreds. Taken together, the writings that Indians left in the margins of these texts reveal several important aspects of native preaching. The first is the emphasis on spiritual poverty and sinfulness. Perhaps the most pressing problem for missionaries from Canada to Carolina was that Native Americans had no concept of, or word for, sin. The Jesuits tried to use words that meant anything from an offense to the Great Spirit to sexual indiscretion. Native preachers instead used the metaphors of pity and poverty to describe sinfulness as a state of pitiable, spiritual want. One owner of an Eliot bible wrote, “we are pitiful, because of our sin” and then admitted that “Oh I am a pitiful man. Who will save me from my death’s body [sic]?”

One of the Eliot bibles now in possession of the Library Company of Philadelphia was owned by Simon or Joseph Papenau (or both). Joseph was a deacon in Solomon Briant’s Mashpee church, and like the notes left by other Indians, his marginalia reflect a dire concern

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208 Mayhew, Indian Converts, 57.


210 Axtell, The Invasion Within, 108.

211 Transcription of an Eliot Bible from the Congregational Society Library, in Goddard and Bragdon, Native Writings in Massachusetts, Vol. I, 409 and 387. In this last line the writer is simply repeating the 24th verse of Romans 7.
with sin and a harrowing sense of self-pity. “Pitiful people (are) we,” he recorded. “It is not good. Always falsehood is heard among us.” The writer later admitted that “I am forever a pitiful person in the world” who was “not able to defend myself from the happenings in the world.” Papenau’s anxieties about sinfulness, spiritual depravity, and poverty were themes that certainly would have emerged in his, and other native missionaries’, sermons. In fact, this bible eventually left the hands of the Papenaus and found its way into the study – and probably the pulpit – of another native missionary: Martha’s Vineyard’s Zachary Hossueit. When Hossueit read that Indian bible, he was sure to read Papenau’s Mashpee marginalia included in it. These themes of self-reflective pity, spiritual fragility, and sin as poverty surely made their way into the sermons and prayers that Indian ministers led in early New England.

In spite of native preachers’ intense focus on spiritual depravity and sinfulness – classic Puritan tropes – the marginalia in these bibles also reflect some degree of optimism. Much of this has to do with native preachers’ relationship with the bible as text. Many native preachers wrote not only about their own sense of sinfulness, but also the ways in which they believed that reading, studying, and learning from the bible could be a pathway to spiritual deliverance. Joseph Papenau, for example, clearly connected his reading of the bible to his own salvation when he wrote a note to himself in the margins: “This is your book, you

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212 Transcription of Eliot Bible at the Library Company of Philadelphia, in Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts* Vol. I, 423 and 431. This last note, about the “happenings in the world,” is placed right after the first chapter of Kings, where King David’s friends and families try to keep him warm and comfort him with blankets and women, but to no avail.

213 Transcription of an Eliot Bible from the Congregational Society Library, in Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts*, Vol. I, 445. Laura M. Stevens has argued that poverty and pity, along with monetary commercialism, were the most important metaphors at work in the British missionary effort. In her argument, the act of pitying “poor” Indians once at once an expression of compassion as well as a moment of participation in a wider community of civilized, and saved, Britons. See Stevens, *The Poor Indians*. 
Papenau. Read it with concentration (?). Your God will bless you.”

Native ministers probably urged their congregations to read whatever primers, catechisms, and bibles they possessed as a tried and true avenue to grace and salvation. In spite of the declining availability of texts in Massachusetts after 1720, literacy rates in praying Indian towns were remarkably high. One visitor to an Indian village on Cape Cod even noted that almost every head of family in the praying village he visited was capable of reading scripture. Joseph Papenau thus recorded in his own bible, possibly with some delight, that “Many have read this book. I saw it.”

Just as the trope of the “talking book” – a text which could reveal the secrets of God’s creation and offer its reader immense spiritual power – was a prominent theme in Black Atlantic writings, so too did native ministers emphasize the centrality of engaging the Bible as an indispensable spiritual exercise.

Native missionaries and the congregations they led did not disappear into the sunset after King Philip’s War. Indeed, the ones who remained behind the frontier maintained a remarkable degree of autonomy in spite of demographic loss, colonial land greed, and laws designed to restrict their physical and economic mobility. New England’s indigenous ministers were not only crucial to rebuilding native churches after the war, for they knit communities of praying Indians together, fought against colonists eager to take native lands, and formulated an indigenous Christian spirituality that was Indian and Christian in nature.

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215 “Account of an Indian Visitation,” 133.


In their relationships with one another, in their itinerancy, in their sermons, and even in the marginalia they recorded in their Indian bibles, native missionaries actively fashioned a Christian Indian identity, constantly hoping to secure a place for themselves and their congregations in the postwar world.

Ironically, a more sophisticated, nuanced, and detailed understanding of the “Eliot mission” demands that we take Eliot out of the picture. Heralded as the “apostle to the Indians,” Eliot only traveled from his Roxbury pulpit to Natick about every two weeks, and he had the same arrangement with the praying town of Punkapoag, near present day Canton. By the end of his life, Eliot was going to these villages only a few times every year, depending upon his health. The Puritan missionary enterprise, therefore, was not organized and operated solely by English missionaries, let alone John Eliot. Instead, native evangelists were usually on their own. Indian preachers and teachers appropriated Christianity for multiple reasons, and their translation(s) of Christianity and newfound roles as Christian evangelists did not necessarily involve a complete break with their past or a rejection of their people. Instead, Christianity offered an alternative system of spiritual meaning that some Native Americans sincerely embraced during this period of tumultuous change. As apostles to other Indians, these New England preachers would become the benchmark and standard by which later indigenous missionaries were judged. Although John Eliot is the most famous missionary to the New England Indians, there were in fact dozens of Native American preachers, teachers, and catechists, all of whom formed the backbone of these Puritan missions. In their translation of Christianity and in their ascension to positions

\[218\] Letter from Increase Mather to Dr. John Leusden, 12 July 1687, in Mayhew, *The conquests and triumphs of grace*, 64-65.
of spiritual leadership within a rapidly changing cultural landscape, Indian preachers played a
central but thus far neglected role in early American encounters.
CHAPTER TWO

ANGLICANS AND THE EXPANSION OF THE INDIGENOUS MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE, 1700-1740

It must have been a pretty awkward meeting between the two men, despite the superficial similarities that bound them together. Both were named George, both were royal representatives from their respective nations, and neither could speak English very well. Missionary history, however, would tie these men together, at least for their brief meeting in 1715. One of the Georges was the powerful King of England; the other a “Prince” from the Yamasse Indian nation of the Carolinas. The first was a product of the Hanoverian succession, and as such was much more comfortable with German language and culture than English. The second was the son of a powerful Yamasse chief, and was sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) to England for a missionary education. In spite of the obvious cultural divides that separated George I of England and Prince George of the Yamasses, their meeting was collegial and the King of England received the Indian prince “very graciously.”1 Indeed, it was hoped that, when finished with his baptism, conversion, and evangelical training, the Prince would be an invaluable addition to the missionary effort among Indians in the southern colonies. As such, these two royal Georges represented the future of the evangelical effort in the British Atlantic world. While the members of the SPG expected moral and institutional support from King George I, they

1 St. George Ashe, A Sermon Preach’d before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday the 18th of February, 1714 (London: J. Downing, 1715), 49.
also assumed that native royalty like Prince George would flock to their ranks to serve as preachers to their people. These assumptions expose one of the most striking ironies of the early modern Protestant missionary enterprise: the nature of Atlantic world encounters forced English ministers to rely upon non-English people for the creation and development of their missions.2

This chapter examines some of the tensions involved in Anglicans’ use of native missionaries, particularly the ways in which Anglicans attempted to transform Indian royalty into Christian evangelists during the first half of the eighteenth century. Although neither Puritans nor Anglicans would admit to any major theological or doctrinal similarities, they nevertheless acknowledged their mutual distrust of Catholics, were quite aware of each other’s attempts to preach to native peoples throughout the world, and even collaborated on several missionary projects. Like the Puritans before them, Anglicans attempted to use native preachers, but their obsession with native “royalty” ensured that their numbers were always relatively small. At the same time, imperial wars constantly put these potential preachers in harm’s way, forcing them to decide between English Christianity and the indigenous peoples from which they originated. At least in this period, they almost always chose the latter.

In spite of the Anglicans’ failure to produce a native pastorate, by 1740 there was an integrated network of communication that linked Protestant missionary activity not only throughout the Atlantic world, but also into the sphere of the Indian Ocean. This network included Puritans, Anglicans, German and Danish Lutherans, and Protestants of all pales and

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gave Anglicans the opportunity to participate in and contribute to native missionary projects as far away as India. This experience, as well as their simultaneous failures in the American colonies, forced several Anglican divines to design new and innovative evangelical proposals that would reflect and catalyze a wider, transatlantic debate about the propriety and efficacy of using native preachers. In sum, this chapter examines the various impacts that war, an obsession with royalty, utopian fantasies, and the expansion of Anglican missions had on native evangelical efforts in the Protestant Atlantic world and beyond.

Puritans and Anglicans in the Missionary Field

Puritans had never been alone in their reliance upon native evangelists. Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and French missionaries had all employed indigenous missionaries to varying degrees, and the Catholic Church had long made the creation of a native pastorate one of its central goals. Although they possessed a near monopoly on Protestant evangelization in the British Atlantic during the seventeenth century, Puritans received some competition at the turn of the eighteenth century when a flood of new Anglican organizations attempted to spread the gospel throughout the British empire and beyond. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) was established in 1698 while The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) was created in 1701. The SPG would eventually become the best funded, most widely scattered, and most tightly organized missionary organization of the eighteenth century, sending out around 300 missionaries to

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3 The literature on these missionary organizations is enormous. However, the two most classic texts are William Osborne Bird Allen, Two Hundred Years: The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698-1898 (New York: B. Franklin, 1970); and the outdated but useful Charles Frederick Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G.: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900, Vols. I-II (London: The Society’s Office, 1901). Laura Stevens provides an incisive critique of these missionary organizations, their sermons, and their use of pity to create integrated, transatlantic networks of philanthropy in Laura M. Stevens, The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
stations and parishes throughout the Caribbean, British mainland colonies, and Africa. Both
the SPG and the SPCK were the brainchildren of Dr. Thomas Bray; the SPCK was designed
to distribute books and establish schools while the SPG was primarily a missionary
organization. Additionally, The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge
(SSPCK) was founded in 1709 in Edinburgh as a Presbyterian missionary organization that
both distributed books and supported missionaries throughout the Atlantic. Some associates
of Dr. Thomas Bray also founded their own missionary branch in 1723 and creatively named
it The Associates of Dr. Thomas Bray. In all, this new collection of organizations attempted
to spread Protestantism in places where Puritan missions failed to reach. In spite of the
confusing array of titles and responsibilities, all of these organizations would compete,
correspond, and sometimes cooperate with Puritan missionary efforts. Like other evangelical
enterprises before them, they too would tap into a long tradition of using native agents in
their own missionary stations.

Anglicans missionary projects were, in several ways, dramatically different from their
Puritan counterparts. The most important difference was their faith in hierarchy and their
incredible organization. Although Puritans had always hoped for a centrally organized
missionary effort, the exigencies of cultural encounter and circumstances on the ground
dictated that there would be a tremendous amount of autonomy on the part of local preachers.

4 Frederick V. Millis, Sr. is right to note that the SSPCK, relative to the SPG and the SPCK, has been
ignored by most scholars, in spite of their active participation in American missions during the eighteenth
century. See Mills, “The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in British North

5 John C. Van Horne, ed., Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The American Correspondence of

6 The best summary of Anglican efforts to Christianize blacks and Indians is Travis Glasson, “The Society
for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts of the World and the Creation of Race in the Atlantic
World” (PhD Diss., Columbia University, 2006).
While some Puritans embraced this autonomy, Anglicans generally feared it. Instead, the tight, mechanical, and centralized organization of the SPG included hundreds of missionaries scattered throughout the Atlantic who took their policies directly from the organization’s secretary, who received his direction from a larger committee. At the end of this great chain of authority was not the king, but the Archbishop of Canterbury (often called the ABC), who oversaw all things Protestant in the British empire. The Anglicans therefore had a very different view of the relationship between centers and peripheries in the Atlantic world. Puritan preachers had several hubs from which missionary policy could spring, including London, Boston, Natick, and Martha’s Vineyard. The Anglicans, on the other hand, believed that missionary policies should be handed down only from London, and that there was little room for deviation or improvisation on the ground. Anglican ministers and missionaries had to travel to London to be ordained, whereas Puritans could ordain preachers anywhere they saw fit. Some Anglicans begged for an American bishopric to ordain native preachers, and one minister even declared in 1718 that “it will be highly necessary to transfer the Center of this great Work to that side, where it may rest, as in its proper place.” In spite of these pleas, Anglicans would never create an American bishopric, and preachers would continue to be ordained only in England. The result was that, while Puritans had officially ordained Indian ministers by the 1670s, Anglicans did not ordain a “native” preacher for almost a century afterwards.


8 Philip Bisse, A Sermon Preach’d before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday the 21st of February, 1717 (London: Joseph Downing, 1718), 20.

9 For more on the training of Anglican missionaries, see Alfred W. Newcombe, “The Appointment and Instruction of S.P.G. Missionaries,” Church History 5 No. 4 (December 1936): 340-358.
In spite of the differences in their thinking about centers and peripheries, Puritans and Anglicans nevertheless had much in common, as both were part of a larger Protestant-wide effort to spread the gospel, in their own unique ways, to indigenous peoples. There is no question that Puritans and Anglicans distrusted (if not despised) each other, and they constantly berated one another for failing to propagate Protestantism among the world’s gentiles. Yet despite the squabbling and doctrinal differences, Puritans and Anglicans still corresponded with one another frequently and even allied themselves against Catholic missionary efforts. For example, Puritans and Anglicans agreed that the French Catholic menace among the Iroquois of New York and Western New England was detrimental to any English missionary effort. Part of this conflict was, of course, theological. Protestants of all pales assumed that Catholic missionary work would expose indigenous peoples to what they thought were the perfidious rituals of the Catholic Church while making them “seven times more the Children of Hell than they were before.”

The intrusion of French Jesuits into Iroquoia in the late seventeenth century represented not only an affront, insult, and challenge to Protestant missionary efforts, but also a blatant act of aggression that made frontier warfare all but inevitable. Increase Mather even foresaw a “dark Cloud…which streameth forth blood” from that region as early as 1676. Some Puritan commentators suggested during the imperial wars of the first decades of the eighteenth century that their evangelical neglect of the Indian nations out west was the chief reason why Indians had attacked English

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settlers in the first place. Using this logic, Puritans began to argue that they had provoked the wrath of God by allowing the French to be the first ones to reach these powerful Indian nations.\footnote{Solomon Stoddard, \textit{Question Whether God is not Angry with the Country for doing so little towards the Conversion of the Indians} (Boston: B. Green, 1723).} Puritans in New England and Anglicans in New York, therefore, both had a lot at stake when it came to offsetting the influence of French Catholicism in Iroquoia.

This explains why Cotton Mather, of all people, was a vocal proponent of Anglican intrusion into Indian affairs. According to its charter, the Puritan-led New England Company could not extend its evangelical efforts past the borders of New England proper. It was therefore up to the SPG or some other institution to offset the threat of Frenchified Indians and put a stop to what Mather called the expanding “Empire of Antichrist.”\footnote{Cotton Mather, \textit{Another Tongue brought in, to Confess the Great SAVIOUR of the World. Or, some COMMUNICATIONS of Christianity, Put into a Tongue used among the Iroquois Indians, in America. And, Put into the Hands of the English and the Dutch Traders: To accommodate the Great Intention of Communicating the Christian Religion, unto the Salvages, among whom they may find anything of this Language to be Intelligible} (Boston: B. Green, 1707), 2.} In the 1710s Mather urged the governor of New York to send Anglican missionaries to the Indians of Long Island. He also expressed a desire for the SPG to send some missionaries out to the Iroquois. “Lett the Gentlemen of the New Society,” Mather quipped, “send a Missionary or two, for the Christianizing of the Iroquois Indians.” Mather believed that the use of SPG missionaries among these Indians would not only offset the popery of the French Jesuits, but also relieve the New England Company from worrying about the task, since these “objets [the Indians] are without ye bounds of New England.”\footnote{Cotton Mather to William Ashurst, 9 November 1710, in Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the Parts Adjacent in America, \textit{Some correspondence between the governors and treasurers of the New England Company in London and the commissioners of the United Colonies in America, the missionaries of the company, and others between the years 1657 and 1712, to which are added the journals of the Rev. Experience Mayhew in 1713 and 1714} \textit{(Edited by] John W. Ford [Governor of the New England Company)}. (New York: B. Franklin, 1970), 11. Even after the Anglicans had established a mission among the Mohawks in 1712, Mather was still unhappy with the lackluster effort of the Anglicans. He complained that they were a “mighty Society” with “ample” revenues and who “for
he wanted, as Anglican missionaries were stationed among the Mohawks by 1712. Even if Puritans and Anglicans rarely saw eye to eye, their missionary efforts often overlapped and influenced one another. There is no better evidence for this than Cotton Mather – perhaps the most Puritanical of Puritans – pleading for an Anglican mission to the Indians of New York.

Anglican missionary rhetoric and practices were not all that different from Puritan ones. Both Puritans and Anglicans alike envisioned their missions as a city upon a hill, and Anglicans like Philip Bisse had no problem with invoking the same classic Christian motif that John Winthrop employed when the Puritans arrived in New England. “Corporations erected for Charitable uses,” Bisse reminded his Anglican audience in 1717, “are as that City set on a Hill, which cannot be hid.”16 In spite of their theological and doctrinal differences, this city upon a hill motif was used generously by Puritans, Anglicans, and even German Lutherans working in India.17 In addition to viewing their missions as beacons of Christian light, the seals that Puritans and Anglicans fashioned to act as visual representations of their respective missions drew from scripture in precisely the same ways. While a naked Indian cited the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and begged Puritans to “come over and

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17 In 1718 Bartholomew Ziegenbalg predicted that his mission to India “would thereby in some Degree appear again like a City that is set on an Hill, and may be seen at a Distance.” See Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, *Propagation of the Gospel in the East: Being an Account of the Progress Made by Some Missionaries at Tranquebar in the East-Indies, For The Conversion of the Heathens in Malabar. Of the Methods by them taken for effecting this Work; of the Obstructions they meet with; and of the Proposals which they make in order to promote it. Together With Some Observations relating to the Malabarian Philosophy and Divinity: And concerning their Bramans, Pantares, and Poets. Part II.* (London: Joseph Downing, 1718), v.
help us,” the Indians in the Anglican seal made the exact same request but in Latin: *transiens adi uva nos*.

In spite of their institutional and doctrinal differences, Puritans and Anglicans both looked to Native Americans as willing recipients of missionary efforts. Both the seal for the Massachusetts Bay Colony (left) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (right) depict naked Indians in the wilderness, pleading for missionaries to “come over and help us.” Massachusetts seal courtesy of the Public Records Office, Commonwealth of Massachusetts. SPG seal courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Like Puritans, Anglicans looked to their own missionary neglect with a great deal of shame, especially when comparing their measly successes to the grandiose baptismal numbers published by Spanish and French missionaries. While Puritans believed that the examples of the French and Spanish missionaries should “make us Ashamed,” Anglicans
admitted that “No Nation has been so guilty of this neglect as ours”18 In spite of their obvious doctrinal differences, Puritans and Anglicans were both spurred on by a desire to save the “poor Indians,” expel the papist Catholics, expand Protestant Christianity, and redeem their missions from the failures of the past.19

Anglican divines also agreed with Puritans that indigenous agents should be chief participants in the process of evangelization. When Thomas Bray began drumming up support for the SPCK and SPG in the 1690s, he suggested that every English colony should have at least one or two schools “for the Instruction of half a dozen Indian Youth, to be sent afterwards amongst their own People, to civilize and convert them.”20 The Puritans of the seventeenth century had, like the Anglicans after them, obsessed over the conversion of native royalty. John Eliot divulged this missionary fantasy by publishing a fictional account of the conversion of Wampanoag Chief King Philip in the 1670s, and Puritans usually liked to pull evangelical leadership from existing indigenous leadership. At the same time, they also understood that Christian leadership need not always come from the top down.21 Anglicans, on the other hand, expressed an almost pathological obsession with royalty and

18 Stoddard, Question Whether God is not Angry, 9; Thomas Bray, A Memorial, Representing the Present State of Religion, on the Continent of North-America (London: William Downing, 1700), 12.


20 Thomas Bray, Apostolick Charity, Its Nature and Excellence Consider’d, in a Discourse Upon Dan. 12. 3. Preached at St. Paul’s, at the Ordination of some Protestant Missionaries to be sent into the Plantations. To which is Prefixt, A General View of the English Colonies in America, with respect to Religion; in order to shew what Provision is wanting for the Propagation of Christianity in those Parts. Together with Proposals for the Promoting the same: And to induce such of the Clergy of this Kingdom, as are Persons of Sobriety and Abilities to accept of a Mission (London: William Hawes, 1699), from the fifth point of his “General View.” This section of the document lacks page numbers.

21 See the third dialogue from John Eliot, Indian Dialogues, For Their Instruction in that Great Service of Christ, in calling home their Country-men to the Knowledge of God, And of Themselves, and of Jesus Christ (Cambridge, MA: Marmaduke Johnson, 1671).
assumed that indigenous political leaders would be the agents of native conversion. This was partly due to the social and cultural milieu in which they lived: a hierarchical society where every individual had their place in the great chain of being. Royalty commanded respect, reverence, and especially deference, and many ministers believed that Indians had “the best of all Governments, Monarchy.” The English assumed that hierarchy, kingship, authority, and royalty were part of a common social grammar which Englishmen and Indians alike could respect and understand. Just as the conversion of New England sachems like King Philip might have resulted in the widespread Puritanization of countless Indian souls, Anglican missionaries also began their efforts among America’s native population with the working assumption that the conversion of a king would result in a general Christianization of the rest of his people. This policy, of course, did not account for demographic and generational change, nor did it acknowledge the long tradition of consensus (as opposed to hierarchical rule) that characterized Indian polities. Nevertheless, the figure of an Indian king was a powerful icon that was just as naturally appealing to Anglicans in the eighteenth century as it had been to Puritans in years prior.

**Indian “Kings”**

Anglicans had long been interested in recruiting Native Americans for missionary work. One of the first efforts was the construction of Brafferton Hall at the College of William and Mary at the turn of the eighteenth century. Virginians and Anglicans believed that Brafferton would become an Indian Oxford, from which native preachers would set out

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22 Mayhew, *A Brief Narrative of the Success which the Gospel hath had, among the Indians, of Martha's-Vineyard*, 32. Alden T. Vaughan has recently argued that the obsession with indigenous “royalty” can clearly be seen in the popularity of the figure of Indian kings, queens, and princes who were brought over to England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
to convert and “civilize” their Indian kin throughout Virginia and beyond. Enrollment, however, was always meager, and native parents often refused to part with their beloved sons. It probably did not help the cause that the college’s promoters tried to boost student enrollment by purchasing Indians who had been captured in war. Furthermore, there were few examples of success even after willing Indians had been educated there. One Virginian noted that Brafferton’s Indian students had indeed “been taught to read and write, and have been carefully instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, till they came to be men.” And yet, soon after they returned to their people, the observer complained, “instead of civilizeing [sic] and converting the rest, they have immediately Relapst [sic] into Infidelity and Barbarism themselves.”

Brafferton’s failure only demonstrated that early Anglican efforts to cultivate a native pastorate in the Americas got off to a discouraging start. Nevertheless, in the 1710s Anglicans began to invest a tremendous amount of time, money, and effort on cultivating native preachers who came from “royal” Indian families. The earliest and most prominent examples were the Four Indian Kings of Iroquoia and George, the Yamassee Prince of South Carolina. In the spring of 1710, four representatives of the Iroquois Confederacy (one was actually a Mahican who became an Iroquois leader) visited London to secure a diplomatic alliance with the English. The English, of course, relished the idea of using four native sachems not only as diplomats, but as Protestant missionaries as well. Even though later historians would assert that these men were not kings, but rather “young and relatively powerless anglophiles,” the English visit was nevertheless seen by contemporaries as a crucial moment in linking the interests of England

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Their visit was accompanied with pomp and majesty, and they even had an audience with Queen Anne. Newspapers reprinted the kings’ dramatic speeches to the Queen while ballads and poems romanticized their visit. The Indian representatives asked Queen Anne not only for her military protection, but also for missionaries to instruct the Indians, claiming that any person they sent to Iroquoia would be given a “most hearty Welcome.”

Two years later William Andrews arrived at Fort Hunter, a recently constructed outpost located right next to Mohawk Castle. The English were clearly trying to graft a Christian empire onto a Mohawk polity, and a key agent in that effort would be Hendrick. The most prominent of the four sachems, Hendrick would assist Andrews as a lay preacher in this new Anglican mission on the Iroquoian borderlands.

Even if Hendrick’s claim to Indian “royalty” was dubious, he certainly was no pawn, for he and the three other “kings” understood how to prey upon English anxieties about religious competition. The French Jesuits had, of course, been a consistent factor in Iroquoian diplomacy for decades, and any English mission would have to account for the complications of competing against Iroquoian Indians who allied themselves with the French and prayed for the Catholic Church. One Anglican commentator even called Iroquois

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25 See Anonymous, *The Four Indian Kings* (Boston: Fowle and Draper, 1762). This timely poem was printed just at the end of the Seven Years War.

26 Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters*, 120.


Indians “The Praying Indians of Canada” and, in his letter to the SPG, Hendrick signed his name with a Frenchified “Henrique.” In their speech to the Queen, the kings admitted that they had been “importuned by the French, both by the insinuations of their Priests, and by Presents, to come over to their interest.” As allies to the English, however, the Indian kings assured the Queen that they had always looked upon French missionaries as “Men of Falsehood.” To make things even more complicated, the first Protestant missionaries among the Mohawks were not Anglicans, but rather a Dutch immigrant and a Calvinist minister. In fact, the Indian kings who visited England were actually attached to the Dutch Reformed Church. Any Anglican missionary who began working among New York’s Indians therefore had to worry not only about the persistence of Iroquoian traditional religion, but also the strength of French Catholic, Dutch Reformed, and Calvinistic influences among the Mohawks. But even as Anglican preachers railed against Jesuit efforts among Iroquoian Indians, they simultaneously looked to the order of Jesus as a model for how to best evangelize Indians. One commentator noted that the SPG might not be able to sustain a mission among the Indians unless they were “able and willing to live with the Indians in their own Country, and according to their Way and Manner, which is the Method the French


30 David Humphreys, An Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Containing Their Foundation, Proceedings and the Success of Their Missionaries in the British Colonies, to the Year 1728 (London: J. Downing, 1730); and Vaughan, Transatlantic Encounters, 127.

take.”\textsuperscript{32} All of these exigencies, in addition to the sensitivity of Iroquoian politics, made native intermediaries like Hendrick absolutely necessary to any Anglican missionary attempts in New York. Andrews could never navigate the treacherous waters of Iroquoian cultural encounter without him.

We do not know very much about Tee Yee Neen Ho Ga Row, also called Hendrick Tejonihokarawa.\textsuperscript{33} Although born into a Mahican family in the last half of the seventeenth century, Hendrick became a Mohawk leader by the turn of the century, and his visit to England only bolstered his reputation – at least among the English – as a man of import. Like his Anglican sponsors, Hendrick believed that Christian missions were opportunities to solidify diplomatic and political allegiances. In their letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, for example, the four Indian kings noted that the construction of a chapel and the presence of English ministers would not only spread the light of the gospel, but also “occasion a credit to our Six Nations.”\textsuperscript{34} And yet, Hendrick was not just an anglophile, for he seemed to be a man of many overlapping and sometimes contradictory identities. Throughout his life he urged New York and SPG officials to protect Indian lands even as he signed some of those lands off to the English and fought viciously for the English during their incessant battles against the French.\textsuperscript{35} We also know that Hendrick was deposed from his sachemship momentarily in the 1710s. Although the reasons for this are still unclear, they might have had something to

\textsuperscript{32} Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, \textit{An Account of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts : Established by the Royal Charter of King William III. With their Proceedings and Success, and Hopes of continual Progress under the Happy Reign of Her Most excellent Majesty Queen Anne} (London: Joseph Downing, 1706), 56-57.

\textsuperscript{33} The name of Hendrick was fairly common among some of the Iroquois tribes. There were in fact several Hendricks in the history of the Mohawks, which can make identifying them quite difficult.


\textsuperscript{35} Lydekker, \textit{The Faithful Mohawks}, 26. Vaughan, \textit{Transatlantic Encounters}, 132. Hendrick died at the Battle of Lake George in 1755, where there is now a statue and a tiny motel named after him.
do with his evolving and seemingly incongruous identity. A Mahican Mohawk who signed his name in French, allied himself with the Dutch Reformed Church, and begged for English missionaries, Hendrick was certainly a product of the interlocking cultural matrixes that transatlantic religious interaction fostered in the Iroquoian borderlands.

John Verelst’s portrait of Tee Yee Neen Ho Ga Row depicts Hendrick the Sachem not only as a diplomat, leader, and orator, but as a Christian ambassador as well. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.
After his trip to England, Hendrick began to recast himself as a cultural broker, or an intermediary who could slip between Indian and English worlds quite easily.\textsuperscript{36} His visual representation became an essential component of this multivalent identity. As one English commentator noted, by 1722 Hendrick had become a “polite Gentleman…apparall’d as we, Speaks pretty good English and Scarcely distinguishable from an Englishman but by his tawny complexion.”\textsuperscript{37} In fact, a series of portraits of the Indian kings – painted by Dutch artist John Verelst – record Hendrick’s metamorphosis from Indian “royalty” into Christian evangelical. While most scholars have emphasized the diplomatic characteristics of the Verelst portraits, Hendrick also stands out from the other three Indian kings because of the obvious Christian symbolism and iconography inscribed in the image. For example, Hendrick is the only Indian out of the four painted without a weapon, decorative tattoos, or a scene of battle or hunting in the background. Instead of a weapon, Hendrick carries a wampum belt, a traditional icon of economic networking and diplomacy. Interestingly, the belt is not decorated with traditional indigenous imagery, but rather with crosses, symbolizing his newfound identity as a Christian diplomat. Perhaps most illustrative of Hendrick’s new identity were his clothes. Instead of traditional Indian clothing and moccasins, which the other Indians sport in their paintings, Verelst painted Hendrick with English-style stockings and shoes. The final touch was Hendrick’s other vestments. Instead of a shirt or waistcoat, he was dressed in a robe, ironically very reminiscent of the clothing worn by the French missionaries he earlier claimed to distrust. In short, John Verelst painted


\textsuperscript{37} Vaughan, \textit{Transatlantic Encounters}, 133.
Hendrick just as much as a preacher as a statesman. While Hendrick was not “above ethnicity,” as one scholar has argued, the portrait does suggest the ways in which Hendrick’s image tried to make the oxymoronic idea of a Christian Indian consistent and completely reconcilable.

Hendrick assisted the Anglican mission at Fort Hunter by serving as a lay reader. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what impact Hendrick’s assistance to missionary William Andrews meant, either to Hendrick, Andrews, or even the Mohawks who heard him preach. In spite of this fact, Andrews did record that he had some small successes during the initial period of Hendrick’s tenure as a native evangelist. Within the first six months of Andrews’ arrival, for example, he and Hendrick oversaw 100 Mohawk baptisms. By 1716, about one-third of the Mohawks at Mohawk Castle had been baptized in the rites of the Anglican Church. Even if the Mohawks began attending religious services because of the “victuals” that Andrews offered them, this is certainly not a paltry number, and there is a great chance that Hendrick was personally responsible for many of these baptisms. Hendrick’s position as an established leader probably helped the cause, as some Mohawks might have found it compelling that their military leader, diplomat, and orator had already been baptized and converted. And yet, language was most likely at the center of Hendrick’s small successes, for the Mohawks had historically expressed an antipathy towards, and utterly refused to be taught, the English language. This is because the worst people they knew – the traders –

38 For an analysis of Verelst’s paintings, see John G. Garrant, The Four Indian Kings (Ottawa: Public Archives, 1985), 139-143.

39 Garrant, The Four Indian Kings, 143.

40 Vaughan, Transatlantic Encounters, 131.

spoke English. Because William Andrews spoke very little Mohawk, it was up to Hendrick – who could speak English, Mahican, Mohawk, and probably a little French – to communicate the religious doctrines necessary for Christian baptism. Hendrick therefore wore many hats at Fort Hunter: as a political leader, orator, interpreter, leader of religious meetings, catechist, and preacher.

Mohawks’ suspicion of the English language also spurred the publication of an Indian primer in the “Mahaque” tongue, and it is probable that Hendrick utilized this primer as a tool for teaching the Lord’s Prayer and preparing Mohawks for baptism.\(^{42}\) Prayer was certainly no alien concept to the Mohawks, as they and other Iroquois frequently offered up prayers of thanksgiving and supplication to the spiritual forces that guided the universe. When Anglicans included a “Prayer in the time of War and Tumult” in the Mohawk primer, native Christians like Hendrick could seize upon this opportunity to situate Christianity into the problems of international and intertribal warfare that plagued Iroquoia throughout the eighteenth century.\(^{43}\) Hendrick might have also used the primer to introduce Christian psalms into existing constructions of Iroquoian song-singing. The most prominent psalms in the primer were Psalms 23 (“the lord is my shepherd”), 67, 100, and 117. Psalm 103, also included in the Mohawk primer, spoke directly to the material advantages that Christian neophytes like Hendrick probably expected from their newfound covenant with the English God. “Praise the Lord…and forget not all his benefits,” Psalm 23 declares. It then proclaims


that God alone “forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” The eagle analogy certainly would have struck a cord with Native Americans, for they respected and revered animals that demonstrated the most freedom and were the least constrained by their environment.\textsuperscript{44} In the end, however, we do not know the extent to which Hendrick employed these Psalms in his reading and preaching. And yet, their inclusion in the Mohawk primer at precisely the time that Hendrick was preaching to other Mohawks is worth nothing. It suggests, though does not prove, the various ways in which native neophytes might have understood Christianity as accruing not only spiritual benefits, but temporal ones as well, protecting them from disease, hunger, and old age. The Mohawks even developed their own word for the personage responsible for protecting them: “Neoni,” or Jesus Christ. In this and many other ways, native preachers like Hendrick translated Christianity – literally and figuratively – into a context of Iroquoian spiritual and temporal dilemmas.\textsuperscript{45}

In spite of the many baptisms and opportunities for religious translation, Hendrick and Andrews faced innumerable dilemmas in attempting to convert the Mohawks to Christianity. Hendrick was partially to blame for some of these failures. As early as 1710 one Anglican noted that the great Indian “King” was not really royalty at all, and that he “cannot command ten men.”\textsuperscript{46} Hendrick was also noticeably and inexplicably absent from a conference of Christian Iroquois held at Schenectady in the summer of 1711, so his power

\textsuperscript{44} James Axtell, \textit{The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 16.


\textsuperscript{46} Mr. Barclay to the SPG, 26 September 1710, in \textit{SPG Records}, Letter Series A, Volume 5.
and faith was probably not as consistent as Anglicans had hoped. Some of the fault also lay with Andrews’ high expectations for the mission. For example, he complained incessantly about the Indians’ roving lifestyle, affinity for liquor, constant swearing, and inattentiveness to the Sabbath. Less than a decade after he began his mission, Andrews angrily observed that the Mohawks were little more than a “sordid, mercenary, beggarly people, having but little sense of religion, honour, or goodness among them; living generally filthy, brutish lives: they are of an inhuman, savage nature; kill and eat one another.” “Heathens they are, and heathens they will still be,” Andrews summarily concluded. Andrews abandoned his Hobbesian nightmare in 1719, taking a post in a more congenial New Jersey parish and leaving Hendrick in the lurch. There were a few sporadic attempts to rekindle the missionary fire after Andrews’ departure, but it was not until the 1740s that the Anglicans would reestablish a permanent (rather than an itinerant) presence among the Mohawks. Until then, native Christians like Hendrick were left to preach to the Mohawks on their own. The Anglican experiment with native “royalty” – at least in Iroquoia – was therefore by any standard far from a success.

Like Hendrick the preacher, South Carolina’s Yamassee Prince’s flirtation with Christianity also gave him access to English alliances while simultaneously putting him in

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48 Andrews’ complaint about Indian swearing is ironic, since indigenous languages had no swear words in them. Paradoxically, it was English “civilization” that exposed Indians to the barbarity of cursing.


50 Hendrick died at the 1755 battle at Lake George, fighting against French and Indian forces. The best overview of this mission can be found in Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 214-236.
the middle of Indian and English conflicts. The son of a Yamassee Sachem, Prince George was only 17 years old when he accompanied Gideon Johnston to England in 1713. He resided there for a year and a half while the SPG paid for his instruction, housing, and even clothing. As was the case with Hendrick, the SPG’s intentions in supporting the Prince were both diplomatic and evangelical. George Stanhope explained in 1714 that the SPG spent so much money supporting the Yamassee Prince because they believed he would not only further British interests in South Carolina, but also “promote the Christian Religion” among other southeastern Indian tribes. The Prince, however, never fared very well in England. He struggled with his studies, flunked his scholarly examinations in 1714, and was perpetually homesick. In spite of these challenges, he continued his instruction and was baptized as “George” after giving the SPG proof of his learning in 1715.

Just as Hendrick’s metamorphosis into a Christian preacher required his dressing the part, the redressing of the Yamassee Prince was also a crucial component of converting native royalty into an Anglican evangelist. The SPG footed the bill for the Prince’s coat (a necessity in the cold English winters), breeches, socks, shoes, pants, a new cravat, and a whole new wardrobe. The impetus for this came partially from the SPG’s desire to make the Yamassee Prince presentable to the upper crust of English society in an attempt to procure funding. As noted in the beginning of the chapter, the Prince was even presented to King

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51 The best source on the Yamassee Prince is still Frank J. Klingberg, “The Mystery of the Lost Yamassee Prince”: 18-32.

52 George Stanhope, The early Conversion of Islanders a wise Expedient for propagating Christianity. A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; On Friday the 19th of February, 1713-14 (London: J. Downing, 1714), 32.

53 It is highly probable that the Yamassee Prince either took or was given the name George as a symbolic gesture in honor of King George I, the Hanoverian king who sat on England’s throne.

54 Within the SPG’s journals and letters there are a handful of sources that document the course of clothing the Yamassee Prince.
George I just before he returned to South Carolina in 1715. At the same time, the redressing of the Yamassee Prince was also intended to prepare him for his re-entry into South Carolinian English-Indian relations. Recast as an educated, English gentleman, it was important that the Yamassee Prince be both represented and re-presented to the Indians as a figure of honor, class, and ability. In a society as highly structured as eighteenth century South Carolina, where race trumped all, the Yamassee Prince was one very exceptional figure who might possibly transcend racial boundaries (admittedly by supplanting them with Christian ones) if only given the proper education and attire. Furthermore, Anglican missionaries truly believed that clothing was an important tool in converting Indians, one that spoke volumes about a person before that person even spoke. Indigenous peoples, it was believed, understood hierarchy, place, and honor, so dressing the Yamassee Prince was vital to recasting his identity as an Anglican missionary. Gideon Johnston, the Prince’s mentor, confirmed this assumption when he observed that “Indians in Generall are most affected with that kind of garb, which is gawdy and makes the finest shew.”

When the Yamassee Prince arrived in Charleston after his year and a half away, his education, language, and attire made him, at least in appearance, partly an English gentleman.

The dramatic conversion of the Prince promised to fulfill the fantastical expectations of Protestant missionaries. Prince George was fitted out with a new education, new wardrobe, and importantly, a newfound sense of gratitude towards the SPG. Even as they trained indigenous peoples in the complexities of Anglican theology, SPG ministers still expected deference from their students, and the Yamassee Prince did not disappoint. Writing to the SPG upon his return to Carolina in the winter of 1715, he thanked his Anglican

55 Quoted in Vaughan, Transatlantic Encounters, 134.
sponsors and appeared grateful for all “their Favours which I never forget.” Unfortunately for both George and the SPG, the Yamassee War of 1715 alienated the Prince from his Anglican sponsors and catalyzed a violent diaspora of the same people that English missionaries were trying to convert. Gideon Johnston, who sailed back to the Carolinas with the Prince in 1715, reported to the SPG that when the war broke out the Prince instantaneously became “Extremely Sunk and dejected.”

The drowning of Johnston in April of 1716 might have made him feel even more despondent, for Johnston had vowed to treat the Prince as one of his own children during this time of tribulation. Yet the most grueling challenge the Prince faced was the fate of his father, the Yamassee sachem. Although the sachem had offered up his own son for Anglican training, English officials in South Carolina did little to protect their valuable ally during the war. Rumors circulated that the sachem had been taken prisoner by enemy Indians, killed at the hands of his own tribe, or that he had fled to St. Augustine, seeking refuge with the Spanish Catholics. By 1716 the Prince’s father was captured by the English, and he and his men were shipped off as slaves.

In all of this confusion the SPG lost track of the Prince, who most likely abandoned his Christian mission, followed his people to Spanish Florida, and disappeared off the face of the map and out of the purview of Anglican missionaries.

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56 Yamassee Prince to the SPG, 8 December 1715, quoted in Klingberg, “The Mystery of the Lost Yamassee Prince”: 27.

57 Quoted in Vaughan, Transatlantic Encounters, 15.

The Yamassee Prince’s expenses included “Passage and Cloths” that he would need to get to South Carolina, as well as training from tutors Johnston, MacBeth, and Noblet. It also included a small, ceremonial gun as a gift to his father. Letter 26, in *SPG Records*, Letter Series A, Volume 7, page 64.

The approbation that Gideon Johnston received from the SPG, clergy in South Carolina, and Anglican missionaries like Francis Le Jau for his work with the Yamassee Prince inspired him to turn to other native royalty even before his untimely death in 1716. No sooner had he stepped off the ship in Charles Town than he asked the “Emperour of the Cheriquois, to let me have his Eldest Son.” The Cherokee sachem allegedly “most willingly and cheerfully consented” to this proposition because “he saw how well the Yammousea
youth had far’d, by his being among us; and he has promised to bring him to me.”

The Yamassee War and Johnston’s death conspired to make this attempt into Cherokee royalty little more than a pipe dream. Several years later a schoolmaster in Charlestown brought an Indian youth to school to try to “make a good Use of him.” Predictably, this youth was none other than the “Son to one of the Chiefs of the Creek Nations.”

Like all the experiments with native royalty before it, this enterprise never materialized. In fact, none of these efforts even came close to replicating the same near-success that the Anglicans had with the famous Yamassee Prince. Although the Anglicans had gained the trust of a few members of Indian royalty by the 1740s – a feat of which Puritans could rarely boast – they learned the same lesson that Puritans had learned generations before: war would always hamper Protestant missionary efforts, leaving native evangelists with little but torn identities, difficult choices, and displaced families.

**India and the Supra-Atlantic Missionary Enterprise**

Both Puritans and Anglicans, as we have seen, tried to cultivate a native evangelical corps in their Atlantic missions, and the Anglican emphasis on Indian kingship produced only meager results. Another limitation they faced was that the Puritan New England Company and the Anglican SPG were both geographically limited by their own charters. While the NEC could not send evangelists past the bounds of New England proper, the SPG’s charter dictated that it could only send its missionaries wherever England was sovereign. The SPG undeniably bent that rule frequently, but this limitation nevertheless meant that English


60 Joseph Wilcocks, *A Sermon Preach’d before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday the 18th of February, 1725* (London: Joseph Downing, 1726), 36.
missionaries would have to correspond with other, non-English Protestant groups to inquire about, and participate in, missionary work in other parts of the world. Protestant missions were therefore never operating in either a denominational or geographical vacuum and they constantly sought to transcend the permeable boundaries of the Atlantic world. One of the most pressing concerns was the spread of Christianity into the East Indies. As Andrew Porter has argued, there was “always an Asian dimension” to Christian missions, for the conversion of the Atlantic world was only a stepping stone towards the larger goal of “gospelizing” the entire world. Even some of the most outspoken critics of Atlantic history have rightly urged historians who study Indians in the West to “pay a bit more attention to the Indians in the East.” Indeed, Protestant missionary work was always a global


enterprise, an effort that linked missions in New England, the Caribbean, Africa, and elsewhere to conduits of information emanating from England, India, and other parts of Asia. The debate about native missionaries, then, was not only an Atlantic-wide phenomenon, but a Supra-Atlantic conversation that bound these communities in spite of the vast distances and deep oceans that separated them. When Protestant missionaries pondered the problem of converting Indians in the Americas, they often looked to Indians in India as an evangelical model. The East and West Indies, therefore, were inextricably linked in the Protestant missionary mind.

Even though Puritan missionaries were limited to New England, clergymen like Cotton Mather tapped into wide networks of Atlantic, and even Supra-Atlantic, correspondence to find out about missionary work in other regions. This curiosity was fueled by missionaries’ assumption that gospelization was a global process, one not circumscribed by political, geographical, or topographical boundaries. Samuel Sewall, for example, envisioned New England as a “New Jerusalem” and believed that this city on a hill would “invigorate Christianity in the several Quarters of the World; in Asia, in Africa, in Europe, and in America.” Continental Europeans also regarded missionary work in America as a decisive moment in the sacred history of Christianity. When Dutch Reformed theologian Johann Hoornbeek published a book about the conversion of the gentiles in 1669, he was sure to include a large section on the efforts of Puritan missionaries across the Atlantic. And yet

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64 Samuel Sewall, *Phaenomena quaedam Aapocalyptica Ad Aspectum Novi Orbis configurata. Or, some few Lines towards a description of the New Heaven As It makes to those who stand upon the New Earth* (Boston: Barthelemew Green, 1727), 2.

65 Dennis Channing Landis, *The Millennium: Christianity in the Americas. An Exhibition at the John Carter Brown Library, May – September 2000* (Providence: The John Carter Brown Library, 2000), 19. See Johann Hoornbeek, *De Conversion Indorum & Gentilium* (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius à Waesberge & the widow of Elizaeus Weterstraet, 1669). Dennis C. Landis has argued that, in the seventeenth century, German Lutherans actually held a very intense and sustained debate about whether they should be involved in missionary work at all. Although it appeared to be mandated by scripture, Martin Luther said nothing about missions himself. By the turn of the century, however, the ascension of
this spirit of New England exceptionalism did not preclude the possibility that other gains were being made by other Protestants in other zones of contact.\textsuperscript{66} Cotton Mather, for example, developed an intimate correspondence with August Francke, a Pietist scholar who founded a famous orphan school in Halle, Germany. Francke even developed a very successful school for future tutors – a kind of missionary training program – that was designed to send its graduates out to propagate Christianity throughout the world.\textsuperscript{67} Mather was also in touch with Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, a German Lutheran missionary sent to India by the Danish Court at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a mission which was also supported by the Anglican SPCK. Mather’s letters to and from Ziegenbalg reflected the collective interests that all Protestants shared, in spite of the doctrinal differences and vast oceans that separated them. As Mather stated, German Lutherans working in India and Puritan evangelists in the Americas were “Joyned in our Minds, tho’ parted by the Waters; One Soul, tho’ not one Soyl, Uniting of Us.”\textsuperscript{68} Mather even shipped money and books to

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{66} In fact, Puritans often wrote disparagingly about their own missionary efforts in contrast with other Protestant, and even Catholic, ones. See Stoddard, \textit{Question Whether God is not Angry}.


\textsuperscript{68} Letter from Cottom Mather to Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, 31 December, 1717, in Cotton Mather, \textit{India Christiana. : A discourse, delivered unto the Commissioners, for the Propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians : which is accompanied with several instruments relating to the glorious design of propagating our holy religion, in the Eastern as well as the Western, Indies. : An entertainment which they that are waiting for the kingdom of God will receive as good news from a far country} (Boston: B. Green, 1721), 74.
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India as a show of support for Ziegenbalg’s interdenominational mission. New England Puritans were therefore very curious about, and quite active in, Protestant missions well beyond the bounds of the Atlantic world.

So were the Anglicans. As stated earlier, the SPG could not officially preach beyond the boundaries of the British empire, but the SPCK did not have such a caveat in their charter. In fact, by the first decade of the eighteenth century, the SPCK was directly participating in Ziegenbalg’s interdenominational, international, and intercontinental mission. This ambitious enterprise employed Puritan money and books, German missionaries, Anglican financial support, Danish royal backing, and Indian catechists. The English collaboration with the Germans should not be surprising. After all, England had already had a few continental Europeans on their throne, and George I, a German by birth, was the King of England by the time this mission got started. Germans and English thus had a lot more in common by 1710 than they did in decades prior. Although the mission to the coast of India was operated by German Lutherans and supported by the Danish royalty, the SPCK provided a significant amount of funding for it. They received annual updates from the Lutheran missionaries and even claimed it as one of their own missions.\(^{69}\) Like the Puritans, Anglicans believed that they had a direct stake in the India mission, even if they were not physically there. Halle’s Professor Francke also noted these connections. Just as he kept in contact with

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\(^{69}\) It was not until 1825 that the SPCK would hand over the direction of the India mission to the SPG. For more on this mission, see W.K. Lowther Clarke, D.D., *A History of the S.P.C.K.* (London: S.P.C.K., 1959), 59-76. For more on religious identity formation in eighteenth century India, see Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Even the Scottish, Presbyterian organization of the SSPCK extended their view past the bounds of Edinburgh by sending monies and books to places as far away as the Greek Church in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Egypt. The books included 6,000 psalters, 10,000 testaments, and 5,000 catechisms, all of which amounted to about 3,000 pounds sterling. This was roughly the same cost of employing 75 SPG missionaries in the field. See *The Christian Monthly History: Or, An Account of the Revival and Progress of Religion, Abroad, and at Home* Number I. For April 1745 (Edinburgh: R. Fleming and A. Alison, 1743-1746), 35.
Puritan divine Cotton Mather, he also sent the SPG free copies of accounts of his school and its role in Protestant missionary work in Southern India.\(^{70}\)

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\(^{70}\) Frederick Michael Ziegenhagen to the SPG, 2 February 1747/8, in *SPG Records*, Letter Series B.
the eighteenth century. Like the Puritans and Anglicans before him, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg described his mission to India as “a City that is set on an Hill, and may be seen at a Distance.”71 He also shared other Protestants’ disdain for the Catholic menace that surrounded him. The Lutheran missions were enclosed by French and Portuguese stations in India, and Ziegenbalg complained bitterly about the “sorry Performances” of the Catholic priests there.72 Like the Anglicans in New York and South Carolina, Ziegenbalg must have felt encircled by his Catholic competitors. For our purposes, however, the most important connection between Ziegenbalg’s mission and those of the Anglican Atlantic was the tremendous amount of authority placed into the hands of native peoples.

German Lutherans agreed with Puritans and Anglicans that native evangelists would be absolutely necessary to any sustained evangelical effort. Beginning in Tranquebar and working their way up the east and west coasts of India, Ziegenbalg and the other Continental missionaries who followed him cultivated a corps of native elders, exhorters, catechists, and teachers.73 While a “pretty young Man of the Malabarian Race” volunteered to be an interpreter and preacher, other Indians offered their services as teachers or leaders of prayer groups.74 John Ernest Grundler reported in 1719 that experience had taught him that local catechists – every catechist was an Indian – were supremely effective at not only sustaining the church, but expanding it beyond its borders and reaching out to other Indians. Although the documentary evidence never tells us exactly how that worked, it is important to note the


extent to which native Indians controlled and ran these missions. The German Lutherans officially supervised these locals, but the catechists themselves led biblical, exegetical, and theological exercises, where they selected passages from scripture and expounded upon them. After they offered these reflections as “a Sermon for the Publick,” the Indian catechists would then apply these passages to the temporal and spiritual challenges that Indians faced in the early eighteenth century. Grundler hoped that the best of these catechists would eventually make the German missionaries obsolete and “take the work of this Mission into their management.” He, like other Christian missionaries around the world, longed for the day when, “by their means, we shall one day see much Advantage and a mighty Harvest.”

Ironically, the more successful European missionaries were, the more obsolete they would become.

Bartholomew Ziegenbalg also relied upon a native poet to acquire as many indigenous texts as he could in order to learn about the local caste system, languages, and religion. This poet eventually became a native teacher who translated the catechism and history of Christ into Damulian, sang psalms with Indian children at night, and even offered a narrative of his own conversion. When he gave Ziegenbalg this confession in 1709, he admitted that his conversion experience was based upon a search for metaphysical truths rather than a desire for spiritual salvation. This emphasis on religious truth was a common one for many Indian neophytes, and argument and reason – rather than ecstatic revelation – usually won out in India. Ziegenbalg rejected European assumptions that Indians were somehow pliable and impressionable in their religion. He declared that Indians as a whole were not “so destitute of Arguments as we imagine,” and were “able to baffle…one Proof

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75 Letter from John Ernest Grundler to Cotton Mather, 10 December 1719, in Mather, India Christiana, 56.

76 The italics are mine. John Ernest Grundler to Cotton Mather, 10 December 1719, in Mather, India Christiana, 84.
alleged for Christianity, with ten others brought against it.”  

The Indian search for religious truth was therefore a paramount concern that native missionaries had to confront head on. Some native congregations even made lists of sacred truths – derived from Christian scripture – and disseminated them among their neighbors. Ziegenbalg’s native poet engaged in the same intellectual project by scouring Malabarian, Hindu, and Islamic books, reading every sacred text he could procure. After his studies he eventually concluded that all of these religions “contain nothing but a pack of Lies, and a Huddle of odd and confused notions.” Protestant Christianity, however, had proven to the poet to be “the only true, and saving Religion in the World.” The Indian poet’s conversion appeared more like a humanistic search for sacred knowledge than a blind leap of faith.

Before his embrace of Christian evangelism, Tondaman Mudaly was a Pandaram, or a low-caste Hindu Priest, who resided in Cuddalore. “In my infancy,” Mudaly recalled, “my Parents taught me, that there was a Being who had created Heaven and Earth, and that good Men would go to Heaven, but the Wicked to Hell.” Yet Mudaly’s later quest for further religious education, as well as his temporal experiences among other Indians, caused him great uneasiness. He became incensed at the “dancing Girls” who sang and offered sex at the many pagodas throughout India. He was shocked by the innumerable sacrifices made


78 John Ernest Grundler to Cotton Mather, 10 December 1719, in Mather, *India Christiana*, 56.


80 His story can be found in “The Life of a Pandaram, a Sincere Convert to Christianity at Cudulore,” from Letters from George Huttenan to the SPCK, 12 and 20 of January, 1768, in George Henry Hutteman, *A Genuine Account of the remarkable Conversion of an Indian Priest to Christianity, in the Year 1763* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1765). Cuddalore is on the eastern side of southern India, located about 10 miles south of Pondicherry.

to mythical creatures during sacred days. And, after a prolonged spiritual struggle characterized by intense longing, rejection from family and friends, and combing sacred texts for divine truths, Mudaly finally decided to hear what the Protestant missionaries had to say. When that happened, Mudaly recalled, “the mists of mine Understanding began to clear up,” and the knowledge that the Protestants disseminated was “immediately approved by the silent Voice of Reason and Conscience.” Like the Malabarian poet, Mudaly’s appropriation of Christianity was based upon a search for knowledge rather than an anxiety about the status of his soul.

Mudaly also integrated Christianity into Indian Hinduism by describing his spiritual transformation as a fundamentally corporeal experience. In his own confession, he admitted that this “Wedam [religion] enables a Man to curb and subdue his Passions and wicked Appetites of the Flesh; and makes the Mind in Love with Holiness by the Spirit of Jesus.” Just as the traditional practice of asceticism helped Indians reign in their primal impulses and strive for spiritual lucidity, Mudaly observed that the exercise of Christian rituals also served that function perfectly. Mudaly had thus concluded that Christianity was the only religion that could curb his passions while helping him remain loyal to the sacred dictums his parents had taught him when he was a child. He envisioned his Christian transformation not as a complete conversion or a surrendering of his Indian identity, but rather as a “reduction” in the seventeenth and eighteenth century sense of the word: he believed Protestant Christianity represented a return to the initial intentions of the Parabara Wastu, or Supreme Being. For

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82 “The Life of a Pandaram, a Sincere Convert to Christianity at Cudulore,” 5.

83 Hutteman, A Genuine Account, 6.

84 “The Life of a Pandaram, a Sincere Convert to Christianity at Cudulore,” 6. Mudaly’s use of “Parabara Wastu” for God and “Jesus Mattiastar” for Jesus Christ would, according to Lamin O. Sanneh’s interpretation, reflect the indigenization of Christianity on Indian soil. As such, Christianity thus becomes detached from its Western moorings and reoriented, recast, and remanifested as an indigenous Indian.
Mudaly, Christianity was not an alien or invasive religion, but rather a reawakening of the fundamental essence of human spirituality that he learned from his elders and sacred texts.

In spite of the vast physical and cultural spaces that separated Indian Indians from American ones, Indian preachers still faced the same kinds of problems that native missionaries throughout the Atlantic world experienced. Most pressing of all was the recasting of their identity as both Indian and Christian, a difficult thing to do in the caste-oriented social world of southern India. Native missionaries in India faced resistance not only because they appeared as agents of a new, imperial religion, but also because their very existence seemed to upset the vital, but sometimes quite delicate, caste system upon which Indian society was based. The story of Johannes, another Indian preacher, reveals the ways in which Indian Christians navigated these problems of identity in such a caste-oriented society. Johannes reminded his Indian audiences that, although he was a “wretched sinner,” he had never upset the careful social order of the Indian caste system. When his enemies accused him of forfeiting his caste via his conversion to Christianity, he simply replied, “I have changed my Religion, but not my Cast. By becoming a Christian I did not turn an Englishman: I am yet a Tondaman. Never did the Priest of this Place desire of me any Thing contrary to my Cast. Never did he bid me to eat Cow Flesh or Beef, neither have I seen him eat it, or any of the Tamulian Christians, though such a Thing be not sinful in itself.”

Johannes, like other Indian preachers, believed that his adoption of Christianity was not an affront to the caste system, but rather an affirmation of it.

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85 Hutteman, *A Genuine Account*, 8-9. Johannes was originally named Arunasalam Pandaram, but changed his name to Aruhananden and then Johannes.
The Malabarian Poet who translated sacred texts for Ziegenbalg faced even more persecution from his fellow Indians. Fearing the cultural power of persuasion that the poet wielded, his parents locked him in their home for three days without food or water. A mob of 200 neighbors gathered to force him to renounce his newfound Protestant Christianity while others threatened to poison and even hang him. Much to the delight of his Protestant supporters, the poet never renounced his new faith. In spite of Indian fears that these neophytes were abandoning their traditional ways, Mudaly, Johannes, the poet, and other Indian preachers were not interested in becoming Englishmen or betraying their countrymen. Instead, they sought ways to graft Christianity onto indigenous Indian notions of the social caste system, personal behavior, and even the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, and in the process they translated Protestant Christianity into an Indian cultural vernacular.

Although Protestants from India to the Americas viewed the apparent success of the Indian mission with delight, the ascension of Indians into positions of ecclesiastical leadership also highlighted some questions about the nature of ordination, the authority of native preachers, and the relationship between missions and the home church. This was certainly not a new problem. As early as 1694, years before the SPCK and SPG were even established, several Anglicans made a proposal to erect a native seminary in India. The object was so that ministers might be “bred up and ordained there upon the spot.”

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86 The same was true for missionary work in North America, which was often perceived as a religious periphery that demanded certain ecclesiastical policies to be bent, if not broken. See Charles L. Cohen, “The Colonization of British North America as an Episode in the History of Christianity,” *Church History* 72 No. 3 (September 2003): 553-568.

87 Anonymous, *A Farther Appeal to the Unprejudiced Judgment of Mankind, In Behalf of the Indians. In Two Parts, Containing, I. Animadversions upon some late Arguments of a Right Reverend Prelate of the Church of England, in reference to our sending Missionaries from hence to convert the Indians. Written in the Year 1760. II. Thoughts upon the proper Means and Measures of converting the Indians to true Christianity. Written in the Year 1764. To which are added, Considerations relative to the Subject of the foregoing Proposals, particularly that of appointing Bishops or Superintendents in our Colonies abroad. By Another Hand: Both Joint-Writers in the Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England, &c.* (London: A. Millar, 1766), 39.
college was never built, but the problem of native ordination resurfaced when an Indian named Pastor Aaron was ordained in 1733 and another catechist named Diego was ordained in 1741, both with Lutheran, and not Anglican, rites. Every minister understood that sending natives to Europe for ordination would be attended with “insuperable difficulties,” not to mention excessive costs. And yet, there were questions as to whether the German missionaries in India even had the power to ordain native preachers. Some SPCK authorities tried to squash that question immediately, noting that it was a “tender point” that could “yield no service to this mission but might do abundance of mischief.”

Henry Newman, who served as the librarian of Harvard College, acted as personal administrator of George Berkeley’s Bermuda scheme (discussed later in this chapter), and was secretary of the SPCK in the 1730s, hoped that Anglicans could prevent any “difficulties or misunderstandings that may hereafter grow in those parts upon a supposition of the Holy Orders conferr’d in India not being valid.”

Some Anglicans vehemently disagreed. One respected divine complained to Newman that he would “allow of no Pastor Aarons to preach the gospel without they come over to England for Episcopal ordination, or some bishop goes over to India to ordain them.”

This situation was resolved, partially, by the fact that the mission was officially under the auspices of the Danish Crown. Even though the SPCK donated books and monies to the mission, they were not in a position to dictate such an important policy as that which dealt with the problem of native ordination. The College at Copenhagen, rather than the Church of England, gave the German Lutherans permission to officially ordain native

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preachers in India. Nevertheless, the very presence of native evangelists in India was cause for an ecclesiastical debate that challenged the ways in which Anglicans understood the relationship between the home church and the widespread missions they supported. No native preacher would ever be ordained outside the bounds of England proper.

By 1740 Puritans, Anglicans, Danes, Germans, and Indian preachers had collaborated to establish a series of schools and missions throughout the coasts of India. While ten European missionaries supervised the missions, half a dozen native preachers and 30 native catechists oversaw their daily operations, which included Christian teaching, leading prayers, translating sacred texts, and singing psalms. Indian evangelists faced persecution from other natives and struggled to create a new sense of identity, one that was characterized by a synthetic fusion of Christian spirituality and indigenous culture. Warfare, which wracked New England, New York, and South Carolina, also came to India in the 1750s, as the French attacked Protestant missions and occasioned a veritable diaspora of Christian Indians to the north (an event that some Protestant commentators believed was wonderfully providential).

The India missions also underscored the fact that Puritans, Anglicans, Danes, and Germans were all connected to a wider world of correspondence and information than we have previously recognized. Central to these transatlantic, even Supra-Atlantic, conversations was the debate over what role native people would play in their own conversion to Christianity. Whether among Indians in America or Indians in the East, indigenous evangelists were essential to the development of, and discussions about, the Protestant missionary enterprise.

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91 The Christian Monthly History, 83.

92 W.O.B. Allen and Edmund McClure, Two Hundred Years: The History of The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698-1898 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1898), 266.

93 See Hutteman, A Genuine Account, 1.
The Berkeley Plan and the Problem of Slavery

The abysmal failure of Anglican missionary efforts in the Atlantic during the first few decades of the eighteenth century, especially when compared to the apparent successes of the Protestant missions in India, forced Anglican divines to propose new, creative, and more ambitious plans for the evangelization of Indians and Africans in the Atlantic world. The Indian royalty model certainly had staying power, but new alternatives were emerging that made the education of indigenous children the focus of the native missionary project. By the middle of the 1720s, for example, Anglican cleric George Berkeley had concluded that the expansion of British dominion abroad had thus far represented only a missed opportunity for spreading Christianity. Naturally, he turned to the missionary organizations charged with converting Indians and Africans and blamed the SPCK and SPG for the “very inconsiderable progress” the gospel had made among native peoples throughout the Atlantic world.  

Berkeley then drafted his own ambitious plan to convert the world’s indigenous peoples and rescue Christianity from its failures: he would create a college where Indians and Africans could be educated, trained as missionaries, and sent back among their people to affect a general conversion. In the middle of the 1720s, Berkeley secured funding, Parliamentary backing, and had even decided on Bermuda (a place he had never visited) as the location for his college.  

94 George Berkeley, *A Proposal For the Better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations, and For Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity, By a College to be Erected in the Summer Islands, Otherwise Called the Isles of Bermuda* (Dublin: George Grierson, 1725), 3. For more on Berkeley’s theories about the degeneration of the English nation, see George Berkeley, *A Discourse Addressed to Magistrates and Men in Authority, Occasioned by the Enormous License, and Irreligion of the Times. To Which is Added, A Report From the Lords Committees for Religion, Appointed to Examine into the Causes of the Present Notorious Immorality and Prophaneness: Made by the Earl of Granard, on Friday the 10th of March, 1737* (London: J. Roberts, 1738); and *An Essay Towards Preventing the Ruin of Great-Britain*, which can be found in George Berkeley, *A Miscellany, Containing Several Tracts on Various Subjects* (London: J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper, 1752).

95 While Berkeley was concocting this plan, the agent in charge of his affairs was Henry Newman, a man who had been educated at Harvard, served as its librarian from 1690 to 1693, and then became the secretary
that Bermuda would be a perfect locale for the convenient intermingling of English preachers with Amerindian and African students. Although modern historians have viewed this plan primarily as a fantastical and utopian scheme that became entangled in the personal politics of English society, the Berkeley Plan was much more than that. Berkeley’s scheme, in fact, represented a seminal moment in larger transatlantic debates about the propriety and efficacy of using native missionaries.  

In letters to his colleagues and in *A Proposal For the Better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations* (1725), Berkeley explained why native missionaries would be more effective than the English ones already in the colonies. Even the most zealous and skilled Anglican missionary, Berkeley claimed, “must find himself but ill qualified for converting the American Heathen, if we consider the difference of language, their wild way of living, and above all, the great jealousy and prejudice which savage nations have towards foreigners.”  

“Children of savage Americans,” he continued, would “make the ablest and properest missionaries for spreading the gospel among their countrymen: who would be less apt to suspect, and readier to embrace a doctrine recommended by neighbours or relations, for the SPCK. Newman, in some ways, personifies the connections between Puritan missionary efforts and Anglican ones.

96 The Berkeley proposal has been covered by several scholars. See Edwin S. Gaustad, “George Berkeley and New World Community,” *Church History* 48 No. 1 (March 1979): 5-17; A.A. Luce, “Berkeley’s Bermuda Project and His Benefactions to American Universities, with Unpublished Letters and Extracts from the Egmont Papers,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* Volume 42, Section C, No. 6 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1934); Graham P. Conroy, “Berkeley and Education in America,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 No. 2 (April – June 1960): 211-221; Benjamin Rand, ed., *Berkeley and Percival: The Correspondence of George Berkeley Afterwards Bishop of Cloyne and Sir John Percival Afterwards Earl of Egmont* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 31-46. Gaustad is generally recognized as the foremost scholar of George Berkeley, so consult his works for more on Berkeley’s life and thought. I also thank Margareta Lovell, of the University of California at Berkeley (appropriately), for urging me to examine Berkeley’s plan in light of the longer history of debates about native missionaries.

men of their own blood and language, than if it were proposed by foreigners.”

His plan was to secure Indians while they were young and keep them at the Bermudian seminary until they were ready to be transported to England for ordination. They would then be sent back to their own nations and serve as “powerful instruments” to convert their brethren. Although Berkeley suggested that his ambitious scheme had “never been tried,” this was not entirely accurate. By calling upon and explaining the need for native missionaries, Berkeley was participating in a much older transatlantic conversation about the best means for propagating the gospel. Two characteristics made his plan unique. The first was that this was one of the first times in which Anglicans did not demonstrate an obsession with fawning over native royalty. Second was Berkeley’s plan to isolate Native Americans and Africans on a distant island 600 miles from the American coast. Secluded from the traders, merchants, and profanity of the world, Berkeley’s students would serve as cogs in the hub of a transatlantic, Anglican evangelical effort centered in Bermuda.

Berkeley and his supporters also believed that this Bermuda Plan would finally give Anglicans the opportunity to strike back at Catholics and provide an institutional framework for giving Spanish, Portuguese, and French missionaries some competition in the Americas. Berkeley implied that the SPG was weak when compared with the veritable army of Jesuit and Franciscan “regulars” who did the bidding of the Catholic Pope. This numerical advantage, Berkeley anticipated, “may be over-balanced by our employing American missionaries.” In fact, Berkeley believed that, given their understanding of local languages and cultures, native preachers “would in all probability have much greater influence on the

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Americans, than the utmost endeavours of popish emissaries can possibly have.”

Ironically, Berkeley’s plan for native missionaries tried to emulate, and replicate the successes of, the Catholic missionaries he claimed to despise. Even one of Berkeley’s friends applauded his scheme and predicted that Berkeley’s reputation would “in some time exalt your name beyond that of St. Xavier.” Berkeley eagerly tapped into anxieties about anti-papery even as he drew obvious parallels between Catholic missionaries and the army of native preachers he expected to graduate from his Bermuda school.

Although Bermuda had many advantages, it lacked the two main ingredients that Berkeley needed: Indians and Africans. Berkeley thought he had an easy solution to that obstacle: if peaceful methods could not be used to procure potential seminarians, he might obtain some by “taking captive the children of our enemies.” Such a suggestion aroused the indignation of Anglican missionaries and American settlers alike. Thomas Bray called it not only “un-Christian” but “anti-Christian,” and declared that it would provoke “an Eternal War” between Indians and English. William Byrd, a wealthy Virginia planter, lampooned the idea of using enemy Indians as future missionaries. He declared that the only way

102 Sir John Percival to George Berkeley, 30 June 1723, in Rand, ed., *Berkeley and Percival*, 209. Xavier was, of course, perhaps the most famous of the early Jesuit missionaries.
103 Berkeley outlined the advantages of Bermuda in his *Proposal* as well as in his letters to his friend, Sir John Percival. These included its equidistance to all colonies, its healthy climate, its protection from pirates, and its distance from both the heathen practices of Native Americans as well as the outright commercialism of the English. See Letter from Berkeley to Sir John Percival, 4 March 1723, in Berkeley, *A Discourse Addressed to Magistrates and Men in Authority*, 204-205. Berkeley’s detractors, on the other hand, noted that Bermuda lacked Indians and Africans and was a barren country where “there is no bread, nor anything fit for the sustenance of man, but onions and cabbage.” See William Byrd to Sir John Percival, 10 June 1729, in Rand, ed., *Berkeley and Percival*, 244.
105 Samuel Clyde McCullough, “A Plea for Further Missionary Activity in Colonial America –Dr. Thomas Bray’s Missionalia” (n.p., 1946), reprinted from *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (September 1946), 10.
Berkeley could succeed would be if he had “the command of half a dozen regiments, with which he or one of his professors in the quality of Lieutenant General must make a descent upon the coast of Florida and take as many prisoners as he can.” Byrd sarcastically concluded that such a maneuver would “be as wise, and as meritorious, as the Holy War used to be of old.”\textsuperscript{106} Byrd was quite right. George Berkeley’s enemies-as-missionaries proposal exposed his absolute naiveté in engineering this scheme. The idea of native missionaries was neither novel nor controversial, but proposal to kidnap potential evangelists and take them to a barren island certainly was.

In some ways, Berkeley’s ignorance about his own plan doomed it to failure. He had never been to the island where he proposed to construct this seminary, he had probably never met any Native Americans in his life, and he was utterly inexperienced in missionary work. Historians are right to acknowledge that such a fantastical scheme of taking Indians 600 miles from their homes to a deserted island was improbable, if not impossible. Contemporaries agreed. Even though Berkeley had plenty of clout in the Anglican community, many believed the logistics of this plan were ludicrous. The Bishop of Salisbury said it was a “ridiculous project,” and William Byrd thought it was simply a “romantic” musing engineered by a veritable “Don Quixote,” and that it would only result in a “religious frenzy.”\textsuperscript{107} Even Berkeley himself acknowledged that some of his colleagues would think he was “mad and chimerical.”\textsuperscript{108} A further setback occurred when King George I died (he apparently supported the plan) and Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole blocked the scheme.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{106} William Byrd to Sir John Percival, 10 June 1729, in Rand, ed., \textit{Berkeley and Percival}, 244-245.

\textsuperscript{107} Journal of Sir John Percival, 27 February 1732, in Rand, ed., \textit{Berkeley and Percival}, 282; William Byrd to Sir John Percival, 10 June 1729, in Rand, ed., \textit{Berkeley and Percival}, 244.

\textsuperscript{108} Berkeley to Sir John Percival, 4 March 1723, in \textit{Berkeley and Percival}, 206.

\textsuperscript{109} Conroy, “Berkeley and Education in America”: 214.
Berkeley’s plan also represented an implicit affront to the SPG itself. Thomas Bray, the influential founder of the SPCK and SPG, wrote *Missionalia* a few years after Berkeley’s plan went public, and Bray tried to persuade readers that Berkeley’s scheme was absurd and impossible. Ironically, Bray was the same person who in 1699 supported the creation of colonial colleges for the training of native preachers for evangelical roles. By 1727, when Bray published *Missionalia*, he had changed his tune. Casting doubt on the idea of native preachers as a whole, Bray used several examples from missionary efforts in Africa to demonstrate the ways in which supposedly converted indigenous peoples would only return to the rude and barbaric cultures they reveled in before they were exposed to Christianity. Two “Black Princes” from Mozambique, for example, were “sorry Fellows” who were baptized and trained in Bray’s parish in the early eighteenth century. One of them committed suicide in England and the other converted to Christianity, only to cast it off as soon as he returned home. For Bray, these examples demonstrated the futility of using native Christians to preach the gospel. Berkeley’s plan was, in Bray’s eyes, silly and impractical because natives would not travel far from home to be educated by Christian strangers, they may never return home if they actually did travel, and their return to savagery was almost inevitable if they did return home. Any indigenous student attending Berkeley’s school or any other native missionary program, according to Bray, would quickly “return like the Dog to his Vomit, to the former Wild and Savage Ways.” Bray believed that this was equally

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110 Bray, *Apostolick Charity*, the fifth point from “A General View.”


112 “A Memorial Relating to the Conversion, as well of the American Indians, as of the African Negroes. To the Reverend Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Wilkinson, Commissaries, and the Rest of the Reverend Clergy
evident for Africans as it was Indians, and that “artificers” (people who could teach indigenous peoples civilization before Christianity would be introduced) should be the focus of any missionary project.\footnote{McCullough, “A Plea for Further Missionary Activity in Colonial America –Dr. Thomas Bray’s Missionalia,” 9. When a man remembered only as “Mr. Lyttleton” tried to revive Berkeley’s plan again in 1765, the proposal was quickly tabled by Parliament. See J. Maxwell Greene, “Bermuda (alias Somers Islands). Historical Sketch,” \textit{Bulletin of the American Geographical Society} 33 No. 3 (1901): 231.}

Bray’s voice, no matter how loud and influential, was in the minority. Berkeley’s plan may have been logistically problematic, but few agreed with Bray that native preachers were the problem. Some Anglican ministers even suggested that the SPG should start employing black evangelists in the south, especially since the plantations were so distant from one another. Edmund Gibson, the Lord Bishop of London, suggested in 1728 that plantation masters and SPG officials should begin selecting specific slaves and targeting them as future missionaries. “Some of them, who are more capable and more serious than the rest,” Gibson argued, “might be easily instructed both in our Language and Religion, and then be made use of to convey Instruction to the rest in their own Language.” The minister even coolly anticipated that this “may be done with great ease.”\footnote{Bishop Edmund Gibson, \textit{Letter to the Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Plantations abroad; Exhorting them to encourage and promote the Instruction of their Negroes in the Christian Faith}, in David Humphreys, \textit{An Account of the Endeavours Used By The Society For the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, To instruct the Negroe Slaves in New York. Together with Two of Bp. Gibson’s Letters on that Subject. Being an Extract from Dr. Humphreys’s Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, from its Foundation to the Year 1728} (London: s.n., 1730), 23.} In spite of the alleged “ease” that would accompany such a plan, Gibson’s scheme remained a pipe dream well until the 1740s, when a school for young black evangelists would be overseen by slaves owned by
the SPG. In the meantime, it was one thing to educate a few Indian kings, but to give slaves access to such spiritual authority and opportunity for social networking seemed foolhardy, if not suicidal.

At the center of this Anglican debate over native missionaries was the problematic relationship between missions and slavery. By the eighteenth century, for example, there was a veritable “black majority” in South Carolina, making the evangelization of that colony’s slaves a matter of utmost importance to most ministers and an issue of extreme controversy to others. Although a few missionaries, most notably Samuel Thomas and Francis Le Jau, established schools and preached to some slaves, instruction was customarily left to the masters. The SPG faced an uphill battle in convincing slave masters that Christianization would not make their slaves more likely to rebel. The majority of plantation owners and overseers assumed that the slaves who harnessed the most spiritual and intellectual acuity would be the ones most prone to lead a bloody rebellion. This assumption appeared to be correct when, in 1712, New York City experienced a brief rebellion among its urbanized slave population. Not surprisingly, rumors circulated that the idea for rebellion originated

The Charleston Negro School, as it is called, is discussed in the next chapter.


As part of their campaign to urge slaveholders to give their slaves Christian instruction, the SPG often printed stories of prominent Carolina families who either taught their slaves themselves or allowed their slaves to attend church services. Annette Laing suggests that Africans who volunteered for instruction from Le Jau were not forced to do so, but rather viewed the missionary as a “purveyor of an important religious tool.” As such, African slaves believed that conversion to Christianity was not a demonstration of their subjugation to a dominant culture, but rather “promised to enhance their spiritual power.” See Laing, “Heathens and Infidels?”: 197-198.
among the slaves who attended Elias Neau’s Anglican school. This ended up being a false accusation and SPG commentators gloried in the fact that the slaves who started the rebellion were actually the property of men who were “declared Opposers of Christianizing Negroes.”

Nevertheless, New York passed a law that limited slave mobility and curtailed blacks’ access to education. Some masters even threatened to send their slaves south if they attended Neau’s school. Such an angst-ridden social climate made it difficult, if not impossible, to suggest the creation of a black evangelical corps. Even if they remained as slaves, black preachers still threatened to undermine the very racial hierarchies that formed the backbone of colonial American society.

The root of the problem was the doctrine of Christian liberty, and masters feared slave instruction because they feared the rebellions that could result from it. The SPG responded to this suspicion (and neglect) of black instruction by sending over thousands of sermons and personal addresses to remind masters of their biblically-mandated injunction to spread the gospel. In every one of these texts, SPG missionaries clearly explained that conversion did not imply freedom and that Christian instruction in no way tested the racial

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120 Some of these documents include a fairly famous sermon by William Fleetwood, which reminded his readers that failing to spread the Gospel is in fact failing to be a Christian at all. See William Fleetwood, *A Sermon Preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, At the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, on Friday the 16th of February, 1710/11, Being the Day of their Anniversary Meeting* (London: J. Downing, 1711). An early example of such missionary literature is Morgan Godwyn, *The Negro’s [and] Indians Advocate : Suing for their Admission to the Church: or A Persuasive to the Instructing and Baptizing of the Negro’s and Indians in our Plantations. Shewing, That as the Compliance therewith can prejudice no Man’s just Interest; so the wilful Neglecting and Opposing of it, is no less than a manifest Apostacy from the Christian Faith. To which is added, A brief Account of Religion in Virginia* (London: J.D., 1680).
boundaries of American society. Edmund Gibson, the same Anglican who supported a black slave missionary program, assured masters that “Christianity, and the embracing of the Gospel, does not make the least Alteration in Civil Property, or in any of the Duties which belong to Civil Relations.; but in all these Respects, it continues Persons just in the same State as it found them.” Other Anglicans lambasted the “horrid” and “erroneous” notion that Christian spiritual liberty implied temporal freedom. In his famous sermon advocating the Christian instruction of black slaves, William Fleetwood asserted that “the Liberty of Christianity is entirely Spiritual.” Fleetwood and his compatriots thus had little concern for the temporal status of slaves, for the spiritual consequences of remaining in heathenish darkness were significantly more ominous than the earthly conditions of southern slavery.

“Let the Christians,” Fleetwood proclaimed, “be Sold, and Bound, and Scourg’d, condemn’d to Bonds and Imprisonment, to endure all Hardships and Disgrace, and to enter into Heaven, Blind, and Halt, and Maimed, rather than having Two Eyes, and Hands and Feet entire, to perish miserably.” SPG ministers even suggested that slaves would be “much better

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121 Gibson, Letter to the Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Plantations abroad, in Frederick Dalcho, An historical account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South-Carolina, from the first settlement of the province, to the war of the revolution; with notices of the present state of the church in each parish: and some account of the early civil history of Carolina, never before published. To which are added; the laws relating to religious worship; the journals and rules of the convention of South-Carolina; the constitution and canons of the Protestant Episcopal church, and the course of ecclesiastical studies. (Charleston, SC: E. Thayer, 1820), 109.


123 Fleetwood, A Sermon Preached before the Society, 17-22. Fleetwood was building off of a previous work that he published in 1705, which articulated the ways in which social relationships among Christians should be constructed along hierarchical lines and bound by duty. See Fleetwood, The relative duties of
servants to their earthly masters” if they had a sense of the divine master residing above.\textsuperscript{124} In this way Anglicans contributed to a planter ethos that, as historian Jon Butler put it, demanded obedience while fashioning a kind of “Christian absolutism” in American slave society.\textsuperscript{125}

Anglicans had several reasons to express such concern about the relationship between slavery and Christianity, not the least of which was that the SPG itself was a corporate slaveholder. When Christopher Codrington bequeathed his Barbados plantation to the SPG in 1710, the missionary organization accepted the donation with glee. The plantation contained about 300 African slaves, and the SPG envisioned this windfall as a Protestant utopia, where they could demonstrate to other slaveholders that Christian instruction did not inevitably result in outright rebellion. In fact, the Christianization of the SPG’s slaves (who later had the word “SOCIETY” branded upon them) was of the utmost concern to the Anglican organization precisely because they could not chastise American colonists for failing to instruct their slaves if they exhibited the same neglect. As William Fleetwood put it, “if all the Slaves throughout America, and every Island in those Seas, were to continue Infidels for ever, yet ours alone must needs be Christians.”\textsuperscript{126} Anglicans therefore looked to Barbados as an ideal place to begin a fresher, more ambitious missionary endeavor, with a


\textsuperscript{124} Samuel Bradford, \textit{A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; On Friday the 19th of February, 1719} (London: John Wyat, 1720), 36-37. If the SPG’s assurances were not enough, South Carolina passed a law in 1712 that effectively repeated what the Anglican missionaries had been declaring all along: that conversion to the Christian faith made no alteration whatsoever in civil status. See “An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes and Slaves,” in Dalcho, \textit{An historical account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South-Carolina}, 94-95.

\textsuperscript{125} Jon Butler, \textit{Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 146.

\textsuperscript{126} Fleetwood, \textit{A Sermon Preached}, 25.
new college structure as the backbone of this enterprise. This scheme was actually part of
Christopher Codrington’s last wishes, as he requested that students emerging out of the
College would be either missionaries or doctors. The training of blacks for missions in the
West Indies and Africa was even one of the College’s founding principles.\footnote{Klingberg, \textit{The Carolina Chronicle}, 156.} According to
John Moore, Codrington College would serve as a “sort of perpetual \textit{Seminary for Catechists}
and Missionaries” and establish Barbados as a new beacon of Protestant missionary
energy.\footnote{Moore, \textit{Of the Truth & Excellency of the Gospel}, 41.} Although the SPG started construction on the college in 1714, the unprofitability
of the plantation and other distractions barred it from opening before the fall of 1745.\footnote{For more on the Codrington bequest, see John A. Schultz, “Christopher Codrington’s Will: Launching the S.P.G. into the Barbadian Sugar Business,” \textit{The Pacific Historical Review} 15 No. 2 (June 1946), 192-200; and Frank J. Klingberg, “British Humanitarianism at Codrington,” \textit{The Journal of Negro History} 23 No. 4 (October 1938): 451-486.} Unfortunately for the Anglicans, and against the designs of Christopher Codrington, it never
served as a factory of native missionaries. Nevertheless, the Codrington bequest was an
important moment in Anglican missionary history, for it created an opportunity for the SPG
to get involved in evangelical work in the rest of the West Indies. By the middle of the
eighteenth century they had missionaries on Barbados and the Mosquito Shore, as well as in
the Bahamas and several enclaves dotting the Caribbean. Codrington’s bequest also left
Anglicans with a legacy of deep involvement in slavery and the slave trade, a legacy with
which the Anglican Church is still coming to grips.\footnote{In 2006 the Anglican Church voted to apologize for their role in perpetuating slavery and the slave trade. See the article from \textit{The Telegraph} at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1510048/Church-offers-apology-for-its-role-in-slavery.html (accessed on 28 April 2008).} In spite of their attempts to nurture a
native pastorate through royalty, and in spite of the ambitiously utopian schemes conceived
of by Berkeley, Gibson, Codrington and others, Anglicans would enter the 1740s without a
single indigenous missionary on the payroll. The First Great Awakening would quickly change that.

Anglican missionaries learned important lessons about native preachers from 1700 to 1740. The first was that war would always disrupt native missionary work. Imperial wars in New York, South Carolina, and India all took their toll on the native missionaries intended to mediate between Protestants and Indians. Furthermore, Anglicans found that obsessing over royalty and trying to convert Indian “kings” and “princes” was not necessarily productive or effective. In a period of colonization and massive demographic change, indigenous leadership was never as stable as English missionaries hoped, and native preachers proved just as unpredictable as the wars which disrupted their work. While this obsession with royalty produced meager results, the overly ambitious utopian schemes were also failures. Plans like Codrington College and Berkeley’s Bermuda scheme never generated the elite corps of native preachers that they had promised. In fact, neither plan created so much as one native minister in the eighteenth century. Because of these multiple challenges, Anglicans were constantly recasting, revising, and revisiting their formula for missionary work. In spite of these revisions and in spite of some resistance from influential divines like Thomas Bray, indigenous preachers almost always remained a central component of that formula. By the time of the First Great Awakening, Puritans and Anglicans alike had moved away from the royalty-centered approach and towards one that focused on the education of Indian and African children throughout the Atlantic world. Not surprisingly, Anglicans envisioned Africans and Indians teaching these children.

For their own part, indigenous missionaries from India to Iroquoia tried to create sustainable Christian communities, preserve their sense of cultural autonomy, and carve out a space where being Indian and Christian was not a contradiction in terms. The Indian kings
supported by the Anglicans faced their own obstacles, and yet preachers like Hendrick began a tradition of native Christian leadership that would be cultivated by other Indians later in the eighteenth century. Finally, although Indians in India faced problems and opportunities unique to the subcontinental Asian cultural landscape, they engaged in similar exercises of appropriation and translation that blacks and Native Americans across the Atlantic engaged in. By translating texts, singing psalms, leading prayer groups, and pushing for their own ordination, Christian Indians situated themselves within a sacred genealogy that had always reserved a space for native conversion of the gentiles.

The period from 1700 to 1740 was immensely important in establishing a precedent for future employment of native missionaries by Anglicans. Both Puritans and Anglicans participated in a transatlantic – even Supra-Atlantic – exchange of information that put various missionary projects in touch with one another. Although vast distances separated New York, South Carolina, the Caribbean, and India, they were nevertheless all part of the same global process of evangelization; a process that, by definition, transcended political, geographical, and topographical boundaries. As such, this period set the stage for an explosion of native missionaries after 1740. George Berkeley’s failed Bermuda plan serves as a perfect example. Although Berkeley’s project failed miserably, it did have some long-term repercussions. Berkeley never went to Bermuda, but he did land in Rhode Island, mailed his books there, and purchased a plantation just north of Newport. When he left Rhode Island and returned to England, he donated many of these books to Harvard and Yale Colleges. He even let Yale receive a portion of the profits from his plantation because he revered it as an institution that bred “the most clergymen and most learned of any in America.”\[131\] Yale honored the generous donation by offering a post-graduate scholarship

\[131\] Luce, “Berkeley’s Bermuda Project”: 107.
(the first in Yale’s history) in Berkeley’s name. One of the first Yale graduates to win this prestigious award, supported by the funds from Berkeley’s Rhode Island plantation, was a determined and imperious young man named Eleazar Wheelock. Wheelock’s first Indian pupil would be a famous Mohegan preacher named Samson Occom, and Wheelock would eventually engineer the most ambitious, and certainly most controversial, native missionary project in the history of the early modern Protestant Atlantic world.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{132} Wheelock’s plan is discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.
CHAPTER THREE

SLAVE PREACHERS, INDIGENIZATION, AND SEPARATISM
IN AN ERA OF REVIVAL, 1735-1770

Harry probably had a case of the first day of school jitters. That universal sensation of nervous excitement that accompanies the dawn of every new school year must have also been exacerbated by the unique circumstances of the school he was in. Harry had good reason to be restless, for his school was part of an exceptional experiment in colonial South Carolina’s race relations. Built several weeks before in the blazing summer of 1742, Harry’s “Charleston Negro School” was envisioned as the backbone of a new Anglican effort to evangelize South Carolina’s black majority. The sprawling and separated geography of the Carolina plantation system, resistance from slave owners, and harsh laws against the education of bondspeople in this slave society conspired to make the evangelization of the rice country’s slaves nearly impossible. The creation of this new educational institution was thus anticipated as a seminal moment in the history of black Christianity, for the students themselves would be the ones to spread the word of Christ, hopefully succeeding where previous white missionaries had failed. Harry therefore had an even more compelling reason to be anxious on the first day of school. Trained in the fundamentals of Christian doctrine by Anglican missionaries, he was not there to learn, but rather to teach. Like the students walking into his classroom on that first day, Harry was also a slave.¹

¹ Brief summaries of the Charleston Negro School can be found in Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 70-73; Shawn Comminey, “The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and Black Education in South Carolina, 1702-1764,” The
Scholars have debated feverishly over the nature of what has usually been called “The Great Awakening.”² Some have identified it as a transformative event that not only laid the foundations for future American religious history, but also paved the way for the American Revolution.³ Others, most famously Jon Butler, have attacked the monolithic implications of this approach. Butler has described the Great Awakening as an “interpretive fiction,” urging scholars to cease calling it “The Great Awakening” because the phrase implies a coherent and unified event where none ever existed. In Butler’s interpretation, what we know as “The Great Awakening” was instead a series of individualized and distinct revivals that had unique origins, different characteristics, and disparate outcomes.⁴ More recent studies have turned away from these questions and instead focused on the impact that

² The Great Awakening is also referred to as the First Great Awakening, distinguishing it from the second wave of revivalism that crested around the 1820s and 30s.

³ See, for example, Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind, From the Great Awakening to the Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Harry S. Stout, "Religion, Communications, and the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly 34 No. 4 (October 1977): 519-541; and Patricia U. Bonomi, Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). While all three interpretations differ in some regards, each underscores the fact that the Great Awakening was a momentous event that not only changed American religious belief and practice, but also provided some of the rhetoric, communication networks, and attacks on deference that the Revolutionary generation would rely upon decades later.

eighteenth century revivalism had on African American and Indian communities.\(^5\)

Meanwhile, historians of the Atlantic world have insisted that we situate American revivalism into a much larger spatial and temporal context of transatlantic evangelicalism.\(^6\)

This chapter is not necessarily concerned with engaging in the historiographical debate over the utility of the phrase, “The Great Awakening.” While it takes Butler’s criticisms seriously, it also acknowledges that, from 1735 to 1770, Protestants of all pales witnessed and participated in a transatlantic explosion of evangelical revivalism that had a colossal impact on indigenous missionary work. Before 1735 only New England Congregationalists had a substantial number of native preachers in their missions.\(^7\)

Anglicans supported native preachers in India and even tried to train Native American

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\(^7\) This is discussed in the first chapter of my dissertation.
royalty as missionaries in the first decades of the eighteenth century, but incessant imperial wars interrupted this program. By 1770, however, native preachers had become vital to the Moravian missions of the Caribbean, North America, and beyond. Anglicans had purchased slaves to teach other slaves, employed Mohawk catechists in their New York mission schools, and began training a few young Africans for the propagation of the gospel in West Africa. Eleazar Wheelock commenced training Samson Occom, Joseph Johnson, and other eastern Algonquian Indians to serve as missionaries to the powerful Iroquois tribes to the west. New England Indians were beginning to form their own separate congregations under native pastors. The years from 1735 to 1770 therefore witnessed an astonishing burst of indigenous missionary work. But this explosion of evangelical fervor was a mixed blessing. Moravians, Anglicans, and Congregationalists all came to realize that the appropriation and translation of Christianity by indigenous preachers and teachers during a period of intense revivalism could be encouraging and inspiring, but also socially destabilizing and – from an orthodox standpoint – theologically problematic. Even as black and Indian preachers became the backbone of the Protestant missionary enterprise, their access to ecclesiastical and spiritual authority became increasingly controversial. The genesis of Afro-Moravian preachers in the Caribbean, the rise and fall of the Charleston Negro School, and concerns over Indian separatism all illuminate the ways in which missionaries throughout the Protestant Atlantic addressed these problematics of race, slavery, dispossession, and indigenization during a period of revival.

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8 This is discussed in the second chapter of my dissertation.

9 This is discussed in the fifth chapter of my dissertation.
First Fruits and National Helpers

The Unitas Fratrum had a peculiar relationship with other Protestant missionary enterprises in the British Atlantic.\(^{10}\) While their history, theology, and unique approach to evangelization made the Moravians, as they were commonly called, a distinctive element within the evangelical resurgence of the mid-eighteenth century, their rapid spread and alleged successes among Indians and blacks throughout the Atlantic world made them both a competitor of and model for other Protestant missionaries. When Ezra Stiles, a Congregationalist minister in Newport, Rhode Island, altered his view that civilization should precede conversion among indigenous peoples, he attributed the change of heart to reading the history of the Moravian mission to Greenland.\(^{11}\) David McClure, a contemporary of Stiles and a missionary among New York Indians, reported that Moravians practiced the “best mode” for converting the gentiles: “They go among them without noise or parade, and by their friendly behaviour conciliate their good will. They join them in the chase, and freely distribute to the helpless and gradually instil into the minds of individuals, the principles of religion.”\(^{12}\) McClure, like Stiles, suggested that the culturally flexible approach to Protestant evangelism might ultimately be more successful than previous attempts had been. Stiles and McClure were not the only ones paying attention to the Moravian missions. As Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood have noted, “the mission techniques pioneered…by the Brethren are crucial for understanding the pedagogy of conversion employed with particular success by the

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\(^{10}\) Unitas Fratrum means “unity of brethren” in Latin.

\(^{11}\) Stiles, like many Congregationalists before him, had formerly believed that civilization was necessary for Christian conversion. His research into the history of Moravian missions in Greenland, which were much more culturally flexible than British Protestant evangelical enterprises, made him change his mind. See Ezra Stiles to Eleazar Wheelock, 26 January 1768, in Stiles, The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), Microfilm Reel 2.

\(^{12}\) Quoted in Merritt, At the Crossroads, 102.
Methodists, who adopted almost all of the Moravian innovations.”13 These relationships went both ways, of course. Moravian missionaries possessed Anglican sacred texts, including the daily prayers, litany, catechism, and chapters of the Bible that the Church of England printed into the “Mohoque” language.14 Although Moravians were distinct from other Protestant groups, Anglicans and dissenting Protestants were well aware of each others’ movements, successes, and failures among black slaves and Indians within the British Atlantic world and beyond. As such, Moravians were a part of British Atlantic missionary history even as they weaved in and out of it.15

Moravians owed their origins to a wave of German pietism that developed decades before the eighteenth century missions were even conceived.16 Led by Count Nicholas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf, they used their community in Herrnhut, Germany as a base for missionary work.17 Well organized, adequately funded by Zinzendorf and other donors, and driven by an insatiable evangelical enthusiasm, Moravian missionaries spread throughout the globe with astonishing rapidity. By 1740 they had missions in Bern, Stein, Malhausen,

13 Frey and Wood, _Come Shouting to Zion_, 83.

14 In fact, two of these three books held at the American Philosophical Society were owned by Moravian missionaries. One was owned by David Zeisberger and the other by Christopher Pyrlaus. See the APS’s copies of Church of England, _The Morning and Evening Prayer, The Litany, Church Catechism, Family Prayers, and Several Chapters of the Old and New-Testament, Translated into the Mahaque Indian Language_, by Lawrence Claesse, Interpreter to William Andrews, Missionary to the Indians, from the Honourable and Reverend the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (New York: William Bradford, 1715).

15 The best analysis of the connections between Moravians and the First Great Awakening of the Atlantic world can be found in W. Reginald Ward, _The Protestant Evangelical Awakening_ (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

16 For a summary of the rise of the Moravians, see Ward, _The Protestant Evangelical Awakening_, 116-159.

17 Moravians were the spiritual descendents of John Huss (also Jan Hus), a pietistic theologian martyred in 1415. Zinzendorf gave refuge to more than 600 refugees who were freeing religious persecution in Moravia on his estate in Saxony. Zinzendorf himself was eventually exiled from Saxony in 1736, so he also hit the missionary trail. See Rachel Wheeler, “Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican Village,” _Religion and American Culture_ 13 No. 1 (Winter 2003), 30.
Schaffhausen, Estonia, Swenia, Lapland, Muscovy, Wallachia, and Constantinople. They had earlier established themselves in the Danish islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John by the beginning of the 1730s. They began preaching to and teaching slaves in the British colonies of Jamaica in 1754, Antigua in 1756, and Barbados in 1765. While they failed in their attempt to settle a mission in South Carolina in 1737, they established themselves in Georgia by 1735, New York and Pennsylvania by 1740, Connecticut in 1743, New Jersey in 1751, North Carolina in 1753, and Ohio in 1772. In addition to these European, Caribbean, and North American missions, Moravians could also boast by 1740 that they had sent missionaries to Greenland, the Cape of Good Hope, North Africa, Surinam, and even Sri Lanka. One commentator reported that the Moravians had ambitious plans to convert “the other Parts of the East Indies, the Savages of New-York, and the Magi of Persia.” The reference to Caribbean slaves, Iroquois Indians, and Persian clerics in the same sentence illuminates the global aspirations of this rapidly expanding Moravian missionary endeavor. Essentially stateless, Moravians weaved in and out of the British Atlantic world as easily as they did in the German, Danish, and Dutch.

18 By the end of the eighteenth century there were over 11,000 Moravian slaves who were catechumens or converts in these British Caribbean stations. See Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 86-87.

19 The Moravians would eventually have two major settlements that would serve as bases for later missionary work. The first was at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and was the Moravian headquarters by 1741. The second was in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, which Moravians settled in 1753. Jon F. Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan: The Making of an AfrokMoravian World in North Carolina, 1763-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).


21 The Magi were a class of priests within what had formerly been the Persian Empire. See A Dissenting Minister in England to a Gentleman in Scotland (anonymous and undated), in Anonymous, *Copy of Three Letters, The First Written by Dr. John Nicol at New-York, to Mr. William Wardrobe, Surgeon in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh; the Second by a Dissenting Minister in England to a Gentleman in Scotland; the Third From a Minister at Boston to His Friend at Glasgow. Giving an Account of the Progress and Success of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (Edinburgh: A. Alison, 1740), 6-7.
Moravian theology was dramatically different from that of their British counterparts. While they shared many common doctrines with other denominations, Moravians’ “blood and wounds” pietism situated them at an extreme fringe within Protestantism. Moravians emphasized, and indeed celebrated, the temporal suffering of Christ for the forgiveness of sinners. They highlighted the physical anguish and excruciating pain that Christ underwent during his last hours of life in order to draw attention to the ultimate sacrifice he made for humanity. They thus focused on everything from Christ’s crown of thorns and his spilled blood to the massive gash made by a spear during his last hours on the cross. Moravians also stressed the nearness of Jesus Christ to their neophytes, noting that he was not simply a historical figure or theological abstraction, but rather a potent spiritual force that was constantly serving as their protector. Suffering under the traumatic realities of colonial wars, dispossession, slavery, disease, and racial violence, Indians and slaves alike could find in Moravian doctrine a form of Christianity that spoke to the lived experiences of oppressed indigenous peoples throughout the Atlantic world. In addition, and as Aaron Fogelman has recently argued, Moravian theology was highly feminized. Unlike other Protestant denominations, Moravians sent men and women into the missionary field together. German Moravian missionaries married Indian and slave women, women had their own separate religious meetings with their own female spiritual advisers, and women played a major role in their congregations. Moravians also sometimes described Christ as an “eternal husband”

22 Rachel Wheeler, “Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican Village,” Religion and American Culture 13 No. 1 (Winter 2003): 30-31. Wheeler argues that Moravian doctrine can be categorized into three main aspects. First, Moravians emphasized the utility and necessity of family metaphors. Secondly, they spoke to the spiritual and physical sustenance derived from Christ’s wounds and suffering. Finally, they highlighted the nearness of Christ himself.

23 Merritt, At the Crossroads, 105. Merritt suggests that some Indians even elected Christ himself as their tribal leader or council elder.

24 Frey and Wood, Come Shouting to Zion, 83-86.
to female converts and even went so far as to compare the wound on the side of Jesus’ body to a woman’s vagina.\textsuperscript{25} As peculiar as it sounds, this system of Moravian belief helped craft an inclusive community that emphasized spiritual egalitarianism as well as the ubiquity and nearness of Christ, emotive qualities of Christian pietism, painful suffering of Christ’s last hours on the cross, and the feminized nature of Christianity.\textsuperscript{26}

Most importantly, like their Protestant competitors throughout the British Atlantic, the Moravians placed a significant degree of authority in local, native preachers to help evangelize their brethren. Yet they anticipated that the conversion of the world would be neither spontaneous nor immediate. Instead, the “first fruits,” or the small segment of the gentile population that first received the Gospel, would be the ones to carry the message of Christ’s salvation to all the peoples of the earth.\textsuperscript{27} Thus, when Moravians set out from Germany in the 1730s, they aimed to create a base of “national helpers” to serve as the foundation of the new church among blacks and Indians.\textsuperscript{28} The ascension of the first fruits into positions of Moravian spiritual leadership was therefore seen not as a goal in itself, but rather a preparatory moment in the gradual conversion of the world.


\textsuperscript{26} For an example of the emotive and reflective pietism of the Moravians, see the autobiographical confessions of Zinzendorf in Nicolaus Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf, \textit{My Dear Fellow-Traveler, Here hast Thou A Letter, Which I have wrote to Thee out of the Fulness of my Heart And With many Tears For Thy Salvation’s sake: And The Lamb of God Hath sprinkled it with His Blood, That it will be profitable for Thee, If Thou abidest by thy Heart, or now findest thy Heart} (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1742).

\textsuperscript{27} The Moravians based this idea off of Revelation 14:4, where it says that the “first fruits” were the first gentiles redeemed from the race of man.

\textsuperscript{28} The national helper system worked differently in different places. In the Caribbean, Moravians appointed the most visibly pious blacks from certain African “nations” to be the spiritual mentors of other blacks from their nation. The term “national helper” was not necessary among North American Indian groups, for the meetings were segregated by gender.
First Fruits, completed by German Moravian émigré John Valentine Haidt, dramatically details the ways in which blacks and Indians would be central to the conversion of the rest of the world. Digital copy courtesy of http://www.explorepahistory.com/images/ExplorePAHistory-a0a6p1-a_349.jpg. The original can be found at the Moravian Church Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.29

For Afro-Moravian preachers in the Caribbean, these positions of evangelical authority were not necessarily new. Indeed, we get a much better sense of the religious autonomy of black Moravians if we employ a broader, transatlantic approach to the problem. Most of the slaves on St. Thomas were Kongolese, and Catholic missionaries had been preaching among the Kongolese in West Africa generations before St. Thomas’ slave suppliers began to import them into the Caribbean island. As a product of Catholic missionary work and traditional Kongolese spirituality, Kongolese Catholics expressed a unique and syncretic set of Afro-Catholic beliefs and practices, including and especially the veneration of the Virgin Mary. In fact, the Africans sold into slavery and sent to St. Thomas

29 A further description of the painting can be found in Charles C. Jones, The Religious Instruction of the Negroes, in the United States (Savannah: Thomas Purse, 1842), 33.
were pulled from the same cultural groups who used the birth of the Virgin Mary to time the notorious Stono Rebellion in South Carolina in 1739.\footnote{Mark M. Smith, “Remembering Mary, Shaping Revolt: Reconsidering the Stono Rebellion,” \textit{The Journal of Southern History} 67 No. 3 (August 2001): 513-534; and John K. Thornton, “African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion,” \textit{The American Historical Review} 96 No. 4 (October 1991): 1101-1113.}

Kongolese Catholics possessed a rich tradition of indigenous spiritual Christian leadership among them, even well before any of them set foot in the New World. Jose Monzolo, a Kongo slave shipped to Cartegena, was chosen as a Catholic catechist there because he learned the catechism well from other black preachers when he was a child in West Africa. As John K. Thornton has noted, Catholic priests maintained only an itinerant presence among the West African Kongolese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; their duties were more sacramental than evangelical, as they conducted mass baptisms, oversaw marriages, and fulfilled other sacramental offices. The real evangelical work in the Kongo, Thornton noted, was done by local African catechists, who “traveled more frequently, stayed longer and remained at work even when there was no priest or missionary.”\footnote{John K. Thornton, “On the Trail of Voodoo: African Christianity in Africa and the Americas,” \textit{The Americas} 44 No. 3 (January 1988): 269-274.}

For many Afro-Moravians, their work as national helpers was therefore not a dramatic departure from their religious experiences in Africa. Prepared by a strong tradition of indigenous African spiritual leadership, Afro-Moravians probably expected – and may have even \textit{demanded} – that their missionaries be Africans.

Even the national helper system – where Moravians divided Africans into different “nations” and assigned black evangelists to instruct them – would not have been a novel concept to Kongolese Catholics. When ships full of Africans sailed into the harbor of Cartegena in the seventeenth centuries, Jesuit priests gave mass baptisms and administered last rites to any Africans who were on death’s door. The rest were divided into national...
(ethnic and linguistic) groupings and were led by “a catechist of their own nation.” These African catechists translated the Jesuit missionaries’ message while the Jesuits stood on a makeshift altar. One Jesuit missionary showed a picture of Christ’s last moments, “with blood flowing from his wounds.” Another Jesuit would use the blood to baptize Africans. The catechists would teach their Christian pupils the Lord’s and other prayers while employing a picture book to show images of sinners burning in hell as demons tortured them.

The blood and wounds rhetoric that so defined Catholic missionary work in Africa and the Americas was, in reality, not terribly different from the Moravian theology that Kongoles Africans would embrace in the Danish Virgin Islands.32

Just as the Catholics did in their missions throughout the Atlantic world, Moravians also used national helpers as key evangelists in their attempt to convert Africans in the Caribbean. The role of a national helper was to lead groups of 5-10 potential converts in theological reflection and teach them Moravian doctrine and rituals. In his 1777 history of the Moravian mission to the Danish Caribbean Islands, C.G.A. Oldendorp noted that national helpers were charged with “looking after the Negroes who lived near them, of coming to know them in regard to their internal condition, of remembering them diligently in their prayers before God, and of reporting on them to the white workers.”33 These helpers met with white missionaries, as well as each other, at least once a week to report on the activities of the groups they led, the spiritual development of baptismal candidates, and the possibilities

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of bringing new national helpers into positions of leadership. They also filled in for white Moravian missionaries when they visited other mission stations, returned to Germany, or passed away. When there were too many communicants at a religious service on St. Croix in October of 1744, a white Moravian missionary asked four black national helpers to distribute communion. Furthermore, St. Croix was notoriously difficult to traverse, so German Moravians relied upon helpers like Maria Magdalena and Catharina Barbara to travel southward and westward in the sultry summers to try to convert slaves who lived far away from Moravian religious activity. The national helper system thereby gave Afro-Caribbeans access to the performance of the “important services” of religious mentorship, distributing communion, and serving as evangelical missionaries.

It was through black national helpers, not German Moravians, that most Caribbean slaves experienced and expressed their developing sense of Afro-Christian identity.

Although there were dozens of national helpers in Moravian Caribbean stations by the 1760s, the most important ones were the “first fruits”: initial converts who helped bring other Afro-Caribbeans into the fold. The first national helpers in St. Thomas were Andreas and his brother Johannes, Petrus and his brother Christoph, and Anna Maria. Although they

34 Magdalena’s story is recounted in Kea, “From Catholicism to Moravian Pietism”: 115-136.


36 Perhaps the most famous “first fruit” was Jacob Prottén, the son of a Danish soldier and an African woman, who was sent from his home on the Gold Coast to Copenhagen for an education. The same year that Zinzendorf and Prottén met (1735), Prottén agreed to return to Africa as a Moravian missionary. After several unsuccessful attempts to preach the gospel there he returned to Germany and then traveled to the Caribbean island of St. Thomas, where he met and eventually married a slave girl named Rebecca. Prottén and Rebecca crossed the Atlantic to Germany and then traveled to modern-day Liberia, eventually landing in Christiansborg in the late 1750s. They returned to Germany one last time and finally made it back to Christiansborg by 1763. Jacob Prottén died in 1769. Prottén’s life story can be found in Rev. S.R.B. Attoh Ahuma, Memoirs of West African Celebrities, Europe, &c. (1700-1850). With Special Reference to the Gold Coast (Liverpool: D. Marples & Co., 1905). Rebecca Prottén is the inspiration for and subject of Jon F. Sensbach, Rebecca’s Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
were officially installed by the Moravians in 1738, Oldendorp recalled that these helpers were established spiritual leaders in their own slave societies, for they “had already been busy among their people, inspired by the divine grace bestowed upon them by the Savior.”

Their new role of national helper was therefore not a break with the past, but rather a continuance of previous religious mentorship that certainly had its roots in Afro-Caribbean spirituality. Although Moravianism was a form of Western Christianity, there were aspects of Moravian doctrine that these first fruits found emotionally or spiritually satisfying. On the one hand, slaves were drawn to the Moravian message because it emphasized equality and friendship while simultaneously privileging the spoken word over biblical exegesis. One national helper, for example, explained to a group of young catechumens that religious experience was more a matter of the heart than of the head. “You must not think,” he assured his listeners, “that I know what I know and say what I say merely from my head and that I have learned it from a book. No, I say it out of my own experience and out of the feeling in my heart.”

Personal experience, rather than biblical scholarship, was at the center of Moravian theology, and Afro-Caribbeans could easily participate in religious experiences that privileged orality over literacy.

Moravian spirituality and African cosmology also matched up fairly well. Africans taken to the Americans could often draw upon a rich and diverse religious heritage that was comprised of Muslim, Christian, and traditional African cosmologies. The diversity in religious beliefs naturally makes it very difficult to generalize about the precise religious vocabulary that Afro-Moravians would be employing when translating Christianity into Afro-Caribbean spiritualities. West Africans who had embraced at least some elements of

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Christianity or Islam before enslavement, for example, might have found pegging Christian Moravianism into their existing cosmologies relatively easy. At the same time, traditional West Africans who were neither Christian nor Muslim also had religious cosmologies upon which Moravianism might be grafted. Although traditional West African religions were technically not monotheistic, they ultimately articulated a belief in a higher, supreme power that governed the universe. Many West Africans also believed in a series of lesser divinities that were much more active in their individual lives. Moravian Christianity therefore fit into existing Afro-Caribbean cosmologies. Afro-Moravians would recognize the sovereignty of an all-powerful God above but would approach that God through the lesser deity of Jesus Christ. Christ was therefore translated by black preachers into a minor divinity who was constantly active in the temporal and spiritual experiences of Caribbean slaves. “He sees us all the same,” one black preacher observed, “both when we are awake and when we sleep, at home and in the field.” Finally, the physical experience of racial slavery made Christ all the more impressive. Slaves could identify with someone who suffered as they did under the weight of oppression, violence, and death. For black slaves, Christ’s suffering was not a passage from a text, but rather a lived episode of intense physical suffering that paralleled their own personal experiences within the Caribbean plantation system.

This theological and social psychological context helps explain what Moravianism meant to national helpers in the Caribbean missions, but it also hints at the spiritual meanings that black preachers inscribed into their rapidly developing Afro-Moravianism. These black Moravians often took the opportunity to preach during class lectures, funerals, morning prayers, and Sunday meetings. Yet the most important times came when national helpers


were asked to instruct baptismal candidates or catechumens on the saving grace of Christ. Although the speeches for these events varied in substance and style, they still followed a somewhat formulaic pattern. The image of Christ’s personal suffering, for example, was a ubiquitous and recurring theme. Jesus’ “blood, wounds, and death,” one national helper named Mingo explained, struck his “evil heart.” “My heart lives in that experience, and that is the sole ground on which I base my existence,” he recalled. After acknowledging the sinfulness of his heart and the physical anguish his wrongs had caused, Mingo turned to the redemptive power of Christ’s personal suffering. He proclaimed that “His blood and His death constitute more than adequate means to compensate for all my sins. My heart sings: Wounds and blood have bound us to God!”  

The blood, wounds, death, and heart rhetoric were classic Moravian tropes. Yet the reliance upon Christ as a spiritual intermediary between sinners and God was rooted in West African cosmologies of lesser divinities. The emphasis on personal suffering and Christ’s corporeal experiences, of course, struck a chord with Afro-Caribbeans living in a slave society. Like other national helpers, Mingo translated Moravianism into an Afro-Caribbean context, grafting Moravian theology onto African cosmology while forging it in the fire of Caribbean racial slavery.  

Although there were around 40 national helpers on the island of St. Thomas by 1740, the two most prominent preachers were Abraham and Petrus. Both men led their own spiritual meetings, addressed catechumens and candidates for baptism, spoke at weekly gatherings, and sermonized at funerals. “Their presentations,” Oldendorp explained, “were evangelical: they stressed the redemption of sinners through Jesus’ death and their acquisition

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Yet their styles could not have been more different. While Petrus had some prestige within Moravian circles because he was one of the first fruits, Abraham’s “extraordinary gift” of oratorical prowess, combined with his ability to speak several African dialects, put him head and shoulders above other black Moravian preachers. Abraham’s lectures were remarkable events that had “fire” and “were charged with a special force that swept his listeners along with him.” When Abraham preached his listeners were not only struck with “pleasure and blessings” but frequently “broke into loud crying.” Predictably, his reputation as a preacher skyrocketed in the 1740s, as he was able to use his power of preaching to “produce his own rendition of church teaching and at the same time create a shared awareness of a common language and a common cultural heritage.” Yet there were temporal advantages that Abraham’s fiery preaching accrued to him. After complaining that his slave labor was getting in the way of his work as a preacher, white Moravians negotiated a deal whereby they exchanged Abraham for another black slave that was more capable of doing hard manual labor. Although Abraham was still a slave, his avoidance of hard work ensured that he could “dedicate himself fully to his tasks as a helper in the work of God among his people.” Membership in Christ’s kingdom certainly had its privileges.

Unlike Abraham’s powerful speeches, Petrus’ lectures were “filled with love and gentle feelings.” If Abraham exhorted his neophytes in a commanding voice, Petrus’ lectures were softer, more emotive, and much more introspective. Like Mingo before him, Petrus

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fused Moravian blood and wounds theology with a sentimental reflection on his own status as a sinner. Christ’s blood, Petrus confessed, “has redeemed me from the darkness. Now I have peace in my soul. All I am concerned about is to remain a poor sinner before Him forever.”

For Petrus, his personal experience with God’s grace also mandated that he take up the evangelical task of preaching to others. “I feel in my heart,” he admitted, “a great urge to search for souls which I can bring to the Saviour, souls which are as much in the dark as I once was.” Whereas Abraham’s lectures were manly and fiery, commentators described Petrus’ sermons as “more motherly.” In most denominations this observation might have been an insult, but for Moravians the description of Petrus as “motherly” reflected yet another way in which Moravian theology was highly feminized. Petrus could maintain his revered status as a preacher even while his lectures expressed the femininity common in women’s preaching. This softer, more maternal preaching was just one of several models of Christian discourse that national helpers could draw upon to help fashion Afro-Caribbean Moravianism.

Generational change made a difference in Moravian messages, as well. Cornelius, for example, was born a slave to Benigna, one of the national helpers who – along with Abraham, Petrus, and others – operated as the spiritual foundation of Afro-Moravianism in the Danish Virgin Islands. Cornelius became a master mason, purchased his own and his mother’s freedom, and helped Abraham and other national helpers in articulating Moravian beliefs throughout the slave and free black population of St. Thomas and St. Croix. Cornelius certainly drank from the same emotive cup as Petrus and Abraham, and his personal reflections upon his own spirituality demonstrate his emotionalism. “For my part,” Cornelius assured some young black Moravians in the 1760s, “I feel very miserable and

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needy. However, at today’s prayer day I have experienced His grace in my heart and felt His love.” The emphases on misery, spiritual longing, and the physical experience of God’s penetration into the heart were tried and true Moravian rhetorical devices. And yet, as a second generation Afro-Moravian, Cornelius had more practice with and access to scripture, and he pulled generously from different biblical texts in order to craft a Moravian message based upon both penitent emotionalism and scriptural history. Invoking the fifth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans, Cornelius assured his young black audience that access to God’s salvation was not limited to the free, the wealthy, and the educated, but available to all. “My dear people!,” Cornelius exclaimed, “Each of you should come to Him just as you are,” for “The heathens shall see His light and become His people.” Cornelius also updated this Christian message in order to translate it into the transatlantic Afro-Moravianism that had been germinating in the Caribbean for over a generation. Instead of describing heathens as Jews and Gentiles, he characterized them as “Moors.” The “Moors shall come to Him,” Cornelius told his audience of young Moravians, “and He will accept them.”

49 Cornelius to the Catechumens at New Herrnhut, in Oldendorp, A Caribbean Mission, 628.

Black women were also national helpers, and in no other Christian denomination did women retain as much authority to preach and lead. The basis for this authority was in the gender-segregated meetings that served as the backbone of Moravian evangelical techniques. Although Afro-Moravians would congregate weekly for larger gatherings, they also had daily meetings with the national helpers, nearly half of whom were women. These included Benigna, Johanna, Magdalena, Maria, Anna Sophia, Susanna, Rosina, and others. Many of these women were older and some were free blacks, but they all operated as missionaries to

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\[51^{51}\] As discussed in the section on Native Americans (below), name changing through baptism was a major step in establishing oneself as a Moravian. It also fit easily into both Amerindian and African traditions of using a change in name as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood.
other black women. In spite of Magdalena’s age, for example, she visited unconverted black 
slaves and “took it upon herself to further the growth in Christ of those Negroes living nearby 
with whom she associated.”

Like Magdalena, Rebecca Protten embraced the tremendous amount of influence she had on other women in her own meeting. She led spiritual meetings, 
discoursed with friends about their own religious travails, and served as a conduit through 
which the Moravian clergy and black female slaves could be connected. Once again, the 
national helper system tapped into African religious spiritualities and practices, for West 
African women often possessed a tremendous amount of spiritual power as “sacred 
specialists.” These specialists used divination, healing, and spirit mediumship to lead the 
spiritual lives of Africans on both sides of the Atlantic. Often mistaken by white observers 
for witches, African women often practiced the same kind of magic, fortune-telling, and 
astrology that was so evident in popular folk Christianity throughout the early modern 
Atlantic world. Afro-Caribbean women like Rebecca and Magdalena thus found in 
Moravian doctrine a system of theology that could not only be grafted onto existing African 
cosmologies, but also offered them opportunities for social and religious leadership that were 
available to them through either the Caribbean plantation system or other Protestant 
missions.

The status of Caribbean Moravian preachers, however, was always tenuous. 

Although most of the “national helpers” came from the rank and file of the slave societies on


53 Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*.


55 For more magic as a central component of early modern folk religion, see Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of 
Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 67-97; and 
St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John, several active preachers were either assistant overseers or free blacks. This strategy was parallel to English and Spanish practices of trying to pull elite members of the native community into a Christian devotion and transforming them into an evangelical aristocracy. In these highly stratified slave societies, the status of freedom and the position of authority within the social hierarchy of slavery could crystallize spiritual relationships just as it did social ones. There was, therefore, a constant fear that black Moravian preachers would situate themselves as unique specimens of the slave class who were “better” than the slaves to whom they were preaching. The national helper system probably exacerbated these tensions by nurturing a class of elite black preachers in a rigidly hierarchical slave society. German Moravians therefore had to constantly remind national helpers like Abraham and Mingo that “nothing would be more contrary to the purpose of their orders than if they were to imagine that they enjoyed an advantage over their fellows.”

But they actually did. Abraham, who had Moravians exchange another slave for himself so he could avoid hard manual labor, was not the only convert to use his role as a preacher to improve his temporal standing. Mingo, for example, was an assistant inspector who looked after blacks, possessed his own household, and was allegedly “as good as free” because of the temporal and spiritual benefits of his preaching. In spite of its professed egalitarianism, Moravianism in the Caribbean could also intensify the already uneasy tensions in these highly stratified slave societies.

Naturally, the strains and pressures within the Afro-Moravian community paled in comparison to the tensions between black Moravians and the agents of racial slavery, including plantation owners, free whites, and even black overseers. As Jon Sensbach has

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noted, German Moravians made a “devil’s bargain” with slavery: they accepted the
institution of slavery, participated in it, and even negotiated with and depended upon slave
owners to gain access to thousands of souls of black folk.58 Like Anglicans, Moravians
owned plantations and even their own personal slaves.59 They also anxiously tried to assuage
any fears that missionary work would upset the racial status quo. They assured masters as
well as neophytes that baptism, conversion, and religious instruction would actually make
blacks better slaves, not worse. Some Afro-Moravians actually bought into this idea. A
group of national helpers reported to the King of Denmark that, before their embrace of
Moravianism, “we stoll before from our Masters, we run away to Porto Rico, have been lazy,
and have cheated our Masters.” “But,” they concluded, “now it is quite otherwise with us.”60
Another neophyte noted that, as long as his name was Harry (before his Moravian baptism),
“I was a bad negro.” But after he heard Moravian preaching, changed his name to Heinrich,
began going to church and talking about the evil things he had done, he became certain of his
spiritual salvation. After his peaceful and faithful conversion to Moravianism, Heinrich
admitted that he could now “promise my master that I shall be a faithful slave in God’s
grace.”61 When a national helper named Nathanael gave a speech to young students at one of
the Moravian mission stations, he observed that they would be “doubly slaves, if we remain
in sin, for, if we are not redeemed, we are also the slaves of Satan and will also remain as

58 Sensbach, Rebecca’s Revival, 133-161.


60 St. Thomas Negroes Congregation to the King of Denmark, 15 February 1739, in The Christian Monthly
History: Or, An Account of the Revival and Progress of Religion, Abroad, and at Home Number IV. For
February 1744 (Edinburgh: R. Fleming and A. Alison, 1743-1746), 59.

61 Oldendorp, A Caribbean Mission, 574.
such if we depart from this world in that state.” Nathanael focused on the horrors of spiritual enslavement to Satan, making a subtle comparison between plantation owners and the devil while simultaneously implying that spiritual salvation, rather than the trauma of temporal slavery, should be the main focus of Afro-Caribbeans’ thoughts and prayers. These Afro-Moravians peddled the classic convention that Christian slaves made obedient slaves.

Everyone in the Caribbean plantation system knew better. The conversion of thousands of slaves to Moravianism, and especially the rise of an elite black preacher class, obviously threatened to undermine the social, racial, and psychological anchors that kept the plantation system tied down. In fact, the Danish island of St. John had experienced a short-lived but violent rebellion in the early 1730s, just as Moravian missionaries were becoming established in the Danish Caribbean. The tensions between missionary work and slavery would therefore be quite high. Abraham’s preaching to blacks was tolerable, but his frequent preaching among whites was perceived as socially dangerous. When a black Englishman came to the Moravian mission station from Groot Hanslolk Cay (now Hans Lollik Island), he reported that “white residents of the cay were eager to hear the preaching of the Negroes’ teachers.” This could mean two things. On the one hand, it might have meant that white residents were asking for spiritual instruction from black national helpers. On the other, it could signify that they wished for instruction from white Moravians. In both cases, white residents of the cay were either requesting instruction from blacks or to be taught like

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63 Slaveholders were correct to be afraid of the democratizing and egalitarian impulses of Christianity, for missionaries and black preachers would often play major roles in Caribbean slave rebellions. For the most famous example, see da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood*.


blacks. Both scenarios threatened to invert the precarious power relations upon which racial slavery was built.\textsuperscript{66} Even when Afro-Moravianism did not subvert the plantation system explicitly, the presence of elite black preachers threatened to do so implicitly.

National helpers were also attuned to the racial implications of their preaching and often used their oratorical skills and sacred authority to situate themselves as Christ’s chosen people. Not only could Moravian doctrine remind African slaves of their humanity, it could also pose a challenge to the social order of plantation slavery. The rhetoric of property serves as an ideal example. When Mingo wrote to other Moravians in the Pennsylvania missions, he said that he sincerely hoped that Christ would “not abandon us, for although we are poor, we belong to Him. He has earned us.” “We beg you,” Mingo implored his brethren, “to think of us continuously and pray to the Savior that He might wish to keep us as His property.”\textsuperscript{67} This was not a tongue-in-cheek aside, but rather a racialized theological critique that challenged the rigid hierarchy of racial slavery. By invoking the concept of faithful slaves as Christ’s property, Mingo was offering up a spiritual challenge to the temporal power of white masters and overseers. God was, of course, the ultimate “master,” for he reigned above even the seemingly all-powerful white planter class. A mirror image of Mingo’s approach to God’s positioning within the hierarchy of slavery was expressed when an Anglican in Maryland told masters and slaves alike that masters were “God’s overseers.” To act against the master’s will was to act against God’s will.\textsuperscript{68} Mingo’s preaching inverted this relationship. Black preachers’ relationship with God, generated as it was through the

\textsuperscript{66} Oldendorp, \textit{A Caribbean Mission}, 570. There were also around 100 slaves on that island, although official ownership of land did not begin on that island until the late 1760s. While many of these cays, or keys, were used as bases for pirate activity, it is unlikely that these residents were active pirates, for they had too many slaves and complained that they could not get from their cay to St. Thomas.

\textsuperscript{67} Mingo to the Members of Bethlehem and Nazareth, in Oldendorp, \textit{A Caribbean Mission}, 493.

\textsuperscript{68} Butler, \textit{Awash in a Sea of Faith}, 142.
conduit of Christ, promised to circumvent the racial hierarchy of plantation slavery and create a new spiritual hierarchy where God and Christ were the ultimate overseers of a benevolent kingdom of believers.

White planters understood these problematics. Only a few years after the arrival of German Moravians they launched a sustained attack on Afro-Moravianism. White planters and overseers “come to beat and cut us,” a group of national helpers on St. Thomas reported to the King of Denmark in 1739. Writing on behalf of over 650 black Moravians, Abraham, Mingo, and the other authors of this letter lamented that “they burn our Books and reject our Baptism, they miscal [sic] the Brethren for Beasts; saying, a Negro ought not to be baptized, and a baptized Negro be like a Piece of burnt Wood in Hell.”

When another master chained up his slave “until he promised that he would learn nothing more from the brethren about Christianity,” he tacitly recognized not only the egalitarian impulses of Afro-Moravianism, but also the subtle ways in which slaves could invert the power relations within plantation slavery and reorient them along the axis of Moravian theology.

The problem, of course, was the doctrine of Christian liberty, a concept that made slave evangelization astonishingly problematic. For Catholics and Protestants alike, Christian liberty complicated and obscured the hierarchical relationships between slaves and masters, oppressors and oppressed. As Martin Luther articulated in his treatise, Concerning Christian Liberty, a Christian man was the most free person of all people, governed only by the laws of God and Christ and subject to the worldly laws of man only if they coincided with God’s law. True faith in God, Luther and others after him suggested, guaranteed spiritual

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69 St. Thomas Negroes Congregation to the King of Denmark, 15 February, 1739, in The Christian Monthly History, 58. For another famous letter from a converted slave, see Anna Van Popo to the Queen of Denmark, undated, in The Christian Monthly History, 60.

70 Oldendorp, A Caribbean Mission, 420.
freedom. For Luther, the doctrine of Christian liberty helped explain his system of faith over works and justified his scathing critiques of the Catholic Church. Christian liberty could empower slaves and threaten to undermine the racial conventions, colonial laws, and imperial authority upon which slave societies rested. The major problem was not only that a theory of Christian liberty existed, but that Christian slaves actually understood and often articulated it. When Mingo invoked the trope of property to identify slaves as Christ’s belongings, he expressed a version of Christian liberty that simultaneously circumvented and overrode the racial hierarchies upon which his slave society was built. When a Scotch woman named Janet Schaw spent Christmas on Antigua in 1774, she recalled how African slaves interpreted the holiday season. Slaves apparently believed that “good Buccara God,” or the white man’s God, would punish masters who physically battered their slaves during this time of celebration. The sanctity of the holiday season and the image of God punishing slave masters naturally resulted in heightened racial tensions and anxieties about slave rebellions. Schaw slept uneasily during “this season of unbounded freedom,” even as white patrols constantly surveyed the island to ensure that no slaves employed the doctrine of Christian liberty to secure their worldly liberty or harm their masters. When slaves rebelled in Demerara in

71 The theological premises behind Christian liberty are, of course, much more complicated than outlined here. See Martin Luther, Concerning Christian Liberty Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004). See also William Hammond, The Christian Liberty: A Discourse on Galatians iii. 24, 25 (Bristol: Felix Farley, 1745). Jon Butler argues instead that, although Christianity empowered slaves, the doctrine of Christian liberty actually constrained them. Butler contends that Luther and other theologians before him suggested that total liberty was only spiritual in nature. Worldly liberty, or liberty of the flesh and liberty from laws, was of a different sort. This was how, in Butler’s view, Christian liberty came to be seen as a tool of racial oppression. I see it as both a tool of racial oppression as well as a weapon against it. For a fuller discussion, see Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, 138-139. Most Catholic and Protestant understandings of Christian liberty derive from Pauline texts.

1823, the rebellion was fueled partially by an internalization of Christian liberty rhetoric that members of the London Missionary Society unwittingly helped germinate.73 Even though Protestant missionaries throughout the early modern Atlantic tried to shift the focus away from Christian liberty and towards obedience to one’s master, slaves nevertheless picked up on, translated, and employed Christian liberty in ways that white missionaries often predicted but rarely approved.74

Resistance from slave owners and the specter of Christian liberty was only one of many reasons why Moravian success in the Caribbean was never total. Although tensions over slavery could both sustain and challenge Afro-Moravianism, there were other basic, more logistical problems with Moravian missions. One problem was that the vast distance between missions and potential converts was often insurmountable. As the first fruits got along in age in the 1760s, their evangelical trips to the outskirts of the missions became much less common.75 The grueling sugar harvest cycle kept Afro-Moravians in the fields and away from the churches, periodic bouts of epidemic disease wracked the slave population, and perennial storms destroyed roads, paths, and churches. All these natural – for Moravians, supernatural – events conspired to hinder the gathering of Afro-Moravian communities on the Danish Caribbean Islands. But the biggest problem was within the core of national helpers itself. Death and old age of the first fruits, the models of Afro-Moravian piety, certainly took

73 da Costa, Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood.

74 Jon Butler is particularly effective at outlining some of the theological and rhetorical gymnastics that Anglican preachers had to perform in order to push for slave evangelization while simultaneously reinforcing the authority of white masters and overseers. See Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, 129-163. Butler also argues that slave rebellions with religious impulses were more common in the nineteenth century than in the eighteenth. See Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, 156.

75 One national helper named Albert, for example, had to endure a four hour walk (one way) in order to travel from his home to the Moravian mission at New Herrnhut. See Oldendorp, A Caribbean Mission, 542.
its toll. But there was also a significant degree of religious backsliding. Petrus, that “motherly” preacher and one of the first fruits, was eventually expelled from the Moravian church in the spring of 1762 “on account of his bad behavior.”76 Oldendorp also recalled that bombas, or former Moravian converts who held positions of authority within the plantation system, were partially responsible for spiritual backsliding in the Caribbean. These apostates, Oldendorp lamented, “could abuse their power that went along with their position to harass the others for as long as it took to make them as faithless as they.”77 In spite of these problems, German Moravians and national helpers collaborated from the 1730s onward to create the most successful missionary effort that the Caribbean had yet seen. Most importantly, this was the first time in the history of Protestant missions that black slaves were used as agents of evangelism. Even if Anglicans, Congregationalists, and other groups disapproved of this radical move, within years they would be doing the same thing.

The Moravian national helper system was not limited to the Danish Caribbean. In 1753 Mingo addressed a letter to his “white and brown brethren” in the Moravian settlements of Bethlehem and Nazareth, Pennsylvania. Speaking to whites and Indians alike, Mingo hoped that the Pennsylvania Moravians would “never forget us.” “We are poor,” Mingo lamented, “and it is necessary that you think often of us.”78 Mingo’s letter was not the only thing that passed between the Moravian communities of the Caribbean and North American mainland, for German Moravian missionaries as well as recent converts frequently migrated to and from Caribbean mission stations throughout the Atlantic world, ensuring that pens,

76 Oldendorp, A Caribbean Mission, 543. The actual behavior that cost Petrus his membership in the Moravian congregation is still unclear.

77 Oldendorp, A Caribbean Mission, 611. Unfortunately, Oldendorp never specifically explained how the bombas resisted the spread of Afro-Moravianism in the Caribbean.

paper, and people would always keep these communities connected. Indeed, the Native American encounter with Moravianism paralleled, in many ways, what was happening in the Caribbean from the 1730s to the 1760s. While scholars like Jane Merritt, Rachel Wheeler, and Amy Schutt have already traced the general contours of the Native American encounter with Moravianism in the middle of the eighteenth century, the connections and comparisons with the rise of Afro-Moravianism in the Caribbean is certainly worth exploring.\textsuperscript{79}

Moravians had established a praying community in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania by 1741, and within five years they had built half a dozen settlements within a day’s journey of that town. The Indians who lived there, of course, were suffering through the same problems that other Indians had experienced: territorial dispossession, forced migration, disease, and being pulled into the endless imperial wars between France and Britain. But in Moravianism, some Indians discovered a way to address both the spiritual and temporal concerns of indigenous peoples trying to work through the troubles of colonialism. As Rachel Wheeler has noted, Moravian Indian preachers and their listeners were certainly not “victims to a colonization of consciousness,” for they crafted and articulated “a distinctive, Indian Christianity that expressed both deeply rooted cultural values and the realities of a dramatically changed world.”\textsuperscript{80}

Like Afro-Caribbeans, Native American preachers indigenized Moravian doctrine by fusing it with their own spiritual rituals, traditions, and beliefs. Like African cosmologies, Native American cosmologies had much in common with Moravian theology. Moravian


\textsuperscript{80} Wheeler, “Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican Village”: 46.
Indians in the Housatonic and Delaware Valleys, like their counterparts in the Afro-Caribbean missions, also understood Christ as an ever-present “guardian spirit” that offered Indians protection and watched over their lives. Furthermore, the ritual practices of torture and bloodletting fit easily with Moravian concepts of Christ’s corporeal suffering, and even Indian rites of passage into manhood and womanhood melded with rituals of Moravian baptism. Indian women, like female Caribbean slaves, embraced Moravianism because it offered them opportunities for social and spiritual leadership. Indian Moravians also tried to cultivate an ethos of spiritual communitarianism by having husbands and wives construct written salutations (which praised the piety and faith of their spouses) to one another. Even if they did not believe in any aspect of Moravian theology, many Indians accepted Moravian education to improve their physical and spiritual health, maintain a sense of kinship and community, and acquire literacy skills. In sum, while many Native Americans likely


82 Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 106; Wheeler, “Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican Village”: 37; and Schutt, “What Will Become of Our Young People?”: 278. Jane Merritt argues that, while the blood and wounds theology could speak to the cyclic rhythms of Indian women’s menstruation, it also tapped into Indian traditions of bloodletting as physical and spiritual catharsis. See Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 112-121. For the symbology of baptism, see Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 100 and 112. John Heckewelder also suggested that, for Indian men, the taking on of new names signaled a transition into full manhood. The ritual of baptism was therefore a Christian ritual, but also a sacred practice within indigenous culture that represented a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. See John Heckewelder, “An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs, of The Indian Nations, Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States,” in *Transactions of the Historical & Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, For Promoting Useful Knowledge* Vol. I (Philadelphia: Abraham Small, 1819), 129.

83 White Moravian missionaries also fostered a spirit of racial inclusiveness by marrying Indian women. Rachel, one of the spiritual leaders in a Mahican village, for example, was married to white missionary Christian Frederick Post. See Wheeler, “Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican Village”: 42.

84 A few examples of these can be found in *Records of the Moravian mission among the Indians of North America*. Film Number 1279 at the American Philosophical Society. Reel 34, Box 319, Item 8, Folder 2.

cringed at the thought of becoming Moravian converts, others embraced some elements of Moravianism by fusing them with their own traditional beliefs, practices, and rituals.

Like their Afro-Moravian counterparts, indigenous spiritual leaders were central to the development of Indian Moravianism in the middle of the eighteenth century, for they served as church elders, teachers, and exhorters. One example was Nicodemus, the elder of the Moravian Indian Congregation at Gnadenhütten (just north of Bethlehem). In his writings, sermons, and prayers, Nicodemus merged Moravianism with Indian spirituality by employing naturalistic metaphors to explain the value of Moravian cosmology to his fellow Indians. He confessed that “My heart is just so as a little run, which flows down from a mountain, if there is a little fish in the water, it will be carried along down with the water, and so is it with my heart, it swims always in the wounds and is carried away by the blood.” He then went on to employ metaphors from the animal world to elucidate his point. “At first my heart was like a young Pidgeon, which can not yet fly, but does try so long, till it can fly. And such is my heart now, I always fly into the wounds.” But Nicodemus finished his confession with a reference to the centrality of military security on the Anglo-Indian frontier, for he noted that, “I feel my heart is nowhere better preserved than in the wounds of the Saviour, therein I find myself just as if I was in a Fort.”

By variably describing his heart as a fish floating down a mountain river and a young pigeon flying into the wounds of Christ, Nicodemus grafted Moravian theology onto Native American understandings of the (super)natural world. In invoking the metaphor of Christ’s wounds as a fort, Nicodemus implied that Moravian Christianity might, at the very least, offer some veneer of physical

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86 Nicodemus, Elder of the Indian Congregation at Gnadenhütten, January of 1747, in Records of the Moravian mission among the Indians of North America. Film Number 1279, American Philosophical Society. Reel 34, Box 319, Item 8, Folder 3.
protection from settlers, soldiers, traders, and speculators who wished to harm and dispossess his Indian brethren.  

Like their Afro-Moravian counterparts, membership in Christ’s kingdom also gave Moravian Indians access to certain skills and opportunities that other Indians did not possess. The most basic was their attempt to use Christian identity as a wedge against rabid colonization of Indian lands.  

When a Moravian Indian named Tishcohan and another Christian Indian named Moses Tatamy petitioned the government of Pennsylvania to protect Indian lands, they did so by using the idioms of Christian supplication. They suggested that, because they “embraced the Christian Religion and attained some small Degree of Knowledge therein,” they should have the chance to live “under the same Laws with the English.” They also hoped that “some place might be allotted them where they may live in the Enjoyment of the same Religion and Laws with them.” Instead of being moved by the language of Christian humanitarianism, the colonial government simply called these Indians “rascals” who possessed the “impudence to subscribe themselves, ‘Your Honour’s brethren”

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87 This is not to say that Indian Christianity did not create its own set of problems. Disease, migration, and imperial wars certainly did its damage to the Moravian Indian communities of Pennsylvania, New York, and other locales. Also, and as in every other Protestant mission, there was a major fear of religious backsliding among the recently converted. This apprehension was realized when Isaac, one of the teachers in a Mahican Moravian village, went to a tavern, got drunk, and threatened to kill one of the most prominent Christian Indians. The situation was only resolved when Abraham, the elder of the Indian church, and his wife Sarah chastised Isaac for his backsliding. Moravian Indian preachers therefore struggled to synchronize Moravian theology with indigenous beliefs while simultaneously maintaining a level of discipline, even among their own sacred leadership. See Wheeler, “Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican Village”: 39.

88 Another possible advantage was the ability to tap into existing social and economic networks among Moravian Indians. As the receipts from an Indian named Joshua indicate, Moravian Indians contracted with one another to clear land, shingle houses, cut wood, and act as intermediaries in sales involving livestock. While this certainly interrupted traditional practices of social and economic exchange, some Indians nevertheless might have used their identity as Moravian converts to gain access to certain economic advantages. For Joshua’s receipts, see Records of the Moravian mission among the Indians of North America. Film Number 1279, American Philosophical Society. Reel 33, Box 311, Folder 7.

89 Tatamy, who was David Brainerd’s interpreter, is discussed below.
in the Lord Jesus.’” While Tishcohan and Tatamy tried to tap into and exploit the grammar of universal Christian brotherhood, the colonial government saw through this rhetoric. Periodic massacres of Moravian Indians and other religious tensions between missionaries, their charges, and frontier settlers also belied the fragile existence of Christian missionary work. In spite of some Native American embrace of Christianity, by the 1760s many Moravian converts on the Anglo-Indian frontier began to realize that even if their appropriation of Christianity might help save their souls, it could save neither their lands nor their lives.  

Success can beget success, but the ascension of the Moravians from the 1730s onward also drew severe criticism. Although some ministers like Ezra Stiles and David McClure suggested that Moravian evangelical techniques among blacks and Indians were more effective than those tried by previous Protestant missionaries, others saw in Moravian expansion a grave danger. Referring to the Moravians’ unique blood and wounds theology, George Whitefield complained that Moravians introduced “a whole Farrago of superstitions, not to say idolatrous Fopperies” into the Protestant Atlantic. In spite of such criticism, the Methodists who followed Whitefield actually ended up incorporating much of the Moravian pedagogical repertoire into their own missionary work in the 1760s and 1770s. There was no denying that the Moravians had made at least some headway into the Caribbean and the

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90 Quoted in Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 97-98.

91 Perhaps the most egregious assault on Moravian Indians were the infamous massacres at Salem and Gnadenhütten in early 1782. See Dowd, *A Spiritual Resistance*, 85-88.

92 George Whitefield, *An Expostulatory Letter Addressed to Count Zinzendorff, And Lord Advocate of the Unitas Fratrum* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1753), 4. Whitefield was particularly concerned with some of the liberties that Moravians took in their social practices. One example he gave was when Moravians used ribbons to identify the marital status of a congregant. Whitefield argued, correctly, that there was no biblical precedent for such a practice, so he argued that it should be expelled from Moravian missionary work.
North American frontier. They had baptized over 4500 free blacks and slaves in the Danish Caribbean and had cultivated a national helper system that had over 100 black spiritual leaders at its apex. This national helper system and other Moravian practices provided a model for later Protestant missionary groups engaged in the debate over whether to use black slaves and Indians as preachers, teachers, and catechists. Every Protestant denomination eventually did.

**Slave Teachers**

Like the Moravians before them, Anglicans began using black slaves as evangelical agents in the 1740s, and they did so through the institutional edifice of the “Charleston Negro School.” One of the most unique educational experiments in early American history, the school was opened in September 1742 under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), and was designed to instruct black children in the tenets of Anglican Protestantism. The final goal, of course, was to have those black children then “diffuse their Light and Knowledge to their Parents, Relations, Countrymen, and Fellow Servants.”

Yet perhaps the most remarkable characters in the school were not the students and future Christian evangelists, but rather the teachers. Indeed, both Harry and Andrew, the teachers charged with instructing these Carolina slaves, were slaves themselves, purchased by the SPG for the important task of educating others. Although it closed in 1764 and had a negligible impact on the Christianization of Carolina’s slaves, the school’s history nevertheless demonstrates the major changes undertaken in missionary policy in a period of

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transatlantic revivalism. By purchasing slaves to teach other slaves, Carolina Anglicans walked a slender line between reinforcing and destabilizing the fragile racial hierarchies that ordered southern society. The ascension of slave teachers in South Carolina was therefore simultaneously innovative and socially dangerous.

The origins of the school lay in two historical developments within South Carolina. The first was the explosion of racial tensions in the 1730s. In 1731 there were two rumored slave rebellions in South Carolina, and in both of them it was feared that Christianized blacks had used their training to interpret their own doctrine of Christian liberty in their fight against temporal slavery. In 1736 South Carolina papers reported on a slave uprising in Antigua, where some slaves apparently “administered the Sacrament...according to the rites of the Bishop’s Church,” before beginning their rebellion. But the threat of rebellion became palpable in 1739, when the Stono Rebellion took place. While previous generations of scholars have interpreted the Stono Rebellion as a violent response to the overwhelmingly disproportionate power relations of Carolina slave society, recent studies by John Thornton and Mark M. Smith have suggested that there was also a common ideology, indeed a religious spirituality, that motivated and defined these rebellions. This ideology was a widespread Afro-Catholic religiosity that gave Carolina slaves the organizational ability, means of communication, and even sense of sacred timing to begin the revolt. It also explains why the Stono rebels chose Spanish Florida – a Catholic colony – as their getaway destination. The violence of the event, its Christian timing and iconography, and even the

95 Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 71.

96 Thornton, “African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion”; 1101-1113; Smith, “Remembering Mary, Shaping Revolt: Reconsidering the Stono Rebellion”; 513-534; and Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 71. While Thornton explored the African dimensions of the Stono Rebellion in religious and military terms, Smith argued that the roots of the rebellion, including its unique timing and iconographic significance, lay in Afro-Catholicism generally and the Kongolesse veneration of the Virgin Mary more
literacy of its leaders all struck fear into the hearts of southern masters.  

When the South Carolina legislature wrote new slave codes in the wake of the 1739 rebellion, they outlawed teaching a slave to write or even using an already literate slave as a scribe.  

It is therefore ironic that Anglicans turned to literacy and Christian instruction as a method to demand slave obedience, spread the Gospel, and maintain peace in the Carolinas.

The second development that provided the foundation for the Charleston Negro School was the itinerancy of John Wesley and George Whitefield in the late 1730s and early 1740s. Wesley, who was friends with the most influential Anglican clergymen in South Carolina, began working in Georgia in the late 1730s to put together a parish of slave congregants.  

While he was only marginally successful, he cleared the way for George Whitefield, who would also extend his evangelical itinerancy to include southern blacks. Whitefield was irate at the lackluster record of Anglican evangelization in the Carolinas, arguing that the withholding of Christian instruction from slaves by masters was sinful, unchristian, and “Evil.”

Questioning the popular convention of innate African inferiority,

particularly. Jon Butler has argued against this thesis, claiming instead that nineteenth century rebellions, and not earlier ones, were motivated by religion. See Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 156.

Smith argued that Cato, the apparent leader of the rebellion, had literacy skills and wielded a tremendous amount of cultural power among his fellow slaves. See Smith, “Remembering Mary, Shaping Revolt”: 528.


For more on Wesley’s itinerancy in the south, see Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 87-91.

George Whitefield to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina 23 January 1740, in *A Collection of Papers, Lately printed in the Daily Advertiser* (London: Booksellers in Town and Country, 1740), 8. The problem was certainly much more complicated than masters’ refusal to their slaves’ to access education. Albert Raboteau has concluded that the small number of Christian converts was a result of slaveholders’ objects as well as “the unsettled state of religion in the Southern colonies, which held the great majority of the slave population; the paucity of missionaries to catechize slaves; linguistic and cultural barriers between Africans and European; [and] the very way in which conversion was generally perceived – as catechesis, a time-consuming process of religious instruction.” “All these factors,” Raboteau concluded, “ensured that Christianity touched most slave indirectly if at all.” See Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 126. For more on Anglican education among southern blacks in the first half of the
Whitefield argued that blacks were “just as much, and no more, conceived and born in Sin, as White Men are.” If both white and black men were “born and bred up here,” then they were also “naturally capable of the same Improvement.”\textsuperscript{101} Equal under sin, blacks also had the same access to spiritual rebirth, regeneration, and divine judgment as their white counterparts.\textsuperscript{102} Like his predecessors and contemporaries, however, Whitefield also argued that slaves would be more faithful, obedient, and docile if they were Christian slaves. In fact, Whitefield suggested that the Stono Rebellion and the recent spread of smallpox were products of God’s displeasure towards Carolinians for their lack of missionary zeal.\textsuperscript{103}

Whitefield’s remedy was “to buy” some of that “despised Generation” and set aside a large plot of land upon which a school for their instruction could be built.\textsuperscript{104} The evangelical preacher also anticipated that, at this school and in other orphan houses that he constructed, several blacks with “suitable abilities” would eventually be “bred to the Ministry.” Whitefield claimed that, by 1740, he already had one or two “in view for that Purpose.”\textsuperscript{105} In 1740 the Bryan family took their cue from Whitefield and raised their own funds to open a school for black children in St. Helena Parish, hoping that the school’s graduates would teach

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\item George Whitefield to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina 23 January 1740, in \textit{A Collection of Papers, Lately printed in the Daily Advertiser}, 9.
\item Frey and Wood, \textit{Come Shouting to Zion}, 92. Mechal Sobel has argued that this evangelical emphasis on spiritual rebirth matched up easily with West African concepts of regeneration and that baptism melded easily with ritual bathing. The two cosmologies which governed African religion and Baptist religion were therefore not entirely incompatible, but rather mutually accommodating. See Mechal Sobel, \textit{Trabelin’ On: The Slave Journey to an Afrok-Baptist Faith} (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979).
\item George Whitefield to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina 23 January \textit{A Collection of Papers, Lately printed in the Daily Advertiser}, 10.
\item George Whitefield to a friend in London, 27 April, 1740, \textit{A Collection of Papers, Lately printed in the Daily Advertiser}, 2. See also Frey and Wood, \textit{Come Shouting to Zion}, 92.
\item “The Manner of the Childrens spending their Time at the Orphan-House in Georgia,” in \textit{A Collection of Papers, Lately printed in the Daily Advertiser}, 43.
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other slaves about the blessings of Christ.\textsuperscript{106} In short, Whitefield and his followers came to believe that the rise of black preachers would serve as a panacea for South Carolina’s lackluster reputation in preaching to slaves while easing the social and racial tensions that threatened to tear that society apart.

Whitefield put the Anglicans on the defensive, blaming both licentious slave owners and lazy missionaries for failing to make any headway into South Carolina’s slave population. The Anglicans responded in kind by attacking Whitefield’s theology, especially the kind of ecstatic revivalism and excessive enthusiasm that more traditional Protestants found abhorrent in Great Awakening preaching. The biggest problem was the debate about conversion. While revivalists generally understood conversion as an immediate, life-changing experience, traditional Protestants (including Anglicans and Puritans) believed that conversion was instead a protracted and gradual process characterized by intense self-scrutiny, biblical study, and intellectual reflection.\textsuperscript{107} Although these debates were theological and scriptural in nature, when placed within the fire of South Carolina race relations, they became even more controversial. How should slaves be converted? Who was primarily responsible for their conversion, and what did this mean to their status as slaves? Although Anglicans had been debating these questions for decades, the rise of evangelical revivalism just as the Stono Rebellion shook the south made the question of black Christianity all the more pressing. As such, Anglicans scrambled to mount a defense of their own missionary tradition.

The “chief antagonist” of both the Anglican rebuttal of Whitefield and the renewal of missionary activity was Alexander Garden, an Anglican missionary and commissary to the


\textsuperscript{107} Frey and Wood, \textit{Come Shouting to Zion}, 94.
Bishop of London. Garden thought Whitefield was a “very wicked man” who, even as he helped orphans in his schools, still had a nasty reputation for “Pinching their Bellies.”

Personal animosity and unusual allusions aside, Garden found himself in the awkward position of rebutting Whitefield’s claims that masters were oppressive towards their slaves while simultaneously explaining why so many slaves were still unconverted. Garden addressed the first point by invoking the classic trope of the paternal slave owner, noting that masters and overseers were not violent tyrants to their slaves, but rather benevolent fathers who constantly treated their charges with gentle love. Garden then suggested that the reason why Carolina’s slaves were ignorant of the Gospel was because the Anglicans lacked a “certain uniform Method of teaching them.”

Ironically, Garden found his “uniform Method” in the pedagogy and practices of Whitefield himself, for in the early 1740s he began to formulate an idea of a school for young black children. Anglicans, like other Protestants throughout the Atlantic world, were

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109 Alexander Garden to the SPG, 9 April 1742, in SPG Records, Letter Series B (hereafter referred to as SPG Records); and Alexander Garden to George Whitefield, 30 July 1740, in Garden, Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 52. The historical basis for Garden’s allusion to Whitefield’s strange behavior towards the orphans is unclear.

110 Alexander Garden to George Whitefield, 30 July 1740, in Garden, Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 51.

111 Alexander Garden to George Whitefield, 30 July 1740, in Garden, Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 53.
beginning to believe that the education of adult Indians and blacks alike would prove futile. They believed that children were the future of the mission and that the only way to make any advances was to focus on a younger generation; a generation less sullied by the pagan rituals of their forefathers. Garden expected that, with two black teachers at the head of the class, his school might produce upwards of 40 graduates per year; those graduates would subsequently preach to the thousands of slaves that had formerly been so hard to reach. Slaves, Garden complained, were a kind of “Nation within a Nation,” and the only way to introduce Christianity to the thousands of slaves in the rice country was to infiltrate their ranks with other, Christianized slaves. “Parents and Grand Parents, Husbands, Wives, Brothers, Sisters, and other Relations,” Garden hoped, “would be daily teaching and learning of one another.” Anglican Christianity would thereby spread throughout the Carolinas like a kind of virus, being transmitted via the hundreds of students that Garden expected to graduate from the school. Garden even anticipated that, within 20 years, “knowledge of the Gospel among those other Slaves…would not be much inferior to that of the lowest Sort of White People.”

On Monday the 12th of September in 1742, the Charleston Negro School officially opened, and within a few weeks the total enrollment of black slaves was up to 30. Garden’s dream of using slaves to convert slaves seemed to be coming to fruition.

If the creation of a school for blacks was not particularly innovative or controversial – Elias Neau had a school for black children in New York in the 1710s – the choice of teachers for the slaves was certainly unique. Rather than relying upon white Anglican instructors for the maintenance of the school, Garden instead envisioned a group of three to five slaves serving as the teaching corps for this school. In Garden’s view, these slaves had to be

112 Summary of a letter from Alexander Garden to the SPG, 6 May 1740, in SPG Journal, SPG Records, Volume 8, 176.
between 12-16 years old and must have had “sober and Docile Dispositions.” The age requirement and the emphasis on sobriety and docility certainly went hand in hand. These teachers in training needed to be young enough to be molded but old enough to understand some of the complexities of Christian theology. In the end, Garden settled on two boys – Harry and Andrew – who were 14 and 15 years old, respectively. Formerly slaves of Alexander Skene, the two boys were born in Carolina, had been baptized, and could say the Church Catechism from memory. Although neither could read, Garden hoped that, with sufficient schooling, they could become teachers within the span of about a year. “This,” Garden bragged, “is the only method, at least the most Efectual [sic]…that the whole ever will, or by Ordinary Human means, can be done.” Most importantly, the identity of the two teachers as slaves would protect Garden’s school against any claim of intellectual elitism while simultaneously guarding against social divisions within slave society itself. Garden believed that the two teachers “must be…Negroe Schoolmasters Home born, and equally property as other Slaves.” In the wake of the Stono Rebellion, ensuring the status of these slave teachers as property was crucial to insulating the school from future attacks from anxious masters. Indeed, it was precisely because Anglicans understood the liberating effects of Protestant evangelism that the Charleston School had to exhibit the classic pattern of slave domination that characterized the wider plantation society.

The benefits of Garden’s plan were both spiritual and temporal. While the school would help spread Christianity among slaves, that Christianity itself would serve as a

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113 Summary of a letter from Alexander Garden to the SPG, 6 May 1740, in SPG Journal, SPG Records, Volume 8, 175.

114 Summary of a letter from Alexander Garden to the SPG, 6 May 1740, in SPG Journal, SPG Records, Volume 8, 176.

115 Summary of a letter from Alexander Garden to the SPG, 6 May 1740, in SPG Journal, SPG Records, Volume 8, 173-174.
protection against future slave revolts. As Anthony Ellys noted in his 1759 sermon to the SPG, the Christianization of slaves could result in a paradigm shift in southern race relations. “Instead of needing to be always watched in order to prevent their doing any mischief,” Ellys argued, “they may become guards, and defenders of their masters; and there will be no longer any such revolts and insurrections among them as have sometimes been detrimental, if not even dangerous, to several of the colonies.”

Garden exemplified this argument and conceived of his school as a cure-all for Anglican anxieties. The school would help offset the Catholic menace from Spanish Florida, redeem the Anglican reputation from the attacks of the evangelists, ensure slaves’ fidelity to their masters, and provide a new mechanism for slave instruction in the widely spread Carolina plantations. As Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood have noted, Garden also believed that the school would be a weapon for “nullifying” the gains made by the kind of evangelical Protestantism that could undermine Carolina’s fragile racial, religious, and social order.

Most importantly, the school was going to be very cost effective. Indeed, Garden purchased the two boys for the SPG on the cheap, buying them both for 52 pounds sterling, a sum the Anglicans found completely reasonable.

One of the most tangible benefits of using slaves to teach, of course, was that, unlike teachers, catechists, and missionaries who frequently complained about their insufficient annual salaries, once slaves were purchased there would be “no further charge about them.” The SPG was learning the lessons that

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118 Alexander Garden to the SPG, 9 April 1742, in SPG Records, Letter Series B.

119 Alexander Garden to the SPG, 9 April 1742, in SPG Records, Letter Series B.
American slavery had been teaching planters for decades: African slaves could be much more profitable than comparable white labor. Despite four decades of combined service for the SPG from the 1740s to the 1760s, Harry and Andrew never appeared on the payroll. In fact, Garden had explicitly calculated that the service of a “young healthy slave” could be counted on for three to four decades and he hoped that none of his successors would request from the SPG “any Charge for [Harry’s] Maintenance.” This was not the first time that the SPG dabbled in slavery. They owned approximately 300 slaves at their Codrington plantation on Barbados and purchased individual slaves as assistants and domestics to Anglican missionaries. The Anglicans’ growing status as slave owners also required that they continue attacking the “vulgar error” that Christianity implied temporal freedom. When Philip Bearcroft boasted that the Charleston school would “make them free indeed,” he was offering a not-so-subtle allusion to the spiritual enslavement of the unconverted. The kind of freedom that the school would bring about was spiritual, not temporal.

120 Alexander Garden to the SPG, 10 October 1742, in SPG Records, Letter Series B. Garden actually believed that whatever small sum – he called it a “trifle” – that would be necessary to maintain his slave teachers could be procured from slave masters and mistresses. He even alluded to a ridiculous notion of having the enslaved parents of these slave teachers contribute their mite to the teachers’ maintenance.

121 For more on Codrington Plantation, see see John A. Schultz, “Christopher Codrington’s Will: Launching the S.P.G. into the Barbadian Sugar Business,” The Pacific Historical Review 15 No. 2 (June 1946): 192-200; and Frank J. Klingberg, “British Humanitarianism at Codrington,” The Journal of Negro History 23 No. 4 (October 1938): 451-486. Mr. Langhorne, who was a missionary to St. George’s Parish in the mid-1750s, apparently purchased two slaves to help build a new parsonage and to do any other tasks associated with the physical maintenance of the parish. See Robert Hay Drummond, A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday February 15, 1754 (London: E. Owen, 1754), 63.

122 Drummond, A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 19.

123 Philip Bearcroft, A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; On Friday February 15, 1744 (London: Edward Owen, 1744), 19.
Harry and Andrew’s bill of sale reminded the two young teachers, as well as their Anglican owners, that in spite of their unique role as Christian instructors, they were still property of the SPG. From SPG Records, Letter Series B, Volume 10, Letter 140.

Like a contemporary slaveholder, Alexander Garden exhibited the classic paternalistic ethos that served to justify the enslavement of millions of Africans in the Americas. Although the SPG technically owned the two slaves, Garden guaranteed his bosses that he would take special care for their education and maintenance. In short, there was no question that Garden and the SPG embraced the role of benevolent slave masters. Assuring his superiors that these slaves would not enjoy any special privileges due to their role as teachers, Garden compared them to rank and file slaves, noting that Harry and Andrew would be “employed in it during life, as the others are in any other Services

124 For more on the philosophy of paternalism, see Howard McGary and Bill E. Lawson, Between Slavery and Freedom: Philosophy and American Slavery (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), Ch. 2.
whatsoever." Garden’s slaves worked in a classroom instead of the fields, wielded books instead of hoes, and cultivated unconverted minds instead of rice. By 1740, Anglicans were fully participating in and contributing to the realities of racial oppression by purchasing Harry and Andrew to teach in their budding school. Garden played the role of the slave master while Harry and Andrew, in spite of their elevated status as Christian teachers, nevertheless remained chattel slaves.126

There is no better evidence for the Anglicans’ embrace of their role of slave master than their treatment of Andrew, the older teacher who eventually became the forgotten son of the project. While Harry, the younger slave, was an “Excellent Genius,” Andrew was “of a somewhat slower Genius.”127 Even though he was more mild-mannered than Harry, served as an assistant to Harry when enrollment became too overwhelming to manage alone, and even though another Anglican missionary asked Garden to place Andrew in his own parish, Garden concluded that Andrew could never teach on his own.128 Therefore, and because Andrew apparently had shown “so weak an understanding” of Christian doctrine, in the fall of 1744 Garden asked his superiors for “discretionary Power to Sell him, and to purchase another of a better Genius in his Room.” The committee in London instead directed Garden to ship him to the SPG plantation in Barbados, where he would work as a servant at

125 Summary of a letter from Alexander Garden to the SPG, 6 May 1740, in SPG Journal, SPG Records, Volume 8, 174.

126 Jon Butler has correctly argued that Anglican ministers like Garden “articulated a planter ethic of absolute slave obedience that ran thoroughly counter to contemporary English political and social theory and became a principle foundation of American slavery’s distinctive paternalism, violence, and sentimentalism.” See Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, 129.

127 Alexander Garden to the SPG, 24 September 1742, in SPG Records, Letter Series B.

128 W. Guy to the SPG, 26 March 1744, in SPG Records, Letters Series B.
Codrington College. For reasons still unclear, Garden was unable to send Andrew away. Andrew spent the next six years in Carolina in limbo, suffering from a “Bruise in his Breast” and eventually being sold by Garden in 1750 for 28 pounds sterling. Like the scores of other slaves who proved to have lackluster performance in the fields, Andrew was sold when he could not adequately serve his Anglican masters. Harry was on his own.

It is difficult to determine exactly what Harry taught his students, and the inner workings of the school remain unclear. The list of books needed for the school – 100 spelling books, 50 Testaments, 50 Bibles, and 50 Psalters with the Book of Common Prayer inside them – reveals that the students probably focused on the basics of Christian instruction: literacy, psalm-singing, the lord’s creed, and other essential lessons from scripture. By 1744, Alexander Garden claimed that enrollment had jumped from 30 to 60, 15 could read the testament very well, 20 were in the Psalters, and the rest were in the alphabet and spelling books. Harry and Andrew (before the latter was sold) apparently examined the students twice a week to determine their progress and graduated about 10-15 students every year. The Charleston Negro School even expanded its enrollment to include “grown Slaves,” who were given the same Christian instruction at the conclusion of the slaves’ workday.

129 Summary of a letter from Alexander Garden to the SPG, SPG Records, SPG Journal Volume 10, 11-12.

130 Summary of a letter from Alexander Garden to the SPG, SPG Records, SPG Journal Volume 11, 300.

131 Summary of a letter from Alexander Garden to the SPG, SPG Records, SPG Journal Volume 9, 239; Raboteau, Slave Religion, 117.

132 Alexander Garden to the SPG, 18 October 1744, SPG Records, Letter Series B.

133 John Thomas, A Sermon Preach’d before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday February 20, 1746 (London: Edward Owen, 1747), 55-56.
In spite of Garden’s contention that the Charleston Negro School was instrumental in “spreading the Light of the blessed Gospel among these poor heathens” of South Carolina, the school was never really successful.\textsuperscript{134} Andrew’s intellectual shortcomings and his being sold away was only a portent of the many challenges the school would face in the future. A hurricane tore the school down in 1752, enveloping the students’ books and forcing them to start anew.\textsuperscript{135} Garden, the main catalyst behind the program, suffered from increasingly ill health and died in 1755, forcing an apathetic Richard Clarke to replace him. Clarke resigned four years later. Smallpox struck Charleston in 1760, once again temporarily closing the school. When Harry died in 1764, the school officially stopped operating and was never reopened by the SPG. By 1764, the three founders of the school – Alexander Garden, Harry, and Andrew – had either died or been sold away. The Charleston Negro School disappeared from the records of the SPG by 1765.

Even though it eventually closed, Harry and Andrew’s school was both a product of and catalyst for indigenous missionary work in the British Atlantic. Alexander Garden founded the school in response to evangelical revivalism, racial tensions after Stono, and concerns about Catholic Spanish influence in the Carolinas. Garden also called upon a longer history of using black and even Indian missionaries in the field, for he was certainly aware of the Moravian use of “national helpers” in their Caribbean plantations. Furthermore, as commissary to the Bishop of London, Garden might have also been tapping into a history of Anglican employment of non-whites in their Carolina missions. Indeed, it should be remembered that Garden’s predecessor – Commissary Gideon Johnston – was the man to

\textsuperscript{134} Alexander Garden to the SPG, 4 February 1750, in SPG Records, Letter Series B.

\textsuperscript{135} Edward Cressett, \textit{A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday, February 16, 1753} (London: Edward Owen, 1753), 53-54.
sponsor and direct the education of the Yamassee Prince in the 1710s. The Charleston school was therefore a product of transatlantic revivalism, Caribbean mission history, and Anglican experimentation with native missionaries.

The school was illustrative of a major shift in Anglican missionary policy, for this was the first time that Anglicans had employed black slaves in their missions. By 1765, however, another Anglican group known as the Associates of Dr. Bray had opened up schools for black children in Philadelphia, Newport, New York, Williamsburg, Norfolk, Yorktown, and Fredericksburg, as well as Chester, Maryland, Edenton, and Wilmington. Their missionaries also employed black intermediaries to teach other slaves. Jonathan Boucher, a Virginia missionary, reportedly trained Aaron to teach other slaves in “Reading & some of the first Principles of Religion.”

Using slaves as teachers, Boucher argued to his bosses, was “the only practicable Method” for propagating the Gospel among slaves in Virginia. John Barnett, a contemporary and colleague of Boucher who was preaching in North Carolina, gave some slaves several copies of Anglican tracts because they “promised me to take pains to instruct such of their fellow Slaves as are desirous to learn.”

During these same years a young African named Philip Quaque was trained in London to become a missionary in his own home near Cape Coast Castle in West Africa. He would become the first African ordained in the English church.

Indians, too, became central to Anglican

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139 For more on Quaque, see Ty M. Reese, “‘Sheep in the Jaws of So Many Ravenous Wolves’: the Slave Trade and Anglican Missionary Activity at Cape Coast Castle, 1752-1816,” Journal of Religion in Africa 34 No. 3 (September 2004): 348-372; Margaret Priestly, “Philip Quaque of Cape Coast” in Africa
missions. Beginning in the 1740s and lasting through the Revolutionary war, Mohawks like Daniel, Cornelius, and Paulus officially worked for the SPG as schoolmasters, catechists, and readers in their fragile New York missions. The Anglicans had no Indian or black teachers on their payroll in 1739. By 1765, they had recently closed a school that, for 20 years, had used slaves as teachers. They also had several black teachers working for the Associates of Dr. Bray, half a dozen Mohawks operating in New York as catechists and lecturers, and were finishing their training of Philip Quaque to return to the Cape Coast of West Africa. If native preachers were a pipe dream for the Anglicans before 1740, they were vital to Anglican missions by 1770.

The introduction of native preachers in such mass numbers and with such rapidity was a major change for Anglicans, who still believed that literacy and formal education were the most important keys to conversion. Great Awakening evangelists like George Whitefield and John Wesley, on the other hand, believed that sincere penitence – rather than classical education – was much more important in the conversion process. Anglicans were afraid (and rightfully so) about losing their grip on the ecclesiastical and spiritual conduct of religion in the Americas and beyond, and they watched their control slipping away as uneducated speakers took to the pulpits, preached to Indians and slaves, and even performed as

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evangelical imposters. The Charleston Negro School was just one of several attempts to address these problems by changing the direction of Anglican missions, maintaining control over the development of Afro-American spirituality, and ensuring that education – rather than an ill-defined “conversion experience” – be the centerpiece of black spirituality. This veritable marketplace of religious ideas, however, found Anglicans losing out to and falling farther behind their Great Awakening competitors. In the Charleston Negro School the Anglicans created a moderately ambitious program, one that promised to provide the kind of viral evangelism that Great Awakening preachers were producing while simultaneously ensuring that its preachers – the slaves – were instructed within the circumscribed confines of an Anglican education. In spite of this negotiation, and in spite of its alleged early successes, the Anglicans allowed the school, and their plans for the evangelization of Lowcountry slaves, to fail.

The Specter of Separatism

While the movement of black slaves into positions of ecclesiastical and spiritual authority was a cause for both celebration and concern, the same could be said for the development of Indian Christianity during this same period. Early modern Protestants throughout the Atlantic world viewed the appropriation of Christianity by black and Indian preachers ambivalently. On the one hand, the ascension of native evangelists into positions of religious authority could not only justify the secular pains taken to evangelize indigenous peoples, but also anticipate the eventual gospelization of the globe’s people. Perhaps this is why Moravians rejoiced to hear about a “converted Negroe” living in Genoa and “endeavouring to erect Schools in the neighbouring Parts, with a View to the Propagation of

Christian Knowledge.” In New England, Benjamin Colman noted with glee that Indians suddenly exhibited a “surprising concern” for their souls in the early 1740s, as they earnestly began “voluntarily applying to the ministers” for Christian instruction. One commentator recounted the 1741 reformation among the Montauk Indians in Connecticut and Long Island and observed that almost all of them had “renounced their heathenish idolatry and superstition, and many of them became true Christians.” While Daniel Mandell has rightfully asserted that Indians in eastern Massachusetts were “barely affected by the Great Awakening,” it was a different story for Connecticut and Rhode Island. The rise of evangelical revivalism there from the 1730s onward offered new ways for Native American preachers to craft constantly evolving spiritual meanings out of Christianity.

On the other hand, Protestant divines feared the permeability of the boundaries between the sincere piety and excessive zeal of indigenous preachers. The explosion of ecstatic revivalism that accompanied the 1730s and 40s – among both white and Indian populations – was often cast by religious conservatives as a dangerous portent of future

142 A Dissenting Minister in England to a Gentleman in Scotland (unauthored and undated), in Unauthored, Copy of Three Letters, 6.

143 Draft of a letter from Benjamin Colman to Governor Shirley, 18 June 1742, in Benjamin Colman Letters, 1728-1745, Massachusetts Historical Society Manuscript Collections.

144 “A Letter From Rev. John Devotion of Saybrook, to the Rev. Dr. Stiles, Inclosing, Mr. Occum’s Account of the Montauk Indians,” in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, First Series, Vol. X (Boston: Munro, Francis, and Parker, 1809, 110.

145 Daniel R. Mandell, Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 127. See Fisher, “Traditionary Religion”; and Simmons, “Red Yankees”: 253-271 for more on the First Great Awakening among southeastern New England Indians. Part of Mandell’s argument rests on the fact that Christian Indian congregations in places like Mashpee and Martha’s Vineyard were already well established by the time of the revivals. They were also using many of the same ecstatic revelatory techniques and syncretic forms of Christianity in their own churches. Finally, they also used Christianity to protect their own sovereignty and sense of cultural identity. See, for example, “Rough Copy of a Petition from over 20 indians in Mashpee, dated 13 August, 1761,” in Gideon Hawley Letters, 1754-1807, mss at the Massachusetts Historical Society. For more on Mashpee in the eighteenth century, see Mandell, Behind the Frontier. For more on Martha’s Vineyard, see Silverman, Faith and Boundaries.
spiritual anarchy that threatened to subvert the fragile ecclesiastical order. One of the most pressing problems was that many native preachers, exhorters, and prophets led their own meetings, followings, and congregations away from the eyes of white authority. One Anglican complained that, by 1750, “even the ignorant Negroes and Indians have set up preaching and praying by the Spirit, and they have their Meetings, in which such of them as can neither write nor read, hold forth in their Turn.”¹⁴⁶ Old Light divine Charles Chauncy scoffed at this democratization of sacred authority. There was a risk, Chauncy lamented, of having “so many Exhorters” preaching in the colonies. In Chauncy’s view, these new evangelists had:

> no Learning, and but small Capacities, yet imagine they are able, and without Study too, to speak to the Spiritual Profit of such as are willing to hear them: Nay, there are among these Exhorters, Babes in Age, as well as Understanding. They are chiefly indeed young Persons, sometimes Lads, or rather Boys: Nay, Women and Girls; yea, Negroes, have taken upon them to do the Business of Preachers. Nor has this been accidental only, or in a single Place, or at a private House; but there is scarce a Town in all the Provinces, where this Appearance has been, but there have been also these Exhorters, in smaller or greater Numbers.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Richard Trevor, A Sermon Preach’d before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday February 16, 1749 (London: E. Owen, 1750), 41.

¹⁴⁷ Charles Chauncy, Seasonable thoughts on the state of religion in New-England, a treatise in five parts. I. Faithfully pointing out the things of a bad and dangerous tendency, in the late, and present, religious appearance, in the land. II. Representing the obligations which lie upon the pastors of these churches in particular, and upon all in general, to use their endeavours to suppress prevailing disorders; with the great danger of a neglect in so important a matter. III. Opening, in many instances, wherein the discouragers of irregularities have been injuriously treated. IV. Shewing what ought to be corrected, or avoided, in testifying against the evil things of the present day. V. Directing our thought more positively, to what may be judged the best expedients, to promote pure and undefiled religion in these times. With a preface giving an account of the Antinomians, Familists and Libertines, who infected these churches, above an hundred years ago: very needful for these days; the like spirit, and errors, prevailing now as did then. The whole being intended, and calculated, to serve the interest of Christ's kingdom. By Charles Chauncy. D.D. Pastor of the First Church of Christ in Boston (Boston: Rogers and Fowle, 1743), 226.
Chauncy conceded that this kind of religious imposture was not limited to the white evangelical population, but also extended to African slaves and Indians. The problem was that, in an era of intensively divisive evangelical revivalism, Indians, slaves, and others began incorporating elements of “Great Awakening” theology into their own cosmologies, thereby complicating the boundaries between Christianity and indigenous religions while simultaneously offering an implicit rebuttal to entrenched ecclesiastical authority.

No one exemplified these tensions better than Samuel Niles. Born around 1701, Niles eventually became a spiritual, cultural, and social leader of the Narragansett people. His propulsion into a position of indigenous leadership was the result of two major developments in eighteenth century Narragansett history: the crisis in Indian dispossession and the outburst of Christian revivalism. Although English settlers were unapologetically buying up Indian lands in the first decades of the eighteenth century, the Narragansett sachemship was partly responsible for this dispossession. Niles, along with other Narragansett leaders, blamed Thomas Ninigret, the Narragansett sachem, for drinking too much, selling land without the consultation of the rest of the tribe, and using those land sales to resolve his own personal debts. Niles even wrote to Sir William Johnson, the British

148 Clerical imposture was a major concern. See Kidd, “Passing as a Pastor”: 149-174; and John Freebairn, A Caution Against False Teachers. A Sermon Preached before The Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, At their Anniversary Meeting, In the High Church of Edinburgh, On Friday, June 7. 1771. (Edinburgh: Robert Mundell, 1771).

149 By this time the “Narragansetts” were actually a collection of different southeastern New England tribes, made up of mostly Narragansett and Niantic Indians. See Simmons, “Red Yankees”: 256-257.

150 A similar conflict over land and the authority of the sachemship occurred on Martha’s Vineyard. See David J. Silverman, Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community Among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha’s Vineyard, 1600-1871 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 121-156.

151 Thomas was not the first sachem to do this with Narragansett Lands. Many of his predecessors were also complicit in selling native lands to English colonists in order to pay off debts, purchase liquor, or amass personal wealth. See Simmons, “Red Yankees”: 256-258.
Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and complained that Narragansetts were quickly losing land, had no access to the sea, and that Indian children would eventually “come into bondage to the English.” He also petitioned the colonial government for assistance and even tried to depose Ninigret and replace the sachemship with a system of Indian counselors. It was within this context of dispossession, internecine power struggles with the sachem, and colonial apathy that Niles tried to use his spiritual authority as a preacher to preserve the land, power, and cultural identity of his Narragansett people.

The second major development that inaugurated Samuel Niles’ rise to power was the spread of evangelical revivalism in southeastern New England in the 1730s and 40s. It should be remembered that the first Christian missionaries to actively court the Narragansetts were two Indians. Japhet Hannit of Martha’s Vineyard and William Simmons of Dartmouth both undertook several evangelical trips to Narragansett in the first decades of the eighteenth century. While Thomas Mayhew, several Anglican missionaries, and a handful of Congregationalist ministers also invited Narragansetts into a Christian communion, the rise of New Light preaching in the wake of James Davenport’s 1741 tour through southeastern New England marked the moment when some Narragansett Indians began to embrace the

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153 Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, xxxv.

154 Niles was not the only Narragansett Christian to use his status as a preacher to protect Indian lands and identity. The brothers Shattock (John and Tobias) traveled to London in 1768 to try to get official protection of Indian lands from the King himself. Unfortunately for the Narragansetts, Tobias died from smallpox in Edinburgh and John failed to succeed in the mission after his brother passed away. See Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 179-181; and James Dow McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932), 201-217.

155 Simmons, “Red Yankees”: 260.
revivalist evangelism that became a hallmark of Christian spiritual leadership. Previous Protestant missionaries had emphasized scriptural knowledge and ecclesiastical deference as fundamental components of Christian spirituality. Davenport and his successors – most notably Westerly, Rhode Island’s Joseph Park – instead introduced “revelations, visions, trances, and emotional participation in services.” In doing so, New Light preaching amounted to a sustained attack on ministers who relied upon literacy and learning to maintain their positions within the hierarchy of “intellectual Puritanism.” Personal feelings from the heart, rather than intellectual wanderings of the mind, were to be the new basis of spiritual experience and ecclesiastical authority. Davenport, Park, and the growing number of Indian converts also opened up new opportunities for Christian Indians to redefine what Christianity meant, where sacred authority originated, and how God’s revelation was to be understood. Samuel Niles and other native preachers would therefore combine the new evangelicalism’s emphasis on personal spiritual revelation with a critique of traditional indigenous authority to become one of the strongest forces in Narragansett society.

For both of these reasons – the failure of whites to respect Indian lands and the genesis of new models of Indian spiritual leadership – southeastern New England Indians

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156 Narragansett Indians had, of course, been exposed to Christian teaching, missionaries, and cultural practices for decades. Yet Davenport’s mission represented the first sustained attempt to introduce evangelical revivalism into southeastern New England Indian culture. For more on his itinerancy in southeastern New England, see Harry S. Stout and Peter Onuf, “James Davenport and the Great Awakening in New London,” The Journal of American History 70 No. 3 (December 1983): 556-578. Due to lack of time and space, I intentionally have given this section on the history of Narragansett exposure to Christianity short shrift. Linford Fisher correctly argues that the Narragansett encounter with Christianity was much more protracted and uneven than I have described here. For a fuller examination that I have given here, see Fisher, “Traditionary Religion”; and Simmons, “Red Yankees.”

157 It is difficult to determine exactly how Japhet Hannit and William Simmons might have tried to preach to other Indians. While the emphasis on scriptural study was certainly central, they were probably more culturally flexible than their English Protestant counterparts. Nevertheless, they were probably not flexible enough, for their evangelism among the Narragansetts amounted to very little.

158 Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, xxiv.
consistently demonstrated a preference for indigenous pastors. The rise of native pastors
gave Indians who were suspicious of white ones an alternative form of leadership that, they
believed, spoke directly to the unique problems of being a Christian Indian during a period of
dispossession. One Anglican preacher, for example, complained that his Indian flock would
not receive him because they feared “I would get their Land from them.” Narragansetts
were irate when an Anglican minister hired a Mr. Cross to oversee the construction of, and
future instruction in, a new school. Because Cross had recently bought up some of the best
Narragansett fishing lands, Indian leaders rejected the offer and preferred to have nothing to
do with him. But Indians’ growing suspicion of white preachers was not only about land,
for they also distrusted English ministers because they accepted payment for their spiritual
labors. Joseph Fish, a minister at Charlestown, Rhode Island and Stonington, Connecticut,
complained that Indians would not attend his services because “I take Money of my Own
people, for preaching; so Am a Hireling, And therefore cant be a true Minister of Jesus
Christ.” Native preachers like Samuel Niles often took the opportunity to exploit these
sentiments and recruit new congregants to their own churches. Niles reportedly told Indians
to cease attending Fish’s congregation because all learned ministers were “Thieves, Robbers,
Pirates, etc.” “They steal the word,” Niles argued. “God told the Prophets the words they

159 John Beach, *A Continuation of the Calm and Dispassionate Vindication of the Professors of the Church of England, Against The Abusive Misrepresentations and fallacious Argumentations of Mr. Noah Hobart, in his second Address to them. Humbly offered to the Consideration of the good People of New-England* (Boston: D. Fowle, 1751), 70.

160 Andrew Eliot to Joseph Fish, 2 January 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 19 ff3.

161 Diary entry for 22 May, 1769, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 59. When Fish
was pressed by an Indian woman as to why he received money for his work, he responded: “I have; And
Justified It. The good people, over the Water, have Sent over Money to Commissioners Boston, on purpose
for Ministers and Schoolmasters to the Indians; and Commissioners employed me; and so I had what
providence had allotted for me, And twas the Will of God that I, and all ministers, that were devoted to the
Ministry, Should be paid etc. etc.” See diary entry for 17 June, 1771, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light
on Separate Ways*, 78.
Spoke: and These Ministers Steal that Word.”

By describing white ministers as burglars of revelation, Niles and other preachers tapped into psychological anxieties about dispossession and market interactions with white settlers. This strategy was so effective that, by the 1760s, native preachers were beginning to replace white ones. Joseph Fish complained in 1762 that Narragansett Indians had “a great Fondness for the Indian Teachers” and preferred to hear lectures and attend services by Indians rather than Englishman. One instructor named Robert Clelland filed a truly pathetic complaint in 1764 to his bosses in Boston when he asked to be dismissed from the “Low and Melancholy Situation” of trying to teach Indians who refused to hear him. Clelland admitted that in spite of his best attempts to generate an Indian congregation, he was still “forc’t to make way for an Indian master.”

The rise of native preachers in an era of revival gave Indians new figures for spiritual leadership and left many English missionaries out of a job.

These tensions manifested themselves and culminated in the creation of a separate Christian congregation under Samuel Niles in the 1750s. The origins of Niles’ separate church actually lay in a post-Great Awakening schism within Joseph Park’s congregation at Westerly. At the same time that Niles was being chastised for “exhorting” in Park’s church, a deacon named Stephen Babcock was establishing his own separatist congregation. Niles joined Babcock but, to the dismay of Niles and other Narragansett Indians, Babcock ordained a Pequot preacher named James Simon as their Indian minister. The Narragansetts expressed their dismay, either for placing a Pequot as minister of a Narragansett church or for having a

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162 Diary entry for 4 September 1769, in Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, 60.

163 Joseph Fish to Andrew Oliver, 15 November 1762, in Massachusetts Historical Society Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts.

164 Robert Clelland to Andrew Oliver, 19 September 1764, Massachusetts Historical Society Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts.
white Englishman decide who their pastor should be. Either way, the Narragansetts threatened to separate again, but Simon’s eventual migration out of Narragansett avoided the conflict and elevated Niles to the position of pastor within the newly formed church by the early 1750s. Samuel Niles was now at the head of his own congregation.

One of the problems that Old Lights faced when dealing with someone as controversial as Niles was that he was not only supported by the majority of Narragansett Indians, but was also a pretty good preacher. Joseph Fish, who became Niles’ nemesis in the 1760s, conceded that Niles was “a Sober Religious Man, of Good Sense and great Fluency of Speech; and know not but a very honest Man. Has a good deal of the Scriptures by heart, and professes a Regard for the Bible.” Even at the height of the Niles separation controversy, one New England divine told Fish that Niles should be “treated and Spoken of with great tenderness.” Ezra Stiles, an Old Light minister in Newport, Rhode Island, entertained Niles at his home in the spring of 1772. Although Stiles found it “extraordinary” (and not in a good way) that Niles could not read, the former was nevertheless impressed with his guest’s theological and scriptural knowledge. “He is however acquainted with the Doctrines of the Gospel,” Stiles observed, “and an earnest zealous Man, and perhaps does more good to the Indians than any White Man could do.” Stiles also concluded that his Indian guest was “of an unblameable Life as to Morals and Sobriety” and generally had a “very great Influence

165 Simmons, “Red Yankees”: 262-264.

166 Joseph Fish to Joseph Sewall, written after 18 September 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, 4-5.

167 Andrew Eliot to Joseph Fish, 2 January 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, 11.
over the Indians.”

By the 1760s Niles had become a wildly popular and widely respected Narragansett pastor.

In spite of his personal popularity, there were several serious theological and ecclesiastical complications that Niles’ ascension into ministerial authority exposed. The first was his unique ordination. Because no white ministers would officiate at his ordination, Niles’ church instead “chose and appointed three Brethren Indians to ordain him.” Niles told Ezra Stiles that, during his lengthy ordination (it lasted an entire afternoon), the “3 Brethren laid their Hands” on him and one of them “prayed over him and gave him the charge of that Flock.” “Such a Spirit was outpoured and fell upon them,” Niles recalled, “that many others of the Congregation prayed aloud and lift up their hearts with prayers and Tears to God.” In the meantime, white witnesses, who probably mistook this entire process for utter confusion, “were disgusted and went away.” At the end of the ordination the Indian congregation sang a few psalms and exited the meeting house.

Joseph Fish told a friend the same ordination story and emphasized that the Indians who ordained Niles were definitely “not in any Office.” When Niles was baptized for the second time in his life – the first by sprinkling and the second by total immersion – Stiles made note that it was conducted “by an Indian not an Elder.”

The problem, therefore, was the source of Niles’ ordination. Although his

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170 Joseph Fish to Joseph Sewall, 18 September 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 4.

171 Diary entry for 8 May 1772, in Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, Vol. I, 232. Although Niles probably did not officially change his name during this second baptism, it is noteworthy that many Indians within his congregation referred to him as “Father Sam.” For Old Light Congregationalists, such a nickname only validated their fears that separatism could result in outright popery (i.e. “Father”) or a total breakdown in deferential social relationships (i.e. “Sam”). For “Father Sam,” see Joseph Fish to Joseph Sewall, 18 September, 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 6.
congregation had accepted him by incorporating some elements of Christian ordination, the foundation for this ecclesiastical exercise was suspect. Indeed, the laying on of hands not only symbolized a transfer of spiritual authority, but also bound all ministers into a sacred genealogy that could trace itself back to the first apostles and even Christ himself. Employing lay Indians – who had no claim to this spiritual lineage – to ordain Samuel Niles was analogous to Pope Leo III placing the crown on Charlemagne’s head: it only highlighted the pressing question of where ultimate authority originated. Niles’ fanatical popularity within Narragansett society, his unblemished personal record, and his church’s separate establishment away from the Congregational mainstream ensured that irritated white ministers could only complain about Niles’ dubious claim to ministerial power. They had neither the will nor the authority to depose him.

For conventional Congregationalists, the most infuriating aspect of Niles’ pastorate was his illiteracy. “He cannot read a word,” Fish complained to a friend, “and So is wholly dependant [sic] Upon the (too Seldom) Reading of others: Which exposes him, (doubtless) to a great deal of Inacuracy [sic] in using Texts of Scriptures, if not gross Mistakes in the Application of them.”172 For Protestants who understood scripture literally as God’s revelation, the inability of a pastor to read and communicate divine truths to his congregation could be unorthodox at best, heretical at worst. Fish contended that separatists of all pales (including Indians) generally lacked any knowledge of scripture and were pathetically weak in biblical exegesis. This not only made them poor scholars and teachers, but also resulted in “low and empty performances” in the pulpit.173 Fish heard from one source that Niles’ lectures were filled with “gross Error…Ignorance, Railing,” and “outpourings of

172 Joseph Fish to Joseph Sewall, 18 September 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, 5.

173 Quoted in Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, xxvi.
Ignorance.”  

“Those Indian Teachers,” Fish whined to Andrew Oliver, “were very ignorant: some of them, especially the Chief Speaker…could not read a word in the Bible.”

Ironically, literacy was one of the reasons why Indians turned to Niles in the first place. At least one Narragansett reported that Fish told Indians they could not hope for a saving conversion if they could not read. They therefore concluded that, because they were illiterate, they “Were All going to hell.”

Although Fish tried to reassure Indians that literacy was ultimately not necessary for salvation, Narragansetts still preferred to turn to a person like themselves: an illiterate Indian who claimed that his own spiritual authority derived not from a sacred text but from personal revelation, visions, and dreams.

If Niles’ inability to read was problematic, the source of his spiritual knowledge was even more so. Although he did have scripture read to him, Niles also relied upon personal revelation, including visions and dreams, to access what he believed was God’s message. In doing so, Niles called upon an established indigenous tradition of using dreams and vision quests to communicate with the spirit world. James Axtell has noted that Indian men often undertook vision quests “in hopes of receiving instruction from a guardian spirit.” For Niles and other Christian Indian preachers, the guardian spirit they were trying to communicate with was probably Christ himself. Indeed, Axtell has also argued that Manitou, or sacred spirits who possessed a wealth of spiritual power, served as advisors and guardians to those who needed assistance. Furthermore, Manitou were known for their “ultimate power of

174 Diary entry for 4 September 1769, in Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, 60.

175 Joseph Fish to Andrew Oliver, 15 November 1762, in Massachusetts Historical Society Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts.

176 Diary entry for 8 November 1773, in Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, 98.
metamorphosis.” As a spirit who multiplied loaves of bread, converted water into wine, and himself became transubstantiated during communion, Christ could have been interpreted and perceived as the ultimate Manitou for Narragansett Indians. Like Afro and Indian Moravians, Narragansetts approached the ultimate deity – God – through the lesser spiritual force of Christ. Christ was therefore a gateway and intermediary between humans and the creator of all things.

Dreams could also reveal visions of heaven that reflected the socio-historical realities of colonialism. One Indian named Tobe had a dream where he went to heaven and saw “the Great God” as well as Jesus Christ (whom he described as a “handsome Man”). Tobe also dreamt that he saw “a Multitude of Folks in Heaven, Resembling Butterflies of Many Colours.” While Tobe’s dream certainly could have been subconscious nonsense, it may have had its origins in Rhode Island’s vibrant multicultural population, as Indians, whites, and blacks intermingled in the Narragansett region. It was probably no accident that Tobe’s vision of heaven was an inclusive one that welcomed all souls, regardless of race, ethnicity, or class. In their dreams, vision quests, and recounting of scripture through memory, Niles and other Christian Indians creatively translated Christianity – including the personage of Christ and their visions of heaven – to incorporate it into a framework of indigenous cosmology and spirituality.

Congregational contemporaries, of course, did not see Niles’ reliance upon dreams and visions as a “creative translation” of Christianity. Joseph Fish thought Tobe’s dream was

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179 Diary entry for 5 July 1773, in Simmons and Simmons, Old Light on Separate Ways, 93.
“Strange,” “Horrible,” and even “Gross.” Fish and his colleagues also scoffed at the “inward impressions,” “False Religion,” “wild Imaginations,” “visionary things,” and “idle dreams” of Indian separatist preaching. Andrew Eliot told Fish that he was sorry that Niles threatened to lead his Indian congregants “from the Sacred oracles to his own whims and imaginations.” As if this was not clear enough, Niles’ reliance upon direct revelation, rather than biblical study, threatened to undermine the very fabric of New England’s spiritual order. Fish feared that Niles relied too much upon his own spirit to teach him church doctrine and conduct, and was therefore “in imminent danger of leaving the Word, for the Guidance [sic] of Feelings, Impressions, Visions, Appearances and Directions of Angels and of Christ himself in a Visionary Way.” If Fish did not put it directly enough in his letters to friends and colleagues, he stated it plainly in his diary: Indians threatened the status quo because they were “taught by the Spirit, immediately from Heaven: So have teachings above the Bible.” It was one thing to create congregations separate from English ecclesiastical authority, but quite another to cast off thousands of years of scriptural tradition to find new revelations in dreams. Samuel Niles and other Indian separatists thereby represented not only a threat to Congregational orthodoxy, but also an implicit challenge to biblical authority itself. As such, Fish could only interpret his battle with Samuel Niles theologically. When

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180 Diary entry for 8 November 1773, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 98.

181 Quoted in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, xxvii; Joseph Fish to Nathaniel Whitaker, 30 July 1766, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 29; and Andrew Eliot to Joseph Fish, 2 January, 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 11.

182 Andrew Eliot to Joseph Fish, 2 January 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 11.

183 Joseph Fish to Joseph Sewall, 18 September 1765, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 5. Fish actually implied that this vision-based approach to preaching motivated Niles to ordain another Indian, an action would have been abhorrent to conservative Congregationalists already upset at Niles’ own ordination.

184 Diary entry for 22 May 1769, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 59.
Niles urged his Indian congregation not to attend any of Joseph Fish’s services, the latter recorded that “Satan has a hand in Stirring up Sam Niles.” While Fish attributed the rise of separate native churches under Indian pastors to Satan’s malicious designs, the roots of Niles’ spiritual leadership lay instead in Narragansett concerns over dispossession as well as a wider effort to fuse indigenous spirituality with Christian revivalism.

While the line between sincere piety and ecstatic excess was certainly thin, the boundaries between Christian preacher and native revitalist were also very porous. In fact, Samuel Niles might be viewed as a kind of native revivalist, or a spiritual leader who used his sacred authority as a tool to try to maintain Indian land and preserve Narragansett culture. As was the case with Niles, native preachers who were members of established Protestant congregations or trained in English schools had the potential to use Christianity in ways that

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185 Diary entry for 21 November 1774, in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 110. These concerns over native separatism never stopped Joseph Fish and other ministers from employing native preachers in their schools and missions. In fact, Fish employed Sampson Woyboy, Charles Daniel, and John Shattock, Jr. as teachers in his Indian school in Stonington, Connecticut. For Woyboy see Joseph Fish to Andrew Oliver, 15 November 1762 in Massachusetts Historical Society Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts. For Daniel see Joseph Fish, “Accounts of journeys and lectures, 23 October 1771,” in Massachusetts Historical Society Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts; Diary entry for 27 May 1771 in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 77; and Joseph Fish to Andrew Oliver, 10 November 1773 in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 99. For Shattock see Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 70 ff. 11; and Joseph Fish and John Shattock, Sr., to Eleazar Wheelock, 30 January 1771 in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 214-215. In fact, the rise of Indian separatist churches urged Fish to find other, more manageable, native preachers who could combat Niles’ whimsical theology with their own form of intellectual Indian Congregationalism. This probably explains why, in the fall of 1770, Fish urged Indians to establish yet another Christian congregation, this time under the tutelage of James Daniel and the rest of Ninigret’s sachem party. This attempt to break Niles’ influence among the Narragansetts failed. See diary entry for 24 September, 1770 in Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light on Separate Ways*, 67.

186 Writing in 1768, Ezra Stiles saw these conflicts differently. He suggested that Indian separation was a result of New Light ministers leading their congregations into “Irregularities & Separations.” Although they refused to ordain Separatists of all pales – including Baptists and Indians – Stiles noted that “in Truth they had bro’t these Illiterates forward by making them pub. Exhorters.” Stiles, in other words, argued that the New Lights themselves were responsible for the wave of separation that characterized New England churches in the middle of the eighteenth century, for it was a classic example of the chicken coming home to roost. See Ezra Stiles, *Extracts From the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., 1755-1794 : With a Selection From His Correspondence*, ed. Franklin Bowditch Dexter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), 252.

187 This is, in fact, Linford Fisher’s argument in “Traditionary Religion.”
white ministers did not approve. Puritan divine Charles Chauncy rejected the idea of bringing Indian children to English schools because, after the great expense paid for their education, there was no guarantee that they would not be “viciously turned” into renegade preachers or apostates.  

Although Presbyterian missionary David Brainerd rejoiced that his interpreter, Moses Tatamy, had taken up preaching to other Indians in the Delaware Valley, he noted that the specter of Indian separatism always abounded when offering spiritual authority to indigenous peoples. “Spiritual Pride,” Brainerd recounted, “also discover’d itself in various Instances; and in one or two an unbecoming Ambition of being Teachers of others.” This “unbecoming Ambition,” however, was rather an attempt on the part of Indian neophytes to apply selected elements of Christian doctrine or ritual to the socio-historical realities of Native American experience in a colonial world.

Scholars like Gregory Dowd and Alfred Cave have noted how native revitalization movements among Indians borrowed selectively from both indigenous traditions as well as Christian cosmologies. Papunhunk, for example, was a Munsee spiritual leader who, along


189 David Brainerd, An Abridgment of Mr. David Brainerd’s Journal among the Indians. Or, the Rise and Progress of a Remarkable Work of Grace among a Number of the Indians. In the Provinces of New-Jersey and Pennsylvania (London: John Oswald, 1748), 108. On the other hand, Brainerd also noted that there were native revivalists among his potential converts who either used Christianity or could have been Christians in the making. When Brainerd was confronted by a zealous reformer during his mission to Pennsylvania in the 1740s, he was initially struck by the “pontifical garb” of his bear costume that failed to distinguish him as a “human Creature.” But after discoursing with the reformer about Christianity, Brainerd eventually concluded that this reformer actually possessed “something in his Temper and Disposition that look’d more like true Religion than any thing I ever observed amongst other Heathens.” See David Brainerd, Mirabilia Dei inter Indicos, or the Rise and Progress Of a Remarkable Work of Grace Amongst a Number of the Indians In the Provinces of New-Jersey and Pennsylvania, Justly Represented in A Journal Kept by Order of the Honourable Society (in Scotland) for Propagating Christian Knowledge. With some General Remarks (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1746), 54-56; and Cave, Prophets of the Great Spirit, 11-14.

with several colleagues, preached to a community of Indians on the Susquehanna River in 1752. Although his message was nativist – he deplored the use of liquor, demanded that the English continue fair gift exchanges, and was infuriated by the loss of Indian land – he also borrowed from his Quaker contemporaries by proclaiming himself an avid pacifist.\textsuperscript{191} Moravian missionary John Heckewelder recalled an Indian preacher working around Cayuga in New York in the early 1760s. This preacher proclaimed that the “Great Spirit” had chosen him to not only point out the sins of Native Americans, but also to communicate how Indians could redeem themselves and regain the favor of the Great One. The Cayuga revivalist employed a map within a book of deerskin to make his message clear. The map was actually a sacred geographical outline of Indian lands, where Indians were blocked into their lands by an evil spirit restricting them from accessing “the heavenly regions.”\textsuperscript{192} Calling it “the great Book or Writing,” the Cayuga preacher held up the book and its contents during his orations, urging his listeners to abstain from drinking liquor, repent for their sins, and return to the old ways. The preacher even suggested that each Indian family create and preserve a book just like the one he was using in his sermons.\textsuperscript{193} This emphasis on the repentance for sin and the reference to a sacred text as a source of spiritual revelation, combined with the experience of

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\textsuperscript{191} Merritt, \textit{At the Crossroads}, 126-127. \\
\textsuperscript{192} John Heckewelder, “An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs, of The Indian Nations, Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States,” in \textit{Transactions of the Historical & Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, For Promoting Useful Knowledge} Vol. I (Philadelphia: Abraham Small, 1819), 289. Heckewelder also noted that Wangomend, another Indian prophet, argued that he had actually been to heaven and discovered that there were in fact three heavens, one for Indians, one for whites, and one for blacks. See Heckewelder’s discussion of Wangomend from 290-292. \\
\textsuperscript{193} He even offered to make the book himself for a small fee.
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sermonizing oratory; all of these elements illustrate how native revitalization movements fused indigenous traditions with Christian idioms, cosmologies, and practices.\textsuperscript{194}

The Cayuga preacher’s use of a sacred text is remarkable for two reasons. First, many literate blacks within the African diaspora had a parallel experience with literacy. Often invoking the trope of the “talking book” in their autobiographies, black Atlantic writers believed that literacy was a sacred power which granted them access to divine revelations that illiterate persons did not possess. It was in this way that many Africans believed that books, like the preacher’s deerskin book, could help them navigate the complicated pitfalls of racial oppression within a framework of indigenized Christianity.\textsuperscript{195} Secondly, it is supremely ironic this preacher employed, and indeed embraced, an idea of sacred texts while Samuel Niles was doing just the opposite. Niles, who had been exposed to and trained within institutionalized Congregationalism, rejected the book as the only source of spiritual authority and instead incorporated his own memories, dreams, and visions into a broad understanding of revelation. The Cayuga preacher, who lacked any formal Christian training, embraced the book as a sacred text from which Indians could direct their spiritual and temporal lives. The problematics surrounding literacy and text as spiritual authority thus reveal the myriad ways in which separatist preachers and native revivalists blurred the “boundaries of religious practice” by selectively translating elements of Christianity into their own indigenous frameworks.\textsuperscript{196}

\textsuperscript{194} Heckewelder, “An Account of the History Manners, and Customs, of the Indian Nations,” 287-290. Also see Heckewelder’s larger discussion of “Preachers and Prophets” from the mid-eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century on pages 286-295.


native preachers was both an opportunity and a problem. Although white ministers depended upon and sought to cultivate indigenous spiritual leaders, they had little control over how these preachers would use Christianity to craft their own messages of salvation and redemption. The cases of Samuel Niles and the Cayuga preacher thus demonstrate not only how Christianity became indigenized, but also how Indians detached Christianity from its Western moorings and appropriated it for their own political, cultural, and spiritual agendas.

The Moravian missions of the 1730s, Anglican efforts in the 1740s, and the controversies within southeastern New England Indian churches in the middle of the eighteenth century appear, on the surface, to have little in common. But the rise of Afro-Moravianism in the Danish Caribbean, the creation and collapse of the Charleston Negro School, and the increase of separatism among Indian congregations all resulted from and promulgated a larger, transatlantic period of revival that offered new ways for blacks and Indians to appropriate and translate Christianity. Even when the evangelical revivals of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield did not touch these missions directly, they still coincided with several major shifts in missionary policy.

These changes were threefold. The first change was about scale. This period witnessed a veritable explosion in the use of black and Indian evangelists in Protestant missions throughout the Atlantic from 1735 onwards. While there were already dozens of Puritan Indian preachers in New England villages by that time, the only other denomination to follow their lead was the Anglicans, and they failed in their efforts to cultivate a royal Indian pastorate in the first half of the eighteenth century. By the third quarter of that century, however, we find New England preachers not only continuing to lead their congregations, but also creating new ones, as Samuel Niles did. Anglicans began using Mohawk teachers in their missions to the Iroquois, David Brainerd allowed his interpreter to
continue to preach in the Delaware Valley when his own services were over, another Indian named Good Peter began taking up the task of preaching to his fellow Oneidas, and Indian revivalists like the Cayuga preacher incorporated elements of Christianity into their own nativist critique of Indian historical experiences. Perhaps most importantly, Eleazar Wheelock began Moor’s Charity School in the 1750s, an institution which would train dozens of Indians to serve as missionaries to other Indians on the New York frontier. By the middle of the eighteenth century there were also Afro-Moravian national helpers in the Danish and English Caribbean missions, slave teachers in Charleston as well as throughout Virginia, and an Anglican African beginning his mission on Africa’s Gold Coast.

This leads to the second major shift in missionary policy: while no denomination had considered training blacks for evangelical positions in the early eighteenth century, by the 1760s that policy had changed dramatically, as there were black preachers in the Caribbean, American south, and West Africa. And yet, Moravians and Anglicans understood that the rise of an elite black preacher class in a slave society also threatened to subvert the precarious social hierarchies upon which racial slavery was built. Thirdly, the threat of Indian separatism, while always a concern, became ever more immediate during this period of evangelical revivalism. Not only did Indians begin to break away from mainstream Protestant churches in the middle of the century, they also embraced new forms of Indian spiritual leadership that offered both explicit and implicit critiques of traditional secular and spiritual power. Indeed, Amerindian preachers who exhorted against dispossession, alcoholism, and the waning spiritual condition of their fellow Indians effectively blurred the boundaries between nativist revitalization and Christian revivalism. As such, black and Indian preachers all found unique ways to participate in the revivalism of the eighteenth

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197 This is discussed in later chapters.
century, even as they translated evangelical Christianity to fight their own secular and spiritual battles.
CHAPTER FOUR

A BLACK AMONG BLACKS: AFRICANS AND EMPIRE IN PHILIP QUÁQUE’S CAPE COAST MISSION

The two Anglican missionaries who became correspondents during the third quarter of the eighteenth century seemed to have little in common. While one was stationed in the idyllic town of Newburyport, Massachusetts, the other was assigned to Cape Coast Castle, West Africa’s brutal and notorious slave trading fort. Nevertheless, the men became fast friends when the New Englander wrote to his colleague across the Atlantic to inquire about the progress that the gospel had been making in Africa since his arrival there in the 1760s. As two employees of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), they could certainly relate to one another’s problems.¹ They lamented the slow spread of the gospel in Africa, expressed disappointment at the state of religion in America, and complained bitterly about the constant need for more books, stationery, and other supplies. They signed their letters in the most affectionate of ways and their wives even exchanged polite greetings through their husbands. Unfortunately, the American Revolution did to this relationship what it did to so many other ties that seemed to bind.

While the missionary in Africa was a clear supporter of the British empire, the minister in Newburyport seemed less fervent about his own loyalty. In the spring of 1775 he wrote to his friend in Africa to complain of the bitter injustices that the American colonists

¹ The SPG was founded in 1701, three years after the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) was created. Both were originated by Thomas Bray. While the SPCK was designed to operate schools and distribute books, the SPG actively employed missionaries throughout the world.
faced under the yoke of the tyrannical British. He appropriated the revolutionary rhetoric of the age and argued that American colonists were verging fast towards oppression and, of course, slavery. Expecting an empathetic response, the Massachusetts man instead received a harsh scolding by the missionary in Africa for his protests. His friend wrote back, “In your Epistle You seem to lament bitterly of your Mother Country for Universal Liberty. You, upon whom the light of the Gospel flourishes and abound[s]…advancing daily towards the seat of Bliss, find the Hardships of Bondage and Oppression! Good God can this be possible!?” The African missionary was particularly irate at his colleague’s tired use of the metaphor of slavery to explain the colonists’ relationship with the empire. As a missionary on the Cape Coast, the Anglican had witnessed firsthand the horror and cruelty of the transatlantic slave system. Naturally, he compared the “slavery” of the colonists to the actual enslavement of people all around him. He asserted, “When I behold with Sorrowful sighing, my poor abject Countrymen over whom You without the Bowels of Christian Love and Pity, hold in cruel Bondage…I could wish that the Conviction of this Practice would spring first from the Breast of us all, particularly you, since We know perfectly well the heinousness of it.”

The African missionary was clearly drawing attention to that central paradox of liberty and slavery in American history. He was also reminding his friend that the “oppression” of the British empire could never compare to the oppression of actual, physical enslavement.

But the choice of “countrymen” for his description of Africans was not a rhetorical ruse, for

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this missionary was Philip Quaque, an African who was born on the same slave-trading coast he now hoped to convert.

In spite of the abundance of primary source material on African Anglican Philip Quaque, he remains a fairly obscure figure. 4 Kweku, as he was originally called, was born into a prosperous family of Fetus, a group of Gold Coast Africans whose language fell within the larger Akan dialect. 5 He was sent from West Africa to England when he was a young boy, tutored by an Anglican minister for over a decade, ordained as a deacon and then missionary within the Anglican Church, and finally sent back to Africa in February of 1766. He lived on the Cape Coast for half a century, writing over 40 letters – totaling nearly 200 pages – to the SPG from his home at Cape Coast Castle. 6 Unlike sermons, tracts, or even missionary accounts, Quaque’s letters were never meant for public eyes. Of course, he knew that the letters would be added to the official SPG record, but since they are not public


5 They lived in what is now modern-day Ghana. Quaque’s last name (actually Kweku in Fetu) meant born on a Wednesday.

6 The letters are available under two different titles. The first is Philip Quaque, Letters of the Rev. Philip Quaque of West Africa (East Ardsley, England: Micro Methods Ltd., 1980-1985). The second is Philip Quaque, The Letters of Philip Quaque, 1766-1811 (East Ardsley, England: E.P. Microform, 1970s). There are only a handful of libraries that own these microforms, and the originals are housed at the Rhodes House Library, Oxford University. Although there is no notable difference in content or format between the two letter collections, I have used the first one throughout. They are simply referred to as Quaque Letters.
documents *per se*, they avoid the rhetorical and formulaic devices of most published missionary writings and reveal a candid, and often critical, analysis of his mission. Even when he dressed his letters in the language of Christian humility, Quaque still used them as an opportunity to formulate and articulate his relationship with the empire he was trying to improve and the indigenous peoples he was hoping to save. Philip Quaque’s mission to the Cape Coast therefore offers a rare opportunity to examine how native missionaries conceptualized their relationships with empire and other native peoples while simultaneously carving out a place for indigenous Christians within a larger sacred history.

**American Missions, African Bodies**

The origins of Philip Quaque’s mission reside in both African and American missionary history. The first few chapters of this dissertation have discussed how King Philip’s War and its aftermath had, by the end of the seventeenth century, taken away much of the Puritan zeal to Christianize Native Americans. Back in England, however, several Anglican organizations were created to spread the gospel in the ever-expanding British empire, the most important being the SPG, which was founded in 1701. Although the SPG was primarily concerned with improving the piety and practice of English settlers throughout the world, the state of native peoples and slaves increasingly fell under their purview. They established a mission among the New York Mohawks as early as 1704 and were traversing that frontier just as the Puritans had in New England a generation earlier. Furthermore, as

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7 The SPG was founded in 1701 and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) was officially established around 1698. While the SPCK was designed to establish schools and disseminate religious texts throughout the world, the SPG served as the missionary arm of the Anglican Church. Both were founded by Thomas Bray.

8 This mission station, like so many other mission stations, was not a permanent one. It had missionaries coming in and out of that region, and it was fairly peripatetic in terms of when it was actually in operation.
increasingly more African slaves were transported into the American colonies, SPG missionaries also became interested in their collective spiritual fates. By the 1740s the SPG, in addition to Moravians and other Protestant denominations, was much more active in seeking out indigenous evangelists for their missions throughout the Atlantic.

One of the agents of this transformation was Thomas Thompson, a Cambridge-educated Anglican missionary stationed in Monmouth County, New Jersey from 1745 to 1751. Whether he knew it or not, Thompson was working during a period of great change for the Protestant missionary enterprise. The First Great Awakening evoked powerful religious passions from New England to South Carolina. Puritans once again began depending on native peoples in their missions, and Native Americans were even beginning to form their own separate churches in New England and New York. Moravians had established missions in Greenland, Pennsylvania, the Caribbean, and other places around the world, employing “national helpers” in each of their evangelical enterprises. It was in this decade that Samson Occom, the Mohegan preacher, commenced his famous missionary career under Eleazar Wheelock. Not to be outdone in this veritable market of evangelical options, the SPG also began using native agents much more frequently. They employed native schoolmasters among the Mohawks in their frontier schools and even established a “Negro School” in Charleston, South Carolina, where two slaves taught dozens of other

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9 This Thomas Thompson should not be confused with another Thomas Thompson who had a mission in South Carolina around the same time that the former Thompson was in New Jersey.


slaves to disseminate the gospel among that colony’s black majority.²² Living in eastern New Jersey during the 1740s, Thompson was quite aware of these major developments, as the SPG annually printed their anniversary sermons with timely updates on missionary activity throughout the Atlantic world. They then sent the sermons and yearly overviews to all of their missionaries, creating an Atlantic-wide network of information that notified each missionary of other evangelical activities, no matter how far away they were stationed.

For his own part, Thompson expressed a keen interest in the religious development of both Indians and African slaves in New Jersey. In his Account of Two Missionary Voyages, published in 1758, Thompson recalled his attempts to expose local slaves to Christian doctrine as soon as he arrived in the colony. He instructed some of them after services on Sundays and even held occasional meetings in his own home, using Lewis’s Exposition and psalms as a way to introduce Christian precepts into slave culture.²³ At the same time, the students that Thompson and other Anglican teachers recruited were not from the rank and file of slave society. Instead, Thompson drew from third generation, English-speaking, domestic sectors of the slave population. There were two reasons for this. The first is fairly obvious: teaching Christianity in a highly stratified slave society could be potentially dangerous, so courting the most Anglicized slaves could help temper some of the more radical elements of Christian theology. On the other hand, Protestant Christianity required a concrete understanding of scripture, a fair amount of literary competency, and the ability to recite key Christian texts. Protestant missionaries had always prided themselves on how seriously they

²² All of these developments have been discussed in previous chapters. For more on slavery in early South Carolina, read Peter H. Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina From 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion (New York: Knopf, 1974).

²³ Graham Russell Hodges, Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North: African Americans in Monmouth County, New Jersey, 1665–1865 (Madison: Madison House, 1997), 70-71. For more on small farm slavery in New Jersey, as well as the Anglican role in attempting to convert slaves, see Hodges, Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North, 43-90.
took conversion, especially in contrast to the ritual and casuistry that Jesuits and Franciscans employed to “convert” hundreds of thousands of native peoples in the Americas. Baptism and conversion were thus affairs of the utmost importance, demanding the intellect and gravitas of an acculturated Afro-American. Circumscribed by both theology and the educational conventions of a slave society, it is doubtful that Thompson made any major impact on the spiritual transformation of New Jersey’s slaves.14

Either satisfied or completely disappointed with his progress, Thompson requested a transfer to the West African coast in 1750, effectively becoming the first Anglican missionary to spend a considerable amount of time on West Africa’s shores. He spent only a few years there. Not surprisingly, he was an early advocate of the belief that American missionary experience would be an appropriate model upon which to base future African missions.15 The first Anglican missionary to plan a sustained evangelical trip to that region of West Africa, Thompson acknowledged that the chances of failing and eventually perishing in the white man’s grave were very high. Yet he still looked to the American historical past for guidance, implicitly comparing Indian evangelical activities with his future African one. He countered those who suggested that his African mission would probably fail by arguing that the mission to Native Americans also had slow beginnings. Drawing upon missionary history, Thompson recalled, “The Indian Mission in North America, which was begun about the Year 1704, did not succeed at first.” After the introduction of new missionaries and native catechists in the 1740s, however, Thompson could confidently claim that the New

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15 The Native American model for African missions is discussed in more detail in chapter 6 of this dissertation. Also, Andrew Porter has correctly argued that American missions among both slaves and Native Americans were the testing ground and crucible for later nineteenth century missions from Africa to India. See Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2004).
York mission “has since flourished, and many of those Heathens have been added to the Lord.” The fact that his missionary voyages to both New Jersey and Africa appear next to each other in his *Account* also suggests the extent to which Thompson’s evangelical activities in Africa might have seemed like a continuous, fluid expansion of his previous missionary duties across the Atlantic. In his mind, as in the minds of many other missionaries, Native Americans, African slaves, and Africans would all be central components in the spread of Christian religion throughout the world, regardless of where they lived. Thompson sought to test that hypothesis with an experiment on Africa’s Cape Coast.

In spite of the explicit comparisons and connections, most people acknowledged that Africa and Africans were somehow quite different. In eighteenth century thought, there was no place darker or more in need of Christian enlightening than Africa, and it was often looked at as a white man’s grave. David Hume, who had little positive to say about Africa or Africans, said that the continent was covered with “barren sands” and “sterile uncultivated lands.” He believed the landscape and people there were “struck with one common curse” and that the entire coast was filled with “unhappy negroes” and “wretched men.” In his anniversary sermon for the SPG, Isaac Maddox paraphrased from previous descriptions of Africa to describe the people there as “all without Exception crafty, villainous, and fraudulent; being sure to slip no Opportunity of cheating an European, nor indeed one another; They seem to be born and bred Villains.” Maddox continued by claiming these

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16 Thomas Thompson, *An Account of Two Missionary Voyages By the Appointment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The One to New Jersey in North America, the Other from America to the Coast of Guinea* (London: Printed for Benj. Dod, at the Bible and Key in Ave-Mary-Lane, near St. Paul’s., 1758), 86.

people were characterized by innumerable “degenerate Vices,” the least not being “Sloth and Idleness.”

“For Christian missionaries, Africa was a desolate spiritual wasteland marked by a vacuous absence of Christian religion. Scholars of legal history have recently outlined the

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18 Isaac Maddox, *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; at the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, on Friday the 15th of February, 1733; Being the Day of their Anniversary Meeting* (London: J. Downing, 1734), 25. Maddox is citing Bosman’s *Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 117.
ways in which the British Atlantic world had multiple “zones of law” and “zones of violence.” If this created a kind of “legal geography,” there was also a form of “sacred geography” at work in Atlantic missionary enterprises. Christian missionaries considered England and the expanding American settlements as zones of Protestant piety, where the light of the gospel shined more brightly than anywhere else. The Native American borderlands and the entire continent of Africa, on the other hand, were zones of intense irreligiosity, in spite of the presence of both Roman Catholicism and Islam in many communities on Africa’s coast. Africa, in particular, was a land of sin, brutality, and rampant crime. As Isaac Maddox noted in his anniversary sermon, “Murder, Adultery, and Theft, here are accounted no Sins.” When Thomas Thompson preached to English traders on the African coast in 1752, he reported that his audience was glad to hear the gospel, since the traders were “in that melancholy State of Exile from true Religion.” Philip Quaque would also embrace this rhetoric of Africa as an irreligious space, describing it as a “wicked and degenerate land,” a

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20 For more on the idea of America as a sacred space, see John Huxtable Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 184-218; and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). Cañizares-Esguerra argues that both Puritans and Catholics understood the New World as a kind of sacred garden. They therefore employed biblical and agricultural tropes to characterize their missionary work in this sacred landscape, an act that Cañizares-Esguerra calls “sacred gardening.”


23 *Thompson, An Account of Two Missionary Voyages*, 32.
“barren land,” a “strange place,” or even “these distant Clymes.”

He complained to his friends and colleagues throughout the Atlantic world about the lack of religion there, and the overall “wretched state of Africa.”

By all accounts, Africa was certainly a “religious periphery.” If London was the “Jerusalem of England,” as itinerate preacher George Whitefield once claimed, then Africa was certainly a modern-day Sodom or Gomorrah.

In fact, it was the very climate of Africa that marked it as distinctly different from missions anywhere else in the world. Africa was understood as a sultry, hot, exotic place containing climatic and epidemiological conditions that would wreak havoc on European bodies. Thomas Thompson stayed in Africa for only four years before he departed in 1756 on account of the climate and its impact on his health. The SPG readily acknowledged that “a longer Stay in that Climate would deprive him of his Health, if not his Life,” and agreed to reassign him to England. He hoped that some other missionary “with better Health” might be able to succeed him after he left.

Philip Quaque’s first wife and her wife’s friend who

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24 All quotes except “strange place” taken from undated letter from Quaque to the SPG, in Quaque Letters. It was probably written in the period from October 20th to the end of 1767. “Strange place” extracted from Quaque to the SPG, 7 March 1767, in Quaque Letters.

25 Quaque to the SPG, 17 March 1773, in Quaque Letters.

26 Charles Cohen applied this term to the British North American mainland colonies, although the phrase is perhaps even more appropriate for African missions. For Cohen’s discussion of North America as a religious periphery, see Charles L. Cohen, “The Colonization of British North America as an Episode in the History of Christianity,” Church History 72 No. 3 (September 2003): 553-568.


28 Edmund Keene, A Sermon Preach’d before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday February 18, 1757 (London: E. Owen, 1757), 59-60.
accompanied them to Cape Coast (both of whom were English) probably should have followed in Thompson’s footsteps, for they both experienced premature deaths in Africa.

Historians have long noted the vital role that ideas about the body played in cultural encounters between Europeans and Native Americans. The same could be said for the missionary encounter between Europeans and Africans. In fact, the African climate’s effect on the body would serve as both a metaphor and physical marker of racial difference between Europeans and Africans. William Bosman, an English traveler to West Africa at the beginning of the eighteenth century, observed that the region’s sudden change from soaring heat during the day to bone-chilling cold at night “occasions several contrary Effects in our [English] bodies.” He also believed that West Africa’s mountain mists were to blame for spreading infections across the peoples of the coast. This mist, Bosman complained, fell “too thick on the Earth” and made it so that it was “almost impossible to escape the infection.” Bosman even admitted that “our Bodies [are] more susceptible to it than the Natives.”

Bosman and other English commentators after him perpetuated the not wholly incorrect idea that West Africa was, for all intents and purposes, a white man’s grave. Anthony Benezet, a leading abolitionist during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, explained that “Altho’ the extream Heat in many Parts of Guinea, is such, as is neither agreeable nor healthy to the

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30 William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts. Containing a Geographical, Political and Natural History of the Kingdoms and Countries: With a Particular Account of the Rise, Progress and Present Condition of all the European Settlements upon that Coast; and the Just Measures for Improving the several Branches of the Guinea Trade* (London: James Knapton and Dan. Midwinter, 1705), 104-105.
Europeans, yet it is well suited to the Constitution of the Negroes.” As such, the bodies of English missionaries would be particularly susceptible the climatological and epidemiological hazards that the land contained. Native Africans would presumably not face such challenges.

Although Africans had successfully adapted to this exotic climate, European commentators nevertheless agreed that the climate had left its imprint on Africans’ faculties, attributes, and behavioral patterns. Thomas Thompson suggested that even though Africans on the coast were not completely savage, most were still “hot and choleric.” This choleric nature produced in them a natural “Impetuosity in their Temper which makes them speak their Words very quick.” Thompson then applied his body metaphor to African culture, describing traditional African religions as a kind of “Deformity” that they had carried all their lives and were visibly ashamed of. It was the African body itself that made the prospect of establishing a native pastorate so appealing to Protestant missionary interests. The theory was that native Africans could not only retain the language of their upbringing but also survive the harsh disease environment, maintain strong constitutions in the exotic climate, and endure the tolling physical labor that African missionary activity would necessarily entail. Ironically, the same kind of logic that made African bodies appear destined for

31 Anthony Benezet, A Short Account Of that Part of Africa, Inhabited by the Negroes. With Respect to the Fertility of the Country: the good Disposition of many of the Natives, and the Manner by which the Slave Trade is carried on. Extracted from divers Authors, in order to shew the Iniquity of that Trade, and the Falsity of the Arguments usually advanced in its Vindication. With Quotations from the Writings of several Persons of Note, viz. George Wallis, Francis Hutcheson, and James Foster, and a large Extract from a Pamphlet, lately published in London, on the Subject of the Slave Trade (Philadelphia: W. Dunlap, 1762), 15-16.

32 Thompson, An Account of Two Missionary Voyages, 72, 56, and 84-85.
perpetual slavery in tropical climes also gave promising young Africans access to Christian spiritual authority.33

Thomas Thompson therefore had several good reasons to try to establish a native pastorate in Africa. First, his deep knowledge of American missionary experiments clearly demonstrated that native preachers could be more effective, especially in the borderlands, than English ones. Secondly, African bodies seemed particularly well-adapted to a climate and environment that would easily crush less sturdy European bodies. Finally, Thompson was not the first to try to train an African pastorate. In fact, several Africans had already been sent to Europe and trained up as missionaries to return to their own countries. The most famous of these were Jacob Protten and James Capitein, both of whom were brought from Africa, educated in continental Europe, and returned to their respective posts on the Gold Coast and Elmina Castle just before the middle of the eighteenth century.34 Protten was a Moravian missionary while Capitein was trained within the Dutch Reformed Church. In his attempt to employ native missionaries, Thompson was building upon a securely poured


foundation of American missionary history, early modern body theory, and West African evangelical experience.35

As soon as Thompson arrived at Cape Coast Castle he attempted to instruct local Africans in Christian precepts.36 Yet he did not do so indiscriminately. Not only did he believe that the Africans on the coast were more civilized and better prepared to accept Christian instruction, he also employed the time-honored policy of looking to the children who came from elite indigenous families to form the backbone of his missionary experiment. He initially hoped that four or even six Africans could be sent back to England for training, and he even tried to extend his ambitious scheme to the Africans living near the slave castle at Anamaboe. Although it is unclear whether Thompson was directly involved in the project, two West Africans (John Aqua and George Sackee) were sent to England around 1753 for religious education and baptism.37 Neither panned out as missionaries. For various reasons, Thompson had to settle for three: they were named William Cudjo, Cabinah, and Philip Quaque.38 They were all sons of prominent African families, they were all under 12 years old, and they all set out together for England in 1754. Trained under several SPG tutors, the boys fared well for the first few years, but Cabinah died soon after his smallpox


36 A comprehensive analysis of this region and its relationship to slavery can be found in William St. Clair, The Door of No Return: The History of Cape Coast Castle and the Atlantic Slave Trade (New York: Bluebridge, 2007).

37 Glasson, “Missionaries, Methodists, and a Ghost”: 35.

38 Cabinah is also sometimes referred to as Thomas Caboro.
inoculation and William Cudjo had apparently gone insane by 1764. While their African families impatiently awaited the homecoming of their sons, family members were dying off. By 1766, when Quaque returned to Africa, the SPG had concluded that William had no family members left, did not possess the mental capacity for travel, and would not be going home anytime soon. Taken from his home in Africa but hoping to return, William Cudjo spent the rest of his life at St. Luke’s Hospital in England. When Quaque would return to Africa, he would do so not with his African compatriots, but with an English wife, her English friend, a bible, and a decade of Anglican training under his belt. He was a transformed man.

The experience of being transported to and living in England had destroyed the bodies and minds of Cudjo and Cabinah, Quaque’s African colleagues. Quaque found that he too was not immune the epidemiological afflictions that ran rampant on Africa’s soil. Even though his birth on the West African coast would have presumably made Quaque impervious to native diseases, his first letters back to the SPG after his return to the coast revealed how his frequent maladies impeded missionary work. After only half a year on the coast, he lamented that, because of repeated sicknesses, “the state of my Constitution is very much altered for the worse.” Disease was ruining his ability to even stand, let alone give to give rousing sermons, and he was perplexed as to why he suffered so much like an Englishman. He even concluded that “This Country is very destructive to the Health of many of the British Constitutions, and tho’ myself being a Native by Birth, yet am not exempted from undergoing the common fate equally with those who are not.”

To make matters worse, a wave of smallpox epidemics struck the slaving fort and surrounding area from 1769 to the early 1770s, leaving hundreds of dead Africans and English traders in its wake. Quaque

39 Quaque to the SPG, 28 September 1766, in Quaque Letters.
survived the smallpox only to be infected with some “tormenting and wasting Guinea Worms.” Otherwise known as *Dracunculiasis*, Guinea worms were a parasitic worm that would enter a human’s body if they drank still and infected water. The worms would then remain in the body for up to a year, becoming as long as three feet and eventually exiting the body, often through the legs or the feet. Quaque understood that the worm could literally paralyze himself and his mission, and he admitted he was “very timorous about this Disorder, as many have been known to lose the use of their Limbs by it, and many others become a Cripple.”  

The worms probably caused Quaque a “grievous pain,” as they had done to so many other victims. But, luckily for Quaque, the worms quietly exited his body before doing any serious damage to either his body or his mission.

Contrary to contemporary discourses concerning the imperviousness of the African body to African diseases, Philip Quaque was indeed affected by the harsh African climate. But just as bodies were susceptible to climate, some early modern theorists also suggested that climates themselves were quite malleable. Interestingly, in 1778 Quaque connected a temporary rise in religious sentiment with climate change. When he wrote to the SPG in the summer of that year, he noted that the frequency and sincerity of devotion was greater in the past three months than he could ever remember. He then bragged about “how widely different the Climate appears to be to what it was a few Years ago,” arguing that this “amazing Alteration” had been felt by every English settler and every African native. The implication was that, just as the climate could shape African and European bodies, the

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40 Quaque to the SPG, 6 February 1771, in *Quaque Letters*.

41 Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 109. Bosman recorded that some victims of guinea worms had nine or ten of them at once, which left them “inexpressibly tormented.”
introduction of civilized Christianity might also ameliorate the African climate.42 In Quaque’s view, the transformation of Africa from a land of death to a Christian land was therefore marked not only by changes in the religious sentiment of the people, but also in the climate itself. Embracing the idea that the advance of human civilization could alter climate, Quaque pointed to climate as proof that Christianity was on the advance among his people.

While early modern ideas about the climate, the body, and disease accentuated the differences between Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans, they also demonstrated the necessity of native evangelists. Just as American missionaries relied upon Native American preachers because of their perceived ability to endure the harsh lifestyle in the wilderness, so too did African bodies became a central advantage to using native African evangelists. The body thus became a physical and metaphorical apparatus for identifying physical differences, even as those very differences opened a window for black missionaries to be employed as evangelists to other Africans.

“A Black Among Blacks”

Even if Philip Quaque was immune to African diseases (he was not) and even if he retained his native tongue to speak fluently in indigenous African languages (he did not), he still would have faced immense challenges in attempting to convert indigenous Africans. Although he spent nearly half a century on the Cape Coast, the success of his mission was slim at best. By the time he was writing to his friend in New England in 1775, he could only boast of 52 baptisms over almost a decade of work, and that included European and mulatto

42 Scholars working within the history of science have examined this relationship between early modern discourses of English expansion and ideas about climate change. See Kupperman, “The Puzzle of the American Climate in the Early Colonial Period”: 1262-1289; as well as selections from James Delbourgo and Nicholas Dew, eds., Science and Empire in the Atlantic World (New York: Routledge, 2008).
Quaque had always doubted whether his unique position as an African preacher on the Cape Coast would make any difference in the religious temperament of Africa’s population. He constantly complained about the irreligion of the English traders and officials in the castle and was even more shocked by the idolatrous customs of native Africans. He even wrote to the SPG that his failure to generate any spiritual transformation often made him wish that he had been sent somewhere else. He was beginning to understand that, instead of using his identity to his advantage, to his “great Sorrow and Astonishment [he had] found it quite the reverse.” He eventually became certain that “Something more than a Human effort must work that effectual Cure of their Bigotry and Superstition.” The SPG agreed that Quaque produced less than stellar results, lamenting that “It was natural for the Society to hope for better fruits from the ministry of a Black among Blacks…this has not been the case.” Although we can certainly debate the long-range impact of Quaque’s mission, there are other important questions at stake. There were perhaps hundreds of native teachers, catechists, and missionaries throughout the early modern Atlantic, but very few written records illuminate exactly how they perceived non-Christian native peoples and

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44 In nearly 200 pages of letters, Quaque never once acknowledges that he remembers any of these customs from his childhood.

45 Quaque to the SPG, 12 June 1780, in *Quaque Letters*.


47 The actual impact of Protestant evangelical activity on West Africa is difficult to surmise, but their success was certainly less than they expected. At the same time, Protestant and Catholic missionaries introduced some Christian aspects into African culture, like Black Christmas, which happened around the time of the annual yam festival. See Wood and Frey, *Come Shouting To Zion*, 30.
positioned themselves between European and indigenous cultures. Quaque’s letters to the SPG therefore offer historians a remarkable opportunity to assess how neophytes attempted to convert other peoples, how they perceived the indigenous peoples they were trying to save, and how they fabricated a unique identity in the process.

Quaque considered himself a central figure in the spiritual battle against what he perceived to be superstitious fetishes in the form of traditional African customs. Although he was born in Africa, his time in England was formative, as he also conceived of England and the people residing there as models of Christian piety, charity, and obedience. He described Old England as “that blessed Christian country” and took pride in his several years of English language, education, and training. By contrast, Quaque characterized his native Africa as a “barren country” full of “Desolate Parts” and inhabited primarily by “poor, Superstitious and Idolatrous People.” These Africans, Quaque believed, were “poor unthinking and lamentable Creatures” who lived in a barren religious landscape marked by avaricious vice, gross paganism, and wicked idolatry. In spite of his reservations about African religion, however, Quaque held fast to the policy that he could never compel his audiences to convert.


50 Quaque to the SPG, 6 August 1782 and 19 August 1771, in Quaque Letters.

51 Quaque to the SPG, 7 March 1767, in Quaque Letters.
no matter how “poor” they appeared. This was a policy that the SPG expressed all throughout the Atlantic world. Just two years after Quaque arrived in Africa William Knox suggested in a pamphlet that “if any success be expected from among the Indians, it must be founded on this principle, that nothing is to be pressed upon them; their own desires must move foremost, and those will always carry them to ask, as much as they can receive.” Protestant missionaries truly believed that forced conversions were an underhanded strategy, for Christianity implied free will, and it would have been theologically irresponsible to impose conversions on anyone. Native peoples had the freedom to seek their salvation just as they had the freedom to reject it.

Although conversion was a matter of free will, native missionaries still perceived themselves as instruments that God used to bring about spiritual transformations. Quaque considered himself as such, and he often followed the strategies and methods used by his predecessor, Thomas Thompson. Like Thompson, Quaque believed that if he were to convert the West African coastal peoples, he had to start with their Cabosheers, or local rulers. Convincing the Cabosheers and other local penyins (elders) to convert would represent a major spiritual victory and vindication for Quaque. These Alpha Africans were the most respected people in Cape Coast society and their conversion could produce a trickle-down effect, resulting in the spiritual salvation of hundreds of thousands of souls. The stakes were high. Cudjo Cabosheer, in particular, was a popular, amiable, and well-respected leader on the Cape Coast in the 1760s and 1770s. Quaque personally witnessed a testament to Cudjo’s popularity when upwards of one million people paid their respects to the coastal

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leader when he died in 1777. Quaque probably expected him to embrace Christianity fairly easily, for he was a relation of Quaque, he was the one who sent Quaque to England in the first place, he had his own children sent there earlier, he supported the creation of a Christian school for local African children, and he even let Quaque preach in his own home. Instead, the Cabosheer viewed Christianity as a tool of diplomacy. In fact, Thompson had earlier described the Cabosheer as very conversant in English and possessing “a good Knowledge of many Things relating to the Government and Affairs in England.” It is quite possible that all of his gestures were actually diplomatic maneuvers designed to gain favor with English officials and advance his commercial interests. In fact, Andrew Porter has suggested that many indigenous peoples, throughout all of the Christian mission experience, accepted Christian schooling while rejecting Christianity itself. Porter claims that they did this because they “found via English a flexible entrée to international commerce, which they were able to turn to their advantage.” When Quaque pushed the Cabosheer on conversion, the latter could only slyly respond that he was “too old to enter into Covenant with God.” Quaque simply retorted that “if you willingly become so, by your good example, no doubt

53 Quaque to the SPG, 17 January 1778, in Quaque Letters. Thomas Thompson, in his Account of Two Missionary Voyages, suggests that the real “king” in that part of Africa not Cudjo Cabosheer, but his little brother, named Amrah Coffi. The Cabosheer was initially offered the kingship but he declined it.

54 There is much confusion about the relationship between Quaque and the Cabosheer. While some sources say that the Cabosheer was Quaque’s father, it is most likely that Quaque was either a grandson or a distant relative. Margaret Priestly suggests that Quaque referred to Cudjo as “nana,” meaning grandfather or chief. See Priestly, “Philip Quaque of Cape Coast,” 106.

55 Thompson, An Account of Two Missionary Voyages, 34.

but that all your Subjects will in all probability become so too.” Cudjo Cabosheer never did take the bait and Quaque had to find other ways to preach to Africa’s black population.

After being rebuffed by Cudjo, Quaque sought to preach on his own. Although he was a “native African” he followed many of the missionary models that he learned during his training and that were most likely already employed by Thomas Thompson years before. Both Thompson and Quaque acknowledged that Africans had some notion of a deity, for they did have a word for God: Yangcúmpong. One converted African even told Thompson that he believed he was “Yangcúmpong’s Man.” And yet, the tenacity of African idolatry and barbarity often made both missionaries doubtful of any future success. Quaque scoffed at traditional African funerary customs, arguing that they demonstrated the “Depravity and Obduracy” of the “Apish” Africans. He marveled at what he perceived to be the idolatrous practices of Africans, constantly railing against the fetishism that he witnessed all around him: sacrifices to goddesses, congregating at sacred rocks, and sacrificing fish as a way to contain disease. Whether Quaque knew it or not, Cape Coast Africans were experiencing major social, demographic, and cultural changes. As Margaret Priestly has noted, the recent aggression of the Ashanti, coupled with migratory movements of Fanti peoples into the Cape Coast area, ensured that Fetu natives like Quaque’s family and others would begin to absorb some elements of Akan culture into their own local, indigenized traditions. What Quaque was witnessing was therefore not a static state of primordial religion, but rather a complex synthesis of various cultural elements from several African groups. Quaque never made

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57 Quaque to the SPG, 28 September 1766, *Quaque Letters*.

58 *Thompson, An Account of Two Missionary Voyages*, 44.

59 Quaque to the SPG, 17 January 1778, in *Quaque Letters*.

60 Priestly, “Philip Quaque of Cape Coast”, 103.
that distinction, and he constantly asserted that all indigenous religious customs, practices, and beliefs were childish and barbaric.

At a large Christian service in the fall of 1767, Quaque adopted Thompson’s tactic of attacking “their absurd Notions.” He reported to the SPG that, during his sermon, he “exposed and ridiculed greatly the folly of their Idolatrous and Superstitious Customs of adoring Fetishes.” Quaque said the audience was impressed, but one of the local penyins later told him that Christianity was not for them because “they were but Black Men, and the only Means or Books afforded by Him to them is their Fetishes.”

In a rather brilliant rhetorical gesture, this penyin identified “books” as a kind of fetish, downplaying the relationship between literacy and religious salvation and tacitly implying that the Bible, too, was a kind of fetish. Whether Quaque caught onto this gibe or not, it nevertheless reflected many Africans’ resistance to Quaque’s Christian message. They had their own systems of thought and religion that satisfied their needs. Many saw no reason to change them.

But Quaque was not completely inflexible. Indeed, his strategies in that 1767 service also demonstrate the ways that he tried to negotiate his way into the hearts and minds of the Africans on the coast. At previous services he noted that some of the local Africans would hear him patiently and attentively, only to bask in the pleasures of hard liquor immediately after he had finished speaking. While Quaque might have been flattered that they offered to drink “upon my Head” – meaning they would drink to his health – he was initially disturbed by such excessive use of liquor. At the same time, Quaque understood that the exchange of rum was central to the slave trading economy of the Cape Coast and that there was little he could do to root out drinking among the coastal population. So instead of pointing out the consumption of liquor as yet another one of their many horrific sins, Quaque actually began

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61 Undated letter from Quaque to the SPG, probably written in the fall of 1767, in Quaque Letters. See footnote 13.
using it as a temptation for Africans to come to his religious services. He admitted that he gave a group of Africans “a flask of Liquor, thinking that that might be the means of enticing them over to it, and told them that now they must not neglect my coming, whenever I officiate in Town.” While Quaque’s bribe might have been morally suspect, he believed he was cleverly exploiting existing social conventions of a community that was fundamentally rooted in exchange. He supplemented his liquor bribe with the singing of the psalms, a standard missionary tactic designed to introduce indigenous communities to biblical knowledge. It apparently had a moving effect on the audience. Since coastal inhabitants were “fond of Music,” they “hearkened to [the psalms] with due Attention, and expressed a Great Veneration” towards them.\footnote{Undated letter from Quaque to the SPG, probably written in the fall of 1767, in Quaque Letters. See footnote 13.}

For all native missionaries throughout the Atlantic world, the psalms could serve as a possible gateway through which indigenous peoples might gain access to revealed religion. Psalms were therefore just as convenient to have on hand as any fiery sermon, bible, or catechism.

Preaching to Africans also generated certain theological and ecclesiastical conundrums. Thomas Thompson found this out when he tried to preach on a Sunday, but everyone was out fishing. After asking around, he learned that Cape Coast residents took Tuesday off instead of Sunday, leaving him with a theological (not to mention logistical) problem that he never really resolved.\footnote{Thompson, An Account of Two Missionary Voyages, 36-37.} When Philip Quaque went to baptize two small infants, he was unable to find suitable sponsors for the children. He wrote back to the SPG and wondered if West Africa’s visible lack of professing Anglicans would make it permissible for him to baptize them without sponsors, or even to have “heathen” parents step...
Traditional models of ecclesiastical policy were thus often questioned and challenged, though rarely abandoned.

In spite of the many disparaging remarks that Quaque made about native Africans and the mulattoes living on the coast – he found the mulatto population to be elitist, haughty, and profane – he nevertheless hoped to place Africans into a larger sacred history of Christianity by comparing them to the Israelites, Egyptians, and even the English themselves. In one letter to the SPG he reminded his benefactors that “England formerly [was] much troubled with Idols and false Notions, till at length the Son of God…came down from Heaven, and revealed his Ways to them.” God then “made some Pastors and Teachers, who [knew] much more of this Will and were to be sent One by One into different Parts, to instruct and bring over the Ignorant, that they also might know Him and his Will and so believe in Him, by the forsaking and throwing aside of their Fetishes and false Notions.”

Quaque even cited one African tradition of a man’s brother inheriting his property and identity – including his wife and family – when the man dies. This custom seemed to be “the established system thro’ out the whole African Country.” Quaque compared the practice to a similar question posed to Jesus by the Sadducees in the 22\textsuperscript{nd} chapter of the book of Matthew. In doing so, Quaque was not only positioning himself as a spiritual descendant of Christ, but also describing Africans as latter-day Sadducees who could eventually be

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64 Quaque to the SPG, 28 September 1766, in Quaque Letters.

65 Colin Kidd has recently argued that, in spite of some radical Enlightened thinkers to establish races as innately and irrevocably separate (including having separate origins) most early modern theologians continued to believe in the fundamental unity of the human race and the redeemability of the world’s indigenous peoples. See Colin Kidd, The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 79-120.

66 Undated letter from Quaque to the SPG, probably written in the fall of 1767, in Quaque Letters. See footnote 13.

67 Quaque had mistakenly argued that this was taken from the 22\textsuperscript{nd} chapter from the Book of Mark. This might have been disturbing to his Anglican supporters, since Mark did not even have 22 chapters.
converted and redeemed. By comparing Africa to Christianity’s primitive churches, Quaque reminded his English backers that, despite the great obstacles there, Africa and Africans could be redeemed. In this way Quaque espoused a kind of benevolent evangelicalism that would avoid the essentializing tendencies of contemporary racial discourses while chalking religious differences up to culture. In other words, Africans were not inherently savage, barbaric, or superstitious. Their culture had made them so. This is perhaps why Quaque had also established and taught in several different schools by the end of his career, hoping to compel future native missionaries to carry on the work he had been doing for decades. Quaque constantly sought to carve out a narrative space for Africans by consistently arguing that they were not natural barbarians, but rather Christians in the making. In this sense Quaque was articulating what historian James Sidbury has called an “affiliative” interpretation of African identity. Quaque perceived Africans as divided, disparate, and at an early stage in human cultural development, but he nevertheless envisioned a day in which evangelical Christianity would bind them together and shape their collective destiny as a nation.

“Hybridity” and “syncretism” have recently become critical concepts in historical and theoretical discourse. Scholars have called upon these models to conceptualize cultural interactions and translations between Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans during the early modern period. These models help explain how indigenous peoples could appropriate some aspects of Western European culture (especially religion, forms of trade, and military

68 Ty Reese has adequately covered the nature and impact of Quaque’s educational efforts. See Reese, “Sheep in the Jaws of So Many Ravenous Wolves,” 348-372. Interestingly, one of the schools that sprang up was run by a group of Englishmen known as the “Torridzonian Society,” once again revealing the early modern English obsession with climates, bodies, and Aristotelian geography. Quaque was hired to teach in their school.

69 Sidbury traces the distinction between “affiliative” (identity based upon a conscious affiliation) and “filiative” (identity based upon a shared family or kinship lineage) in Sidbury, Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
techniques) while simultaneously fusing them with their own traditions, cosmologies, and practices. On the surface, it would seem as if native missionaries were hybrid creatures par excellence, human embodiments of the meeting of Western and indigenous cultures. Quaque certainly revealed some of this hybridity by choosing to marry a local African girl after his English wife died.\(^{70}\) He even acted as “interim chief” for a group of Africans during an itinerant preaching tour at Dixcove Fort to the north.\(^{71}\) Even though Philip Quaque still considered himself an African, his identity was first and foremost as a Christian. Literary scholar and postcolonial theorist Edward Said explained that, when European commentators encountered and wrote about new and exotic peoples, they were not just objectively describing what they saw, but actually creating their own oppositional identities based upon their perception of what constituted “otherness.” Europeans who wrote about other peoples, Said argued, were implicitly writing about, and defining, themselves.\(^{72}\) Through his own writings to the SPG and his correspondents in the American colonies, Philip Quaque engaged in the very same narrative project as European colonizers.

Quaque’s identity as a Christian trumped his identity as an African. As such, he often tried to distance himself from other Africans in order to preserve his identity as a pious Christian.\(^{73}\) In doing so, he railed against the inherently “avaricious disposition of the Blacks” and was personally pained by the fact that even his relatives took his advice only

\(^{70}\) However, Quaque actually reported in his letters that he did this to squash any controversies resulting from romantic jealousies. Marrying an African girl could both solidify ties with the local population and essentially take him off the market of bachelors on the coast.

\(^{71}\) Quaque to Edward Bass of Newburyport, 31 July 1775, Quaque Letters.


\(^{73}\) As noted earlier, there is an excellent discussion of Quaque’s identity in Littlefield, “Almost an Englishman,” 70-94.
when it came to worldly – not spiritual – matters.\textsuperscript{74} Probably expecting a significant amount of deference from his potential African neophytes, Quaque was irate that they “foolishly” regarded him “in no other Light than as one of themselves.”\textsuperscript{75} Although Quaque’s skin color identified him as an African, his training had firmly established him as highly educated member of the English clerical class. When he was training in England he probably had a regimen fairly similar to the training of other SPG missionaries, which demanded that he demonstrate a superior knowledge of “Greek, Latin, Scriptural and Church history, the Bible, the Prayer Book, the Creeds, and the Thirty-nine Articles.” He might have even dabbled in a bit of Hebrew.\textsuperscript{76} In spite of his academic pedigree, Africans as well as English traders and governors still perceived Quaque as an African. They gave him very little attention, much less respect. Caught between the English who rebuked him and the Africans who ignored him, Quaque could only write, near the end of his life, that “a Prophet has not honor in his own Country.”\textsuperscript{77} In assailing African customs while simultaneously offering their practitioners a central place in future Christian history, Quaque staked out a spiritual middle ground that was situated uncomfortably between African and English worlds.\textsuperscript{78} As Quaque found out, it was lonely in the middle.

\textsuperscript{74} Quaque to the SPG, 13 October 1811, \textit{Quaque Letters}.  
\textsuperscript{75} Quaque to the SPG, 12 June 1780, \textit{Quaque Letters}.  
\textsuperscript{76} Alfred W. Newcombe, “The Appointment and Instruction of S.P.G. Missionaries,” \textit{Church History} 5 No. 4 (December 1936): 347.  
\textsuperscript{77} Quaque to the SPG, 13 October 1811, \textit{Quaque Letters}.  
\textsuperscript{78} See Richard White, \textit{The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) for more on the concept of a “middle ground” in American history.
Religion Versus Empire?

In a recent book published for the Oxford History of the British Empire, Norman Etherington argued that “The greatest difficulty faced by those who have tried to argue that Christian missions were a form of cultural imperialism has been the overwhelming evidence that the agents of conversion were local people, not foreign missionaries. None of them were coerced into believing and very few were paid.”\(^7\) Etherington went on to discuss examples from nineteenth century India and South Africa, but we have seen that he might have also applied this model to Protestant missions all over the Atlantic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indigenous actors were central to missionary work throughout nearly every Protestant mission, and the case for eighteenth century Africa was certainly no different. Given the centrality of native agents to Protestant missionary work, the relationship between missions and empire needs to be reexamined.

Nevertheless, historians have often ignored the experiences, attitudes, and impact of indigenous actors, at all levels, in the history of missions. While earlier church historians espoused a kind of hagiographical approach to English missionaries, later critics would describe them as rapacious imperialists or, in the words of historian David Silverman, as “ideological shock troops for colonial invasion whose zealotry blinded them.”\(^8\) British historian Brian Stanley agrees. He fears that “the belief that ‘the Bible and the flag’ went

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hand in hand in the history of Western imperial expansion is fast becoming established as one of the unquestionable orthodoxies of general historical knowledge.”  

Although both approaches (missionaries as saints versus missionaries as imperialists) have dominated most narratives of religious interaction, neither of them place native missionaries center stage in their attempt to assess the relationship between evangelical activities and imperial ones. The precise social position, location, and periodization of Quaque’s mission to Cape Coast afford historians a tremendous opportunity to examine the relationship between missions and empire. As an African Anglican, Quaque had a unique perspective on the British empire; a perspective that both defies easy categorization and demands further inquiry.

The correspondence between Quaque and Edward Bass with which this chapter opened suggests that the former clearly supported the British crown. But exactly what that meant to Quaque is not as clear. In The Ideological Origins of the British Empire, historian David Armitage argues that, from about the 1730s on, the British began a self-conscious process of fashioning a global imperial identity. Britons, Armitage claims, took great satisfaction in the fact that their empire was not an empire of conquest or force. Instead, it was an empire of liberty, and Armitage suggests that the British proudly characterized their growing empire as “Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free.”

According to Britain’s

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81 Brian Stanley, The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1990), 12. Both the missionaries-as-saints and missionaries-as-imperialists approaches to Protestant missions leave little room for indigenous Christians. In the first interpretation, Anglo-American missionary activity was emphasized to glorify and memorialize the philanthropic efforts of a more “civilized” people. On the other hand, the newer scholarship emphasizes resistance, often violent, to Christian missions. In both accounts native Christians and the indigenous Christianities they create are rarely taken seriously.

empire builders, these four characteristics – Protestantism, commercialism, maritime strength, and freedom – made the British empire the most distinctive and exceptional in human history. Indeed, historians of American foreign relations, led by figures like Walter LaFeber, have demonstrated that “empire” could be defined broadly, including not only territorial control but also much more subtle economic, cultural, and social influences.⁸³ Armitage’s four characteristics can thus serve as a framework to help conceptualize Quaque’s relationship with the British empire, especially his relationship with missionary societies, slave traders, and military and political officials. This African missionary was certainly no “shock troop” for colonial invasion, but rather a complex human being who had an ambiguous, and sometimes exasperatingly complex, perspective on the connections between missionary evangelism and empire-building.⁸⁴

There is no doubt that Quaque was a Protestant imperialist. We have already witnessed the various ways in which he disparaged local indigenous beliefs and practices and sang the praises of English Protestantism. But the relationship between Quaque and the home institution that backed him (the SPG) was also a rather tenuous one. In fact, presuming that missionaries were imperialists is to also assume that the relationships between these missionaries, the organizations that funded them, and the nation-state were clear and symbiotic. This was certainly not the case in seventeenth century Puritan New England, eighteenth century New York, or the Moravian Caribbean missions. Not surprisingly, it was

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also not the case with Quaque’s mission in Africa. The SPG was, after all, an independent entity. Parliament had approved its charter but had no official means of directing the institution, which relied mainly upon the benevolence of private fundraising. Neither did the SPG have an established line of communication with the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the group which oversaw most imperial matters. Though members of the Privy Council were certainly aware of some of the SPG’s activities, they never received an official report from that organization until they asked for one in 1788. By that time the SPG had already sent out over 300 missionaries since its inception in 1701.

The relationship between the SPG and Quaque himself was similarly patchy. In spite of the time, effort, and money the SPG poured into Quaque’s education and training in England, his supporters rarely corresponded with him. Quaque complained bitterly about this fact and noted that he has “not embraced that Kindness, nay, not so much as a Line from my Worthy Benefactors since my Residence on the Coast.” He even went so far as to imply that the SPG’s silence was a reflection of either Quaque’s African origin or the second-class status that an African mission had compared to the missions in the Americas. He protested that “Many Brethren in America I suppose often enjoy that secret Consolation, which doubtless must refresh them greatly, and prompt them on with more rigour, whereas I that is situated in a Bypath of Misprision, must of Consequence want that Assistance more than most Missionaries.” Missionaries from all over the Atlantic world would often return thanks for letters from their home institutions, indicating how heartening it was to have a piece of news and a little encouragement from the metropole. Quaque would eventually receive more letters from the SPG, but the relationship between himself and his benefactors soured anyways. He still complained of their infrequent correspondence, blamed the SPG for

85 Quaque to the SPG, 8 March 1772, in Quaque Letters.
placing him in the “lamentable Situation I now enjoy,” asked for raises that were not granted, and even had a request for his children to be educated by them rejected.\textsuperscript{86} He might have also found out that, while the SPG paid his predecessor Thomas Thompson 70 pounds per year, Quaque only received 50 pounds from the SPG for his work.

The SPG was not entirely satisfied with Quaque either, and relations between the organization and its missionary got progressively worse from the moment of Quaque’s arrival in 1766. By the end of the 1780s, the SPG even accused him of “paying more attention to purposes of trade than of Religion,” a rash accusation that had little evidentiary basis.\textsuperscript{87} There were two main reasons for the tension between Quaque and the SPG. The first was that, upon his arrival at the Cape Coast, it was apparent that Quaque did not retain any fluency in his native African tongue. This is not surprising. The most formative years of his life were spent in English schools, learning English culture and language, with only one or two classmates at the time. The SPG was thus disappointed that, in some ways, their African missionary became too English during his acculturation in London. But there were practical concerns as well. The language barrier not only hampered basic communication but also hindered the dissemination of gospel truths. If Quaque could not speak the language, the SPG had forfeited the major benefit of investing so much money to train him in the first place. He, in effect, became like Thomas Thompson before him, who complained constantly about “the strange kind of Jargon” that he found among the various residents of West Africa.\textsuperscript{88} Thompson relied on an interpreter, a local African Frederick Adoy, because the language barrier was, in Thompson’s words, “a Disadvantage, not to be compounded at any

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\textsuperscript{86} Quaque to the SPG, 15 April 1769, in \textit{Quaque Letters}.
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\textsuperscript{87} Dr. Morice to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, February 1788, in \textit{Quaque Letters}.
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\textsuperscript{88} Thompson, \textit{An Account of Two Missionary Voyages}, 71.
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Rate.” Adoy probably sensed opportunity when Quaque arrived, for he not only served as Quaque’s interpreter, he also aggressively set out to acquire a consistent salary for his translational services, suggesting that he would “not spend his Breath any more in vain” if he did not get some sort of monetary compensation for his skills. One time he even forced Quaque to cut a sermon short because he was tired. All of these incidents and reports placed the SPG in a fairly powerless position, and they did not mince words when they tersely urged Quaque “to indeavor to recover his own language.”

The SPG was also concerned about Philip Quaque leaving his mission post to journey to other regions of the African coast as an itinerant preacher. This was a dangerous proposition for Quaque, for even though the SPG was a missionary organization, most of the organization’s “missionaries” were, by the 1770s, operating within well-established parishes in the American colonies. The church-based community was a central component of any Anglican endeavor, and simply wandering around the African coast would not please the folks back home. He asked the SPG for permission to go up to Senegal in the spring of 1772, arguing that “I freely and gladly would embrace the Opportunity of being more Serviceable at Senegal to my fellow Creatures there, than I do here amongst my own

89 Thompson, An Account of Two Missionary Voyages, 69.

90 Quaque to the SPG, 15 April 1769, Quaque Letters.

91 SPG Records, SPG Journal, Volume 18, 267. Mark Thompson has suggested to me that Quaque’s loss of language might have been a self-conscious way to fashion a new, English Christian identity. Although it made him less valuable as a missionary, he might have intentionally lost his language to make him more English than African.

92 This very issue, in fact, led to a heated debate in the presses over the role and conduct of the SPG. Many American ministers believed that the preponderance of parishes in American towns and cities belied the fact that the SPG was trying to establish an Anglican bishop in the Americas. They protested that the SPG should be more focused on converting Native Americans and black slaves than in trying to establish Anglican authority in settlements where Christian religion had already flourished.
Quaque was trying to escape from the very place where he grew up, but when he was denied a Chaplainship at Senegal, he had to give up. For four months in the winter of 1772/1773 Quaque was in Accra. He also spent eight months at Dixcove Fort from 1774 to 1775. He would later return briefly to a few of these places, but the evidence suggests that the SPG was uneasy about Quaque’s wanderings. Dixcove, for example, had a sizeable Dutch population, and it offered Quaque a chance to compare Dutch evangelical tactics with those of the Cape Coast. He concluded that the Dutch method of teaching native children, exposing them to Christian doctrine, attending hours of devotion, and other practices were “worthy of Imitation.” Conversely, the Dutch were apparently impressed with Quaque, for they attended his services when he journeyed up there. A Dutch governor even sent him a letter of thanks with a small gratuity for his preaching. When Quaque proudly reported to the SPG this international/interdenominational exchange, the SPG simply recommended “that Mr. Quaque be directed for the future not to absent himself for so long from the Cape Coast without the Leave of the Society.” Although the SPG tried to find a better position for him, Quaque would be stationed there until his death in 1816. In spite of the SPG’s warnings, he spent many of those years traversing the African coast anyways. The SPG expected Quaque to be a stationary, obedient, African-speaking preacher. He was none of those things. These mutual frustrations expose a systemic problem with the interpretation that Protestant

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93 Quaque to the SPG, 10 April 1772, in Quaque Letters.

94 Quaque to the SPG, 17 March 1773, in Quaque Letters.

95 Quaque to the SPG, 11 September 1779, Quaque Letters.

missionaries were the foot soldiers for colonial invasion: religion and empire certainly could not be symbiotic if the agents within those relationships were constantly at odds.

If Quaque was frustrated with the organization that nominally supported him, he became irate and scornful towards the commercial dimension of the British empire. The foundation of Britain’s commercial power in Africa was, of course, the transatlantic slave trade, and here is where Quaque was at his most anti-imperialistic.\(^{97}\) One of the ironies of Quaque’s position is that the African Committee – a group of slave-trading merchants with major political sway at Whitehall – actually paid half of his salary to serve as chaplain of their garrison. Quaque, an African by birth, was being paid by African slave traders to act as their collective spiritual compass. Another paradox was that Cudjo Cabosheer, Quaque’s powerful uncle who sent him to England in the first place, was directly involved in the slave

\(^{97}\) The most nuanced analysis of Quaque’s anti-slavery position can be found in Glasson, “Missionaries, Methodists, and a Ghost”: 41-50.
trade. Travis Glasson has recently found that Quaque’s wife was a slave, and Quaque also purchased another old female slave in 1785, benefited from the labors of a “Chapel servant” living at Cape Coast Castle, and engaged in more than a few administrative duties that kept the wheels of the Gold Coast slave trade moving.\(^98\) Thus, when Quaque took on the slave trade, he was biting both the Anglican and African hands that fed him his entire life. Yet his letters contain compelling stories of slave uprisings, brutal attacks on native peoples, and beleaguered slave forts under siege. Interestingly, only a few times did Quaque argue against slavery on the basis of his own racial identification as an African. He understood that merchants would ignore his pleas because of his distinctive identity. Some prominent merchants even refused to attend divine services with him because they, according to Quaque, “would never come to Cape Coast to be Subservient to, and to sit under the Nose of a Black Boy to hear Him pointing or laying out their faults before them.”\(^99\) Instead, Quaque began to attack slavery as wholly inconsistent with Christian principles, hoping to insulate his arguments – and probably himself – from race-based rebuttals.

Quaque envisioned a Christian empire where race would not matter, and he despised the “upstarts” who objected to his own preaching because of some “Distinction of Colours and Place of Nativity.” He clearly understood that his unique position as an African could obviously hamper and obfuscate his anti-slavery position. Instead, he extolled the values and unity of what he called “the Christian Race” and attacked the slave trade from the outside, arguing that it impeded the propagation of revealed religion and kept Africa in perpetual

\(^98\) Glasson, “Missionaries, Methodists, and a Ghost”: 43-46; and St. Clair, The Door of No Return, 219.

\(^99\) Undated letter from Quaque to the SPG, probably dated from October 20th, 1767 to the end of that year, in Quaque Letters. It is likely that Quaque’s own kin, if not his immediate family, were directly or indirectly involved in the slave trade, though Quaque never mentioned this in his letters. For a compelling narrative of the experiences of two slave-trading African princes, see Randy J. Sparks, The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
darkness.\textsuperscript{100} He complained that the “cursed slave trade” was the only thing stopping a successful mission and regretted that “the stir of religion and its everlasting recompense is not so much in vogue as the vicious practice of purchasing flesh and blood like oxens in market places.”\textsuperscript{101} By using Christian theology as a basis for anti-slavery, Quaque was hoping to distance his arguments from his own personal identity while simultaneously formulating anti-slavery rhetoric that was being used at the same time in England. Quaque thus passionately asserted that the expansion of the Kingdom of God was being hindered by a desire for material wealth at the expense of countless African souls.

The African missionary further attacked the merchants by employing a rhetorical strategy that would be used by later abolitionists like Olaudah Equiano and Harriet Beecher Stowe: he contended that even the most pious of Christians could be transformed into savage beasts when they participated in the slave trade. He reported to the SPG that English slave traders forfeited their rights to even call themselves Christians because, “by their Behaviour they seem as if they have changed the good Seeds sown, by the stain which they now shamefully cast upon the Profession wherewith they were called; by Corruptions of Morals and the Inhuman Practice and the love of Mammon which they hold in great Esteem.”\textsuperscript{102} As noted earlier, part of the problem was that Africa was often characterized as a zone of

\textsuperscript{100} Quaque to the SPG, 6 February 1771, in Quaque Letters. The very concept of a “Christian Race” – rather than biological races – was central to early modern theological discourses on ethnological differences between people. See Kidd, \textit{The Forging of Races}, 54-78. Also, William Shenstone wrote an anti-slavery poem that used the same language (“What fate reserv’d me for this Christian race? O race more polish’d, more severe than they!”). See Granville Sharp, \textit{An essay on slavery, proving from Scripture its inconsistency with humanity and religion; in answer to a late publication, entitled, “The African trade for Negro slaves shewn to be consistent with principles of humanity, and with the laws of revealed religion.”} (Burlington, N.J., 1773), 27.

\textsuperscript{101} Quaque to Samuel Johnson, 5 April 1769, in Herbert and Carol Schneider, eds., \textit{Samuel Johnson, President of King’s College: His Career and Writings} Vol. I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), 429; Quaque to Samuel Johnson, dated November 26, 1767, in Schneider, eds., \textit{Samuel Johnson, President of King’s College}, 425.

\textsuperscript{102} Undated letter from Quaque to the SPG, in Quaque Letters. See footnote 13.
irreligion. Conventional moral and religious standards and behaviors that would be customary in England were much shakier on African ground, and once civilized Englishmen came to Africa, the threat of their degenerating into immoral and barbarous slave traders was heightened. Only two years after Quaque’s arrival he made this connection, reporting that “It is astonishing for a refined Mind to reflect upon some inhuman Actions which are done in the wildest or the most savagest Part of Africa.”103 He was referring not only to what he perceived as savage local customs but also to the practice of slave kidnapping and trading. Quaque also noted that merchants and official government agents often refused to come to holy services because they could not, in good conscience, do so on one day and then trade slaves the next. This became their usual excuse for not attending holy services. Like most missionaries before and after him, Quaque understood that the example of the English who lived nearest to indigenous peoples would be a major factor in the development of Christian missions. If they refused to attend divine service, there was little chance that Quaque could transform the religious sensibilities of the Africans he was trying to evangelize.

Quaque’s renunciation the merchants and the slave trade they promulgated placed him at one end of an ideological divide within the eighteenth century British Atlantic. From the 1760s on, British intellectuals became ever more concerned about the morality of the slave trade and its standing as a national sin. The leaders of this movement were usually Methodists and black Atlantic writers – such as Olauduh Equiano – who had close connections with other evangelical characters throughout the Atlantic world. Indeed, one scholar has recently argued, quite persuasively, that Quaque’s London education placed him at the center of Methodist evangelical activity, and as such his anti-slavery stance was informed just as much by transatlantic Methodist evangelism as it was by his own identity as

103 Quaque to the SPG, 5 September 1768, Quaque Letters.
an African. But historians should be cautious of painting Anglicans universally as defenders of the slave trade and Methodists as its attackers. Some of the most staunch and conservative Anglicans certainly defended the slave trade, and their ownership of slaves in plantations and towns around the Atlantic world gave them a reason. But, at the same time, there were also Anglicans who were virulently anti-slavery and anti-Methodist. William Warburton, for example, was renowned for defending the Anglican Church against Methodism, but he was also decidedly opposed to the transatlantic slave trade. On the very same month that Quaque first arrived home to Africa, Warburton took the opportunity of an anniversary sermon to proclaim that it was deplorable to speak of Africans as property. In fact, Warburton argued, Africans were “endowed with all our Faculties, possessing all our qualities but that of colour.” Treating “our BRETHREN” with such unChristian brutality, Warburton implored, “shocks all the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common sense.” The Anglican then concluded that, since Africans were fundamentally equal to their English brothers, “nothing is more certain in itself, and apparent to all, than that the infamous traffic for Slaves, directly infringes both divine and human law. Nature created Man, free: and Grace invites him to assert this freedom.” Quaque’s anti-slavery stance might have certainly been influenced by Methodist evangelism, but it should be remembered that Methodists were not alone in beginning to critique the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade, for there were a handful of Anglicans who were beginning to do the very same thing.

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Ironically, the very man who started Quaque’s career as an African missionary would position himself at the opposite end of the spectrum as a fierce defender of the transatlantic slave trade. In 1772 – the same year of Britain’s famous *Somerset* case – former New Jersey and African missionary Thomas Thompson published a tract entitled *The African Trade for Negro Slaves, Shewn to be Consistent With Principles of Humanity, and With the Laws of Revealed Religion.* A former slaveowner himself, Thompson relied on scripture, property rights, and a tired characterization of Africans as pagans to conclude that slave trading was “not contrary to the law of nature” and was “as vindicable as any species of trade whatever.” While Thompson suggested that his motives were intellectual only, he dedicated the tract to none other than the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, the joint stock company in charge of protecting and maintaining the African slave trade. Thompson thus provided a religious defense of the transatlantic slave trade, a trade which knit the British empire together, served as the commercial backbone of imperial power, and infuriated his African protégé.

Thompson’s publication had a long-term consequence. It influenced one philanthropist to respond just a year later with *An Essay on Slavery,* which aggressively attacked the institution and declared that it was completely inconsistent with Christian principles. The author’s name was Granville Sharp, and though Sharp had been fighting

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105 The case of James Somerset was a landmark case where a slave sued for his freedom in an English court. Although he won, and although the case was widely interpreted as declaring slavery illegal in England, the decision was actually not as sweeping as many contemporaries believed. For more on the case and its importance in transatlantic abolitionism, see Steven M. Wise, *Though the Heavens May Fall: The Landmarks Trial That Led to the End of Human Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2005); and David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 469-522.

106 Thomas Thompson, *The African Trade for Negro Slaves, Shewn to be Consistent With Principles of Humanity, and With the Laws of Revealed Religion* (Canterbury: Simmons and Kirkby, 1772), 15 and 12. Thompson probably had at least one slave, including Phoebe, a “wench” whom he baptized during his tenure in New Jersey. See Hodges, *Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North,* 70.
slavery in Britain for years – he had been quite active in the *Somerset* case that year –
Thompson’s pamphlet compelled him to publish one of his first attacks on the slave trade. In
it, he described Thompson’s conclusions as “totally false” and replete with poor
argumentation. \(^{107}\) Instead, Sharp envisioned an empire that looked strikingly similar to the
one that Quaque had proposed: an empire of universal Christian benevolence where religion,
rather than race, was the true marker of humanity. Sharp asserted that “the glorious system
of the gospel destroys all *narrow, national partiality*; and makes us *citizens of the world*, by
obliging us to profess *universal benevolence*: but more especially are we bound, as
Christians, to commiserate and assist to the utmost of our power all persons in *distress*, or
*captivity*. “\(^{108}\) For both Quaque and Sharp, Christianity had less to do with one’s identity as
an Englishmen or African and more to do with one’s identity as a Christian brother in an
expansive, global community of benevolent believers. Slavery was therefore inherently
contrary to the very Christian principles upon which the British empire prided itself.\(^{109}\)

Although Quaque never published any anti-slavery tract, and although his mentor
seems to have had the more audible voice in the struggle over Christianity and slavery,
Quaque still influenced the anti-slavery debate to a significant degree. Alexander
Falconbridge, who wrote a scathing critique of the transatlantic slave trade, actually spoke
with Quaque when he was at the Cape Coast, and he incorporated the information that
Quaque relayed into his published and private denunciations of the trade. A British Naval
Officer called to testify about the horrors of slavery in the early 1790s also reported that he


\(^{109}\) Sharp would eventually become the leading figure in the British abolitionist movement, a movement
that would culminate in the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. For more on the end of the British
transatlantic slave trade, see Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*
learned about the disruption that the trade caused from Philip Quaque personally. While Quaque has never been as celebrated as the more popular Olauduh Equiano or Ottobah Cugoano, his impact on the slavery debate (though indirect) was certainly significant. In the end, Quaque’s assault on the transatlantic slave trade conveniently addresses Armitage’s fourth characteristic of the British empire: Quaque and Granville alike would have agreed that the British empire could never be “free” if it was an empire of slaves.

Quaque thus embraced the theory of a Protestant empire but despised the commercial aspect of Britain’s imperial growth. Yet his stance on a maritime empire in Africa was perhaps the most ambivalent aspect of his ideology. An eighteenth century maritime empire, of course, included the commercial strength and vast wealth that maritime commercialism accrued. It would have also included the naval resources, personnel, as well as a series of forts to function as the empire’s skeletal system and protect imperial interests abroad. Quaque firmly believed that British military resources could be used to spread the gospel, not necessarily to bombard natives into submission, but to stop rival religions from competing with the British for the hearts and minds of Africans. The British Navy, in particular, could be tremendously helpful in both maintaining order and reminding English merchants and traders that even though they were in Africa they were still Christians. The presence of the British military could help transform this African space into a sacred one. Quaque said so himself when he noted that he preached to virtually no one in 1770 until “the Time when His Majesty’s Ship Phoenix and the Hound Sloop of War lay in Cape Coast Castle Road, which afforded Me an Opportunity on Sunday before Easter of Expatiating the little Talent I have by reading of Prayers.” It was in this respect that Quaque actually welcomed a military

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110 Glasson, “Missionaries, Methodists, and a Ghost”: 48-49.

111 Quaque to the SPG, 12 April 1770, in Quaque Letters.
empire, and he explained to the SPG how “far more Advantageous it would be could this Settlement be more immediately under His Majesty’s Protection.” As if he was not definitive enough, Quaque clarified by stating, “I mean a Military Establishment.”

At the same time, Quaque also recognized that the business of running a military empire could impede the progress of the gospel in West Africa. In the spring of 1777 a ship dubbed the Weazle docked, unloaded all the supplies necessary for the defense of the fort, distributed arrears to different servants, and put the region in such a state of commotion that the “hurry and confusion of Business together, have at present conspired to obliterate the thoughts of that incumbent Duty and Service in Public.” When an African rebellion broke out over a decade later, Quaque refused to defend the slave fort at Annamaboe. He simply explained that bearing arms against other Africans would be “highly inconsistent and injurious to my Profession.” He was booted out of Cape Coast Castle for expressing such convictions. If a military establishment could help Christianity gain a footing in Africa, it could just as easily distract Englishmen from their daily spiritual obligations and generate tensions with native Africans. Quaque was therefore torn between the evangelical advantages of having a military establishment in Africa and the spiritual costs associated with maintaining it.

For Quaque, the major problem with the British empire was that, in spite of its nominal identification as a Protestant kingdom, several governors in charge of Cape Coast Castle could not have cared less about religion. It was for this reason that Quaque had a tense relationship with the governors and garrison of the Castle. He complained of the

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112 Quaque to the SPG, 5 September 1769, in Quaque Letters.

113 Quaque to the SPG, 11 April 1777, in Quaque Letters.

114 Quaque to the SPG, 21 July 1792, in Quaque Letters.
soldiers’ taking too many wives, their lack of public worship, and their participation in the slave trade. Quaque assumed that, if the governors of the Castle were more religiously devoted, the Anglicans could make real and meaningful changes in the African spiritual landscape. Instead, he charged that most of the governors were only concerned with “love of gain and Ambition,” rather than the souls of black folk.\textsuperscript{115} He was also personally insulted that the governors rarely invited him to dinner. He recalled that he experienced “very disrespectful treatment from the Officers of the Fort” and became increasingly concerned when he discovered that one of the governors was a “very rank Presbyterian born and bred.”\textsuperscript{116} One governor kicked Quaque out of the Fort when they needed more space for other soldiers. Quaque accused another of making “a ridicule of religion, and a future state, as a trick and cheat, and that he never knew any one to chuse to go to heaven when he could live upon earth.”\textsuperscript{117} Quaque developed a vicious rivalry with another of the governors, who allegedly claimed that “Clergymen have no Business in these Parts, unless come to be starved.” Quaque retaliated by telling his superiors that “The present Governor would have no more to do with Prayers, while he can purchase Slaves at a cheap rate, unless upon Extraordinary days to shew Me off.”\textsuperscript{118} When this governor died from a horrible disease in 1770, Quaque admitted to his benefactors that “since now my Enemy is taken out of my way, I am therefore in great hopes of seeing better Days.”\textsuperscript{119} There was no love lost between

\textsuperscript{115} Quaque to the SPG, 19 August 1771, in \textit{Quaque Letters}.

\textsuperscript{116} SPG Records, SPG Journal, Volume 18, 266. Quaque to the SPG, 28 September 1766, in \textit{Quaque Letters}.

\textsuperscript{117} SPG Records, SPG Journal, Volume 18, 337.

\textsuperscript{118} Undated letter from Quaque to the SPG, probably written in the fall of 1767, in \textit{Quaque Letters}. See footnote 13.

\textsuperscript{119} Quaque to the SPG, 27 September 1770, in \textit{Quaque Letters}.
Quaque and the imperial governors who, according to the African missionary, put the slave trade before the truths of revealed religion.

To return to David Armitage’s concept of the British empire as “Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free,” it is clear that Quaque wanted the empire to be more Protestant than it really was, less commercial than it had been (especially with respect to the slave trade), more militarily aggressive if it resulted in better conditions under which to spread the gospel, and, of course, free – which meant no slaves. The problem was that Quaque was living on the west coast of Africa in the eighteenth century, when the British empire was, in Quaque’s view, decadent, corrupt, and certainly not living up to its duty to propagate the gospel in foreign parts. Quaque was thus neither a champion of traditional indigenous rights nor a blind follower of the British empire. Instead, he was a Christian African struggling with his own distinctive identity while simultaneously formulating, through his letters, a conception of empire founded upon an expansive and universal Christian brotherhood. Unfortunately for him, the British empire was not that empire.

Inside the courtyard of the notorious Cape Coast Castle is a small cemetery reserved for important English officials who governed at the Cape Coast. Placed next to tablets commemorating the legacy of English governors, military officials, and brokers, there is a tablet reserved for Philip Quaque which reads: “Philip Quarco, 1741-1816.” While African Anglicans have honored his memory as a testimony to the determination of Christian missionary work, his real legacy was much more ambiguous. Philip Quaque’s entire life story, unearthed by the dozens of letters he left behind, highlights the liminal space in which native missionaries operated, a space filled with complexity, ambiguity, and tension. As an

120 There is also a tablet that says “Rev Philip Quaque died 17 Oct 1816,” at Christ Church Cathedral on the Cape Coast.
African evangelizing other Africans, Quaque was a walking paradox: a literate, English speaking, well educated African preaching in a place where the very denial of African intelligence helped justify the slave trade that surrounded him.

Christian missions often became an exercise in futility, and for Quaque this was no different. Yet his relationship with Africans and his ideological conceptualization of the British empire expose the contradictions and uncertainties that characterized the use of native missionaries. In Quaque’s view, the kingdom of God did not acknowledge the geopolitical or military boundaries drawn up by secular empires. Instead, the Kingdom that indigenous missionaries envisioned was an inclusive one, an expansive one; an empire that cared not for material or national gain, but for the souls of the millions of indigenous peoples throughout the world. These high expectations, coupled with the minimal results, left many native evangelists disillusioned. As British historian Andrew Porter said for the nineteenth century, missionaries’ “engagement with empire more often than not took the form of bitter experience,” leaving their “relationship with empire as deeply ambiguous at best.”

Examining native missionaries like Philip Quaque restores that ambiguity and demonstrates that the relationships between missionaries and their potential neophytes, and between religion and empire, were much more fragile and tenuous than we have previously acknowledged.

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CHAPTER FIVE

NATIVE EVANGELISTS, MOHAWKS, AND ONEIDAS IN THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY IROQUOIAN BORDERLANDS

There may have been no better symbol of English civility and gentility in the eighteenth century than tea. Critically important for the British imperial economy, essential to the networking of socialites and politicos, and the commodity of choice for Bostonian protestors to dump overboard, tea was universally understood as vital to the constitutions of English bodies and essential to the conduct of social life. This explains why, in February of 1765, one missionary stationed among the Oneida Indians in southern New York complained bitterly about his lack of it. Writing to a colleague to beg him for more tea, coffee, and a new shirt, the evangelist revealed that the Indian family he lived with had depleted most of these supplies during the frigid winter. His shirt had even wasted away because it had gone too long without a good, vigorous wash.¹ While this evangelist was stationed at Onaquaga, an Oneida town that had actively invited Christian missionaries to settle there, his colleague had ingratiated himself among a group of Seneca Indians who were much less amenable to the idea of Christian missionaries than their Oneida cousins. Stuck among what he dubbed “the most savage and barbarous” Indians on the North American continent, the Seneca missionary was infuriated by the first missionary’s complaints. Although his colleague at Onaquaga was universally renowned for his “polished manners,” the Seneca missionary nevertheless

advised him to make use of the innumerable natural materials that the wilderness afforded to
make his greatly desired tea. These included “pine buds, sassafras bows & the bark of the
root spice wood,” and “chips from the heart of the sugar maple.” “These are more friendly to
our constitution,” the Seneca missionary observed, “than foreign teas & all more so to the
natives.” As for the deteriorating clothes, he added that his friend should procure a leather
shirt and have “Indian breeches” made for him. “Disgrace or no disgrace,” he assured his
colleague, “I expect to do it shortly for myself.” Most Christian missionaries experienced
this universal temptation to “go native” and adopt the foods, material comforts, clothing, and
lifeways of their charges. The Seneca missionary was actually endorsing it. What made this
interchange between missionaries unique was that the man who directed his colleague to go
native was an Anglo-American preacher named Samuel Kirkland. What made it even more
peculiar was that his colleague was Joseph Woolley, an Indian evangelist. Here is an
exceptional case where an English missionary insisted that a native one go native.

While we do not have a record of Joseph Woolley’s response, he must have
considered Kirkland’s suggestion with some trepidation. After all, he was a graduate of
Moor’s Charity School, an educational institution in Lebanon, Connecticut operated by the
famous Eleazar Wheelock. Wheelock’s “Grand Design” was to “purge all the Indian out” of
his students and employ them as native preachers among the Iroquois in the 1760s. Trained

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4 Woolley was a Delaware Indian trained at Eleazar Wheelock’s Charity School in the late 1750s and 1760s. A compelling narrative of Kirkland’s missionary work, set against his relationship with Mohawk warrior and diplomat Joseph Brant, can be found in Alan Taylor, The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

in husbandry and agriculture, indoctrinated in scripture, and fluent in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, Woolley’s education at Wheelock’s school – as well as his identity as a Delaware Indian – set him apart from the Indians he was trying to convert. Woolley was not the only Native American to experience this tension, for there were a handful of other Montauk, Mohegan, and Delaware Indians who took up residence at Wheelock’s school, received a classical education, and were then sent out to open the door for the gospelization of the most powerful Indian nation in North America. Caught between two cultures, Woolley and other native preachers from Wheelock’s school constantly struggled with this perpetual identity crisis while simultaneously hoping to change the identities of the people to whom they preached.

As the most famous and best recorded effort in the history of eighteenth century Protestant missions, the Wheelock program has been combed over by historians, literary scholars, and others. This scholarship can be divided into three distinct but overlapping tendencies. First, historians like James Axtell have focused extensively on the institutional history of Wheelock’s school, especially the way in which it served (or, in Axtell’s argument, did not serve) as a foundation for Dartmouth College. Literary scholars, on the other hand, have examined the writings of Samson Occom and Joseph Johnson (Wheelock’s most famous pupils) to reveal how they used Christian evangelism to forge a distinct Native American literary tradition. Finally, recent years have seen a growing interest in Indian

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6 Axtell takes issue with the assumption that Dartmouth College was a natural extension of Moor’s Charity School, and argues that Wheelock’s imperious nature and undisguised racism made him break completely with the idea of native preachers in the late 1760s. See James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 204-215; and Axtell, “Dr. Wheelock’s Little Red School,” 174-188.

communities after the American Revolution, and the effort by Wheelock’s Indians to purchase Oneida lands and build a settlement in upstate New York (known as the Brothertown movement) has been the subject of several articles, dissertation chapters, and even a forthcoming monograph. And yet, as important as all of these studies are to our understanding of this native missionary program, the actual mission to the Iroquois Indians – the *raison d’etre* of Wheelock’s school – has often been neglected.

The purpose of this chapter is to recover these Iroquois missions by examining three major problems. First, this dissertation has already demonstrated that Wheelock’s effort to use Indian preachers was never as original as he claimed. Indeed, the Iroquois mission was less a result of his own personal ingenuity than a product of the end of the Seven Years’ War, existing practices of using native preachers in Iroquoia, and the material and spiritual concerns of the Oneida Indians. Secondly, this chapter explores the relationship between the Christian preachers and their Iroquois audiences. Just as literacy bestowed upon some native preachers certain cultural advantages, it also gives us the ability to track their movements, attitudes, and evangelical efforts, as these preachers left nearly ninety letters that document their work among the Oneidas. These letters highlight the unique ways in which preachers like Woolley translated Christianity, perceived of other Indians, and situated themselves as

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both Indian and Christian. Thirdly, the letters also illuminate the many conflicts between native preachers and their superiors, native preachers and Oneida Indians, and the conflicts among native preachers themselves. These conflicts undermined the mission as a whole and cast doubt on the propriety of native preachers. And yet, Wheelock’s failures did not necessarily end the native missionary enterprise. In fact, Wheelock’s mismanagement of this affair only reinforced other missionaries’ belief that native peoples would be central to indigenous Christianization within the Atlantic world and beyond.10

The Open Door Policy

Protestant missionaries viewed 1763 as a seminal year in the sacred history of Christianity. The French were officially defeated in the Seven Years’ War, leaving Canada, the Great Lakes Region, and the Mississippi Valley in the hands of the British and their colonial allies. English divines understood this change in fortune as a sign from God himself, one that offered Protestantism a unique opportunity to spread the light of Christianity where pagan darkness and Catholic foppery once ruled. The metaphor of the open door was employed *ad infinitum* to characterize the providential prospects that the fall of the French accrued to Protestantism. An Anglican divine named Edmund Keene had argued as early as 1757 that the war of the 1750s and early 60s gave the English a “Prospect of seeing an

10 This chapter relies heavily on published anthologies produced by Joanna Brooks, Laura J. Murray, and James Dow McCallum, which are nearly total in their comprehensive coverage of the letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians. For the manuscript versions of their letters, and for the letters of other missionaries involved in this mission, see Dartmouth College Library, *Microfilm Edition of the Papers of Eleazar Wheelock Together With the Early Archives of Dartmouth College & Moor’s Indian Charity School, and the Records of the Town of Hanover, New Hampshire Through the Year 1779* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Library, 1971); and the accompanying guide, Dartmouth College Library, *A Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Papers of Eleazar Wheelock: Together With the Early Archives of Dartmouth College & Moor’s Indian Charity School, and the Records of the Town of Hanover, New Hampshire Through the Year 1779* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Library, 1971).
effectual Door opened to introduce Missionaries into [Indian] Castles.”

Samuel Buell reported that “a glorious door” was opening for the propagation of the gospel to the Iroquois by the end of 1763.

Eleazar Wheelock also observed that there was a “door opening for a hundred Missionaries…and perhaps for ten Times that Number” to go among the Indians now that the French were gone. Gideon Hawley called the moment a “very fine opening” and Thomas Newton (an Anglican) declared that “a wide field is opened to us by the late treaty of peace.”

Another Anglican minister in the American colonies observed in 1762 that he and his Protestant colleagues should not miss the incredible potential for Christian evangelization that now lay before them. “The War being now happily concluded in that Country,” he declared, “there will, in a short Time, be the best Opportunity of propagating the Gospel among the heathen Natives of that Part of the World, that was ever offered.”

This appeared to be a crucial moment in Christian history. Protestant ministers had long been

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13 Eleazar Wheelock, *A Plain and Faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and Present State of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut* (Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper, 1763), 23. Wheelock uses the metaphor of the open door again on 44 when he notes, “This was the opening a Door which never had been opened for such a Purpose to these Nations.”


fantasizing about the conversion of the Iroquois nation, and in 1763 the door seemed open for them to do it.

But the persistence of French Catholicism, as well as French Catholics, loomed large. The Jesuits had made inroads into Iroquoian villages during the seventeenth century, and Protestant ministers feared and even envied their limited successes. They believed that the Indians of Iroquoia were “infected with the roman catholic religion” and “deeply tinctured with romish superstition.”

Although the Treaty of Paris had officially ousted the French and their missionaries out of the Indian borderlands, many Catholic evangelists consciously decided to ignore the pact. “We Expect one of the French Ministers here this season,” one Mohegan missionary reported to Eleazar Wheelock in the spring of 1768, “for which Reason I don’t love to leave the Indians.” Native preachers, as well as their white counterparts, were therefore viewed as weapons in the fight against stubborn French sympathies and even more stubborn French preachers. For their own part, Iroquoian Indians were highly selective of the Christian missionaries they brought into their lands before and after the war, and they understood the ways in which missionary influence could generate inter- and intra-tribal

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17 Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 2 May 1768, in Johnson, To Do Good to My Indian Brethren, 70-72. John Witherspoon, an agent for the SSPCK and a later tutor for two African missionaries in training, also suggested that preaching to Iroquois Indians would help detach them from the “fraudulent nation” of the French and ally them more strongly with the English. See John Witherspoon, The absolute Necessity of Salvation through Christ, A Sermon, Preached Before the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, In the High Church of Edinburgh, On Monday, January 2. 1758. To which is subjoined, A short Account of the present State of the Society (Edinburgh: W. Miller, 1758), 41.
divisions along kinship lines. And yet, the unique circumstances of the Iroquois at the end of 1763 (discussed below) necessitated that they invite Christian missionaries into their homes, lands, and lives, thus holding that metaphorical door open for native preachers.

English divines and Native Americans both understood Christianity as a fundamental component of diplomacy, and Eleazar Wheelock pushed his sponsors to think of the diplomatic and security benefits of his native missionary program. Wheelock informed Sir William Johnson, superintendent of Indian affairs and arguably the most powerful British official in North America, that indigenous missionaries might “guard [the Iroquois] against the influence of Jesuits; be an antidote to their idolatrous and savage practices; attach them to the English interest, and induce them to a cordial subjection to the crown of Britain, and it is to be hoped, to a subjection to the king of Zion.” One of Wheelock’s colleagues even declared that “20 Missionaries among the Indians would be better to keep them in peace than 5000 Men under Arms.” While Wheelock’s plan was fundamentally evangelical in nature,

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19 This partially explains why English missionaries were often hired by imperial and colonial institutions as diplomats. Christian Frederick Post, a Moravian missionary, was hired by Pennsylvania to perform a diplomatic mission in 1758, and Samuel Kirkland was recommended by the American commissioners to be a diplomat to the Iroquois at the onset of the American Revolution. See Journal of Christian Frederick Post, 1758, in Mss collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Ms 519); and Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, 121, respectively.


he also believed that he could drum up support for his native missionary program by appealing to the anxieties of English policymakers and frontier settlers. He even suggested that procuring Iroquois students would be another safeguard against the ravages of the frontier, as Indian parents would be reluctant to attack English settlements if they knew their children lived among them. As Wheelock began selling his native missionary plan, he began to fuse military and evangelical rhetoric to attract a wide swath of donors and supporters.

Wheelock’s charity school has been well-documented by other scholars, so there is no need to repeat it in depth here. A Yale graduate who trained a Mohegan preacher named Samson Occom in the 1740s, Wheelock tried his hand with other Indian pupils after witnessing Occom’s miraculous transformation from pagan Indian to respected preacher. He established a school in Lebanon, Connecticut and named it after its most generous donor. Moor’s Charity School, as it was eventually called, brought in dozens of Delaware, Mohegan, Montauk, Narragansett, and other Algonquian Indians in the 1750s and actively recruited Iroquois Indians in the 1760s. The goal was to train these students in classical languages, civility, agriculture, husbandry, and scripture, and then to use them as instruments for the conversion of other Indians. As he told the nations of Iroquois beyond his borders,

Wheelock’s Indian Charity School, From Which Grew Dartmouth College (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Publications, 1933), 40. The provenance of this quote is confusing. It was actually said by Mr. Ells (a minister in Stonington, Connecticut), who was hoping that Sir William Johnson would say the same to the English court in order to drum up money and support for Wheelock’s plan. Wheelock also hoped to create an Indian community of native Christians in Pennsylvania and New York, a program that was highly suspected by General Amherst, Sir William Johnson, and other influential figures. They believed, probably correctly, that Wheelock would only use his Indian community to open up white settlement. For more on this scheme, see McClure, Memoirs of the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock, 232-236.

22 Eleazar Wheelock to the Earl of Dartmouth, 4 September 1766, in Richardson, ed., An Indian Preacher in England.

Wheelock’s primary objective was for the Iroquois students to return home, “and in their own language teach their brothers, sisters, and friends the way of Salvation Jesus Christ.”

Wheelock also sold his native missionary scheme as a fundamentally innovative and path-breaking method for spreading the gospel. He extolled “the Newness of the Thing” and later hagiographers would cultivate a cult of personality that laid the creation of a native pastorate at his feet, suggesting that the idea for a native school was “his and his alone.” “Five years ago,” Wheelock boasted in 1767, “nobody thought of a Probability of introducing a Schoolmaster into these Parts.” Wheelock, his supporters, and even later historians perpetuated his reputation as an originator and innovator who introduced the use of native preachers in early America.

This reputation, however, is undeserved. Native evangelists had always been central to the Protestant missionary enterprise, and Wheelock was actually building off of an older, transatlantic tradition of using indigenous preachers. He was, after all, a Berkeley Scholar at Yale, and his school in Lebanon looked strikingly similar to the one that Berkeley envisioned for Bermuda: a seminary of learning located far away from the vices of English settlers and Indian savages alike. The Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), the Edinburgh-based Presbyterian organization that initially lent tremendous support to Wheelock’s plan, did not agree that Wheelock’s design was his and his alone. In 1767 they

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25 Eleazar Wheelock, *A Continuation of the Narrative of the State, &c. of the Indian Charity-School, at Lebanon, in Connecticut*: From Nov. 27th, 1762, to Sept. 3d, 1765 (Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper, 1765), 19; and Richardson, *An Indian Preacher in England*, 12.

claimed that Wheelock’s program was “begun and carried on with the same spirit with which
the late Reverend and eminent Professor Frank founded the present famous orphan-house at
Hall in Germany, so it hath been blessed with many suchlike remarkable smiles from
Heaven.”27 Francke’s program, discussed briefly in a previous chapter, influenced Puritan
missionary efforts in New England, George Whitefield’s orphan schools in the Lowcountry,
native evangelical programs in India, and countless other Protestant missionary efforts. Like
Isaac Newton before him, Wheelock stood on the shoulders of giants. Yet he never conceded
that he was not the first to introduce native preachers into transatlantic missionary practice.

In fact, Wheelock was not even the first to introduce native missionaries into
Iroquoia, for the Indians of New York had a long tradition of using local Christian preachers
among them. It should be recalled that the early 1740s was a period of extraordinary change
in Anglican missionary policies. Anglicans’ earlier experiments with native royalty had little
effect, and growing religious competition from Methodists, Presbyterians, and Moravians
compelled them to begin using black slaves as teachers in the Carolinas. By the 1750s they
were even training West Africans – like Philip Quaque – for Anglican missionary work. The
Iroquois Indians were also part of this larger development, as Anglicans began employing
native schoolmasters, catechists, and readers in their Mohawk missions in the 1740s.28 The
earlier mission by William Andrews (from 1712 to 1719) was a failure, but in the 1740s
Anglican missionaries from Albany began to return to the Mohawk “castles” of

27 The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, Recommendation By The Society in
Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, In favour of the Academy established by Mr Eleazar
Wheelock, of Lebanon, in Connecticut, in New England, For the education of Indian Missionaries
(Edinburgh: s.n., 1767), 2.

28 See William B. Hart, “Mohawk Schoolmasters and Catechists in Mid-Eighteenth Century Iroquoia: An
Experiment in Fostering Literacy and Religious Exchange,” in The Language Encounter in the Americas,
the Good of Our Souls: Mohawk Authority, Accommodation, and Resistance to Protestant Evangelism,
1700-1780 (PhD Diss., Brown University, 1998), 213-246.
Tiononderoge (The Lower Castle near Fort Hunter) and Canajoharie (The Upper Castle), hoping to cultivate native Christians among the 500 or so Mohawks who lived there in the 1740s and 50s. Henry Barclay, the Anglican missionary stationed in Albany, petitioned the SPG to fund native schoolmasters at these two castles. By 1742 a Mohawk named Daniel was teaching at Canajoharie and Cornelius (apparently a Sachem) was teaching at Tiononderoge. Barclay’s choices, at first, appeared to be good ones. He reported that Cornelius was “very faithful and diligent” in his teaching, and that Daniel was also very successful. Because Barclay exercised only an itinerant presence among the Mohawks, Daniel and Cornelius were often left to their own devices, and both of them had leave to join the Mohawks when they went on their seasonal hunts. But their jobs were not simply educational in nature, for even schoolmasters were charged with teaching students the fundamental principles of Christianity. Barclay reported that Cornelius, the schoolmaster at Tiononderoge, “reads prayers in my Absence, and is much Beloved by his Countrymen.” Native preachers like Daniel and Cornelius exercised and exhibited some of the spiritual authority that absent English missionaries possessed.

In spite of its early successes and Cornelius’ alleged affection from his Mohawk brothers, the use of native schoolmasters among the Mohawks also produced its quarrels. First, one anti-English and anti-Christian Mohawk manipulated some of the tensions inherent

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29 They were distinguished as “lower” and “upper” by virtue of their location on New York’s Mohawk River.

30 Henry Barclay to the SPG, 17 November 1742, in Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (East Ardsley, Yorkshire: Micro Methods, 1964), Letter Series B (hereafter referred to as SPG Records). Cornelius’ prayer groups are also reported in John Gilbert, A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; On Friday February 17, 1743-44 (London: J. and H. Pemberton, 1744), 46.

31 Henry Barclay to the SPG, 4 November 1743, in SPG Records Letter Series B.
in using native missionaries. Cornelius and Daniel were both paid 7 pounds, 10 shillings annually for their services, but the anti-English Mohawk told Cornelius that he had heard that the SPG was actually paying him twenty pounds per year. The rest of the money, the Mohawk declared, was being pocketed by Barclay, the English preacher. Other Iroquois Indians opined that Barclay was “in League with the Devil, who was the Author of all the Books” that the SPG had given them. The Mohawks at Tiononderoge did not believe this story, but the ones at Canajoharie did, and by March of 1745, the Upper Castle was “all in a Flame” over Barclay’s alleged fidelity to Satan. When John Ogilvie, an Anglican minister working among the Mohawks in the 1750s, tried to train another Mohawk as a Christian missionary, his parents took him home, “as they said, [because] he might learn to despise his own Nation.” These episodes demonstrate how precarious the use of native missionaries in Iroquoia actually was, and white evangelists had to walk very gingerly among the Iroquois in the middle of the eighteenth century. In fact, Barclay’s reputation never recovered from his rumored allegiance to Satan. Cornelius and Daniel quit their teaching jobs in 1746 and Barclay followed soon after, taking a much less taxing post as a church rector.

Anglicans and Iroquois seemed to have short memories, for by 1750 another Anglican missionary (John Ogilvie) was cultivating another corps of native preachers at Tiononderoge and Canajoharie. This time the Anglican relied upon Abraham, an older Mohawk sachem and brother to Hendrick, the native preacher famous for being one of the

32 Henry Barclay to the SPG, 4 June 1744, in SPG Records Letter Series B.
33 Henry Barclay to the SPG, 12 March 1745, in SPG Records, Letter Series B.
34 Thomas Hayter, A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-Le-Bow, on Friday February 21, 1755 (London: Edward Owen, 1755), 49.
Four Indian Kings who secured a diplomatic alliance with the British in the early 1710s. Ogilvie reported in 1750 that Abraham was an active force in preventing drunkenness, reading morning prayers, visiting other Indian nations, rejecting religious offers from French Jesuits, and keeping up “divine service among the aged people & children whilst the others are in the woods.”

Jonathan Edwards even reported that Abraham was a “remarkable man; a man of great solidity, prudence, devotion, and strict conversation.” Edwards concluded that Abraham acted “very much as a person endowed with the simplicity, humanity, self-denial and zeal of a true Christian.” Abraham must have been quite the catch, for Edwards actively recruited Abraham and his Christian Mohawk allies to train them at his community at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The Anglicans, of course, suspected this move from the New Light minister and instead offered Abraham five pounds sterling to be a reader in the Mohawk congregation. Although Abraham toyed with the idea of going to Stockbridge, it never came to fruition.

Instead, Old Abraham spent the last of his days reading and teaching his fellow Mohawks, following his brothers and cousins on the warpath during the French and Indian War, performing “Divine Service every morning and evening” during that war, and training his son, Paulus, to do the same.

When the SPG was debating whether to give Paulus a teaching position, they admitted in 1750 that offering him the salaried post would “much engage his uncle Hendrick,

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who we are all sensible has been of the most material Service during the late War.”

Like his uncle, Paulus also had military and political clout. He fought alongside his fellow Mohawks during the French and Indian War and eventually took the sachemship at Canajoharie when Hendrick and Abraham died in 1755 and 1756, respectively. In the meantime, Paulus taught about 40 children each day to read and write, instructed them in the Christian psalms, and even “read Prayers” in Ogilvie’s absence. He probably had the help of an Anglican catechism after 1763, but he had little support from spelling books, for a colleague of his noted that he taught Mohawk children the alphabet “by means only of little manuscript scraps of paper.” In short, Paulus took up the mantle of indigenous Christian leadership that Abraham left when he died in 1756. He would remain a lay reader throughout and after the American Revolution, when he migrated with some of his fellow Mohawks to Ontario. When Daniel Claus published a primer for the Christian education of Canadian Indians in 1786, he included an engraving of Paulus teaching young Indians on the inside cover.

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39 John Ogilvie to the SPG, 27 July 1750, quoted in Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, 68-69. Paulus should not be confused with Petrus Paulus, another Mohawk reader who was appointed schoolmaster in 1750 but died several years later.

40 Keene, A Sermon Preach’d, 47; and Robert Hay Drummond, A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting In the Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow; on Friday February 15, 1754 (London: E. Owen, 1754), 54.


42 Daniel Claus, A Primer for the Use of the Mohawk Children: to Acquire the Spelling and Reading of Their Own, As Well As to Get Acquainted With the English Tongue; Which for That Purpose Is Put on the Opposite Page (London: Printed by C. Buckton, 1786).
The conversion of the Mohawks was never viewed as an end in itself. In fact, the Mohawks occupied the eastern side of the Iroquoian “longhouse” of New York, and missionaries imagined Mohawk evangelists spreading westward to their Iroquoian brothers: the Oneidas, Tuscaroras (after the Tuscarora wars of the 1710s), Onandagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. Even though historians have become accustomed to using these monikers to distinguish between Iroquoian groups, there was a tremendous amount of overlap, interconnection, and entanglement among them. Onaquaga, an “Oneida” town situated on the Susquehanna River in southern New York, was actually comprised of Oneidas, Shawnees, Delawares, Tuscaroras, Mohawks, and other ethnogenetic groups. Joseph Brant,

the prominent Iroquois leader, was a Mohawk from Canajoharie who also owned land at Onaquaga. Brant was not the only one to cross the permeable boundaries between Mohawk and Oneida, for the similarity of dialect and their geographic proximity ensured that other Iroquois travelers would work to knit these communities together. Missionaries hoped they could exploit these itinerant tendencies as a tool to expose Indians west of Mohawk territory to the fundamentals of Christianity. In 1751 Abraham, the Mohawk lay preacher, reported to Jonathan Edwards that the Mohawks were not the only ones interested in hearing the word of the Gospel. There were other, “considerable men,” Abraham reported, “of the nation of the Oneiyutas, in other places, and also some of the Tuscarores, that are religiously disposed.” These “considerable men” were probably Good Peter, Isaac Dakayenensere, and Deacon Thomas, leaders of Oneida communities and later Protestant evangelists.

Good Peter was an Oneida Indian of the eel clan. A man of considerable import in his own right, he embraced a call to Christian evangelism after a series of New Light

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47 “Good Peter” was also known as Domine Peter, Peter the Priest, Petrus the Minister, and especially Gwedelhes Agwerondongwas. See Love, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England*, 83 ff. 4.

48 Each Iroquois nation was divided into distinct clans; the most common being wolf, bear, and turtle. See Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 11-15.
preachers visited his town of Onaquaga in the late 1740s.49 “Occasion’d partly by the death of his father, and by a blessing on the means of grace,” one missionary explained, Peter had his conversion experience in 1754 at the age of 21. English missionaries undoubtedly viewed Peter’s sudden “conversion” as divine providence, but Peter might have understood it as a change in his ever-evolving identity as an Oneida. A young adult coping with the death of his father, Peter might have seen his turn to Christian Indian, and even Christian evangelist, as a rite of passage, assuming a new adult identity along with a new name.50 Gideon Hawley, one of the most active English preachers at Onaquaga, left the village in 1756. Peter then took up the mantle of Christian evangelism that Hawley left behind. He learned to read the Mohawk bible, conducted itinerant missionary trips to other Iroquois Indians, and (with Isaac), “constantly led the people in the publick worship of God, ever since they have been destitute of a missionary.”51 Elisha Gunn, who bore witness to some of Peter’s sermons, reported to Hawley that he “preaches excellently well.”52 But, like other native preachers before and after him, Peter was no pawn. When English officials built a fort in his town in 1756, he urged them to take it down because it disturbed their peace and upset the Oneidas’ practice of Christianity. “Some of our Warriors are foolish & some of our Brothers soldiers don’t fear God,” Peter explained, so the destruction of the fort would hopefully remind his

49 There was a mission station at Onaquaga from 1748 to about 1777. See Calloway, The American Revolution in Indian Country, 112.

50 Gideon Hawley to Andrew Oliver, 20 May 1761, in Gideon Hawley Letters, 1754-1807, in Mss. Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society (typescript version).

51 Gideon Hawley to Eleazar Wheelock, 26 November 1761, in Gratz Collection, Chaplains of the French and Indian War and the Revolution, Case 8, Box 26, Mss Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

52 Gideon Hawley to Andrew Oliver, 20 May 1761, in Gideon Hawley Letters, 1754-1807, in Mss. Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society (typescript version).
brothers and cousins to pay more attention to their spiritual lives than their martial ones.\textsuperscript{53}

Paradoxically, Peter also made a name for himself as a warrior and scout for the English during the Seven Years War, hoping to purge the French and their Catholic influences out of Iroquoia.\textsuperscript{54} He also understood the financial benefits of his cultural skills. While a group of Indians were collectively paid 15 shillings for assisting Gideon Hawley in returning from Onaquaga, Peter alone was paid 12 shillings and 2 dollars for doing the same thing.\textsuperscript{55}

Membership in Christ’s kingdom certainly had its privileges.

\textsuperscript{53} Quoted in Calloway, \textit{The American Revolution in Indian Country}, 114.


\textsuperscript{55} Gideon Hawley to Andrew Oliver, 10 October 1765, in Gideon Hawley Letters, 1754-1807, in Mss. Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society (typescript version).
Indian missionaries were not motivated solely by money, and it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of Oneida preachers like Good Peter, Isaac Dakayenensere, and Deacon Thomas to sustaining Christian evangelical efforts in the absence of English missionaries. Isaac, for example, reported that as soon as he had his conversion experience, he “made it my Business…to learn letters, and as much of the Christian religion as I possibly could, and have endeavored all in my power to spread it amongst our people.”\textsuperscript{56} Isaac and Peter oversaw religious services at Onaquaga while Deacon Thomas led Christian meetings around Kanonwalohale in the 1750s and 60s, frequently preaching “with the Appearance of great Affection and Zeal...for an Hour and a half.”\textsuperscript{57} These Oneida preachers even scouted out evangelical opportunities among their Iroquois cousins. In 1765, for example, Good Peter told Presbyterian missionary Samuel Kirkland that a mission to the Senecas at that time was a “bold if not hazardous enterprise,” since they were still riled up from the Indian uprisings of the previous years. Kirkland ignored Peter’s advice and, predictably, his mission eventually failed.\textsuperscript{58} Oneida preachers were fully aware of their centrality to Christian missions and even pushed for more ecclesiastical authority. The Indians at Onaquaga, for example, assured Gideon Hawley that they “need no further instruction, and were Isaac or Peter ordained, they would be contented without an English missionary.”\textsuperscript{59} Neither Oneida

\textsuperscript{56} Quoted in Glatthaar and Martin, \textit{Forgotten Allies}, 52.

\textsuperscript{57} Journal of Ralph Wheelock for 27 Sunday March 1768, in Eleazar Wheelock, \textit{A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon in Connecticut, New England : Founded and Carried on by The Rev. Dr. Eleazar Wheelock ; With an Appendix, Containing the Declaration of the Trustees of That Charity; A List of the Names of the Subscribers; An Account of Monies Received and Paid; Together with Dr. Wheelock's Annual Account of his Receipts and Disbursements} (London: J. and W. Oliver, 1769), 48. Deacons had ceremonial functions in Iroquoian society just as they did in Christian churches. See Glatthaar and Martin, \textit{Forgotten Allies}, 340 ff 44.

\textsuperscript{58} Journal of Samuel Kirkland for 28 March 1765, in Kirkland, \textit{The Journals of Samuel Kirkland}, 3.

\textsuperscript{59} Gideon Hawley to Eleazar Wheelock, 26 November 1761, in Gratz Collection, Chaplains of the French and Indian War and the Revolution, Case 8, Box 26, Mss Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
preachers were officially ordained, but their power as cultural brokers and Christian missionaries only grew as the Oneidas and the English became more dependent upon them to navigate the tempestuous waters of Christian missionary work among the Iroquois.

As the author of one study has recently remarked, Oneida preachers like Good Peter, Isaac, and Deacon Thomas had the ability to “conceive and relate Christian precepts in Oneida terms to aid nation members in grasping basic concepts. Whenever they spoke to friends and relatives, these Oneidas were especially effective in transferring biblical teachings and images into established Oneida constructions of reality.”60 They even did damage control when English ministers floundered, and they embraced opportunities to do a little preaching of their own. When Samuel Kirkland used the word “Karoughyage” (Oneida for Heaven) for “Kanonwalohale” (the major Oneida town) in one of his sermons, Deacon Thomas stepped in to clarify Kirkland’s meaning. “Brethren,” Thomas reportedly told his fellow Oneidas, “don’t take Offence at what our Father has said; you see his Mind is so much in Heaven, that he speaks it when he thinks nothing of it.” Thomas then immediately gave what Kirkland dubbed a “lively, judicious and affecting Exhortation upon the Nature and Properties of a spiritual Mind.” Kirkland remembered Thomas’ intercession as a seminal moment in his mission to the Oneida, for he was in the midst of trying to get the town of Old Oneida (a traditional, anti-Christian town) to congregate with those at Kanonwalohale (a larger, more missionary-friendly settlement). The chiefs of Old Oneida met with Kirkland sometime later and entered into a long discourse, with Thomas witnessing the event. The Oneida chiefs then finished their discourse and awaited Kirkland’s reply. But “before I had time to utter a Word by way of reply,” Kirkland recalled, “Thomas…desired to speak a few Words, and gave a most judicious and striking Exhortation.” Far from feeling upstaged,

60 Glatthaar and Martin, Forgotten Allies, 62.
Kirkland seemed impressed, and reported that tears flowed quickly from the eyes of many Oneida chiefs. He even proclaimed that he had “never heard Words flow more easy, or with greater Propriety, from any Man in my life.”

Although Kirkland might have envied Deacon Thomas’ effortless ability to speak to the Oneidas, he never complained about the Oneida preacher overshadowing him. Instead, Kirkland probably realized that Thomas was a priceless cultural asset, even if he had the tendency to speak on Kirkland’s behalf and engage in long, extemporaneous exhortations.

The Oneidas at Kanonwalohale, Onaquaga, and other towns possessed their own need for assistance, their own agendas for inviting Christian missionaries into their lives, and even their own “open door” metaphor. They viewed the Mohawks as elder brothers, but also as keepers of the “eastern door” of their Iroquoian longhouse, whereas the Senecas guarded the “western door.”

They actively recruited Christian missionaries to help them deal with the cataclysmic problems they faced in the wake of the Seven Years War. The warrior class had increased its power among the Oneidas throughout the eighteenth century, and the traditional leadership of older sachems and even Oneida women was constantly being challenged. The warriors looked to English missionaries as a way to secure diplomatic allegiances with the east and strengthen their own position in Iroquois society. Furthermore, the Oneidas were in the midst of a fundamental change in their lifeways, as they were moving out of larger

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62 For more on the Oneida historical landscape before, during, and after these missions, see Glatthaar and Kirby Martin, *Forgotten Allies*, 7-99; Jack Campisi and Laurence M. Hauptman, eds., *The Oneida Indian Experience: Two Perspectives* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1988). The best study of Onaquaga, one of the most important Oneida towns, can be found in Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 108-128.

longhouses and into smaller homes, characterized less by extended kinship networks and more by nuclear families.\textsuperscript{64} The accoutrements of English “civilization” had also altered their material culture. By the 1760s the Oneidas were cooking in metal kettles and frying pans, eating their foods from pewter plates, sporting English silver broaches, and looking in glass mirrors as they combed their hair.\textsuperscript{65} The Oneidas embraced their reputation as outposts of English culture. While one English commentator called Onaquaga “the finest Indian town I ever saw,” Samuel Kirkland dubbed the Oneidas there “the most civilized Indians” in Iroquoia.\textsuperscript{66}

But “civilization” had its discontents. Encroaching settlers carried not only an insatiable thirst for land, but also destructive vermin and diseases that wreaked havoc upon their crops and bodies. In the first years of the 1760s the Iroquois suffered from smallpox, vermin infestations, premature frosts, and failed crops.\textsuperscript{67} One of the Oneida chiefs warned David Fowler, a Montauk Indian on a Christian mission in the spring of 1765, that “some of the Indians would starve to Death this Summer. Some of them have almost consumed all their Corn already.”\textsuperscript{68} As English colonial settlers hunted in Iroquoian lands and fished on Iroquoian rivers, meat and fish were depleted precipitously, and Oneidas complained that

\textsuperscript{64} Glatthaar and Martin, \textit{Forgotten Allies}, 36.


\textsuperscript{67} Taylor, \textit{The Divided Ground}, 53.

\textsuperscript{68} David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 24 June 1765, in Whitaker, \textit{A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School}, 40.
they could not find fowl, beast, or fish within 70 miles of their settlements. This partially explains why Oneidas understood the introduction of agriculture and Christianity as “spiritual food” and asked Protestant ministers to help them “uphold our Bodies, our lives, lest our souls should unexpectedly leave both you and us, before we have time to set them in the right way.” The Oneidas had no intention of ceding their lands and understood the precarious position they would be put in once they accepted English missionaries. “We would have you Understand Brethren,” the Oneidas proclaimed to Wheelock and his colleagues, “that we have no thoughts of selling our Land to any that come to live among us; for if we should sell a little Land to any, by & by they would want to buy a little more & so our Land would go by Inches till we should have none to live upon.” The Oneidas at the small village of Jeningo wanted a Christian missionary, but they utterly refused to have an English one settle among them. They therefore requested that Samuel Ashpo, a Mohegan preacher trained at Wheelock’s charity school, initiate a mission there. The Mohawks at Canajoharie followed suit, expressing a strong preference for their own English-trained Philip Jonathan over a Euro-American teacher named Jacob Oel. Native preachers would, in their eyes, provide the best of both worlds. Theoretically, they would introduce Indians to the saving graces of Christianity while providing material relief. Because native preachers lacked the avaricious

69 Glatthaar and Martin, Forgotten Allies, 62.

70 Quoted in Taylor, The Divided Ground, 55-56.


72 See Eleazar Wheelock to Gideon Hawley, 10 June 1761, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 35-36; and “Recommendation of Samuel Ashpo, 29 July 1762,” in Ibid., 37-38.

73 Hart, “Mohawk Schoolmasters and Catechists in Mid-Eighteenth Century Iroquoia”: 246.
impulses that discredited white missionaries, they were also expected to protect the very lands that English settlers eyed so jealously.

While Christianity’s association with English colonization definitely marred it in the eyes of some Iroquois Indians, others viewed Christianity as a weapon to combat the novel historical, epidemiological, territorial, and spiritual dilemmas they faced in the eighteenth century. First, if husbandry and agriculture accompanied Christianity, as Wheelock and other Protestants claimed it would, then the starving Oneidas supported it. Furthermore, literacy and education were beginning to be viewed as cultural weapons, as tools for gaining access to English power and authority as well as the word of God himself. Baptism, for example, was not simply an arcane formality, but an important moment for securing the protection of an all-powerful God and gaining access to a kind of preventative medicine. Even if Iroquoian traditional religion and Christianity were not completely compatible – the Trinity, afterlife, and original sin were usually alien concepts for indigenous peoples – there were many other areas of religious overlap. Iroquois Indians and Christians both believed that God had created the earth, that good and evil were active forces in peoples’ everyday lives, that lesser deities (like Christ) were also active in peoples’ lives, that thanksgiving and charity would improve one’s standing with spiritual forces, and that martial imagery was appropriate for understanding the battle between good and evil. The Oneidas were therefore not “passive recipients,” but “demanding catalysts” for Protestant missionary work in the 1760s. When

74 Hart, “Mohawk Schoolmasters and Catechists in Mid-Eighteenth Century Iroquoia”: 233-236; and 245-246.

75 Glatthaar and Martin, Forgotten Allies, 59.

76 Taylor, The Divided Ground, 55. The Oneidas had a long history of employing outside spiritual helpers to meliorate their temporal problems. When they discovered the threat of a group of pro-French western Indians invading their territory sometime in the seventeenth century, they apparently elevated a French Jesuit to the status of hereditary sachem in order to ward off the attack. See Glatthaar and Martin, Forgotten Allies, 39.
they asked for help from Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, the Iroquois knew what they were getting into. Indeed, Wheelock’s Indians traveled to the same places where Mohawk and Oneida native preachers had already been working: the Mohawk “castles” of Tiononderoge and Canajoharie, the Oneida towns of Kanonvalohale, Old Oneida, and Onaquaga, as well as smaller settlements like Cherry Valley, Lake Utsage, and Jeningo. In short, the Moor Indians’ missions were designed to cultivate already well cultivated ground. Native preachers among the Iroquois were not unique, unheard of, or exceptional, but important and long standing threads in the fabric of eighteenth century Iroquoian society and culture.

**Indians Among Indians**

There was, however, one aspect of Wheelock’s program that was unique: this was the first time that Amerindians from one linguistic and cultural group were being used to proselytize other indigenous groups and, in that sense, Wheelock’s Indians were not really “native” at all. Instead, they were Indians but outsiders, lying in a mercurial and liminal space between Indian and English, Iroquois and Algonquian, Western and indigenous.

Fortunately for historians, their frequent letters back to Wheelock describe their missions, their attempts to maintain their unique identity as Christian Indians and, most importantly, their efforts to use Christian evangelism to remold Iroquoian society in the 1760s. While these letters were certainly predictable and formulaic – Laura J. Murray rightly notes that they were “exercises in penmanship and epistolary styles” that “rehearsed religious discourses” and “practiced a rhetoric of politeness and humility” – they were also pragmatic, revealing the subtle ways in which indigenous peoples tried to convert neighboring indigenous peoples in the pre-Revolutionary borderlands. 77 Like Philip Quaque’s letters

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detailing his mission in West Africa, the letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indian missionaries provide a rare glimpse into the native missionary mind and illuminate the ways in which Native Americans functioned as evangelical agents during the eighteenth century.

The most important thing to note about these Moor Indians is that they were certainly not alone, for Wheelock and his benefactors envisioned using native preachers alongside English ones like Samuel Kirkland, Ralph Wheelock, and Theophilus Chamberlain. In their role as assistants, they often worked in conjunction with local Oneida Christians to protect English missionaries, who were much more suspect than their Indian colleagues. Samuel Kirkland, for example, had a volatile relationship with the Oneidas in the 1760s; some days he was embraced as a father, other days he was kicked out of his hosts’ homes because of his battle against Indian drinking. When Kirkland confiscated some rum from an Indian named Jau-na-whau-na-gea, the Oneida demanded payment for his loss. Kirkland refused, and Jau-na-whau-na-gea approached the missionary and threatened to “gripe” him “upon the throat.” Kirkland wrestled his adversary to the ground and then called for Mohegan missionary Joseph Johnson to “assist in binding him.” Jau-na-whau-na-gea’s wife ran to the scene and tried to pry Johnson and Kirkland off her husband by hitting and biting them “like a Dog.” Kirkland and Johnson released Jau-na-whau-na-gea, but the English missionary was so fearful of retribution that he wisely fled into the woods. In the ensuing days, Deacon Thomas discovered more rum among the Oneidas, apprehended it, and destroyed it while Kirkland was in exile. Kirkland returned within a few days and resumed his normal pattern of

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78 Extracts from the letters of Samuel Kirkland, in Eleazar Wheelock, *A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon in Connecticut, New England : Founded and Carried on by The Rev. Dr. Eleazar Wheelock ; With an Appendix, Containing the Declaration of the Trustees of That Charity ; A List of the Names of the Subscribers; An Account of Monies Received and Paid; Together with Dr. Wheelock's Annual Account of his Receipts and Disbursements* (London: J. and W. Oliver, 1769), 37-38. Kirkland was wise to call Johnson, who actually had a reputation for wrestling. Only a year before he began his mission among the Oneidas, Johnson was reprimanded for fighting with a white student named Eleazar Sweetland, throwing him down and holding him there for about 15 minutes. See Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 6 September 1764, in Johnson, *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren*, 59-60.
preaching, having apparently won this important battle against Indian vices. Although the threat of violence was ever-present for white missionaries, Joseph Johnson’s physicality and Thomas’ crusade against rum helped legitimize and, in some senses indigenize, Kirkland’s work among the Oneidas. It is doubtful that Kirkland would have survived this encounter without the help of either native evangelist.

Native preachers were among the Oneidas to stop their excessive drinking and protect English missionaries, but they were certainly not just the muscle of the operation. The most basic duty expected of the Moor Indians was to keep school regularly among their Mohawk and Oneida charges, teaching them the fundamentals of Christianity as well as the basics of language, the alphabet, and spelling. Schooling was a vital element of Christian spirituality, for it gave Christians access to sacred texts and religious truths that were unavailable to non-literate peoples. As such, native missionaries took schooling very seriously. Joseph Woolley, the tea-drinking Delaware preacher at Onaquaga, reported to Wheelock that “I hope Sir, I shall be enabled to walk before my School as it becometh, & teach them those Things that I ought which I wish, Long & Pray for.” A list of David Fowler’s books suggests that the entrance into all things spiritual was literacy, for he had 40 copies of spelling books at his mission at Kanonwalohale. He also had catechisms, discourses on the lord’s supper, and other sacred texts, but the small and cheap spelling books were the foundation of his Iroquoian educational program. Other native preachers did not have the resources that

79 Journal of Samuel Kirkland, 28 October 1769, in Kirkland, The Journals of Samuel Kirkland, 58. This episode is also recounted in Glatthaar and Martin, Forgotten Allies, 63-65.

80 The best analysis of this educational project is still Szasz, Indian Education in the American Colonies, 233-257.


Fowler had. Moses, a Mohawk teacher at an Iroquois community near Lake Utsage, had few books, taught his classes in “nothing but an open Barrack,” and had his students sit around a “Bark Table” while he led classes.\(^{83}\) In spite of their material wants on the borderlands, native preachers nevertheless pushed indigenous education as a way to better deal with English colonialism as well as gain access to divine revelation.

Iroquois students and parents, on the other hand, were ambivalent about literacy and schooling. While many saw the spiritual and temporal power that literacy could accrue, others believed that schooling was not the main benefit of having Christian missionaries. They constantly asked for help with agriculture and frequently requested Christian ministers, but schoolteachers were less in demand. They therefore kept school very irregularly, and native schoolmasters complained bitterly about their inability to draw students on a daily basis. Montauk missionary David Fowler reported in May of 1765 that Iroquois Indians never sent their children to school because they “had too much work to do” and because Fowler came too early in the season. “I can’t get but one Boy here,” Fowler complained, because all the boys had gone to their seasonal hunt.\(^{84}\) Fowler was not alone in his frustration. Hezekiah Calvin, a Delaware Indian sent to open a school among the Mohawks at Fort Hunter (near Tiononderoge, or the Lower Mohawk Castle), said that the Indians were “very loth to send their children” to Calvin’s School. They would “make excuses,” Calvin complained, “that they had work for [the children] to do.” Calvin knew how to respond to what he perceived as blatant Iroquois laggardness. He threatened to leave the Indian settlement because, as he put it, he had no one to teach. The very next day the Mohawks sent

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\(^{84}\) David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 29 May 1765, in McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 90-91.
five students to Calvin’s school, hoping to keep him there and maintain the cultural and
diplomatic link between themselves and the ministers to the east.85

What kept most students out of the schools were the seasonal hunts that formed a
central part of the Iroquoian subsistence economy, especially when vermin and premature
frosts destroyed their agricultural harvests.86 In fact, Iroquoian hunting patterns proved to be
one of the most ironic aspects of native missionary work in New York: while the Iroquois
demanded Christian missionaries, in part, to help solve their famine crises, missionary work
was severely hampered by the Iroquois’ frequent absences during their long, seasonal hunts.
As the plentitude of game dramatically decreased in the eighteenth century, hunts had
become more time consuming and less successful than ever before, thus keeping Iroquoian
children (especially young boys and men) out of native missionary schools. Algonquian
preachers complained constantly about these noticeable absences. David Fowler’s class at
Kanonwalohale, for example, was doing exceedingly well in the spring of 1765, so much so
that he bragged to Eleazar Wheelock that he “never saw Children exceed these in learing
[sic].” The problem, however, was that most of his children accompanied their parents on the
lengthy spring hunts. “They are often/always roving about from Place to Place,” Fowler
complained, “to get something to live upon. Provision is very scarce with them.”87 One year
later Hezekiah Calvin noticed that his Mohawk students at Fort Hunter were absent because
the adults “are going out to hunt & that they must needs take their Children with them that

85 Hezekiah Calvin to Eleazar Wheelock, 11 August 1766, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s
Indians, 49-51.

86 Iroquois Indians relied upon a cycle of subsistence patterns. They would hunt in the fall and the spring,
they had semi-annual fishing excursions, and they grew corn and other sedentary crops. See Glatthaar and
Martin, Forgotten Allies, 20-23.

87 David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 15 June 1765, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s
Indians, 93-95. The “often/always” appears so because, in the manuscript version and in McCallum’s
transcription, the word “often” actually appears directly above “always.”
they cant leave their Children alone &c &c.”

One year after that, Joseph Johnson lamented that all his students were absent because they were off to “fetch some flesh from the Hunters.”

Iroquois hunting patterns undoubtedly hampered Indian educational efforts in New York.

Unlike English missionaries, however, native preachers were less daunted by the prospect of accompanying Indians on these seasonal hunts. This was obviously true for Oneida preachers like Good Peter and Deacon Thomas, the latter of which was hoping to go on a spring hunt in 1768 to help pay off a personal debt. In fact, for most Native American societies, hunting was understood not only as a subsistence strategy, but also an opportunity to demonstrate masculinity, cultivate group cohesion, and contribute to the welfare of the community.

As such, native preachers often took the opportunity to accompany the Iroquois on their seasonal hunts, hoping to strengthen cultural bonds while simultaneously carrying on some semblance of Christian education among them. During his missionary trip to the Oneidas in the spring of 1762, for example, Samson Occom was forced to “wander about after” his students because they were scattered around, trying to find food. Joseph Johnson, another Mohegan and Occom’s son-in-law, had no other choice when his students went on the hunt in May of 1768. The ones who remained in his Oneida town during the

88 Hezekiah Calvin to Eleazar Wheelock, 11 August 1766, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 51.

89 Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 10 November 1767, in Johnson, To Do Good To My Indian Brethren, 63-65.

90 Journal of Ralph Wheelock with Allyn Marther in Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, 47.

91 Glatthaar and Martin, Forgotten Allies, 22-23.

92 Samson Occom to Eleazar Wheelock, 19 July 1762, in The American Colonial Clergy Section of the Gratz Collection, Case 8, Box 24, Mss. Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
Native preachers thus seemed much more opportunistic than English ones in their attempt to use the hunt as a chance to prove their mettle, procure some food, and connect with the very people whose souls they were trying to save.

In spite of their willingness to join the Iroquois on their seasonal hunts, the eastern Algonquian Indians who comprised a large share of Wheelock’s missionary corps nevertheless emphasized agriculture, rather than hunting, as the true path to living like Christians. No one exemplified these attitudes better than David Fowler, the Montauk Indian who oversaw a school and worked alongside Samuel Kirkland at the Oneida town of Kanonwalohale in the mid-1760s. When Wheelock introduced Fowler to the Iroquois, he declared that the Montauk would not only be a missionary, but also a weapon against the periodic famines and starvation that plagued Iroquoian society in the eighteenth century. “I hope you will help him to get a house,” Wheelock wrote to the Iroquois, “and let him have some of your land to plant and sow.” Besides instructing schoolchildren, Fowler was expected to “help and instruct you in managing husbandry; with which you must learn if you expect God will increase your number, and build you up, and make you his people.” The Oneidas complied and promised Fowler free but temporary use of their lands as well as some help in clearing and fencing them in. The Iroquois understood this as an experimental move that could provide some relief from the temporal problems they were facing. Fowler

93 Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 2 May 1768, in Johnson, To Do Good To My Indian Brethren, 70-72.

94 Although Wheelock trained more Iroquois than Algonquian Indians, most of the missionaries working in the 1760s were Algonquian Indians. Iroquois attendance at Wheelock’s school was often short-lived and sporadic.

understood his agreement with the Oneidas as a precious opportunity to transform the economic, religious, and social culture of the native peoples of New York. Well before Fowler had cultivated any crops on his lands, he proclaimed – perhaps prematurely – that his Indian neophytes “see now that they would live better if they cultivate their Lands than they do now by Hunting & fishing.” Native preachers also viewed the males’ neglect of the fields as a marker of laziness. Fowler dubbed Oneida Indian men the “laziest Crew I ever saw in all my Days” because the women farmed while the men slept late and took care of the children. When he brought his wife Hannah to Oneida, Fowler hoped his “other Rib” would serve as a model for Iroquois women and persuade Indian men to take to the plow while their women stayed in the homes. In urging Iroquois Indians to embrace sedentary agriculture and transform gender roles, native preachers both repeated and transformed some of the narratives of civilization that characterized English missionary discourses.

If agriculture was one marker of difference between the Moor Indians and the Iroquois of New York, language was another obvious point of dissimilarity. As noted earlier, Wheelock’s program was original only in that the Indian preachers traveling to Iroquoia in the 1760s were usually not Iroquois. There were therefore dramatic linguistic differences between Wheelock’s Indian missionaries and the people they were trying to convert. This is not to say that the Moor Indians lacked linguistic skills: they could speak their own languages and English, as well as Latin and Greek. But their inability to speak the Iroquoian dialect made them ineffective and more socially isolated than they ever might have imagined. When Joseph Woolley relayed his troubles in speaking to his students at Onaquaga, Samuel

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96 David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 24 June 1765, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 96.

97 David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 15 June 1765, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 94.

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Kirkland sharply rebuked him, noting that Wheelock depended much on Woolley’s “proficiency in the Indian language.” Urging him to labor harder to learn the Oneida tongue, Kirkland curtly reminded Woolley that “A faithful Missionary’s life is no lazy one.”

David Fowler, a much better scholar than Woolley, also admitted that he could “say very little” to his students and greatly needed an interpreter. Hezekiah Calvin expressed dismay at his inability to communicate sacred truths to the Iroquois, going so far as to call himself a “dumb stump that has no tongue to use.” Calvin might have been too hard on himself, for the problem was not only in translating words into indigenous languages, but actually translating Christian concepts into native ones. David Brainerd, a missionary in Pennsylvania in the 1740s, felt the pain of this problem acutely and observed that there were no Indian words for concepts like “Lord, Saviour, Salvation, Sinner, Justice, Condemnation, Faith, Repentance, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Grace, Glory, Heaven, with scores of the like importance.” While Brainerd complained about the “defectiveness” of indigenous languages, native peoples also suspected the English language itself as a source of social and cultural problems. Iroquois Indians were understandably reluctant to send their children to learn under native preachers who spoke the same tongue as the English traders and settlers who constantly sought to deceive them.


99 Extracts of Letters from David Fowler, 24 June 1765, in Whitaker, A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, 40.

100 Hezekiah Calvin to Eleazar Wheelock, 14 August 1767, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 58.

In spite of these linguistic differences, or perhaps because of them, native preachers pursued other ways to ingratiate themselves into the hearts and minds of the Iroquois. Oratory was one way to do that. An English contemporary noted that, among Indians, “Orators are in the highest Esteem.” “To be able to speak well in public,” he continued, “is the shortest and most infallible Road to Honour and Influence among” the Indians.\footnote{Whitaker, \textit{A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School}, 7. This quote is not Whitaker’s own words, but actually quoted from someone else.}

Warriors might have taken issue with this argument, but the fact remained that what we would now call “public speaking skills” were prized by Iroquois Indians. The Moor Indians also embraced the sacred power of oratory in their own work. When Jacob Woolley wrote to Eleazar Wheelock in the winter of 1761, he complained that writing was but a “silent language” that could not convey exactly what he had to say as if they were conversing with one another face to face.\footnote{Jacob Woolley to Eleazar Wheelock, 14 December 1761, in McCallum, \textit{The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians}, 251. David Fowler, one of Wheelock’s most celebrated students, encountered the same problem. When trying to articulate some of the Oneidas customs, Fowler admitted, “I can’t express myself by writing as I could by talking.” See Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 29 May 1765, in McCallum, \textit{The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians}, 90-91.} Samson Occom, reputed for his “good voice,” was another native preacher who embraced oratory over literacy, even if it was a matter of necessity.\footnote{Alden T. Vaughan, \textit{Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 191.} Nearly blinded by years of intense reading and study, Occom often preached extemporaneously to Indian congregations from Iroquoia to Long Island. Occom complained that the sacred texts produced by Anglo-Americans were too often “written in a high and refined language…in a very high and lofty style.” Occom’s preaching, by contrast, was universally celebrated as powerful but plain, clear but eloquent, moving and articulate. Occom said that his oratorical style was “common, plain, every day talk,” so simple that children, blacks, and especially
Indians could understand him. He employed common phrases, metaphors, and incidents from everyday life in his preaching to Iroquois in New York, Mohegans in Connecticut, and Montauks on Long Island. The Moor Indians’ training gave them a chance to situate themselves as eloquent orators who wielded the power of speech and speaking, even if their audiences did not always understand what they were saying. Although Wheelock’s training did not prepare its native missionaries to speak Iroquoian, it certainly trained them how to speak among this so-called “nation of orators.”

This aural self-presentation by the Moor Indians accompanied a visual representation, and clothing constituted an important medium whereby native preachers actively represented themselves as powerful cultural intermediaries. Part of this had to do with personal security, as native preachers changed their dress depending upon their location in English or Indian country. But, like oratory, it was believed that Iroquois Indians respected and understood clothing as a marker of social distinction and value. Hendrick, the Mohawk lay preacher of the early eighteenth century, was – at least in dress – reported to be barely distinguishable from an English gentleman. When Joseph Brant arrived at Wheelock’s school in

105 Samson Occom, *A Sermon, Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian; Who Was Executed at New-Haven, on the Second of September, 1772; For the Murder of Mr. Moses Cook, Late of Waterbury, on the 7th of December, 1771. Preached at the Desire of Said Paul. By Samson Occom, Minister of the Gospel, and Missionary to the Indians* (New Haven: T. and S. Green, 1772), 3. See also Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters*, 193. Not all native preachers were as confident in their oratorical skills: Samuel Ashpo admitted that the first time he preached to the Oneida Indians at Jeningo, he was filled with “Fear and Trembling.” See Samuel Ashpo to Eleazar Wheelock, 22 August 1766, in McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 45.


Connecticut, for example, everyone knew he was from a “Family of Distinction” because he was “considerably cloathed.” This emphasis on status in clothing also explains why David Fowler was quick to lend fellow missionary Joseph Woolley his shirt when he discovered that his colleague was “almost nacked.” Nudity was a symptom of poverty, and native preachers could never appear wanting if they hoped to convert the thousands of Iroquois who expected Christianity to ameliorate their own poverty.

Some indigenous evangelists even expressed a choice preference for certain colored clothes. Fowler, for example, asked in January of 1766 for some “blue Broadcloth and that which is good.” Fowler repeated this request before he returned to Wheelock’s school later that spring. He planned to stay at Wheelock’s home for a week or so “to shed my Skin” and admitted that his clothes were so worn that he, like Woolley before him, was almost naked. Again, he wrote to Wheelock and demanded, “I want all my Cloaths to be blue and that which is good.” While Fowler’s obsession with high quality, blue clothes might seem peculiar, it is possible that he was hoping to use his clothing as a reminder of his status as a Christian preacher. George R. Hamell has argued that eastern woodland Indians revered anything with a blue or blue-green hue because they believed that the translucent quality of these colors reflected their status as visual intermediaries between the natural and

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108 Wheelock, A Plain and Faithful Narrative, 39.

109 David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 29 May 1765, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 91.

110 David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 21 January 1766, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 100.

111 David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 13 May 1766, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 102.
By aggressively demanding that he be outfitted in blue vestments, Fowler might have been seeking to remind his Iroquois audiences that he was an Indian of impressive power, a spiritual medium who exhibited a masterful awareness of and access to the natural and supernatural worlds around them. By asking for “good” cloth, Fowler was also hoping to remind his audiences that he was indeed an Indian of temporal worth as well. If this seems like too tenuous a connection, it is worth noting that Paulus, the Mohawk catechist, was reported in 1755 to be “splendidly arrayed in a suit of light blue, made in an antique mode, and trimmed with silver lace.” Like Paulus before him, Fowler might have been seeking to tap into Iroquoian understandings of the translucence of certain colors as well as the magnitude of clothing as a marker of social standing in indigenous societies.

The records of these missions also give us a sense of how native evangelists spoke, what messages they emphasized, and which rhetorical devices they used when preaching to Iroquois Indians in the 1760s. Oneida preachers like Good Peter and Deacon Thomas were particularly adept at describing Christian spiritualities with Oneida concepts and cosmologies. Good Peter, for example, called the Christian God “the great God, who created all things.” In explaining Christ’s divinity, Peter assured his Oneida audiences that God “walked on earth with men, and had the form of a man, but He was all the while the same Great Spirit; He had only thrown his blanket around Him.” By describing God as a kind of all-powerful shape-shifter, Peter explained to his Oneida brethren that God was both human and divine, an active and ever-present force in their world. Peter, Isaac, and Thomas had the benefit of being Oneida insiders, but the Moor Indians had no such advantage and often

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113 Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, 81.

114 Quoted in Glatthaar and Martin, Forgotten Allies, 62.
acknowledged their precarious position as Indian Christians among other Indians. When Occom preached to the Iroquois, he complained little about “Indian fopperies, and manner of dress,” and reproached them only for their use of painting as bodily decoration. Instead, Occom sought to “strike at the root of evil, and insist on heart religion.”\(^{115}\) Although “heart religion” is a wonderfully vague description of Occom’s preaching, he probably urged his listeners to embrace charity, humility, and a solemn reflection on their own humanity and spiritual frailty. Like other eastern Algonquian preachers, Occom preached very delicately and trod very carefully when trying to transform Iroquois Indians into devout Christians.

Other native preachers emphasized the fire and brimstone approach of the First Great Awakening, advising their Indian audiences to not only acknowledge their sins, but also to consider the punishments they would face if they continued to live in pagan darkness. While we do not have records of Joseph Johnson’s preaching to the Oneidas, his later sermons among other Indian groups are instructive for this purpose. All people, Johnson proclaimed, were “children of wrath” and were destined to descend into a hell that “burns with unquenchable fire and brimstone.” Christ’s power could save Indians from this terrible fate, and Johnson cunningly described Christ as a kind of spiritual physician who could defend Indians against the diseases of evil.\(^{116}\) Sometimes this fire and brimstone approach worked effectively. In 1767 one of the Oneida preachers – probably Peter, Thomas, or Isaac – encouraged his audience to recognize the evils of drinking and the perils of ignoring their Christian missionaries. “Brethren I think we are poor miserable Creatures,” the Oneida

\(^{115}\) Gideon Hawley to Eleazar Wheelock, 26 November 1761, in Chaplains of the French and Indian War and the Revolution, Gratz Collection, Case 8, Box 26, Mss. Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

speaker declared. He then proclaimed that the only way to rise above their spiritual poverty was to confess their sins and find ways to enhance “the Glory of God.” At the same time, Oneida audiences often found the constant talk of sin, wrath, fire, and brimstone to be a bit much. One Indian complained to an English missionary that he was completely content until Christians introduced the concept of sin into his life. When he fell on hard times, he accused an English missionary of being “the cause of it, by your continual talk of sin, sin, sin, as tho’ there was nothing else in the World.” The Oneida concluded that the missionary was “a Plague to me, you give me all this trouble.” Sin was an alien concept for most eastern woodland Indians, so it was difficult for native missionaries to shoehorn it into existing Iroquoian cosmologies. When native preachers taught their students about, or discoursed with their neighbors on the subject of, sin, it had the potential to backfire and make already unstable cultural relations increasingly more volatile.

Native preachers emphasized the eternal punishments of hell, but they also outlined the everlasting rewards of living a pious Christian life. Samuel Ashpo exemplified this tendency, and frequently spoke to the Oneidas of the glories of the “upper World.” In other sermons among other Indians, Ashpo asked his audiences to “set their mind heavenward,” and think of the eternal blessings they would receive once they were accepted into heaven. Avoiding the thorny issue of original sin in his sermons, Ashpo spoke to Indians “chiefly about the latter Day” and encouraged his listeners to prepare for the coming of Christ, the day when every man had to give an account of their lives, actions, and deeds. Influenced by

117 Samuel Kirkland to Eleazar Wheelock, 9 September 1767, in Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, 24-25.

118 Quoted in Johnson, To Do Good To My Indian Brethren, 62.

119 Samuel Ashpo to Eleazar Wheelock, 22 August 1766, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 45; and “An Account of Certain Exhortations,” November 1771, Ibid., 142.
English ministers, Oneida preachers, and Algonquian evangelists like Samuel Ashpo, Oneida Indians began transforming their varying ideas about heaven, and not all of them were in tune with what English missionaries had envisioned. Many listened carefully to their missionaries’ words but did not understand the complicated subtleties of Christian theology. Samuel Kirkland observed in 1773, for example, that Oneida Indians had “conceived a notion, that an external good behaviour with learning the Decalogue as to repeat it without Book, was all the divine law intended or required” for them to obtain “eternal life.” If this was truly the case, the Oneidas themselves were not the only ones to blame, for English and Indian preachers alike emphasized rote memorization in their schools and preached the doctrine of exemplary living in their sermons.

The Oneidas also came to believe that, in order to be absolved of their sins, all they had to do was confess or undergo another baptism, which would wash away their misdeeds. Moreover, Samuel Kirkland complained, loud and boisterous Indian feasts became an “essential part” of these baptisms. What Kirkland may not have realized was that name-changing was a frequent and important ceremony in eastern woodland Indian society, a rite of passage that was embraced and celebrated by the entire community. Samson Occom reported that Long Island’s Montauk Indians, for example, understood name-changing as a central component of life’s cyclical development, a celebration performed not only by the newly named Indian but also by the entire community. “They used to make great dances or frolicks,” Occom reported, and the Montauks “made great preparations for these dances, of wampum, beads, jewels, dishes, and cloathing, and liquor.” Naming was so common among them that it was not unusual for Indians to “name their children two or three times over by different names, and at different times, and old people very often gave new names to
themselves.” The celebratory nature of Indian name changing explains why Kirkland watched as Iroquois Indians “dance and frolic” after a baptism, where the newly baptized candidate took “part in the songs, and walk[ed] in the dance.” Baptism was a definitively Christian sacrament, but it could be situated relatively easily into eastern woodland Indians’ traditions of name-changing as a central moment of personal development. Oneida Indians thus embraced some aspects of Christian evangelism, especially the ones that were most easily incorporated into their own religious worldviews. At the same time, native preachers like Samson Occom and Good Peter – who both experienced their own name changes in years prior – were active participants in helping Oneidas and other eastern woodland Indians translate Christianity on their own terms and into their own cultural vernacular. Baptisms and name changing were vital to this process of religious translation.

Songs were central to these expressions of Iroquoian spirituality, and native preachers actively tried to use song as a medium through which to communicate Christian messages. In spite of the differences in their preaching styles, native preachers all used Christian psalms and hymns to try to engage Iroquoian audiences and tap into indigenous traditions of orality, song-singing, and community-building. “Psalmody,” a Presbyterian missionary in Pennsylvania once observed, “is exceeding pleasing to the Indians,” and the short structure of the psalms was particularly suited for integration into Iroquoian song culture. One


121 Journal of Samuel Kirkland, 9 October 1773, in Kirkland, The Journals of Samuel Kirkland, 80-81; and Axtell, The Invasion Within, 168.

commentator noted that Indians’ songs were sung “in short parts” and “in short lines or sentences.” Psalms and hymns, more than any other sacred text, were therefore easily adaptable to the Iroquoian cultural and ritual landscape. Good Peter and Isaac, who preached at several Oneida towns before the Moor Indians arrived, carried with them “no other book but the Psalms” when they undertook itinerant missionary trips to their neighbors. Eleazar Wheelock’s school had a renowned reputation for producing not only able missionaries, but excellent singers. It is no surprise that the native preachers who situated themselves among the Iroquois also turned to psalms and hymns as a way to attract indigenous audiences to Christianity. David and Jacob Fowler both boasted that their singing schools were successful, and that their Iroquoian students could sing “many Tunes with all three Parts.”

When Wheelock sent David Fowler a packet of new books, three of them were exclusively

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123 John Heckewelder, “An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs, of The Indian Nations, Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States,” in Transactions of the Historical & Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, For Promoting Useful Knowledge Vol. I (Philadelphia: Abraham Small, 1819), 203. English missionaries also believed that, due to the prevailing stereotype of African musicality, blacks should also be introduced to the psalms as an entrée into Christian evangelism. William Knox, for example, proclaimed that that “The Negroes in general have an ear for musick, and might without much trouble be taught to sing hymns, which would be the pleasantest method of instructing them, and bringing them speedily to offer praise to God. They should be taught short prayers for morning and evening, and grace to say at meals.” See William Knox, Three Tracts Respecting the Conversion and Instruction of the Free Indians, and Negroe Slaves in the Colonies. Addressed to the Venerable Society for Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London: s.n., 1768), 39.

124 “An Account of the Missionaries and Schoolmasters Employed Among the Remote Nations of Indians,” in Whitaker, A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, 30. Peter and Isaac also had a few passages from scripture and some prayers in Oneida, but the book of psalms was the only sacred text they carried with them.

125 John Smith to a Friend, 18 May 1764, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 73-75; and Joanna Brooks, “Six Hymns by Samson Occom,” Early American Literature 38 No. 1 (2003): 67-87. While Watts’ hymns were certainly becoming more popular among evangelical circles in the 1720s and afterwards, they never did completely replace psalmody as a form of sacred music. Instead, native missionaries used psalms and hymns simultaneously to attract Indian audiences.

126 Jacob Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 28 November 1766, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 117.
about sacred music.127 While Joseph Johnson could not keep his younger students in the day school, the singing school he ran every evening was characterized by “very full meetings.”128 Iroquois Indians accepted Christian songs much more readily than they did Christian education.

No native preacher was as ardent in his devotion to psalmody and hymnody as Samson Occom. Occom believed that singing was not just a leisurely pastime, but a critical ingredient of Christian spirituality. He thought it was the “Duty of Christians to learn the Songs of Zion, according to good Method or Rule; but the People ought not to be contented

127 Eleazar Wheelock to David Fowler, 17 December 1767, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 111-112.

128 Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 10 February 1768, in Johnson, To Do Good To My Indian Brethren, 66-68.
with the outward Form of Singing, but should seek after the *inward* Part.” Not only did these songs of Zion comfort those with spiritual anxiety, Occom declared, they would also prove to be very “destructive to the Kingdom of Satan.”\(^{129}\) This explains why Occom wrote handmade songbooks and even published original hymns in 1774.\(^{130}\) Even if indigenous audiences failed to embrace written texts as sacred truths, they still embraced the psalms as vessels of sacred knowledge and instruments of group cohesion.

And yet, Occom’s distinction between *inward* and *outward* singing underscores the danger of singing, especially its potential for profane superficiality. English and Indian preachers like Occom understood singing as a serious task, one that demanded contemplation, reflection, and *gravitas* more than it did a good voice. John Witherspoon, an agent for Wheelock’s missionary program, president of the College of New Jersey, and later tutor of two African evangelists, agreed that music was not to be taken lightly. Music was one of the “fine arts,” Witherspoon opined, but when it was applied for the purposes of “amusement only,” music immediately becomes “wholly contemptible.” Singing without religious purpose was “a disgraceful calling” that was “not consistent with the character of a gentleman.”\(^{131}\) Other observers agreed and noted that Iroquoian singing was not indicative of a serious turn towards Christianity, but rather showed that they only embraced the more zealous and extreme of evangelical Christianity’s elements. Sir William Johnson, who initially supported Wheelock’s native missionary program, declared that the Iroquois Indians had not made much progress in Christian knowledge since Wheelock’s Indians began their

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\(^{131}\) Papers of John Witherspoon, 1758-1783, Box 1, page 48, Mss. Collections of the Library of Congress; Call Number MMC-2604 and Control Number: MM81046185.
cultural offensive. “Their whole time,” Johnson complained, was spent “in Singing psalms amongst the Country people.” Johnson believed that this not only caused the Iroquois to neglect their hunting and public affairs, but also forced them to imbibe “an air of the most Enthusiastical Cant” along with “Belchings of the Spirit.” Instead of transforming them into truly pious Christians, Johnson believed that native preachers and their psalm singing only left Iroquois Indians with zealous religious enthusiasm and “a Sett of Gloomy Ideas.”

Singing could be evidence of sincere Christian piety as well as proof of excessive, rapturous zeal.

Through their oratory and self-representation, preaching and teaching, and through their participation in seasonal hunts and employment of sacred music, the Moor Indians tried to plant the seeds of Iroquoian Christianity in the years before the American Revolution. The conflicts that erupted from their mission, however, would eventually cause it to fail.

**Conflict in the Iroquoian Borderlands**

The eastern Algonquian Indians who embarked for New York in the 1760s “existed uncomfortably between cultural categories.” In Iroquoian society but not from it, markedly distinct from their own people by virtue of their education, and unique in their access to Christian spiritual authority, native preachers constantly struggled to define and redefine their missionary work, their potential converts, and themselves, and their letters back to Eleazar Wheelock expose the challenges and conflicts that this native missionary project generated. The intermingling of ambitious Indian preachers, imperious English supervisors, and cunning Oneida audiences catalyzed a host of conflicts, many more than any other

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132 Quoted in Glatthaar and Martin, *Forgotten Allies*, 68.

133 Johnson, *To Do Good To My Indian Brethren*, 58.
Protestant missionary effort before it. Although these conflicts catalyzed the downfall of Wheelock’s program, they did little to dissuade other Protestant ministers from recruiting, training, and employing indigenous missionaries.

While missions have certainly been characterized by physical violence and cultural conflict, it should be remembered that there were important opportunities for conversation, negotiation, and even mutual accommodation between the Moor Indians and their Iroquois audiences. The Moor Indians were certainly not coerced into traveling to Iroquoia and, in spite of their misgivings about Iroquoian culture (discussed below), they truly looked upon their New York neighbors as Christians in the making, future brothers who might share in the glories of the gospel. David Fowler admitted that the main goal of his teaching was in “Spreading the Gospel among the Pagans,” whom he considered to be “my brethren.”

When Hezekiah Calvin contemplated leaving the missionary life behind, the only thing that made him hesitate was his neglect of his Mohawk friends. “The state and condition of my Friends & fellow Brethren would be hovering in my mind daily,” Calvin admitted, “so that I was almost ready to conclude to spend my life amongst them…if I could but have it in my Mind that I should be likely of doing them any good.” He concluded that “I should be very glad…to see my Brethren become Christians and live like Christians.”

Joseph Woolley also expressed a sentimental concern for the plight of Iroquoian souls. Three months after he arrived at his mission at Onaquaga, Woolley declared that “My Soul seems to be more and more upon the perishing Pagans in these Woods: I long for the Conversion of their Souls, and

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134 David Fowler’s Confession, 20 November 1764, in McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 87; and David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 2 December 1766, in Ibid., 106.

135 Hezekiah Calvin to Eleazar Wheelock, 14 August 1767, in McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 57.
that they may come to the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus, and be saved.”

Joseph Johnson entreated God to “make me a blessing to the Children which he has committed to my charge” while Samson Occom felt “a General Concern…riveted in my Heart, for my Poor Brethren…Both for their Bodies and Souls.”

When Occom undertook a long and taxing fundraising trip to the British Isles, he claimed he did so not to boost his reputation or cosmopolitanism. Instead, as he said, he went “purely for the poor Indians.” These native preachers were not avaricious and self-aggrandizing imperialists, and they believed that they truly cared about the lives and souls of their Indian brethren on the borderlands.

But the line between altruistic beneficence and condescending pity was extremely thin in the eighteenth century, especially in missionary discourses. As much as native preachers saw the Iroquois and other Indians as their “brethren,” they also recognized that their unique position as indigenous evangelists had elevated them in English eyes. Some native preachers attributed their elevated status to their own intellectual acuity while others gave the glory to God. David Fowler praised and thanked God because he “distinguished me from many of my poor Brethren, in setting me up to be their Instructor.”

David’s brother, Jacob, thanked Wheelock (instead of God) for “his goodness to chuse me out from my stupid

136 Extract of a Letter from Joseph Woolley, July 1765, in Whitaker, A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, 41.

137 Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 10 November 1767, in Johnson, To Do Good To My Indian Brethren, 63-65; and Samson Occom to Eleazar Wheelock, 10 February 1767, in Richardson, ed., An Indian Preacher in England, 221-222.


140 David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 2 December 1766, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 106.
Brethren and to bring me into his School.”\textsuperscript{141} Jacob Woolley, a young Delaware Indian who left the College of New Jersey because of his perpetual tantrums, was completely humiliated by and ashamed of his behavior. If he was a normal Indian, Woolley implied, his actions might have been understandable. But Woolley was ashamed because “of the peculiar Obligations I am under to God & Man, by whose Goodness & their Charity I have been so distinguished from all my Nation.”\textsuperscript{142} Native missionaries’ sense of elevated status derived partly from Wheelock himself, who described non-Christian Indians in the lowest of terms. He called them “poor stupid creatures” at the “level of brutal Creation.”\textsuperscript{143} Their children were “little savage wretches” who lived in “little despicable bark huts.”\textsuperscript{144} Wheelock viewed Indians as a whole as “poor, greasy, lousy, half starved creatures,” and “the most ignorant, sordid, and miserable of the human Race.”\textsuperscript{145} While Wheelock’s son dubbed Indians “a Swarm of tawny Immortals,” another missionary described them as “little tawny Wretches.”\textsuperscript{146} Native preachers certainly imbibed some of Wheelock’s invective against non-

\textsuperscript{141} Jacob Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 31 January 1767, in McCallum, \textit{The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians}, 117.

\textsuperscript{142} Jacob Woolley’s Confession, 25 July 1763, in McCallum, \textit{The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians}, 254.

\textsuperscript{143} Eleazar Wheelock, \textit{A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon, in Connecticut; From the Year 1768, to the Incorporation of it with Dartmouth-College, And Removal and Settlement of it in Hanover, In the Province of New-Hampshire, 1771} (Hartford: Ebenezer Watson, 1771), 22; and Taylor, \textit{The Divided Ground}, 49.

\textsuperscript{144} Eleazar Wheelock to Lord Dartmouth, 22 December 1768, in McClure, \textit{Memoirs of the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock, D.D.}, 282; and Eleazar Wheelock to the Warkmans Sisters, 17 August 1768, in Ibid., 279.

\textsuperscript{145} Eleazar Wheelock to the Warkmans Sisters, 17 August 1768, 279; and Whitaker, \textit{A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School} (1767), 53.

\textsuperscript{146} Eleazar Wheelock to the Earl of Dartmouth, 8 October 1767, from Ralph Wheelock’s Journal for 13 September 1767, in Wheelock, \textit{A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School} (1769), 32; and Samuel Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 27 October 1766, in Ibid., 7.
Christian Indians and harnessed it to forge their own identity as Christian Indians whose souls had presumably been saved.

These missionary discourses frequently sounded like racialized commentaries, and native preachers developed a host of examples to demonstrate that their Iroquoian neophytes were widely different from themselves. Some of this was subtle and nuanced. Samson Occom, for example, rejected the Anglo-American assumption that Indian bodies were particularly well-suited for evangelical work on the frontier. After several weeks in Iroquoia in 1762, he admitted that the “Climet and the way that I am obliged to Live here, will never suit my Constitution.”¹⁴⁷ In these few words Occom differentiated himself from his Indian hosts while simultaneously staking claim to English bodily civility. As Occom’s letter reveals, the material comforts they lacked also played into this rhetoric, for native preachers frequently complained that they lived like dogs, ate the poorest of foods, verged on the edge of starvation, and were ensconced in unbelievable material poverty when in Iroquoia.¹⁴⁸

Joseph Woolley was also appalled by the way in which Indians neglected a famous Delaware chief named Squash Cutter, who had died from the smallpox. “This poor man was left destitute by all his Friend, & Relations, had nobody to tend him,” Woolly recalled, and he was “sorry & greaved [sic] to see in the Indians so much Brutality, that they cared [sic] no more for each other than the Beasts do.”¹⁴⁹ When native preachers became frustrated at the

¹⁴⁷ Samson Occom to Eleazar Wheelock, 19 July 1762, in Case 8, Box 24 of the Gratz Collection (American Colonial Clergy) at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁴⁸ See David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 29 May 1765, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 90-91; Fowler to Wheelock, 15 June 1765, in Ibid., 93-95; and Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 10 February 1768, in Johnson, To Do Good To My Indian Brethren, 66-68.

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Woolley to Eleazar Wheelock, 6 July 1765, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 267. Woolley’s example probably speaks to Indians awareness about the transmission of smallpox. They left Squash Cutter alone because they understood the devastating ways in which smallpox could be communicated to other Indians. When Woolley suffered from his own fatal illness in late 1765, he used probably remembered Squash Cutter’s death, as he took refuge in an English interpreter’s house,
ineffectiveness of their evangelical labors, they often blamed the stubborn nature of the Iroquois Indians for their failures. Hezekiah Calvin had hoped to do some good “among these Savages,” but their refusal to embrace Christianity (at least along Calvin’s lines), forced him to conclude that nothing could be done for them, for “Indians will be Indians.” Joseph Johnson – the same man who called an Iroquois student at Wheelock’s school an “Indian Devil” – took it one step further by equating Iroquoian recalcitrance with demographic extinction. Replicating an argument he heard many times from Wheelock, Johnson declared that, “if the Indians now Refuse the Offered Gospel it will be wonder if God don’t in his anger cut them off from his Earth.” Johnson’s extinction trope also dovetailed with missionary discourses concerning the land: civilized Christians were destined to spread light into places of darkness while uncivilized indigenous peoples were destined to retreat before it. When Indian preachers described the Iroquoian landscape, they often called upon biblical allusions of non-Christian lands as a wilderness, a dessert, and as “the Gall of Bitterness and the bond of Iniquity.” Moor Indians thus described Iroquoia as a barren country destitute of any religious light at exactly the same time that Anglican Philip Quaque was saying the same thing about West Africa. When David Fowler beat his Iroquois students so badly that it made “their Hands to Swell very much,” his actions were a violent manifestation of the rather than among the Onaquaga residents he was trying to convert. See Elisha Gunn to Eleazar Wheelock, 14 January 1766, in McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*.

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152 Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 20 April 1768, in Johnson, *To Do Good To My Indian Brethren*, 68-69.

religious, geographic, racial, and discursive tensions that plagued the relationship between Moor Indians and their Iroquois hosts.  

Although these discourses appear overtly racist, pity, rather than racism, was at their core. As Laura Stevens has recently argued, pity was a powerful discursive tool, for it helped colonizers craft imperial identities while defining them as distinct from the colonial “other.” While the objects of colonization were objects to be pitied, colonial subjects fabricated their own imperial identities based upon their pity of another group. To be pitied was, in short, to lack power. Conversely, to pity another person was to possess power. Pity therefore gave eastern Algonquian evangelists a rhetorical device with which they could distinguish themselves from their Iroquoian neophytes. Like their imperious English colleagues, native preachers dolled out pity, not received it. David Fowler described his Oneida hosts, for example, as “lazy and sordid Wretches.” “But,” he clarified, “they are to be pitied, not frown’d.” Fowler had hoped that he could help these “poor creatures” cleanse their souls and “weaken the strong Holds of Satan in this Place.” Joseph Woolley explained in 1765 that “My heart feels sorry for the poor Indians, that they know no more about our crucified Saviour.” Fowler, Woolley, and other Moor Indians’ efforts to bestow pity not only gave

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154 Joseph Woolley to Eleazar Wheelock, 6 July 1765, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 268. Wheelock’s school was renowned for its strict corporeal punishment, so it is little surprise that Wheelock’s students employed that disciplinary model in their own schools. In fact, Hezekiah Calvin even confessed that he often found himself “a thrashing them continually” for every mistake that his students made. Interesting, Calvin reported that the Indians believed he was not severe enough. See Calvin to Eleazar Wheelock, 11 August 1766, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians, 49-51.

155 Stevens, The Poor Indians.

156 David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 24 June 1765, in McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock, 96.


158 Joseph Woolley to Eleazar Wheelock, July 1765, in Whitaker, A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School (1766), 41. For their own part, Oneida Indians also used the concept of pity to stake a claim on
native preachers a chance to define the *other* indigenous “other,” it also afforded them the opportunity to simultaneously work out and articulate their own unique identities as Christian Indian preachers among non-Christian Indians. For native preachers, pity was a sacred marker of difference, not necessarily a racial one.

In his sermon to an Indian who had been sentenced to death for murder, Samson Occom clarified what he and his evangelist colleagues meant when they described other Indians as pitiable beasts in the wilderness. For Occom, the distinction was not ultimately a racial one, but one delineated by the sacred workings of god’s grace. “Sin,” not race or culture, Occom implied, “has made him [man] beastly and devilish.” In fact, the sinful man was not even on the level of beasts, for he was “sunk beneath the beasts, and is worse than the ravenous beasts of the wilderness.”

Occom’s wilderness was less a physical place and more of a metaphorical space characterized by an absence of Christian revelation and a dominion of Satanic power. Even though the Indian murderer to whom Occom preached was a “poor miserable object” who had lived in “folly and madness, and enormous wickedness,” he was ultimately redeemable. He was not to be pitied because he was an Indian, but rather because he was not a Christian and thus had no access to divine forgiveness for his wickedness. Occom had come to this conclusion about race and pity well before he gave this sermon in 1774. About 13 years prior, during his first missionary trip to the Iroquois, Occom traveled across Indian and English lands. One thing that Occom took note of was the

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159 Occom, *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian*, 10.

appalling lack of religious devotion from so-called English Christians. “I have thought there was no Heathen but the wild Indians,” Occom recorded in his travel journal, “but I think now there is some English Heathen.” He believed that these English non-Christians were “worse than ye Savage Heathens of the wilderness” because they had the light of the gospel all around them (in ministers, churches, and sacred texts), but neglected to embrace its saving power.¹⁶¹ For Occom and other native preachers, the distinctions they noticed between indigenous peoples and themselves seemed overtly racial. In the end, however, they ultimately believed that these distinctions were superficial, able to be immediately lifted through the repentance of the sinner and the grace of God. While Europeans and Americans were beginning to think of racial differences as immutable, natural, and biological, native preachers believed that these differences were wholly conditional upon the sentiment of the sinner and the benevolence of the almighty. Native preachers pitied non-Christian Indians partly because it helped them work out their own thorny identity crises, but also partly because they truly believed that their neighbors and brethren could never share in the eternal glories of the afterlife if they continued to live and sin as they did.

The relationship between the Iroquois Indians and the eastern Algonquian missionaries was no one-way street. Native preachers depended upon the approval of Oneida Indians, so the rapport between evangelists and traditional leaders was absolutely crucial to the development of this missionary project. Samson Occom’s first trip to the Oneidas in 1761 may not have been a rousing evangelical success, but he did win the respect and affection of Oneida leaders. They told him that they were “glad from the inside of our Hearts that you are come here to teach the right way of God” and presented him with a ceremonial

wampum belt before he departed.\textsuperscript{162} When Samuel Kirkland introduced Delaware Indian Joseph Woolley as schoolteacher to the Oneidas at Onaquaga, the Indians widely approved and promised to adopt him into their tribe.\textsuperscript{163} After Woolley died suddenly later that year, Peter, Thomas, Isaac, and other Christian Oneida leaders wrote to Wheelock to declare that his former pupil was a “very Sober Man, a very good Teacher,” and that Woolley “understood ye Book well.” “We fear,” the Oneidas concluded, “there are none will equal his place.”\textsuperscript{164} There were also opportunities for collaboration between existing Oneida preachers and the Moor Indians. David Fowler, for example, relied upon the logistical and spiritual assistance of Deacon Thomas during his mission to Kanonwalohale, so much so that Fowler proclaimed that Thomas had “done me more Service than all the Town.”\textsuperscript{165} If established native preachers like Good Peter, Isaac, and Deacon Thomas felt threatened or overshadowed by their eastern Algonquian counterparts, they rarely showed it, for they often showered the Moor Indians with compliments and supported them in ways that were indispensable to their missions.

At the same time, the Oneidas were very discerning and particular in their expectations for native missionaries and were especially quick to show disapproval if their guests brought shame upon themselves or their calling. Samuel Ashpo, whom the Jeningo Oneidas requested for a preacher in the first years of the 1760s, was accused several times of


\textsuperscript{163} Journal of Samuel Kirkland, 28 March 1765, in Kirkland, \textit{The Journals of Samuel Kirkland}, 3.

\textsuperscript{164} Lament for Joseph Woolley, 29 December 1765, in McCallum, \textit{The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians}, 272-273.

\textsuperscript{165} David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock, 21 January 1766, in McCallum, \textit{The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians}, 100.
“Drinking Strong Drink to Excess, & of Quarrellg, Indecent, unChristian behaviour,” during and after his mission. The Oneida Indians in that small town were infuriated with Ashpo’s behavior, which discredited both Ashpo in particular and Wheelock’s program in general. Hezekiah Calvin had a difficult time trying to cultivate amicable relationships with his Mohawk hosts at Fort Hunter. Part of this might have been due to his imperious nature and his inability to heed certain Mohawk social mores. The Mohawks were appalled that Calvin refused to eat their food, greet them when entering their homes, or move out of the way of others. For his own part, Calvin believed that the Mohawks “think that I am their Servant.” The coup de gras for Calvin’s reputation was when he got drunk and threw a rampage among his Mohawk charges. Calvin later chalked his misbehavior up to the fact that he was in love. Although love may have made Calvin do crazy things, his social isolation and insecurity about his spiritual authority among the Mohawks also contributed to his fall.

The Oneidas tolerated some missteps by their missionaries, but Ashpo’s and Calvin’s problems paled in comparison to the outbursts that Joseph Johnson instigated in the spring of 1768. Around that time, as he was teaching among the Oneidas, Johnson began exhibiting a remarkable lack of social and sexual restraint; he and another Indian drank three gallons of wine, destroyed household furniture, hired prostitutes (and bought them valuable trinkets),

166 Suspension of Samuel Ashpo by the Connecticut Board of Correspondents, 1 July 1767, in McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 45-46. This might explain why, in late 1761, Gideon Hawley reported that, in spite of Ashpo’s proximity to that settlement, he had “no influence” at Onaquaga. See Gideon Hawley to Eleazar Wheelock, 26 November 1761, in Chaplains of the French and Indian War and the Revolution, Gratz Collection, Case 8, Box 22, Mss. Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

167 Hezekiah Calvin to Eleazar Wheelock, 11 August 1766, in McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 49

168 Samuel Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 12 February 1767, in McCallum, *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 52; Hezekiah Calvin to Wheelock, 11 August 1766, in Ibid., 49-51; and Calvin to Wheelock, March 1768, in Ibid., 62-63.
and wasted provisions. Summarizing the incident later, Kirkland reported that Johnson “turn’d pagan for about a week – painted, sung, --danc’d – drank & whor’d it, wh some of the savage Indians he cou’d find.”

Although one scholar has recently suggested that Johnson’s erratic behavior was “probably more in keeping with a general inclination on Johnson’s part to involve himself in the daily living routines of the community,” Johnson’s conduct was anything but routine for native preachers or ordinary Iroquois. Johnson even later admitted that his actions were completely inexcusable, writing to Wheelock later that year and apologizing for indulging in “Brutish Ease whilst in the wilderness.” His fall, he explained, was not an attempt to gain favor with the Indians, but was instead “Occasioned by the temptation of the Devil.”

What made the entire scenario even more problematic was that Johnson’s debaucheries were “taken Notice of by the Indians.” As word leaked that one of the arbiters of Christian morality lost all sense of it, Johnson’s reputation became shattered. Deacon Thomas implored Johnson to salvage his character by making a public Confession, “as is their Custom.” In an illuminating role reversal, the Oneidas demanded that Johnson – the Christian missionary – make a public confession of his sins. Johnson later explained that, after his confession, the Oneidas agreed to “Bury in Oblivion” everything that had happened and to act as it “never happened so.”

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169 Samuel Kirkland to Eleazar Wheelock, 29 December 1768, in Johnson, To Do Good to My Indian Brethren, 77-78.


171 Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 28 December 1768, in Johnson, To Do Good to My Indian Brethren, 74-77.

172 Joseph Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 28 December 1768, in Johnson, To Do Good to My Indian Brethren, 74-77.
Oneidas and Mohawks continued to look upon Joseph Johnson unfavorably and suspiciously, and he left his missionary post later that year in complete dishonor. “His name stinks,” Samuel Kirkland reported, “from Kanajohare to Fort-Stanwix.” Kirkland declared that even the road that connected Iroquoian communities in northern New York “smells very strong of his pride, falsehood, & diabolical Conduct.”

Christian missions – and especially these native missions – were delicate affairs, and Johnson’s erratic behavior did irreparable damage to the Moor Indians’ objectives.

It was no coincidence that Oneida Indians began expressing a guarded suspicion of the Moor Indians at about this same time. In February of 1769, the Oneidas removed their children from Wheelock’s school in Connecticut, partly because of Johnson’s missteps and partly because they had heard how draconian of a disciplinarian Wheelock could be. Iroquois Indians traditionally treated outsiders, even enemy captives, with a great deal of kindness and even respect, and they expected Wheelock and other educators to reciprocate that relationship. A council of Indians at Onandaga, where the Iroquois council fire was based, told Wheelock’s son that his father could learn much from the French Jesuits: “They don’t speak roughly, nor do they for every little mistake take up a club & flog them.” This may have appeared like a sudden turn in attitude, but the Oneidas had always had their suspicions about Wheelock’s program. Sir William Johnson reported that Iroquois Indians “despise” the Moor Indians because they appeared impoverished and constantly complained

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173 Samuel Kirkland to Eleazar Wheelock, 29 December 1768, in Johnson, *To Do Good To My Indian Brethren*, 77-78.

174 Johnson, *To Do Good to MY Indian Brethren*, 59. Wheelock had, by this time, developed a notable reputation for beating, whipping, and humiliating his students into obedience. By the end of that year, Wheelock’s enrollment dropped from 20 students to only 3.


176 Quoted in Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 209.
about their loss of land in the east. After Johnson’s fall, Kirkland earnestly warned Wheelock not to send any more of his revered Indian preachers. “It wont be acceptable to ye ppl here,” Kirkland explained. Kirkland even begged Wheelock to keep native preachers out of Iroquoia “until there is good evidence to believe ye Indian Devil & evil spirit is gone out of him.” The Moor Indians were gradually developing a reputation as rabble rousers and intruders who had clearly worn out their welcome. Perhaps they wore out their necessity, too. One historian has reported that after the arrival of the Moor Indians, the Oneidas began their own school, where boys and young men learned outside of the institutional framework of the missionary schools. The Oneidas had invited Algonquian preachers into their homes, lives, and lands as a way to secure their futures, but the Moor Indians completely disappointed them.

To make things even more problematic, the intercultural conflicts were not just between the Moor Indians and their Iroquois audiences, but also between Indian missionaries and white ones, native missionaries and each other, and Moor Indians and Wheelock. David Fowler, for example, labored to establish his own authority as a teacher even as white ministers sought to boss him around. He complained that white missionary Samuel Kirkland, Fowler’s colleague and housemate, thought he was better than indigenous evangelists and could “order us about where and how he pleased.” It got so bad that Fowler demanded Kirkland never speak his name again, and he warned Wheelock not to give any preacher enough authority to order Indians about. “He can’t order me,” Fowler quipped, “nor no Missionary that shall come into theseParts. As I am an Instructor I am able to act for myself,

177 Quoted in Taylor, The Divided Ground, 59.

178 Samuel Kirkland to Eleazar Wheelock, 29 December 1768, in Johnson, To Do Good To My Indian Brethren, 77-78.

179 Calloway, The American Revolution in Indian Country, 117.
without having a master over me.” Joseph Johnson had a similar encounter with Kirkland when the white missionary ordered Johnson to gather some firewood. Johnson refused, sparking a heated quarrel about their relative authority in the borderlands. Even native preachers had petty rivalries with one another, like when Samson Occom demanded that Samuel Ashpo, another Indian preacher who had different political allegiances than Occom, not be allowed to enter Wheelock’s school. Occom complained about Ashpo’s “irregular steps” and sought to bar him from exercising the same spiritual authority that he himself wielded. Even the indigenous Oneida preachers who were already well established on the borderlands experienced some of these tensions and conflicts. When the Revolutionary crisis began to heat up, the Iroquois sometimes declared their allegiances based upon religious preferences: many of the Anglicized warriors (like Joseph Brant) sided with the Anglicans and the English, while some Christian Oneidas (who were friends with Kirkland) sided with the New Lights and the colonists. Isaac had hoped to join the former while Good Peter opted to ally himself with the latter.

The most problematic conflict that developed in the late 1760s was not between the Moor Indians and the Oneidas, but between the Moor Indians and their benefactor, Eleazar Wheelock. Wheelock’s domineering comportment and inconsistent support led many of his former students to believe that they were only pawns in his effort to amass personal power


182 Samson Occom to Eleazar Wheelock, 12 May 1762, in Occom, The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan, 69; and Samson Occom to Eleazar Wheelock, 9 November 1762, in American Colonial Clergy, Gratz Collection, Case 8, Box 24, Mss. Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

183 Calloway, The American Revolution in Indian Country, 117. See also Taylor, The Divided Ground.
and influence. David Fowler, ever willing to speak his mind, strongly believed that Wheelock had not supported him as faithfully as he could have during his mission to the Oneida. He even contrasted his own intellect, successful training, and evangelical abilities with those of other Indian missionaries. Fowler protested that Wheelock spent too much time codling them while ignoring him. “I think it very strange,” he complained to Wheelock, “that one who has done most should be forgotten.” “All those which have been sent into those parts have not done any thing worth mentioning. All what they have done is only roving abroad and making the Indians angry,” Fowler quipped. Wheelock did not take Fowler’s comments seriously, but instead attributed them to intrinsic Indian vices. For Wheelock, Indians were particularly susceptible to three distinct but overlapping sins: wandering, pride, and drunkenness. In Wheelock’s mind, Fowler was clearly guilty of pride. But he was not the only one. From the late 1760s to the early 1770s, Wheelock recounted innumerable instances when the best of these native preachers (Jacob Woolley, Samson Occom, Hezekiah Calvin, and Joseph Johnson) got drunk, ran away, “turned pagan,” became apostates, exhibited excessive pride, and brought shame upon Wheelock, his school, and his native missionary program. The origins of these falls lay not only in the anxieties and challenges that native missionaries faced, but also in the racial stereotyping that Wheelock had absorbed and expressed throughout his career. Wheelock had astronomically high expectations for his Indian pupils, and the stresses of undergoing grueling missions to the Iroquoian borderlands often caused ruptures in the relationships between all parties involved.

Wheelock’s program was in trouble by the late 1760s. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix, which extended English jurisdiction westward and into Mohawk and Oneida lands, infuriated Indians and rightfully caused them to suspect Wheelock and any other English or allied

Indians who professed a desire to help them.\textsuperscript{185} At the same time, Wheelock’s Indians were dying, leaving missionary service, or engaging in such astonishing bouts of “apostasy” that it made him question whether Indians were even capable of missionary work. Wheelock confided to George Whitefield in the spring of 1769 that his missionary experiment had gone horribly wrong, and the only practical course was to turn away from training unreliable and vice-ridden Indians and towards more dependable and trustworthy English preachers. “I am convinced,” Wheelock conceded, “that God does not design that Indians shall have the lead in the Affair at present.”\textsuperscript{186} Although Samson Occom and another English minister had recently raised over 12,000 pounds for Wheelock’s native missionary program, Wheelock used the funds to build an elite seminary for white missionaries. The result was Dartmouth College, an institution that graduated only three Indians from 1770 to 1800 and only nine in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{187} Wheelock also turned his attention to training English missionaries for the conversion of Canadian Indians, rather than Iroquois ones. As for the Iroquois Indians that he earlier professed to care so much about, Wheelock believed that their rejection of God’s offer of salvation practically sealed their fate. They shared the same destiny as that of the native missionary program initially designed to help them, as Wheelock believed they were simply destined to waste away “like a morning dew.”\textsuperscript{188}


\textsuperscript{186} Eleazar Wheelock to George Whitefield, 24 April 1769, in Richardson, ed., \textit{An Indian Preacher in England}, 353.

\textsuperscript{187} The story of Wheelock’s failure can be found in Axtell, \textit{The Invasion Within}, 210-217; and Axtell, \textit{Natives and Newcomers}, 183-188.

\textsuperscript{188} Wheelock, \textit{A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon, in Connecticut}, 22.
Protestant ministers around the Atlantic world understood the fall of the French in 1763 as a providential moment in the history of Christianity. The door seemed open for the Iroquois to finally be exposed to the saving light of divine grace, and Eleazar Wheelock sold his native missionary program as a fundamentally innovative and original proposal for sending Christianity into those parts. Native preachers, however, had longstanding experiences in Iroquoia, from Mohawk schoolmasters like Abraham and Paulus to the existing Christian leadership of Good Peter, Isaac, and Deacon Thomas among the Oneidas.

When eastern Algonquian Indians entered Iroquoia in the 1760s, they were certainly not entering a Christian *terra nullius*, but rather a religious landscape that had already been well trodden by indigenous Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian evangelists. Their methods of instruction and self-representation, their embrace of oratory and employment of the psalms, their willingness to join Indians on the hunt and their preaching styles and messages all reveal how this unique group of Indians tried to spread Christianity among a neighboring group of Indians. Indeed, if anything was original about Wheelock’s program, it was the fact that this was the first and most aggressive attempt to use one Native American group to convert another. The conflicts that naturally erupted from these missions, combined with changes in the Iroquoian historical landscape and frequent lapses by native missionaries themselves, brought an end to this ambitious evangelical design. Even the man who professed to love the Iroquois and care for their souls turned his back on them when he opened a school for white missionaries in New Hampshire. In doing so, Wheelock admitted that his native missionary program had been an abysmal failure.

Although Wheelock was immensely powerful, eminent, and influential, few ministers actually supported his turn away from native preachers in the late 1760s. Scottish missionaries, Samuel Kirkland, Samson Occom, other Algonquian preachers, Christian Iroquois leaders, and other divines throughout the Atlantic world universally proclaimed that
Wheelock’s move was unfounded, irregular, and wholly wrongheaded. They generally agreed that Wheelock’s motives were impure, and that he was hoping only to boost his own reputation at the expense of the native preachers he claimed to patronize. Furthermore, the failure of the Moor Indians did little to stop other Protestant missionary groups from cultivating native preachers in other places and at other times. Anglicans still employed native evangelists like Paulus in their Iroquoian missions, Samuel Kirkland still worked with Good Peter and Deacon Thomas to spread the gospel among the Oneidas, the SSPCK still employed native preachers in their missions well after the failure of Wheelock’s program, and even Wheelock’s native preachers returned to Oneida in the 1780s to establish an Indian community that would serve as a base for future native missionary work. Wheelock’s program had not succeeded, but for most ministers the idea of using native missionaries was never in doubt. In fact, later ministers would refer to Wheelock’s program as a model for planning other missionary efforts in other places. When two ministers from Newport, Rhode Island began pushing for a native mission to Africa in the early 1770s, the inescapable legacy of the Moor Indian mission to the Iroquois loomed large in their minds.
CHAPTER SIX

THE QUAMINE PROJECT:
AFRO-CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM AND INDIAN MISSIONS IN THE
REVOLUTIONARY BRITISH ATLANTIC

John Quamine was once again on a merchant vessel, hoping and praying that he survived the “severe storm,” “high Wind,” and “very dangerous gale” that threw the ship violently in and out of the tempestuous New England waters.¹ As he tried to avoid getting sick during his turbulent ride in November of 1774, Quamine must have contemplated what he was leaving behind in Newport, Rhode Island. Indeed, the past few years witnessed several dramatic life changes for Quamine and his growing family: he married a woman named Duchess, had a son named Charles, and bought his way out of slavery through a winning lottery ticket. Another, equally important change was his recent embrace of Protestant Christianity and his successful application to become a member of Newport’s First Congregational Church. This decision actually explained why he was on the ship in the first place. Quamine and his companion, Bristol Yamma, were being sent to the College of New Jersey for training as African missionaries under the tutelage of John Witherspoon. Witherspoon was not only the president of the college (soon to be Princeton) but also widely recognized as one of the leading divines in the Protestant Atlantic world. The headiness of the entire scenario must have caused Quamine some trepidation, for he and Yamma had little academic training and seemed ill-prepared to be tutored by one of the brightest minds in the

colonies. Yet Quamine’s anxieties might have also been caused by the memories of the last time he was aboard a merchant vessel, for it is highly probable that the last time he was on such a ship he was about to become one of the millions of slaves who were transported from Africa to the Americas during the era of the transatlantic slave trade. Although Quamine’s wealthy African father had secured safe passage for his son to be educated in the American colonies in the 1750s, a conniving merchant sold him into slavery as soon as he got the chance. Quamine’s rocky ride thus tells us more about the seemingly redemptive qualities of evangelical Christianity than about his personal relationship with the sea.\(^2\) The first time he encountered such a vessel it was his vehicle to slavery. The second time he boarded one it was as an African missionary-in-training, having his way paid to be educated by one of the most celebrated theologians of his time.\(^3\)

While scholars have long been aware of this experiment to send two Christianized West Africans back to their homeland as preachers, none have inscribed it into the larger history of indigenous evangelical work. In fact, only one historian has given it serious treatment, and that was nearly three decades ago.\(^4\) Despite the recent explosion in black

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3 For a brief biography of Quamine (sometimes referred to as Quamino) and his wife, see Edward E. Andrews, “John Quamino” and “Duchess Quamino,” in *The African American National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006-08). The exact timing of Quamine’s enslavement is still unclear.

Atlantic studies, the Quamine Project remains an overlooked episode in the history of cultural encounter between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Part of this neglect is certainly because the mission never even began, for the tumult of the American Revolution cut off communication networks, left Newport devastated, and forced the two Africans to find ways to support their families that did not involve missionary work. Furthermore, and in a tragically fitting end to this story, Quamine lost his life aboard a ship in 1779 while trying to earn money for his struggling family as a privateer. In spite of its neglect by later historians, this African mission was somewhat of a cause célèbre in its own day, not only because Quamine and Yamma were the first two Africans to be trained at any colonial college, but also because of the list of luminaries involved in the project. These included divines such as Ezra Stiles, Samuel Hopkins, and John Erskine, famous notables like Anthony Benezet, John Witherspoon, and Elias Boudinot (the latter two were signers of the Declaration of Independence), Africans Phillis Wheatley and Philip Quaque, and Indian missionaries like Eleazar Wheelock, Samson Occom, and David McClure. This African mission was unlike any before it, if only because of the wide swath of ecumenical support it garnered from all corners of the Protestant Atlantic missionary community. The Quamine Project was therefore not just the brainchild of one minister, but rather involved Indians and Englishmen, enslaved Africans as well as slaveholders, Radical New Lights, moderate Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Old Light Congregationalists. Anglicans and Dissenters certainly had their doctrinal differences, but when it came to the evangelization of non-Christians, they often seized upon opportunities to create cross-denominational networks of funding and

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5 I make the same argument for Philip Quaque’s mission to West Africa from 1766 to 1816, which I discuss in the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

6 It is important to note that Quamine and Yamma never officially matriculated to the college. They were instead personally tutored by the college president, making them an unconventional addition to the campus.
correspondence. In fact, the records of the Quamine Project read somewhat like a “Who’s Who” in early modern missions and race relations.

The transatlantic popularity of the enterprise is not the only reason why Quamine and Yamma’s story deserves further attention. Although the two evangelists never set sail for Africa, this episode nevertheless illuminates several important points regarding the development of indigenous evangelical enterprises in the eighteenth century British Atlantic. The first is that Africans themselves were the creators of this mission, and this chapter situates the spiritual transformation of Quamine (as well as Yamma) in both transatlantic changes in Afro-Christianity as well as in the local exigencies of Christian revivalism in Newport. While historians have traditionally viewed Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles as the progenitors of the African mission, the evidence instead suggests that Quamine and Yamma had already conceived of the idea well before Hopkins approached Stiles about it in the spring of 1773. These two Africans therefore had a more authorial role in originating this mission than scholars have previously acknowledged. They were not just participants in this project; they were its founders. Secondly and equally important is the degree to which the African mission was influenced by Native American missionary history. It is no coincidence that Quamine and Yamma were selected for this experiment just as the failure of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indian preachers seemed all too clear.\footnote{The mission to the Iroquois by eastern Indians trained at Wheelock’s school is discussed in depth in a previous chapter of my dissertation.} The Quamine Project was therefore not only an effort to Christianize Africa; it was an attempt to redeem the failed Protestant missionary enterprise by learning from the lessons of previous Indian missions and avoiding the same mistakes. As such, this African mission was unequivocally and universally understood as a logical extension of Christian missions to Native Americans. John Quamine’s failed mission thus illustrates the ways in which both Afro-Christian evangelism
and Indian missionary history became equally vital to the development of African missions in the Revolutionary British Atlantic.

**Afro-Christian Evangelism in Newport**

John Quamine’s biography reads very similarly to those produced by black Atlantic writers of the same era, including Olauduh Equiano, James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, and Phillis Wheatley.⁸ Quamine was born into a Fante family around 1743. He later told Ezra Stiles that his father was a “rich man” who lived at Annamaboe, one of West Africa’s most notorious slave-trading ports on the Gold Coast.⁹ Bristol Yamma, by contrast, was an Ashanti who lived further inland within the African interior.¹⁰ According to the account that Quamine later gave Stiles, he was sent by his wealthy father (who might have been a slave trader or broker) to the American colonies to receive an education in the mid to late 1750s. Like so many Africans pulled into the transatlantic slave trade, Quamine was instead shipped to Newport, Rhode Island and sold into slavery to Captain Benjamin Church, a comfortable merchant.¹¹

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⁹ Ezra Stiles, *To the Public* (Newport, RI: Solomon Southwick, 1776), 1. Although Stiles gets authorial credit for this solicitation of funds, Hopkins and Stiles probably drafted the proposal together.

¹⁰ Samuel Hopkins, “A Narrative of the rise & progress of a proposal and attempt to send the gospel to guinea, by educating, and sending two negroes there to attempt to christianize their brethren,” 22 March 1784, Mss. in the Gratz Collection (Eminent Clergymen), Case 8, Box 23 at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Hopkins never published the narrative, but he was probably hoping to either publish it or distribute it among his friends to drum up support for another African mission.

The Newport that Quamine encountered in the 1750s was arguably the most religiously diverse town in the British Atlantic world.\(^\text{12}\) On the one hand, Rhode Island’s historical embrace of religious toleration meant that Old Lights, New Lights, Baptists, Sabbatarians, Anglicans, Moravians, Quakers, and Jews all mingled in its intersecting streets. At the same time, the city’s deep harbor and proximity to both the town’s rum distilleries and the labor-hungry farms along the fertile Narragansett Bay ensured that Newport would become a major destination for West Indian and African slaves.\(^\text{13}\) By 1755 Newport’s 1200 blacks comprised nearly one-fifth of the town’s population, making Charleston, South Carolina the only colonial city that had more Africans per capita.\(^\text{14}\) Like Quamine and Yamma, African slaves who came directly to Newport were usually from the Ashanti, Fante, Mandingo, Mende, or Ibo peoples of the Gold Coast, though some could have originated from much further inland.\(^\text{15}\) The persistence of African traditions and culture, even in an urban setting where there was not as much comparative social autonomy as in the Deep

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\(^{15}\) Youngken, *African Americans in Newport*, 5-10.
South, manifested itself in the ubiquity of African naming patterns (Quamine meant “born on Saturday” among Akan-speaking peoples) and the perpetuation of African cultural rites, coronation days, and funerary ceremonies. Quamine’s religious experience within Newport would therefore contradict one scholar’s argument that Africans experienced a “spiritual holocaust” when enslaved in the New World. Indeed, the opposite seemed to be true.

When Quamine set his foot on Newport’s Long Wharf for the first time, he was stepping into a world where Protestants of all stripes, Jews, Africans, and Native Americans traded goods, exchanged stories, tried to convert one another, and sought spiritual meaning for their lives.


17 Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 129-163. While Butler concedes that some African practices, including funerary rituals and forms of magic and occultism, survived the middle passage, he argues that African religious systems “as systems” effectively died in the transfer from Africa to the Americas.

This map, published by Charles Blaskowitz in 1777, highlights not only the fine natural harbor that Newport enjoyed, but also the remarkable density of religious institutions in a moderately sized port town. Within this map alone Blaskowitz identified ten different houses of religious worship, including two Congregational Churches, a Moravian and Friends’ meeting house, an Anglican church, a Jewish Synagogue, and three Baptist as well as one Sabbatarian meeting house. Image courtesy of the Newport Historical Society.

In fact, Quamine and Yamma may not have even been the first Africans trained for missionary work to come out of Newport. Philip Quaque – an African Anglican missionary stationed on the Cape Coast – reported in 1774 that he encountered an African who was “stoled away from his Country when very young” and shipped to Newport in the 1720s. He lived in that seaport for nearly 50 years as a slave to a Quaker named Samuel Collins. In time this African became a “member or professor of Quakerism,” largely by virtue of his master also being a Quaker. But, even as he was sitting in the segregated balconies of Newport’s Quaker meeting house, confessing his sins publicly, searching for his own inner light, and engaging in the outward performances of Quakerism, he was nevertheless drawn to the remarkable religious pluralism of Newport. He became a faithful “Spectator” of the
Anglican Church, in particular, though the natural antipathy that Anglicans and Quakers often expressed probably restricted him from joining the Anglican congregation there. His master died in 1772, presumably freeing this slave upon his death. The newly freed slave found his way back to Africa, sought baptism under Philip Quaque, and hoped to “become a Proselyte of Christianity.” Although the documentary record of this African Quaker turned Anglican disappears after Quaque’s mention of him, the story nevertheless anticipates the ways in which transatlantic slavery, black participation in religious activity, and religious pluralism in Newport formed the basis for transatlantic Afro-evangelism.

Like the millions of Africans pulled into the vortex of the early modern slave system, Quamine dealt with his plight by carving out a life for himself within the circumscribed social boundaries of New England family slavery. Christianity eventually became a central component of that life. John Thornton and others have rightly argued that slaves’ exposure to Christianity only rarely began on the American side of the Atlantic, as they often had encounters with Christianity, or at least with Christians, well before their slave ships hoisted anchor. As a coastal African who was the son of a wealthy man at Annamaboe, there is no doubt that Quamine had some interaction with the nominally Christian slave merchants who plied their trade there. Quamine also approached Christianity in the same ways that other Christian slaves did throughout the Atlantic world: not by erasing an African cultural past but

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19 This would make sense, since the early 1770s witnessed Newport’s Quaker population moving to prohibit slave-holding among their members.


by fitting Christianity into existing spiritualities and cosmologies. While there were numerous ways that Quamine might have done this, the most obvious would have been to situate God and Christ into an African framework. Africans were technically not monotheistic. They did, however, believe in a supreme power, one that created and governed the universe. More importantly, they also believed in a series of lesser divinities. Unlike the supreme and powerful God, these divinities were very active in Africans’ spiritual and temporal experiences. Many Afro-Christians understood Christ as one of these lesser divinities; an intermediary between man, the lowest of spiritual beings, and God himself.

Quamine’s Christianity thus could have fit easily into a West African cosmological system. While he would recognize the authority of an all-powerful Christian God, Quamine probably approached that God through lesser divinities, especially Jesus Christ.

The physical experience of being enslaved might have only made Christ more relevant and applicable to Quamine’s life. In Christ, slaves could identify with someone who suffered as they did under the weight of oppression, violence, and death. For black slaves, Christ’s suffering was not a passage from a text, but rather a lived episode of intense physical suffering that paralleled their own personal experiences within the transatlantic slave system.

Quamine might have also applied stories from scripture to explain his own terrible fall into this system. When Ezra Stiles asked him in 1773 which biblical texts he read the most, he replied that he read John, Matthew, Romans, and Corinthians. Stiles then asked Quamine to read out of the 10th book of John. “All who came before Christ,” the text reads, “were

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22 I discuss this religious syncretism in much more detail in my third chapter, which deals with religious revivalism among black Caribbean Moravians, Anglican slave teachers, and Christian Indian separatists.

thieves and robbers.” While a thief plunders, steals, slaughters, and destroys, Christ forever remains the faithful shepherd, laying down his own life for his flock. As someone who not only witnessed the theft of so many African bodies from his home at Annamaboe but actually became one of those bodies himself, the story of Christ’s faithfulness in a world full of duplicitous robbers would have had tremendous spiritual resonance for Quamine. This might explain why, when Quamine changed his name from Quaum to John Quamine in the early 1770s – name changing was also a rite of passage that signaled a transformation of identity in West African cultures – he fused his African name with that of the author of his favorite gospel. Through his understanding of Christ, examination of the Book of John, and even his eventual change of name, John Quamine became a physical embodiment of the fusion of African cosmologies and Christian spiritualities.24

This was certainly not a spontaneous change. Although one scholar has argued that Quamine had a conversion experience while within Samuel Hopkins’ First Congregational Church (Hopkins took over in April of 1770), it is more likely that Quamine’s encounter with Christianity was a long and protracted process that included many important episodes placed within a larger trajectory of spiritual transformation.25 Quamine apparently “fell under serious Impressions of Religion” in 1761 and by October of 1764 he had given a local schoolteacher named Sarah Osborn an account of his Christian conversion.26 By 1765 Quamine had been baptized and admitted into the First Congregational Church. Bristol


25 Sweet, Bodies Politic, 331.

Yamma, his missionary colleague, followed suit three years later.\textsuperscript{27} In 1769 Quamine sank his roots deeper into Newport’s black community by marrying “Duchess,” an African slave four years his senior.\textsuperscript{28} Although they were members of the First Congregational, they had their children baptized by Ezra Stiles, who headed the Second Congregational. Their infant Charles was baptized in 1772, Violet in 1776, and Katharine in 1779.\textsuperscript{29} Although they were slaves, Quamine and his wife expressed their spiritual autonomy by participating in the Christian rituals of conversion, marriage, and baptism. For Quamine, these moments were not arcane formalities, but rather important rituals that were vital to his family’s development and understanding of Afro-Christianity.

None of these episodes were more important than the Newport Revival.\textsuperscript{30} Sarah Osborn, the teacher who recorded Quamine’s first conversion narrative, was at the center of this revival. She had been influenced by the preaching of George Whitefield, James

\textsuperscript{27} Diary entry for 13 April 1773, in Stiles, \textit{The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles}, Vol. I, 366.

\textsuperscript{28} It is not clear whether this marriage took place within the institutional framework of Newport’s Congregational churches. Duchess Quamino later became a ubiquitous figure in Newport’s social scene. An accomplished baker and entrepreneur, she would use her baking skills to attain her freedom. Later authors have even suggested that it was her personal influence that urged William Ellery Channing to eventually become an abolitionist. Her grave marker can still be seen at Newport’s black burial ground. See George Gibbs Channing, \textit{Early Recollections of Newport, R.I., from the year 1793 to 1811}. (Newport: A.J. Ward, C.E. Hammet, Jr.; Boston, Mass., Nichols and Noyes, 1868), 170-171; and Youngken, \textit{African Americans in Newport}, 49-50.

\textsuperscript{29} Diary entry for 26 January 1772 in Stiles, \textit{The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles}, Vol. I, 207; Diary entry for 16 June 1776 in Stiles, \textit{The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles}, Vol. II, 16; Diary entry for 3 October 1779 in Stiles, \textit{The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles}, Vol. II, 376. Violet only lived to be 15 years old, and her burial marker can still be seen in Newport’s black burial ground. The last baptism occurred on the same day that Bristol Yamma and his wife had their two children baptized by Stiles.

\textsuperscript{30} Historian Jon Butler famously argued that the First Great Awakening, which scholars usually locate around 1739 or 1740, was an “interpretive fiction” invented by later historians. Butler suggested that the Great Awakening is best understood not as a single, monolithic revival, but rather as a series of religious upheavals that had their own unique origins, courses, and outcomes. In this historiographical context, we might view the Newport Revival as one of many Christian revivals that were persistently popping up throughout colonial America in the eighteenth century. See Jon Butler, “Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretive Fiction,” \textit{The Journal of American History} 69 No. 2 (September 1982): 305-325. See also Erik Seeman, \textit{Pious Persuasions: Laity and Clergy in Eighteenth-Century New England} (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
Davenport, and Gilbert Tennent years before and began leading her own religious meetings in her home in the mid-1760s. 31 These were not religious services within the institutional framework of the church, but rather interdenominational bible study sessions, where participants met weekly to discuss passages from scripture and relate them to their own spiritual longings, sufferings, and travails. While Osborn was painfully aware of the gendered repercussions of holding meetings at her own home, her status as a well-established and older woman helped guard against any potential accusations of her as a religious zealot or upstart. 32

Race was a problem, however, and the fact that Africans embraced Osborn’s teaching made her both praiseworthy and dangerous. In fact, Africans initially approached Osborn to request Christian instruction. As Osborn noted to a friend in 1765, there were “several Ethiopians thoughtful who having their Liberty to go where they like on Lords day Evenings have ask’d Liberty to repair to our House for the benefit of family prayer reading etc.” 33 In spite of the resistance she might have received from the community, Osborn thought it her Christian duty to lead these meetings. By the summer of 1766 she had 300 people – white and black – attending her meetings. By the beginning of 1767 that number rose to 525, literally filling her house with freedmen and slaves in search of spiritual elucidation. 34


some members of the community accused her of keeping a “Negroe House,” she responded that “I only read to them talk to them and sing a Psalm or Hymn with them, and then at Eight o clock dismiss them by Name as upon List.”\(^{35}\) Her list of names, the highly structured timing of the meetings, and the Africans’ promise that they remain orderly and would not “come without the consent of their masters”; all of these tactics helped Osborn situate herself as a benevolent teacher rather than a religious exhorter.\(^{36}\) Not surprisingly, two of the people who soaked in such teachings every week were John Quamine and Bristol Yamma. If Osborn dismissed her charges alphabetically, Quaum (as he was then called) and Yamma would have been among the last to leave.

And yet the significance of the Newport Revival to the Quamine Project was not only in Quamine and Yamma’s certain participation in it, but also their developing role as spiritual advisors outside the circumscribed boundaries of Osborn’s weekly meetings. Although there is no evidence to indicate that either African participated in extra-ecclesiastical exhorting, Osborn revealed that some slaves had begun organizing their own religious meetings.\(^{37}\) She observed that those who had families living in separate households (like John and Duchess Quamine) sometimes held “secret prayer.” She further knew of “two or three of these [Africans] Meeting privately together to read pray and converse.” Osborn even admitted that, “now I Heard Last week they are drawing up into a Little society for prayer at one of

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\(^{35}\) Sarah Osborn to Joseph Fish, 28 February – 7 March, 1767, in Norton, “My Resting Reaping Times”: 520 and 523. According to Rhode Island law, blacks could not be out later than 9pm, of which Osborn surely would have been aware.

\(^{36}\) Hopkins, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Sarah Osborn*, 76.

\(^{37}\) Exhorting differed from leading private religious meetings simply because it was, by definition, a public act.
their Houses on Thursday Nights. They don't know I know anything about it."

Osborn’s passage demonstrates several important points regarding African Christianity in Newport: Afro-Christians were holding clandestine religious meetings and organizing themselves around a core of black spiritual leaders. It is quite likely that Quamine or Yamma – or both – directed these exercises well before they were hand-picked for missionary work. In other words, these two African missionaries were participating in at least some form of Christian evangelization years before they were recruited to continue it in Africa.

While the growing religious autonomy of Quamine, Yamma, and other black Christians was pregnant with spiritual potential, others found it fundamentally problematic. Joseph Fish, who was not only Osborn’s confidant but also the preacher at Stonington, Connecticut, knew something about the dangerous and porous boundaries between revivalism and separatism. When Osborn and Fish were writing, Fish was in the midst of an ecclesiastical dispute between himself and Indian separate preachers in southern New England. Samuel Niles, a Narragansett Indian charged with exhorting in another congregation, had split off and formed his own independent church in years prior. Niles was “ordained” by a committee of Native Americans, a move which was viewed by most Protestants as somewhere between highly unorthodox to completely heretical. Worst still, Niles could not even read. He was therefore dependent upon personal and direct revelation, rather than biblical exegesis, for spiritual knowledge. Any minister worth his salt would have easily seen the problem with an illiterate Indian preaching the gospel to other Indians. When Fish admonished Osborn to be careful when preaching to blacks, he understood the separatist tendencies that Christian Indians and Africans could embrace, appropriate, and employ to

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secure their own spiritual independence. While it could be liberating for blacks and Indians, separatism also had the potential to be dangerously democratic.

This fear of separatism might also explain Ezra Stiles’ sudden interest in black spirituality after 1770. That year, the same that Osborn’s Newport Revival died down, Stiles began holding weekly religious meetings for blacks at his house. These meetings were certainly smaller than Osborn’s, but he sometimes had 70 to 80 blacks in attendance, many coming from outside the institutional bounds of his Second Congregational Church. Perhaps Stiles was sincerely interested in the fate of Africans’ souls, or perhaps he was simply trying to use his preaching as a form of social control. Some of his sermons definitely emphasized the trope of the obedient slave, for on at least one occasion he expounded upon Ephesians 6, which directed its listeners to be faithful servants to their masters. At the same time, Stiles’ recollection of his preaching among Newport’s blacks also revealed their own volition in these spiritual exercises. One time in 1773, for example, they held their religious meeting at “Brother Primus’s House” instead of Stiles’. It is highly probable that Quamine and Yamma were present at these meetings; they had already begun the first stages of their missionary training and Stiles probably assumed that any extra instruction, even practice in leading bible study, would prepare them for their mission. By 1773, Quamine and Yamma had been exposed to nearly a decade of extra-ecclesiastical Christian instruction from Sarah

39 For the correspondence between Osborn and Fish, see Norton, “My Resting Reaping Times”: 515-529; and Barbara E. Lacey, “The Bonds of Friendship: Sarah Osborn of Newport and the Reverend Joseph Fish of Stonington, 1743-1779” Rhode Island History 45 No. 4 (November 1986): 127-136; and Niles’ rise to power, as well as the social and theological problems associated with his pastorate, is detailed in a previous chapter. Fish’s fallout with Niles is catalogued extensively in Joseph Fish, Old Light on Separate Ways: The Narragansett Diary of Joseph Fish, 1765-1776 ed. William S. Simmons and Cheryl L. Simmons (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1982). See also Linford D. Fisher, “‘Traditionary Religion’: The Great Awakening and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Southern New England, 1736-1776” (PhD Diss., Harvard University, 2008), 210-266.

40 “House,” in Stiles’ understanding, could refer to both his home as well as his church.

Osborn and Ezra Stiles, not to mention the lessons they learned weekly at Hopkins’ First Congregational Church. Chances are that, in their own clandestine and subaltern meetings, they expressed some form of spiritual leadership for themselves. At the very least, their religious experiences in Newport demonstrated to them the ways in which spiritual leadership need not necessarily originate within the hierarchical structure of the church but rather could be generated from below.

Given Quamine’s developing religious sensibilities, then, it might have been difficult for him not to view the sudden stroke of fortune he experienced in 1773 as anything but divine providence. In that year he and Yamma collaborated to purchase a lottery ticket. When they actually won, Quamine purchased his freedom and Yamma used the winnings to commence saving for his own. Such a seemingly miraculous turn of events, as well as the recent spiritual transformation of these two Africans, demonstrated to Samuel Hopkins, Ezra Stiles, Quamine, and Yamma that the two Africans were destined for greater things than urban slavery in Newport.42 Only a few months later it became public knowledge that these two exceptional men were to be groomed for a mission “back” to Africa. Former African slaves, God now seemed to be smiling down on the two budding evangelists.

Quamine and Yamma might have interpreted the previous two decades of their lives as a kind of “fortunate fall,” a literary device frequently employed by Christianized black Atlantic writers of the eighteenth century. The fortunate fall explained the horrors of their personal enslavement by suggesting that such trials were only part of God’s plan to bring them to the saving grace of Christianity. The fortunate fall approach to black suffering neither excused nor justified slavery, but instead offered a powerful explanatory device for

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42 Stiles, *To the Public*, 1; Hopkins, “A Narrative of the rise & progress,” 2.
why bad things happened to good people.\textsuperscript{43} When James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw wrote about his religious experiences within transatlantic slavery, he summarized his life as a spiritual pilgrimage that hopefully ended in salvation. “As Pilgrims,” Gronniosaw commented, “and very poor Pilgrims, we are traveling through many difficulties towards our Heavenly Home, and waiting patiently for his gracious call, when the Lord shall deliver us out of the evils of this present world and bring us to the Everlasting Glories of the world to come.”\textsuperscript{44} Phillis Wheatley expressed similar sentiments in a letter to a black friend in Newport. Wheatley wrote, “let us rejoice in and adore the wonders of God’s infinite Love in bringing us from a land semblant of darkness itself, and where the divine light of revelation (being obscur’d) is as darkness.”\textsuperscript{45} Perhaps the most eloquent articulation of the fortunate fall approach to black enslavement was put into verse by Wheatley:

\begin{quote}
’Twas mercy brought me from my \textit{Pagan} land,  
Taught my benighted soul to understand  
That there’s a God, that there’s a \textit{Saviour} too:  
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew. 
Some view our sable race with scornful eye, 
“Their colour is a diabolic die.” 
Remember, \textit{Christians, Negros}, black as \textit{Cain}, 
May be refin’d, and join th’ angelic train.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{43} Anglican Protestants also believed that, even if slavery was an awful temporal condition, it was still a “Blessing” that these “ignorant, rude, and unciviliz’d People” came to the Americas to receive Christian instruction, since they could “hardly be more miserable in any Country than in their own.” See Thomas Wilson, \textit{An Essay Towards An Instruction For The Indians; Explaining the most Essential Doctrines of Christianity. Which may be of Use To such Christians, as have not well considered the Meaning of the Religion they profess: Or, who profess to know God, but in Works do deny Him. In several short and plain Dialogues. Together with Directions and Prayers for The Heathen World, Missionaries, Catechumens, Private Persons, Families, of Parents, for their Children, for Sundays, &c.} (London: J. Osborn, 1740), xx.


\textsuperscript{45} Phillis Wheatley to Arbour Tanner, 19 May 1772, in Wheatley, \textit{The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley}, 164.

\textsuperscript{46} Phillis Wheatley, \textit{Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral} (London: Printed for A. Bell, bookseller, Aldgate; and sold by Messrs. Cox and Berry, King-Street, Boston, 1773), 18. For a recent
Wheatley later told Samuel Hopkins that she supported the Quamine mission – which she learned of via an integrated network of evangelical printing and correspondence – precisely because of her own spiritual transformation within the transatlantic slave system. She admitted that her heart expanded with joy to see “the thick cloud of ignorance dispersing from the face of my benighted country. Europe and America have long been fed with the heavenly provision, and I fear they loath it, while Africa is perishing with a spiritual famine.” According to Wheatley, Quamine and Yamma were the instruments whom God had selected to save the African race: “O that [Africans] could partake of the crumbs, the precious crumbs, which fall from the table of these distinguished children of the kingdom.”

While there is no direct evidence to suggest that Quamine and Yamma actually believed in their own fortunate fall, the evidence from other black Atlantic figures of similar ilk is illuminating. Gronniosaw, Wheatley, Quamine, and Yamma all hailed from the West Coast of Africa, had comparable experiences within Atlantic slavery, converted to Christianity, and understood their lives as a spiritual journey with many travails. The fact that Quamine and Yamma lived in such a religiously vibrant city also suggests that they might have imbibed this fortunate fall theory, even if they did not articulate it themselves.

The fortunate fall device certainly could not justify slavery itself. As Samuel Hopkins argued in 1776, enslaving Africans in order to Christianize them was a “direct and

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47 Phillis Wheatley to Samuel Hopkins, 9 February 1774, in Wheatley, The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley, 175-176. This letter also appears in Stiles, To the Public, 5.

48 For more on the fortunate fall, see Vincent Carretta, ed., Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996); and Carretta, Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005). Carretta argues persuasively that Olauduh Equiano was not born in West Africa, but was actually born in the Carolinas.
gross violation of the laws of Christ.”

And yet, Hopkins, Stiles, and other ministers, including the two African missionaries, might have looked to African oppression as an example of how God operated in mysterious ways. Perhaps, Hopkins mused, “all this past and present evil, which the Africans have suffered by the slave trade and the slavery to which so many of them have been reduced, may be the occasion of an overbalancing good.”

Furthermore, the use of two African missionaries seemed a wholly appropriate way to begin atoning for the sins of the slave traders. Hopkins and Stiles both spoke of missionary work as a kind of early modern reparations program. This was certainly nothing new. Anglicans had long been arguing for the conversion of black slaves as “the only righteous Recompence that can be made them for their being forc’d from their native Country into a strange Land.”

While Stiles suggested that sending two natives was “the best compensation we are able to make the poor Africans,” Hopkins later observed that the native missionary project was “the best and only compensation we can make.” At least for Hopkins and Stiles, there seemed no better way to absolve Christians of the sins of slavery than to send some of Africa’s sons back to their land of nativity to help their people share in the glories of God.

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A Mission to Africans, by Africans

Every individual involved in the Quamine Project had been personally touched by slavery. Quamine and Yamma were former slaves, Hopkins had a slave before he arrived in Newport in 1770, Stiles owned one for 20 years before he became the president of Yale College in 1778, and John Witherspoon possessed a slave at his death in 1794. Hopkins’ battles against slavery and the slave trade have been well documented, and Stiles also became directly involved in anti-slavery campaigns after the American Revolution.\footnote{Hopkins, A Dialogue, Concerning the Slavery of the Africans; Hopkins, A Discourse Upon the Slave-Trade, and the Slavery of the Africans. Delivered in the Baptist Meeting-House At Providence, Before the Providence Society for Abolishing the Slave-Trade, &c. At Their Annual Meeting, on May 17, 1793. By Samuel Hopkins, D.D. Pastor of First Congregational Church in Newport, and Member of Said Society (Providence: J. Carter, 1793); See also Joseph A. Conforti, “Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity: Theology, Ethics, and Social Reform in Eighteenth-Century New England,” The William and Mary Quarterly 34 No. 4 (October 1977): 572-589; David S. Lovejoy, “Samuel Hopkins: Religion, Slavery, and the Revolution,” The New England Quarterly 40 No. 2 (June 1967): 227-243; and Stanley K. Schultz, “The Making of a Reformer: The Reverend Samuel Hopkins as an Eighteenth-Century Abolitionist,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 115 No. 5 (October 15, 1971): 350-365. Hopkins certainly inherited part of his anti-slavery positions from his spiritual mentor, Jonathan Edwards. For more on Edwards’ views on slavery, see Kenneth P. Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade,” The William and Mary Quarterly 54 No. 4 (October 1997): 823-834. For more on Stiles’ relationship with his slave (named Newport) and his later abolitionism, see selections from Edmund S. Morgan, The Gentle Puritan, A Life of Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962).} For Newporters, who depended on the transatlantic slave trade for their economic survival, slavery was the “first wheel of commerce” that unfortunately transformed the idyllic port town into what Hopkins called a “Tower of Slavery.”\footnote{Campbell, Middle Passages, 18; and Samuel Hopkins to the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, 7 January 1789, in the Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers, Microfilm Reel 11, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. See also Crane, A Dependent People, 16-33.} It is therefore no surprise that, for Quamine and Yamma, slavery was at the core of their missionary impulse. The natural rights and republican rhetoric that pervaded college campuses, taverns, and print culture in the 1760s and 70s only stoked this abolitionist fire, as blacks throughout the Americas began
appropriating the language of liberty for their own fight against slavery and racism. When Quamine and Yamma returned from Princeton in the spring of 1776, the war had already been going on for a year and the Declaration of Independence was only weeks away from being proposed. In this milieu Quamine used his newfound literary ability to express thanks to one of the colonies’ most ardent abolitionists: Moses Brown. Quamine wrote that he had heard through several sources of Brown’s “noble and distinguished character, and boundless benevolent engagements, with regard to the unforfeited rights [my italics], of the poor unhappy Africans.” As “one of that nation,” and though an “utter stranger” to Brown, Quamine wanted to present him “with gratitude and thanks…for all your ardent endeavours for the speedy salvation of his poor enslaved country men.” Although Quamine’s letter to Brown is brief, it is highly suggestive of both the natural rights and Christian redemptive rhetoric that permeated evangelical circles in the 1770s. Perhaps Quamine anticipated that he might have a major role to play in a historic transformation; not only would he bring Christianity back to the land of his birth, but he might also employ his newfound cultural skills to end African suffering within the transatlantic slave system.

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56 John Quamine to Moses Brown, 5 June 1776, in Mack Thompson, *Moses Brown, Reluctant Reformer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 105. The original text was at the Rhode Island Historical Society in the Moses Brown Papers, Volume II, 59. However, I have since contacted the RIHS and that particular manuscript appears to be missing. This correspondence is also mentioned in Philip Sheldon Foner, *Blacks in the American Revolution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 21; and Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 243.

57 While Quamine approved of Brown’s work, the feeling was probably not mutual. As a Quaker, Brown argued that missionaries must have unique qualifications for evangelical work, and Brown suggested to Samuel Hopkins that the two Africans did not fit those criteria. See Moses Brown to Samuel Hopkins (date unknown), in Thompson, *Moses Brown, Reluctant Reformer*, 185-186. The letter can also be found in Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 121-122.
Quamine’s Afro-Christian evangelism, belief in the fortunate fall theory, and fusion of abolitionism and missionary work all suggest that he and Yamma were not just participants in, but rather catalysts for, this African mission. While scholars have assumed that Hopkins and Stiles were the originators of the project, Quamine and Yamma had been discussing it amongst themselves well before Hopkins asked Stiles to help advertise the mission in 1773. Conversion and missionary activity was not necessarily forced upon them; indeed, the evidence suggests that they requested education, ministerial training, and the opportunity to return to Africa as preachers. Ezra Stiles noted that the two Africans were “not only willing, but very desirous to quit all worldly prospects and risque their lives, in attempting to open a door for the propagation of christianity among their poor, ignorant, perishing, heathen brethren.”

Quamine also reported to Stiles that he began to learn to write, on his own, in the winter of 1772/73. Stiles noted in his literary diary that, on April 12th of 1773, “Quaum came to see me to discourse upon the scheme of his becoming a Minister.” “He tells me,” Stiles recalled, “that ever since he tasted the Grace of the Lord Jesus he conceived a Thought and Earnest Desire or Wish that his Relations and Countrymen in Africa might also come to the knowledge of and taste the same blessed Things.”

Quamine and Yamma were not just instruments in the Quamine Project, and they were certainly not pawns within this larger missionary enterprise. Instead, they were the originators and co-authors of this ambitious evangelical experiment.

The best evidence for the two Africans’ authorship of this mission comes from a manuscript produced by Samuel Hopkins in 1784, when he was trying to drum up support for

58 Stiles, *To the Public*, 2.


another African mission after this one had failed. Although Hopkins never published the piece, it reveals that Quamine and Yamma had planned to pursue an African mission years before Hopkins and Stiles jumped on board. Hopkins admitted that, before he arrived in Newport, the two Africans “had talked of this matter between themselves.” “And,” Hopkins recalled, “as the gospel had never been offered to their brethren in Guinea, they said to each other, it would be agreeable to them to spend their lives in attempting to spread the knowledge of salvation among that perishing people.” Hopkins took his Newport pulpit in April of 1770 and the plan was officially underway in 1773. This means that Quamine and Yamma had been conversing about and planning this African mission at least three years before any white minister became involved. Although Hopkins and Stiles would be the ones raising money for, and acting as the public faces of, this missionary experiment, the genesis of this African mission lay in the two Africans’ themselves.

This is certainly not to say that Quamine and Yamma might not have had more personal, temporal motives for pursuing a mission to West Africa. In fact, we might read Quamine’s initial adoption of Christianity in the 1760s as a response to the problem of racialized power struggles within New England family slavery. Quamine was a slave of the Church family, who attended Ezra Stiles’ Second Congregational Church. When he decided to join a church, Quamine opted for the First Congregational, a decision which would not have produced the kind of conflicts that a conversion to Quakerism might, but nevertheless belied a significant degree of spiritual autonomy. Although the two churches were affiliated, the First Congregational had more of a New Light pedigree than the Second. Furthermore, Stiles recorded that the Church family attended religious services only three times a year, so Quamine’s masters were neither particularly active in their congregation nor showy in their

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61 Hopkins, “A Narrative of the rise & progress,” 2.
piety.\textsuperscript{62} Quamine’s conversion therefore might have been a kind of power play. Slaves could certainly resist by running away, poisoning their masters, or inciting rebellion. But they also found more subtle, nuanced ways to upset and complicate the power dynamics of slavery. Quamine’s admission into the First Congregational therefore might have been \textit{both} an act of surreptitious resistance as well as a mission statement to assert his rights to spiritual liberty.\textsuperscript{63} Quamine thus skillfully navigated the racial politics of conversion within a city founded upon the very idea of religious freedom.

Yet Quamine’s conversion experience and participation in Newport’s Christian culture do not explain why he volunteered for – and indeed, had long been planning – this African mission. Although I have suggested he did so, in part, out of sincere evangelical impulses, he might have also conceived of this mission as a way to renew contact with his African family and rejuvenate his connections to an ancestral past. Just as Indians used a network of native preachers to find information about and secure the safety of their families during King Philip’s War, Quamine also relied upon a transatlantic network of correspondence between native preachers, white ministers, Africans, and Americans to learn about his family back in Annamaboe.\textsuperscript{64} The backbone of this network was Philip Quaque, a Fetu African who had been ordained as an Anglican minister in England and sent “back” to Cape Coast Castle as a missionary in 1766.\textsuperscript{65} While most victims of the African diaspora

\textsuperscript{62} Stiles, \textit{The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles}, Vol. I, 327. There is some evidence, however, that Benjamin Church had been a deacon under a previous pastor.

\textsuperscript{63} Although we can never know exactly how common this strategy was, Quamine was certainly not the only slave to do this. A slave of Andrew Le Mercier, a Huguenot clergyman in Boston, applied for membership into the Anglican North Church instead of his master’s congregation. See Butler, \textit{Awash in a Sea of Faith}, 154.

\textsuperscript{64} Native preachers’ reliance upon evangelical networks during King Phillip’s War is discussed in the first chapter of my dissertation.

\textsuperscript{65} Quaque is discussed in a previous chapter, but the most thorough published examinations of his life and mission can be found in Travis Glasson, “Missionaries, Methodists, and a Ghost: Philip Quaque in London
would never have had the chance to reunite with their families back home, their correspondence with Quaque – mediated as it was through Samuel Hopkins – gave Quamine and Yamma this unusual opportunity. When Quaque reported to Samuel Hopkins that Quamine’s father (Coffee Yangoe) was dead, but that his mother (Mansa) and uncle (Eucone) were both alive and well, Quamine must have felt some joy to know that his surviving family waited impatiently for his return. Quaque even compared Quamine’s mother’s joy to Joseph’s return to his father, Jacob, in the Book of Genesis. “The bowels of maternal affection,” Quaque wrote, “seem ready to burst; and break forth in tears of joy.” He continued, “The joy it kindled, on the occasion, in expectation of seeing once more the fruit of her loins, before she with her grey hairs goes to the grave, throws her into ecstasies…in rapture she breaks forth and says, ‘It is enough! My son is yet alive! I hope, by God’s blessing, to see him before I die!’”  

Quamine’s wealthy uncle, who inherited his brother’s property upon his death (per West African custom), told Quaque that “nothing shall be wanting Conducive to make him and all about him Happy, and live Satisfactory amongst his own Kindred.” Quaque even secretly suspected that Quamine’s missionary project was...
designed only so that the latter might begin “seeking Shelter amongst his own Kindred.” At the very least, these transatlantic missionary connections informed Quamine and his African family about the state of each others’ welfare. At best, the African mission gave both Quamine and Yamma an opportunity to return to their native land, be embraced as prodigal sons, and live a life of comparative comfort and freedom. Not only did Quamine’s spiritual transformation give him access to education and literacy, it also offered him the chance to connect with his African family in a way that few black Atlantic slaves ever could. For Quamine and Yamma, volunteering for the African mission could reap at least some temporal rewards.

Stiles and Hopkins might have wondered if Quamine and Yamma were spinning a kind of trickster tale by bankrolling their Christian conversion into secular opportunities, for both ministers revealed the slightest of doubts about the Africans’ sincere conversion to Christianity. While Stiles noted that the two of them were “hopefully converted,” Hopkins later recalled that Yamma and Quamine “hopefully became real Christians.” Given the magnitude of the mission, one could understand why Hopkins and Stiles were somewhat circumspect when discussing the conversion and piety of their African recruits. Many Protestants, especially after the First Great Awakening, understood that sincere conversions were not simply used for admittance into a church, but were instead at the core of religious experience. Conversion experiences formed the basis of all future spiritual activity, so it was

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68 Philip Quaque to the SPG, 19 March 1774, in Quaque Letters.

69 For more on trickster tales in cultural history, see Robert Darnton, The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

70 Stiles, To the Public, 1; Hopkins, “A Narrative of the Rise & Progress,” 1.
important that these two evangelists had undergone legitimate ones.\textsuperscript{71} At the same time, Hopkins and Stiles understood the temporal advantages that missionary work could offer to former slaves, so they tempered their grammar of conversion with “hopefully” in order to guard themselves against the kind of backsliding that Eleazar Wheelock found in his own Indians in years prior.\textsuperscript{72}

This explains why Hopkins and Stiles attempted to insulate the African mission by extolling their Africans as having “good character” and “good proficiency,” and that they were “remarkably steady, discerning, and judicious.”\textsuperscript{73} The advantages of these native missionaries seemed obvious to the Newport ministers, especially since Quamine and Yamma were originally part of “the same nation, and speak the same language” as their future neophytes.\textsuperscript{74} Nevertheless, doubts about the efficacy of these two Africans persisted. Even Stiles admitted in 1773 that Quamine was “not communicative, and I am doubtful whether he would be apt to teach.” Stiles further noted that Quamine needed “much Improvement to qualify him for the Gospel Ministry.”\textsuperscript{75} Quamine might have become a Christian teacher, but even Stiles doubted that the African evangelist had the aptitude to become a fully ordained minister.

The most vociferous critics attacked the Quamine Project on both racial and theological grounds. One of the plan’s biggest detractors was Boston’s Charles Chauncy, a man whose reputation as an Old Light curmudgeon made it unclear whether the nickname

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{71} For more on conversion across temporal and spatial boundaries, see Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, eds., \textit{Conversion: Old Worlds and New} (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003).
  \item \textsuperscript{72} This problem is discussed in a previous chapter.
  \item \textsuperscript{73} Stiles, \textit{To the Public}, 1; Hopkins, “A Narrative of the rise & progress,” 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{74} Hopkins, “A Narrative of the rise & progress,” 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{75} Diary entry for 13 April 1773, in Stiles, \textit{The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles}, Vol. I, 366.
\end{itemize}
“Old Brick” referred to his church building or himself. When Stiles and Hopkins published a narrative of the mission and a request for donations in 1773, Chauncy and his Boston ministers balked at sending in contributions. Chauncy explained that one of the reasons why he and his colleagues failed to donate any funds to the training of the Afro-evangelists was because there was little hope of success “unless they should go under the conduct of some well pointed and well qualified white person.” But the biggest problem for Chauncy was theological, not racial. It was well-known in religious circles that Samuel Hopkins was a controversial figure, and not only because he was apparently “devoid of all the gifts of oratory.” His system of divinity, which became known as Hopkinsianism, was an extension of Jonathan Edwards’ radical theological system. One of Hopkins’ most contentious arguments, for example, was that conversion must happen before one could pray for their own salvation. In other words, sinners who had yet to convert could do nothing to save themselves. This was a dangerous position for most Congregationalists, for many believed that such a view would alienate congregants and push them out of the church. When Hopkins was about to take his Newport pulpit in 1770, Chauncy told Stiles that Hopkins was “a troublesome, conceited, obstinate man,” and that he knew of “no worse system of thot in

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77 Charles Chauncy to Ezra Stiles, 1 October 1773, in Gratz Collection, Case 8, Box 21, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The underlines are Chauncy’s, suggesting that he wished to emphasize this point to Stiles.


79 Contemporary commentators suggested that this was precisely what happened when Hopkins was run out of his Great Barrington Parish, and some noted that the same thing almost happened in Newport, as well. For more on his divinity, see Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*; and Samuel Hopkins, *The System of Doctrines, Contained in Divine Revelation, Explained and Defended. Showing Their Consistence and Connection With Each Other. To Which is Added, a Treatise on the Millennium* (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793).
any pagan nation, in any age” than that preached by Hopkins.\(^80\) Another minister said Hopkins’ ideas were “false, absurd, and dangerous, tending to overthrow all Religion natural and revealed.”\(^81\) When Stiles asked Chauncy for money to support the African mission, the Boston minister suggested that the Africans would be better off without Hopkins’ help. He noted that Hopkins’ theology was “far more blasphemous than were ever ones broached among the Pagans in every part of the World.”\(^82\) Chauncy sincerely hoped that Quamine and Yamma would not get their education from Hopkins himself. If they did, and then set out to propagate that system of theology among Africans, he was “fully of the opinion, the African Negroes had much better continue [with their native traditions] as they are.” In Chauncy’s view, going from African “paganism” to Hopkins’ system of divinity would “only exchange bad for worse.”\(^83\)

Stiles recognized that Chauncy’s complaints would be shared by other clergy, so he assured his Boston friend that Hopkins had promised not to indoctrinate the Africans into his system. Stiles also sarcastically noted that Quamine and Yamma had “as much probability of their Learning the theory of Gravity or the intricate principia of the Newtonian system as of


\(^{82}\) Charles Chauncy to Ezra Stiles, 1 October 1773, in Gratz Collection, Case 8, Box 21, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

\(^{83}\) Charles Chauncy to Ezra Stiles, 1 October 1773, in Gratz Collection, Case 8, Box 21, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
their making any kind of real proficiency in metaphysical erudition.” Quamine and Yamma, Stiles conceded, were simply “not capable of being initiated into the metaphysical subtleties” of Hopkins’ system. In this rare instance, assumptions about racial inferiority ironically guarded the mission against Chauncy’s attacks. Certainly the Africans were capable enough to merit supporting the mission, but Stiles believed they also lacked the intellectual acuity to understand the complexities and nuances of Hopkins’ dangerous theology.

That a conservative Old Light resisted the native missionary enterprise on racial and theological grounds is not terribly surprising. That an African missionary stationed at Cape Coast Castle would do the same thing is worth exploring. Although Philip Quaque was happy to serve as Quamine and Yamma’s connection to information networks on the West Coast of Africa, Quaque had serious reservations about the ethnic makeup and religious sentiments of the future missionaries. When Hopkins initially sent Quaque a copy of To the Public (their fundraising pamphlet), the Anglican missionary’s heart was moved “not a little” to learn that there were “still Numbers of Africans, the supposed Race of Ham, able to embrace Christianity were they in a country that yields that Light and Knowledge.”

Quaque might have viewed Yamma and Quamine as kindred spirits, but he was nevertheless wary about the institutional origins of this mission. When Quaque discovered that Hopkins was not a Presbyterian but rather the minister of Newport’s First Congregational, he reported to his Anglican benefactors that “it should be held in Everlasting scorn and Contempt by unminded Men, that those Men whom [Hopkins] spoke of as having more than common


85 Philip Quaque to Samuel Hopkins, 30 September 1773, in Gratz Autograph Collection (Philip Quaque) at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Philip Quaque to Samuel Hopkins, 19 May 1773, in Gratz Collection (American Clergy), Case 9, Box 16, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
Knowledge in Theological Sciences prove at last to be Dissenters.” In spite of their shared identity as African preachers, institutional and doctrinal boundaries between Anglicans and Dissenters still tore Quamine and Quaque apart. From the moment that Quaque learned of their theological leanings, he refused to help the project in any way besides gathering information about Quamine’s family. In fact, he sternly warned Hopkins that “were they to put their feet again on Afric’s Shore without the Support and Concurrent Testimony of both the African Committee, and my Great Benefactors the Venerable Society, they bitterly would rue the Day on which they with Reluctance parted with their happy Place of aboad [sic].” Without the consent and support of English merchants and Anglican benefactors, Quaque believed, the Quamine Project would inevitably fail.

Interestingly, race was another reason why Quaque backed down from offering Yamma and Quamine any assistance in their mission. When Quaque discovered that Quamine was from Annamaboe and Yamma was an Ashanti, he articulated his vitriolic hatred for those two African groups. “Those gentlemen,” he said of Quamine and Yamma, “could not spring from a Race more Vicious, villainous, Revengeful, Malicious and none more brutal and obdurate in their Dispositions, than the Natives of Annamaboe [and] the adjacent Places on the interior parts of that Country.” Their “delight and practice,” Quaque opined, was in “shedding of Blood and distressing their fellow Brethren by frequent Disputes…merely to ruin their inferior Brethren.” Quaque was not only referring to the

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87 Philip Quaque to Samuel Hopkins, 19 May 1773, in Gratz Collection (American Clergy), Case 9, Box 16, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Here Quaque is referring to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), the Anglican missionary society for which Quaque worked.

practice of slave trading, but also to the intense, brutal, and violent intertribal conflicts that perennially devastated the Ashanti, Fante, and other Akan-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast. As a Fetu and an Anglican, Quaque expressed his scorn towards a mission of Ashanti and Fantee Dissenters coming to the Gold Coast. Drawing from his perception of other Africans – especially Fantee and Ashanti – as impulsive, greedy, and bloodthirsty, Quaque anticipated that the two evangelists would hastily succumb to their ethnic proclivities and would “be enticed into many Vices and irregularities that they would find not so easily Eradicated.” These “debaucheries” included the giving of exorbitant gifts to friends, the allure of wealth and power, the spiritual backsliding that Quaque perceived all around him at the Cape Coast, and the inevitable participation in the slave wars that had engulfed the region for generations. While Quaque faintheartedly wished the Newporters the best of luck, he conceded that Quamine and Yamma had little hope of success, especially without the assistance of the Anglicans. As a proud Fetu and devout Anglican, Quaque could certainly not allow a Fante and his Ashanti companion to establish a Dissenting mission only a few miles from his own.

Although the resistance of Chauncy and Quaque came from very different sources – an old Boston Congregationalist and an African Anglican stationed in the epicenter of the slave trade – their complaints reveal much about the nature of the Quamine Project. First, this was certainly a mission to Africans, by Africans, and the theological and racial reasons for resistance only highlight that point. Detractors described Quamine and Yamma as incapable, vulnerable to Hopkins’ system of divinity, as religious upstarts, or from the most


90 Philip Quaque to Samuel Hopkins, 19 May 1773, in Gratz Collection (American Clergy), Case 9, Box 16, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
savage tribes in Africa. Furthermore, Quamine and Yamma took ownership of this mission, conceiving of it from the beginning and acting as its most important participants. Their motivations ranged from Afro-Christian evangelism and abolitionism to a desire to maintain connections with Africa and see their families again. Yet despite the fact that Quamine and Yamma were at the center of the mission, they certainly could not have organized it alone. Instead, Hopkins and Stiles provided the fundraising, networking, and publishing force behind the mission. When they did so, they relied upon a different missionary past – a Native American missionary past – to understand, frame, and express the necessity for this African mission.

“Two Eggs”: Native American Missions and the Black Atlantic

Although Native American and black Atlantic studies have developed as separate historiographical fields, early modern Protestant missionaries were not so quick to embrace such divisions. Indeed, the connections between Native American and African missions were many, and they were rooted in social, racial, and theological understandings of the cultural histories of blacks and Indians. Many ministers believed that, despite a few obvious cultural differences between Africans and Indians (and even among Africans and Indians themselves), they could still be uniformly categorized as savage gentiles awaiting their conversion. John Witherspoon, for example, admitted that what struck him about the Indians of North America were the same things that characterized other indigenous peoples throughout the world: “gravity and sullenness of deportment, love of hunting and war – that is to say, depredation; ferocity to their captives, laziness and aversion to habitual labor, tyranny over the female sex, passive courage, and, if it may be called so, active cowardice,
and strong passions both of lasting gratitude and unextinguishable [sic] resentment." If
Protestants could crack this cultural code and discover a way to convert Native Americans, it
was widely presumed that the same strategy might work for Africans and other non-
Christians throughout the globe. Anglican Thomas Bray articulated this theory when he
observed that “The Heathen in both Quarters of the World, Africa and America, seem to us as
like in Way of Living, and Sentiments of Religion, as two Eggs. And therefore we suppose,
the very same Method must be taken with both.” Protestant ministers assumed that any real
or perceived differences among indigenous peoples were, in the long run, simply superficial
in nature. They believed that Native Americans, Africans, Asians, and even Scottish
Highlanders possessed generally the same behavioral and cultural qualities. The history of
missions among one would certainly have a lot to say about success or failure among
others.

It was not just white, Anglo-American missionaries who emphasized the historical
comparisons and deep entanglements between Africans, black slaves, and Indians during the
last few decades of the eighteenth century. John Marrant, a well-known black Atlantic writer

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91 John Witherspoon, “A Description of the State of New-Jersey” in Witherspoon, The Miscellaneous
Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon, D.D. L.L.D. Late President of the College of New-Jersey

92 Thomas Bray, Missionalia: Or, A Collection of Missionary Pieces Relating to the Conversion of the
for Bray, this did not include the use of native missionaries, for (as discussed in a previous chapter) he
believed that natives were too unpredictable to be trusted with such an important charge.

93 Two scholars have recently examined the comparisons and entanglements between Native Americans
and Scottish Highlanders. See Margaret Szasz, Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans: Indigenous
Education in the Eighteenth Century Atlantic World (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007);
and Colin G. Calloway, White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal Peoples and Colonial Encounters
in Scotland and America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). See also Donald E. Meek, “Scottish
Highlanders, North American Indians and the SSPCK: Some Cultural Perspectives,” Records of the
Scottish Church History Society 23 No. 3 (1989): 378-396. The important question of whether there was an
“Amerindian Atlantic” is taken up in Paul Cohen, “Was there an Amerindian Atlantic? Reflections on the
who traveled along the eastern seaboard and became pastor of a black church in Nova Scotia, counted his alleged “conversion” of the Cherokee King in the late 1760s among his most treasured accomplishments.\textsuperscript{94} Less than two years later, but further north in New England, a famous Mohegan preacher urged a woman in Boston to allow her slave to return to Africa as a missionary. That slave was Phillis Wheatley, a black woman whose reputation as a poetess was skyrocketing in the 1760s and 70s. Samson Occom, the minister who urged Wheatley to become an African evangelist, asked her master, “Pray Madam, what harm would it be to Send Phillis to her Native Country as a Female Preacher to her kindred?” The problem, Occom anticipated, was not necessarily race but gender. “You know,” Occom implored, that “Quaker Women are alow’d to preach, and why not others in an Extraordinary Case.”\textsuperscript{95} In this way Occom revealed that Indian and African missions were much more connected that scholars previously acknowledged. Indeed, when Samuel Hopkins asked Wheatley to be a part of the Quamine Project only two years later, he was tapping into the evangelical networks that knit people like Occom, Wheatley, Philip Quaque, Hopkins, and Quamine together.

Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles may have had their own theological and political agendas for supporting the Quamine Project, but both of them approached it via their personal involvement in and understanding of Native American missionary history. When the Stockbridge Indians sent a young Samuel Hopkins a “particular message” to ask him to be their minister after John Sergeant died in 1749, he considered the position but then

\textsuperscript{94} For Marrant’s narrative among the Cherokee, see Gates, Jr. and Andrews, eds., \textit{Pioneers of the Black Atlantic}, 60-80.

relented upon anticipating that his spiritual mentor (Jonathan Edwards) would take the post. In fact, Hopkins’ own family had been actively involved in narrating the story of the mission to the Stockbridge Indians. The Samuel Hopkins who authored John Sergeant’s *Historical Memoirs* of the Stockbridge Indians was more than the later Hopkins’ namesake; he was his uncle. Instead of taking the post at Stockbridge, Hopkins remained the minister at Housatonic (later known as Great Barrington), just a 30 minute ride from Stockbridge. He resided within riding distance of this ambitious Indian civilization scheme for over a quarter of a century before relocating to Newport in 1770. Throughout his career at Newport he maintained a friendly correspondence with Stephen West (the later pastor at Stockbridge) and Gideon Hawley, a missionary who had proselytized among the Iroquois of New York and Mashpee of Cape Cod. Hopkins even suggested to Hawley in 1761 that the best way to preach to Iroquois Indians would be to bring “some Mohawk boys” to New England “to be educated in order to make interpreters or missionaries as they appear qualified.” Hopkins discussed potential Iroquois missionaries so frequently it even compelled Hawley to observe that he was very much “engaged” with Indian evangelization and seemed to have it “at Heart

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96 Samuel Hopkins, *Sketches of the Life of the Late Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D.D., Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newport, Written by Himself; Interspersed with Marginal Notes Extracted From His Private Diary; to Which is Added, a Dialogue, by the Same Hand, on the Nature and Extend of the Christian Submission; Also, a Serious Address to Professing Christians. Closed by Dr. Hart’s Sermon at his Funeral* (Hartford: Stephen West, 1805), 53-54. For more on the problems and failures of the Stockbridge mission see James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 196-204.

97 Samuel Hopkins, *Historical memoirs, relating to the Housatunnuk Indians, or, An account of the methods used, and pains taken, for the propagation of the gospel among that heathenish-tribe, and the success thereof, under the ministry of the late Reverend Mr. John Sergeant: together with the character of that eminently worthy missionary; and an address to the people of this country, representing the very great importance of attaching the Indians to their interest, not only by treating them justly and kindly, but by using proper endeavours to settle Christianity among them* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1753).

in every letter he writes.”

Hopkins therefore probably understood his own role in the later Quamine Project as an extension of previous missionary work to the Indians.

Like Hopkins, Ezra Stiles was deeply interested in Native American missionary work, but his interests were far more wide-ranging than Hopkins’. Indeed, Stiles was famous for having an insatiable curiosity for anything that was “historical and curious,” including everything from astronomy and geography to smallpox and silkworms. Stiles grew increasingly interested in Indian demography, ethnography, and missionary history throughout the 1760s and 70s. This understanding of Native American history would serve as a model for how he interpreted his role in the African mission. As soon as he graduated from Yale College, Stiles, like Hopkins, was recruited for the ministerial position at Stockbridge.

Although he never took the job, he kept his eyes on the development of Stockbridge for the rest of his life. He also revealed his interest in John Eliot’s seventeenth century mission to the Indians when he copied Eliot’s narrative of the rise of Indian churches in Massachusetts, a text which emphasized the role of indigenous Christian leaders in Indian praying towns.

During the spring of 1762 Stiles took a journey to several Indian settlements in southern New England, stopping by the native Christian community of

99 Gideon Hawley to Andrew Oliver, 20 May 1761, in Gideon Hawley Letters, 1754-1807, Typescript Version, Manuscript Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

100 Justus Forward to Ezra Stiles, 24 January 1792, in Stiles, Letters & Papers of Ezra Stiles, 111.

101 Morgan, Gentle Puritan, 136-139. Although he preached a few times to the Stockbridge Indians, personal politics stopped him from taking the post. His father urged him not to take it because he did not want his son getting embroiled in a theological controversy so soon out of college.

Mashpee, noting its prevalence of Indian preachers, and establishing a long-standing correspondence with Gideon Hawley. It might have been during this tour that Stiles learned about Martha’s Vineyard’s Japhet Hannit, whom Stiles called “an excellent Indian Minister.”

In 1772, just a year before he became involved in the Quamine Project, Stiles edited and republished a history of King Philip’s War, a conflict which devastated New England and dramatically transformed the native missionary movement. Coincidentally, John Quamine was actually a slave to the original author’s (Captain Benjamin Church) namesake and grandson, Benjamin Church.

Stiles also used his extensive contacts to keep in touch with Samson Occom, the famous Mohegan preacher, who provided information about the demographic and religious state of the Montauk Indians on Long Island. Eleazar Wheelock, David McClure, Samuel Kirkland, and Carolina minister Elam Potter all sent Stiles information about Native

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103 Stiles personally took down a narrative of the Potenummecut Indians during his travels, which noted that John Ralph was their Indian minister. See Stiles, “An Account of the Potenummecut Indians. Taken by Dr. Stiles, On the Spot, June 4, 1762,” in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, First Series, Vol. X. Hawley also made Stiles a copy of “Account of an Indian Visitation, A.D. 1698. Copied for Dr. Stiles, By Rev. Mr. Hawley, Missionary at Mashpee, From the Printed Account Published in 1698,” in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, First Series, Vol. X. For Hawley’s description of the leading Christian families at Mashpee, see Gideon Hawley to Ezra Stiles, 22 January 1771 in Stiles, Extracts From the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, 499. Stiles also obtained a copy of Hawley’s diary of missionary work among the Mashpee. Which can be found in Stiles, The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University, Microfilm Reel 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

104 Stiles, Extracts From the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, 302.

105 Benjamin Church, The entertaining history of King Philip’s war, which began in the month of June, 1675. As also of expeditions more lately made against the common enemy, and Indian rebels, in the eastern parts of New-England: with some account of the divine providence towards Col. Benjamin Church: by Thomas Church, esq. his son (Newport: Solomon Southwick, 1772). Although Stiles does not appear in the citation information, he was the one to edit and republish the text.

106 Quamine’s master should not be confused with his son of the same name, who became an infamous turncoat for the British during the American Revolution.

107 “A Letter From Rev. John Devotion of Saybrook, to the Rev. Dr. Stiles, Inclosing, Mr. Occum’s Account of the Montauk Indians,” in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, First Series, Vol. X.
American natural symbols, demography, and spiritual beliefs. Stiles even made sketches of Indian wigwams and drew maps that noted the locations of Indian tribes throughout New England. He was also personally acquainted with Samuel Niles, the Narragansett separatist preacher that Joseph Fish was thinking of when he warned Sarah Osborn to be cautious while teaching Newport’s blacks. Stiles and Niles met a few times, but the most memorable was in the spring of 1772, just a year before Stiles became involved in this African missionary project. Stiles not only recorded the history of Niles’ strange path to ministerial power in Narragansett, but also took the Indian preacher into his study, read him the history of a Moravian mission to Greenland, and showed him a globe “To give him a better idea of things.” He concluded the visit by giving his guest “An account of the Sarepta Brethren and the prospect of introducing Christianity among the Kalmuks and Tartars.”

As Samuel Niles learned that day, Stiles was an early modern embodiment of the global citizen. His efforts to expose the Narragansett Indian pastor to the histories of missions from Greenland to Central Asia demonstrate that many early modern Protestants perceived Christian missions as connected, if not contiguous, evangelical enterprises.

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108 Eleazar Wheelock to Ezra Stiles, August 1771, in Stiles, Letters & Papers of Ezra Stiles; David McClure to Ezra Stiles, 11 November 1771, in Stiles, Letters and Papers of Ezra Stiles, 36-37; Elam Potter to Ezra Stiles, 12 September 1768, in Stiles, Extracts From the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, 552-553.

109 Ezra Stiles, Manuscript Map of Connecticut, 25 June 1767 at the Massachusetts Historical Society. This map is a copy of an earlier 1638 map.

110 Diary entry for 8 May 1772, in Stiles, The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, Vol. I, 233. Stiles actually believed that the Indians might have originated among the Kalmuks or Tartars. When he relayed this hypothesis to the Indian preacher, Stiles recorded that “it pleased him.”
From his quiet study in Newport, Rhode Island Stiles researched the religious state of affairs throughout the world by corresponding with other ministers in Mexico City, Surinam, and even Russia. He knew about Catholic missionary efforts in China and Japan, as well as the Danish mission to India, which relied significantly upon native preachers and teachers. He took stock of Anglican missionaries stationed in Africa, Barbados, the Mosquito Shore (Honduras), the Bahamas, and the Carolinas. He also believed that the Moravians, who had missions throughout the Atlantic world and beyond, were the most successful missionary force among Indians and Africans. By 1774 Stiles could confidently claim that he had

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111 See Stiles, *The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University*, Microfilm Reels 1-5 for more on his extensive correspondence with people throughout the world. Most of these letters are written in Latin.


studied “the history of almost all nations and empires on earth.” When he sat for his 1771 portrait for Samuel King, the image reflected the cosmopolitanism of its subject: the books in the background included Livy, Newton, and Plato, as well as J.B. DuHalde’s *The General History of China*. By the time Stiles became involved in the African project in 1773, his correspondence with other missionaries throughout New England and the world, as well as his own research into Indian missionary history, all demonstrated that there were native missionaries on Martha’s Vineyard, in John Eliot’s praying towns, at Mashpee and along the southeastern New England coast, in Narragansett, Iroquoia, Japan, China, India, the Caribbean, and even Greenland. While the use of native ministers in Africa might have seemed novel to some, Stiles’ studies into the demography, culture, and missionary history of indigenous peoples throughout the world taught him otherwise.

When Stiles outlined his motivations for participating in the Quamine Project to Charles Chauncy, he pointed to the failures of Protestant evangelical efforts among Indians as a guiding lesson for how to continue this work. He noted in 1773 that for 20 years he had “no hope” of converting Indians to Christianity. Nevertheless, he believed it was their “bounden duty as Christians” to “spare no expence towards effectually carrying the Gospel” to Indians and continuing to offer them saving grace, “till they shall have vanished & their Nations shall all be swept off the Earth.” The next line in his letter to Chauncy moves immediately to his reasons for participating in the African project, making both a textual and literal connection between Indian and African evangelical work. He observed that Europe’s merchants had been selling Africans for nearly 80 years, and that it was the duty of Protestant ministers to convert Africans in order to compensate them for the “injury and injustice” they

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had suffered at the hands of nominal Christians.\textsuperscript{115} For Stiles, at least, African missionary work was directly connected to the failures of evangelical efforts among Indians. While historian James T. Campbell has recently suggested that the 1773 African mission was, at least for white Congregational ministers, “an attempt to restore to American Christianity the severity and theological rigor of New England’s Puritan founders,” it was more than that.\textsuperscript{116} Sending Quamine and Yamma to Africa would not only redeem the Puritan founders, but the Protestant missionary enterprise as a whole. As an extension of Native American missionary efforts, the Quamine Project might hopefully succeed where previous Indian missions had failed.

In a period marked by intense theological bickering in the post-Great Awakening world, the ecumenical support that the Quamine Project generated was remarkable. The friendly collaboration of Stiles and Hopkins undoubtedly fueled this interdenominational cooperation. The two men must have made strange partners; the former was the son of Isaac Stiles (an Old Light minister) and the latter was the most notable student of Great Awakening firebrand Jonathan Edwards. Yet when Hopkins first arrived in Newport in 1770, Stiles vowed to “endeavour to live with him as a brother.”\textsuperscript{117} “I have a mind,” Stiles informed a colleague, “that there should be one Instance on this Continent, where two Churches in the same place and of the same denomination should live in harmony. In most Instances they hate one another most heartily.”\textsuperscript{118} Stiles practiced what he preached, for he and Hopkins – in spite of their institutional and doctrinal differences – became fast friends. Stiles delivered


\textsuperscript{116} Campbell, \textit{Middle Passages}, 18.


\textsuperscript{118} Ezra Stiles to John Hubbard, 26 August 1769, quoted in Morgan, \textit{The Gentle Puritan}, 207.
Hopkins’ ordination ceremony and frequently attended his lectures.\textsuperscript{119} When Hopkins was away or when he got a bloody nose, Stiles preached for him. When Stiles’ wife died, he asked Hopkins to say a few words at the funeral.\textsuperscript{120} In spite of the doctrinal differences between Stiles and Hopkins, they committed themselves to living in ecclesiastical harmony. Their collaboration on the Quamine Project demonstrated and amplified that commitment.

The Quamine Project helped unite other missionaries throughout the Atlantic world, for Protestant ministers of all stripes could agree that missionary work was central to the health and vivacity of Christianity. Although they might have disagreed about the goals, means, and nature of missions, they could easily rally behind a plan like the Quamine Project because of its potential as a uniting force. In fact, when Stiles and Hopkins published \textit{To the Public} in 1773 and again in 1776, they relied upon an interconnected, transatlantic network of Protestant ministers from England, Scotland, the Americas, and Africa to raise money for the cause. The nominal and monetary support they received throughout the Atlantic world demonstrated that indigenous missionary efforts could be a uniting force in an era of divisive religious strife. They received money and support from one religious society of women in Newport and from another in Boston. They opened letters of approbation from the Presbyterian synod in New York. Stockbridge’s John Sergeant (the son of the first missionary to that Indian town) informed Stiles that he was “much pleased with your Negro Mission” and promised to donate to the experiment.\textsuperscript{121} They also received money from a collection taken throughout Berkshire County, as well as from an organization called the

\textsuperscript{119} Ezra Stiles, \textit{A Discourse on Saving Knowledge: Delivered at the Instalment of the Reverend Samuel Hopkins, A.M. Into the Pastoral Charge of the First Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode-Island, Wednesday, April 11, 1770} (Newport: Solomon Southwick, 1770).

\textsuperscript{120} Stiles, \textit{The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles}, Vol. I, 413,635, and 565.

\textsuperscript{121} John Sergeant to Ezra Stiles, 16 September 1773, in Stiles, \textit{The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University}, Microfilm Reel 3.
North Association in Connecticut. Other Connecticut clergy supported the idea and volunteered to train the aspiring African missionaries. Elias Boudinot, a powerful New Jersey lawyer and politician who would later sign his name on the Declaration of Independence, offered to board and tutor the two Africans. Hopkins and Stiles received five pounds from a gentleman in London and Anthony Benezet agreed to help raise money for the Africans’ education. While Philip Quaque’s letters expressed suspicion towards the mission, they praised it just enough for Hopkins and Stiles to include parts of them in *To the Public*, giving the entire affair an even more ecumenical luster. As Stiles summarized in a letter to a colleague, this mission might, at the very least, temporarily bridge the doctrinal and ecclesiastical divides that had historically torn the American religious community apart. “We ought all to joyn,” Stiles concluded, “in carrying the glorious Gospel to the Heathen in all parts of the Earth.”

Most of the donations, of course, came from individuals and organizations very much accustomed to supporting North American Indian missions. The African mission was therefore an extension and expansion of previous missionary efforts among Native Americans.

Nowhere was this clearer than within the halls of The Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), based in Edinburgh. The SSPCK contributed their financial and moral support to the Quamine Project mainly because its members viewed it through the lens of previous missionary work among Scottish Highlanders and American

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123 Ezra Stiles to John Sergeant, 15 July 1774, in *The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University*, Microfilm Reel 3. Summaries of who donated what to the mission can be found in Stiles, *To the Public*; and Hopkins, “A Narrative of the rise & progress.”
Indians. The SSPCK had long supported American missions; white evangelists like David Brainerd and Samuel Kirkland were on their payroll and sent them periodic summaries of their efforts. The members of the SSPCK – especially John Erskine, who was in touch with Indian and African missionaries throughout the Atlantic world – certainly knew about Moses Tatami, David Brainerd’s interpreter who became a part-time preacher when Brainerd went home after delivering his sermons. In fact, the SSPCK agreed to pay for the education of Tatami’s son, Peter, at the College of New Jersey in the 1750s – precisely the same place where Quamine and Yamma were headed in 1774. The college’s board members were not only trustees, for they also served as the Commissioners of Indian Affairs for the SSPCK. In other words, the college’s trustees (along with the missionaries in the field) were the eyes and ears of the Scottish missionary enterprise among Indians. They acted as a circuit of information and even dispensed funds for the training of a native evangelical corps. Furthermore, they would have been aware of the ascension of Deacon Thomas, Isaac, and Good Peter in Oneida, where SSPCK associate Samuel Kirkland was stationed for much of


125 Moses’ spiritual transformation from apathetic interpreter to converted preacher can be found throughout David Brainerd, Mirabilia Dei inter Indicos, or the Rise and Progress Of a Remarkable Work of Grace Amongst a Number of the Indians In the Provinces of New-Jersey and Pennsylvania, Justly Represented in A Journal Kept by Order of the Honourable Society (in Scotland) for Propagating Christian Knowledge. With some General Remarks (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1746).

126 Minutes of the General Meetings of the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, 22 November 1753, Records of the SSPCK in Edinburgh, RG GD95/1/4; 1 January 1736-15 November 1759. See especially the minutes for 23 March 1749, 22 March 1750, and 22 November 1753. I would like to thank John Grigg for sharing these research notes with me.

The members of the SSPCK therefore not only knew of and supported indigenous missionary efforts. In all likelihood they considered this African mission as a logical extension of Native American missions of the eighteenth century, for they conceived of Native American missions themselves as extensions of previous efforts to convert Scottish Highlanders. In this way the SSPCK, like other Protestant groups, conceived of missionary work as a linear, almost genealogical exercise, where each mission was directly connected to all others. When an SSPCK member expressed “great satisfaction” that two native missionaries were going to “extend the Mediator’s kingdom to those nations who dwell, at present, in the habitations of cruelty, and in the land of the shadow of death,” he could have been speaking equally about Highlanders, Indians, or Africans. Indian missionary history was therefore central to the SSPCK’s participation in the Quamine Project.

The most important model for the Quamine Project was the cadre of Indian preachers who attended Eleazar Wheelock’s Charity School in the 1750s and 60s. The narratives that Wheelock published annually, Samson Occom’s famous fundraising campaign in the British Isles, and the fallout that ensued when Wheelock used those funds to create a college for English children (rather than Indian ones) all made Protestant ministers painfully aware of the accomplishments and failures of Wheelock’s program. But the direct connections

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129 Szasz, Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans.

130 Stiles, To the Public, 4.

131 As noted in a previous chapter in my dissertation, by the time that Wheelock had used the funds to establish the school, he had become disillusioned with the thought of using native ministers. See Axtell, The Invasion Within, 204-215; Axtell, Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 174-188; and Leon Burr Richardson, ed., An Indian Preacher in England: Being Letters and Diaries Relating to the Mission of the Reverend Samson Occom and the Reverend Nathaniel Whitaker to Collect Funds in England for the Benefit of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indian
between the organizers of the Quamine Project and Wheelock’s Indian missionaries were many. First, Wheelock was personally acquainted with John Witherspoon, who administered funds to Wheelock on behalf of the SSPCK. One of Wheelock’s friends once reported that Witherspoon had accepted to pay some unknown expense of Wheelock’s missionary plan, noting that “In this affair, you are not a little indebted to the Connections & Influence of Dr. Witherspoon who took the most prudent & affectual steps to serve your Interests.” Whenever Wheelock’s missionaries were in need, his friend concluded, “they will draw on the Doctor.” Witherspoon was thus actively involved in distributing funds for Wheelock’s Indian missions well before he became engaged in the African one. When Ezra Stiles wrote to Wheelock in 1767 to congratulate him for recently receiving the Doctor of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh – an accolade which Stiles had been awarded two years earlier – he took the opportunity to praise Wheelock’s school as a “noble Institution.” Stiles added that Wheelock’s ambitious plan of training Native Americans as Christian missionaries was “the almost only prospect of Christianizing the American Aboriginals.” Wheelock returned the favor when the Quamine Project became public, sending Stiles and Hopkins complimentary copies of his narrative of the Indian School and informing the Newport ministers of his “approbation, and readiness to promote the design; so far as lies in [his] power.”

132 Elihu Spencer to Eleazar Wheelock, 9 December 1772, in Gratz Collection (American Colonial Clergy), Case 8, Box 24, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

133 Ezra Stiles to Eleazar Wheelock, 4 November 1767, in Stiles, The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University, Microfilm Reel 2. For their divinity degrees, see Stiles, Extracts From the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, 454 and 469.

program and the African one was when Wheelock volunteered to train Quamine and Yamma himself at Dartmouth College.\textsuperscript{135}

The Quamine Project even borrowed the missionary rhetoric that galvanized Wheelock’s earlier Indian program. The open door, which was such a powerful rhetorical tool for Wheelock’s Indian mission program, also found its way into the evangelical discourses concerning Africa. While Wheelock believed that the 1760s witnessed “a Door opening for a hundred Missionaries” in Iroquoia, Hopkins and others repeatedly used the open door metaphor to describe potentiality of their African mission.\textsuperscript{136} Interestingly, Hopkins even suggested that Quamine and Yamma actually employed that rhetoric themselves when they assured him that “if a door should be opened for them to go, they thought it was their duty, in such a case, to forsake wife and children, and go and preach the gospel to the perishing heathen.”\textsuperscript{137} Perhaps this explains Hopkins’ analogous choice of title for his history of the African mission. While Wheelock published \textit{A Plain and Faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and Present State of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut}, Hopkins titled his “A Narrative of the rise & progress of a proposal and attempt to send the gospel to guinea.” The actual, rhetorical, and literary connections between Indian and African missionary projects also partially explain the rumor


\textsuperscript{136} Eleazar Wheelock, \textit{A Plain and Faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and Present State of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut} (Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper, 1763), 23.

circulating in 1778 that Wheelock had hand-picked Ezra Stiles, rather than his own son, to be president of Dartmouth College when he died.\(^{138}\)

While the organizers of the Quamine Project were undoubtedly influenced by, and had many connections to, Wheelock’s Indian missionary project, recent controversies surrounding Indian missions also provided Quamine and others a model for how not to organize a mission. In the late 1760s, Mohegan preacher Samson Occom and another minister set out across the Atlantic to raise money for Wheelock’s native missionary program. Like the Quamine Project, this experiment aroused the pity and philanthropy, as well as the wallets, of hundreds of individuals, and Occom eventually collected an astronomical £10,000 for the enterprise.\(^ {139}\) However, when Wheelock used the funds to establish Dartmouth College – designed mainly for English students rather than Indian ones – donors became irate that they had freely given money to establish yet another white colonial college. This entire scenario caused a public, messy, and controversial rift between Wheelock and Occom as well as between Wheelock and Samuel Kirkland, his most effective white missionary. The Newport ministers were fully aware of this imbroglio as they planned their African mission only five years later. Stiles’ cousin, for example, was dismayed by Wheelock’s transformation from Indian teacher to white elitist. Alluding to Wheelock’s recent divinity degree, Stiles’ cousin complained that, “If the Intention of a Diploma is to license a Man to give general Disgust, he has acted in Character completely.”\(^ {140}\) Abhorred by


\(^{140}\) John Devotion to Ezra Stiles, 15 October 1767, in Stiles, *Extracts From the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles*, 469.
Wheelock’s turn against native preachers, Stiles remarked that Wheelock had “much of the religious Politician in his Make.” He also called Wheelock a “very ambitious” and “haughty” man who had only “small literary Furniture.” The funds that Occom helped raise, Stiles noted, were intended mainly for the education of Indian preachers at the college. “Yet the only Indian that has graduated there,” he protested, “was obliged to beg elsewhere towards supporting him the last year of his College Residence.” Stiles concluded that it would have “been better to have left the Funds in the Hands of the London Board,” rather than to give it to Wheelock carte blanche.141 According to Stiles and other Protestants throughout the Atlantic, Wheelock’s deception and ambition had wasted a very promising native missionary project. Stiles and Hopkins would hope to keep the African mission an interdenominational one, one that would avoid the pitfalls of Wheelock’s failures while simultaneously learning from them.

When Stiles, Hopkins, Quamine, and Yamma collaborated to raise money for their African mission, they had the failures of the Wheelock controversy fresh in their minds. Stiles even quietly worried that the African mission might share the same fate as the Indian one. Even if they had 30 or 40 black preachers, Stiles admitted to Hopkins, he feared the mission “would be taken up by the public and secularized – as Dr. Wheelocks Indian College, which has already almost lost sight of its original Design.”142 Donors would have expressed the same fears about the potential of party politics, egos, and duplicitous fundraising to ruin this native African mission, just as it had divided the Indian one. The organizers of the Quamine Project assured potential donors that “Whatever shall be given to this end, and put into the hands of the subscribers,” they would “engage faithfully to improve

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to this purpose only, and to promote the proposed mission, according to their best discretion; and to be at all times ready to give an account to those who desire it, of all they shall receive, and the manner in which it has been expended.”

They sought to distance themselves from the kind of deceitful fundraising that had characterized Wheelock’s plan. The final act of that distancing was to reject Wheelock’s offer to train the two African missionaries at Dartmouth. As Hopkins noted in February of 1774, Quamine and Yamma could enjoy free schooling and cheap living in Newport while staying close to their families. Furthermore, they would not be tempted to waste their time in teaching native languages to the young African boy that Wheelock apparently had at his school in Hanover. Such collaboration between Wheelock and the Newport ministers, Hopkins concluded, “cannot take place to any advantage.”

Hopkins and Stiles were clearly distancing themselves from the duplicitous fundraising and sour reputation that Wheelock had accrued in recent years. Indeed, by the time that Hopkins wrote that letter, Quamine and Yamma had probably learned that they were heading to New Jersey, rather than New Hampshire, for their training.

Although there were more prestigious colonial colleges that were closer to Newport, the choice of the College of New Jersey as a site for Quamine and Yamma’s training made perfect sense. By the early 1770s, the institution had built for itself a reputation as a destination for the education and missionary training of Indians and Africans. Before his death in 1764, Gilbert Tennent had received £200 from a man in Scotland for the education of an Indian youth to be trained for “instructing his countrymen in the English language and the Christian religion, or preaching the gospel to them.”

It is unclear whether this ever

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143 Stiles, To the Public, 2.


materialized, although the anonymous Scot would have been pleased when two Delaware
Indians named Jacob Woolley and Bartholemew Scott Calvin attended the college.146 While
Stiles had personally heard about Woolley’s education there, Witherspoon was actually
president by the time that Calvin began matriculating.147 As noted earlier, Peter Tatami was
the son of David Brainerd’s Indian interpreter, and the SSPCK offered some funds for his
education at the college. In addition, Princeton experienced a religious revival in the early
1770s, a fact which might have assured Stiles and Hopkins that the two Africans would not
suffer from any spiritual backsliding when they left Newport.148 Indeed, Witherspoon
publicly bragged that Princeton was not only “one of the healthiest places” in the Atlantic
world, but also that its distance away from licentious English traders, merchants, and conmen
virtually guaranteed that students would preserve their religious piety while avoiding the
temptation to be pulled into uncouth, worldly affairs.149 Finally, this was not the first plan for
African missionaries to attend the college. Twenty years before Quamine and Yamma
arrived at John Witherspoon’s doorstep, college president Samuel Davies devised a plan for
“some three or four young Africans, who still retained their native language, were pious, and
of good abilities, to be educated at the College of New Jersey for missionaries.”150 Although
the scheme failed to materialize, it nevertheless reflected how this college, rather than

146 Woodward and Carven, eds., Princetonians: 1784-1790, 1. These letters can be found in James Dow
McCallum, The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Publications,
1932). Calvin was also known as Shawusukkhkung, or Wilted Grass. They attended at different times,
however; Woolley was there in the early 1760s and Calvin attended several years later.

147 Ezra Stiles to Charles Chauncy, 25 December 1761, in Stiles, The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale
University, Microfilm Reel 1.


149 John Witherspoon, Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica, And Other West-India Islands, In Behalf of
the College of New-Jersey (Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1772), 23 and 11.

Harvard or Yale, had historically been understood as a training ground for both Indian and African evangelists.

John Witherspoon’s prestige and reputation were the final reasons why he was asked to prepare Quamine and Yamma for the rigors of the African mission. Although Witherspoon did not have much missionary expertise, he was a ranking member of the Presbyterian SSPCK (he gave the organization’s anniversary sermon in 1758) and had argued for the necessity of Indian missions in his sermons. Witherspoon noted that there was not a “more noble, a more important, or more necessary exercise of Christian charity, than enabling the Society to carry on their useful and salutary schemes, especially to extend their mission to the Indian tribes.”

Ezra Stiles also assured his colleagues that Witherspoon was not only of a “catholic, charitable spirit,” but was probably the finest theologian in all of the colonial colleges. This “catholic spirit” might have simply been a euphemism to describe Witherspoon’s lack of controversy in years prior. Unlike other Protestant theologians of his time, Witherspoon had few enemies, and he seemed to be the perfect person to head an ecumenical and widely collaborative effort like the Quamine Project. On the one hand, he was generally against the teachings of Samuel Hopkins, so Old Lights like Charles Chauncy might have breathed more easily knowing that Quamine and Yamma were not going to be indoctrinated into the Hopkinsianism system.

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151 John Witherspoon, *The absolute Necessity of Salvation through Christ, A Sermon, Preached Before the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, In the High Church of Edinburgh, On Monday, January 2. 1758. To which is subjoined, A short Account of the present State of the Society* (Edinburgh: W. Miller, 1758), 41. In this address Witherspoon argued that missionary work was not only necessarily for the salvation of Indians’ souls, but also for the safety and security of the American colonies.


Witherspoon and the recent popularity of his college gave it the opportunity to situate itself as an anti-Anglican institution in a growing Anglican mid-Atlantic. While intense rivalries between Anglicans and other American Protestant ministers heated up over the issue of an American bishopric in the 1760s, the competition over Indian missions provided the ammunition in a clerical cold war between Anglicans and Dissenters. Witherspoon’s ecumenicalism could bridge the divides that tore Dissenting communities apart and unite them against the growing aggressiveness of the Anglican Church. “Our Jersey College,” reported a friend to Stiles in 1769, “is now talking as if she was soon to be the bulwark against Episcopacy: I should rejoice to see her Pistols, like honest Teagues, grown up into great Guns. The President is an active man, & a good Preacher; & has done much to procure funds.” With Witherspoon at the helm, there was little chance that the African mission would devolve into the rancorous type of conflict that Wheelock engineered years before.

The education of the two Africans was also influenced by changing perceptions of how to properly train indigenous peoples for evangelical work. While Wheelock had demanded that civilization, husbandry, familiarity with classical languages and texts, and biblical erudition were all equally important, the organizers of the Quamine Project approached African education with a much more practical eye. Ezra Stiles, for example, had an organic view of the role of civilization in converting native peoples. He initially believed that Indians had to be civilized before they could be converted, but by the late 1760s he had


155 Francis Alison to Ezra Stiles, 1 August 1769, in Stiles, *Extracts From the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles*, 435.
changed his mind.\textsuperscript{156} This was for two reasons. The first is that he was influenced by the writings of his colleague, Charles Chauncy, who argued in the early 1760s that missionaries should not think themselves “obliged to convert measures to effect an alteration in that way of civil life they have been used to for ages immemorial.” English civility and Christianity were not necessarily dependent upon one another, for the history of civilization plans had only shown that they resulted in the disruption of native lifeways and rarely made good Christians.\textsuperscript{157} Quamine and Yamma would therefore miss the training regimen that Wheelock put his Indians through, as they would never be trained in husbandry, blacksmithing, agriculture, or any of these material arts. Theology, rather than civilization, would be at the heart of their training. At the same time, Stiles’ research into Moravian missions demonstrated in a very practical way that civilization need not accompany conversion. After reading the history of the Moravian mission to Greenland, Stiles wrote to Eleazar Wheelock to inform him of the implicit comparisons between the native peoples there and those in New York. “Perhaps your missionaries,” Stiles suggested to Wheelock, “might learn from these volumes more advantageously to address the Indians. Perhaps it is a Mistake that Civilizing is necessary to Christianizing the Heathen. If the divine truth can find admission into their hearts, the rest follows of course.”\textsuperscript{158} By the time of his involvement in

\textsuperscript{156} Ezra Stiles to Charles Chauncy, 25 December 1762, in Stiles, \textit{The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University}, Microfilm Reel 1. Stiles looked to the Jesuit missions of Paraguay and the mission of John Sergeant to the Stockbridge Indians to draw his conclusions about the necessity of civilization.


\textsuperscript{158} Ezra Stiles to Eleazar Wheelock, 26 January 1768, in Stiles, \textit{The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University}, Microfilm Reel 2. The history that Stiles is referring to is David Cranz, \textit{The history of Greenland: containing a description of the country, and its inhabitants: ... By David Crantz. Translated from the High-Dutch, ... In two volumes} (London: Printed for the Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of
the Quamine Project, Stiles had rejected centuries of Protestant missionary assumptions by arguing that civilization need not be a component of conversion. If Christian conversion could come first, the rest would follow.

Quamine and Yamma’s training might have reflected this change in direction. Wheelock’s Indian missionaries studied classical texts, learned Latin, Greek, and maybe even Hebrew, and were constantly engaged in agriculture and husbandry. Students at the College of New Jersey spent their first years studying Latin, Greek, rhetoric, geography, philosophy, and mathematics. It is likely that Witherspoon’s personal regimen for Quamine and Yamma looked to, but differed significantly from, both educational models. The first major difference was that, while Wheelock’s students complained bitterly about the harsh, physical, and draconian punishment at the hands of their schoolmasters, Witherspoon was proud of the fact that “no correction by stripes is permitted” at his college. Those who could not be governed by reason and maintain control of their passions, Witherspoon argued, “are reckoned unfit for residence in College.” This pedagogical stance, in addition to the fact that his two students were former slaves, highlighted the problems involved with the corporeal punishment of black students. Unlike Wheelock, Witherspoon never resorted to such measures. Part of this could have been the missionaries’ age. By the time that Quamine and Yamma arrived at Witherspoon’s doorstep, the missionaries were far from children, as both were well over 30 years old. As Witherspoon observed in a sermon on religious education, “You may bend a young twig and make it receive almost any form; but that which

the Gospel among the Heathen: and sold by J. Dodsley; T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt; and T. Cadell, successor to A. Millar; W. Sandby; S. Bladon; E. and C. Dilly; and at all the Brethren's chapels, 1767). See page 328, of course.

159 Witherspoon, Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica, 15-16.

160 Witherspoon, Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica, 18.
has attained to maturity, and taken its ply, you will never bring into another shape than that
which it naturally bears.”161 As older men, rather than young children, the Africans’
education would have prepared them for the duties of their future evangelical calling rather
than expose them to classical texts or arm them with academic erudition. Their training
therefore would have been much more practical, even vocational. In the year and a half that
they spent with Witherspoon from November of 1774 to the spring of 1776, Quamine and
Yamma allegedly became “very good in reading and writing.” In addition to acquiring the
skills of literacy, they also gained “a pretty good notion of the Principles of the Christian
faith.”162 By 1776, the organizers of the mission could boast that Quamine and Yamma had
excelled so quickly in their studies that they were fully prepared to begin the African mission
they had been preparing for – and spearheading – for years.163 The timing, however, could
not have been worse. Just as Quamine and Yamma had successfully finished their training
under John Witherspoon, the American Revolution began to undo the years of work leading
up to this African mission. When John Quamine died aboard a privateer’s ship in 1779, the
Quamine Project effectively died with him.

We could point to nearly a dozen reasons why the Quamine Project failed. For one,
the American Revolution cut off most communication and interaction with Africa, during
which the slave trade reached a temporary nadir and some states even made it illegal.
Ironically, the organizers of the Quamine Project viewed this development as a mixed

161 John Witherspoon, A Sermon on the Religious Education of Children. Preached in the Old Presbyterian
Church in New-York, to a Very Numerous Audience, on the Evening of the Second Sabbath in May
(Elizabethtown: Shepard Kollock, 1789), 10.

162 Woodward and Craven, eds., Princetonians, 1.

163 Stiles, To the Public, 5.
blessing. While most of the donors to and participants in the project abhorred the slave trade, the transportation connections that the trade wrought would have made mobilizing African missionaries much easier. When given the choice between having the slave trade and Christian missions or losing both, some ministers preferred to accept the temporal evil of slavery in order to accomplish what they thought was a greater spiritual good. Scottish missionary John Erskine rejoiced to hear that Massachusetts was abolishing slavery in the 1780s, but admitted that he “shall be sorry if that otherwise desirable event shall hinder any probable scheme of sending the Gospel to the natives of Africa.”

Even some of the organizers of the Quamine Project had their doubts about whether Quamine and Yamma could ever hope to succeed. Ezra Stiles had admitted as early as 1773 that the project was a “discouraging” enterprise and that “Success may be doubtful.” Quamine and Yamma’s personal tutor came to agree with Stiles. By 1782, with the project fully behind him, John Witherspoon reflected on the indigenous people trained at the College of New Jersey. He noted that his educational experiences with Indians, in particular, demonstrated that they would never attain a civilized life. Witherspoon concluded that “There have been some of them educated at this college, as well as in New England; but seldom or never did they prove either good or useful.”

Although John Erskine and Samuel Hopkins would try to revive the project in later years, hopes of a native mission to Africa faded as the American Revolution began and participants like Stiles and Witherspoon succumbed to their own doubts about indigenous missionary work.


165 Ezra Stiles to Charles Chauncy, 8 December 1773, in The Papers of Ezra Stiles at Yale University, Microfilm Reel 3.

166 Woodward and Craven, Princetonians, li.
Although the Quamine Project ultimately died aboard a privateer’s ship, the failed plan nevertheless illuminates several important themes in indigenous missionary work in the eighteenth century British Atlantic. First, Afro-Christians were not simply participants in, but rather organizers and initiators of, African missions. Fueled by local revivals, an anti-slavery impulse, and wider spiritual transformations among people of African descent throughout the Atlantic world, Quamine and Yamma’s mission was certainly a mission to Africans, by Africans. While Ezra Stiles and Samuel Hopkins were the public faces of the project, it ultimately sprang from Quamine and Yamma themselves. Secondly, Native American missionary history played a crucial role in how this African project was understood, framed, and conducted. Although Native American and black Atlantic historiographies have developed separately, Protestant missionaries of that era would not have recognized these boundaries. Indeed, they thought of Indians and Africans as “two eggs,” and that missionary work among the Indians would have much to say about native evangelical preaching among Africans. The Quamine Project was particularly influenced by Eleazar Wheelock’s native missionary program, which showed later evangelists the opportunities and challenges associated with placing indigenous peoples at the center of the Protestant missionary program. In sum, the Quamine Project was rooted in Afro-Christian religious transformations within the Atlantic world as well as the history and challenges of Native American missionary work. John Quamine and Bristol Yamma’s failed African mission thus provides us with a much deeper understanding of religious interaction between Anglo-Americans, Indians, and Africans in the eighteenth century British Atlantic. Like countless indigenous missionaries before them, these two Africans never realized their
chance to return to Africa as prodigal sons and “preach the gospel to the people from which they sprang.”  

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CONCLUSION

NATIVE MISSIONARIES AND THE BRITISH ATLANTIC

On the 11th day of March in 1779, a black Christian petitioned the Bishop of London to ordain him as an Anglican minister in hopes of “returning” to Africa to spread the gospel “amongst my countrymen.”\(^1\) Although his previous evangelical failures initially made him reluctant to write this letter – he was unsuccessful at converting a Jamaican “prince” years before, and his attempt to lead family prayer while a servant to a former English imperial governor were wholly ineffectual – the black applicant was convinced by others to do so anyways. The applicant’s letter outlined his missionary credentials carefully, explaining that he was a faithful and orthodox adherent to the Anglican Church and vowing that his only motive for requesting this unsolicited post was so that he “may be a means, under God, of reforming his countrymen and persuading them to embrace the Christian religion.” He explained that he was moved not only by a sincere Christian zeal, but also by the evangelical successes that other nations, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch, had experienced after training native Africans for missionary work. Both of those governments encouraged the rise of a black ministerial corps in West Africa and, as the applicant noted, the new evangelists they produced proved to be “more proper than European clergymen, [who were] unacquainted with the language and customs of the country.”\(^2\) Governor MacNamara, the

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man’s employer and one of the key figures who persuaded him to request Anglican ordination, drafted a supporting letter that recalled the successes of other nations in West Africa while simultaneously drawing upon his seven years of experience as governor in that region. MacNamara even suggested that the Anglicans’ own history of using black ministers should have been enough to convince the Bishop of London to ordain this son of Africa. He boasted, for example, that he was personally acquainted with Philip Quaque, an African Anglican stationed at the Cape Coast, whom he described as a “very respectable character.”

MacNamara and the black applicant had, of course, said all the right things. They emphasized evangelical competition with rival national powers, appealed to the successes that those powers had in training an African ministerial elite, invoked Philip Quaque’s missionary efforts on the Cape Coast, and outlined the linguistic and cultural advantages of African preachers over European ones. And yet, the Bishop of London coolly responded that he and the other Anglican Bishops were “not of opinion of sending a new missionary to Africa.”

The applicant’s name was Olauduh Equiano, and his effort to become an ordained African missionary had failed.

The denial of Equiano’s application might suggest that the Bishop of London had simply rejected the petition outright because of the applicant’s race. Equiano’s identity as an African certainly could have been a part of this equation, but so might have his ties to

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3 Governor MacNamara to the Bishop of London, 11 March 1779, in Equiano, The Interesting Narrative, 167.

4 Equiano, The Interesting Narrative, 169.

5 The most comprehensive and deeply researched biography of Equiano is Vincent Carretta, Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005).

6 Things might have gone differently had Equiano submitted his application earlier. The Bishop of London to whom Equiano wrote was Robert Lowth, who had been appointed to the position only two years prior. If Equiano and MacNamara had put in the application in 1776, for example, it might have received a more favorable response, for the Bishop of London then was Richard Terrick, the same person who officiated Philip Quaque’s ordination in 1766.
Methodists, his growing reputation as an anti-slavery crusader, the timing of the application during the tumult of the American Revolution, as well as Equiano’s lack of formal training under Anglican authority. While his comparison with Philip Quaque might have seemed apt, Equiano and MacNamara were probably both unaware that Quaque spent a decade of his most formative years under Anglican tutorship in England. One could not simply ask for Anglican ordination and receive it, no matter how sincere, pious, or competent the candidate. Anglicans believed that ordination, like conversion, was a long process, one that took years of training, biblical study, practice, and preparation. Furthermore, Philip Quaque’s mission to West Africa was far from a glorious success, so if Equiano was looking for a positive black role model, he probably chose the wrong one. Finally, Anglicans never trusted black preachers the way that Moravians trusted the national helpers of the Caribbean or how Puritans and Presbyterians depended upon Native American preachers in New England and Iroquoia. All these factors combined to make the rejection of Equiano’s application not necessarily a question of race, and also not terribly surprising.

Olauduh Equiano’s failure to become an Anglican minister was, in some ways, not a culmination of previous missionary history, but actually a rejection of it. The Anglicans rebuffed Equiano for the reasons enumerated above, but it does not necessarily follow that blacks were universally denied access to Christian spiritual authority. In fact, Anglicans had used slave teachers and catechists in their missions, and they did ordain a few black ministers – like Philip Quaque – during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Legions of early modern Protestants had also welcomed, indeed cultivated, native preachers from the beginning of their evangelical efforts in New England in the 1640s. Like Equiano, not all of these evangelists were officially ordained, and many attempted to spread the gospel under their own auspices. In highlighting his credentials to become an evangelist, Equiano revealed his earlier attempts to propagate Christianity among Jamaicans, house servants, and others.
throughout the Atlantic world. When the Anglicans rejected Equiano for ministerial ordination, they were rejecting someone who had years of missionary experience under his belt. Like the black and Native American proselytes who came before him, Equiano did not necessarily need official sanction to operate as a missionary. By cutting his missionary teeth on Jamaican princes and black servants, Equiano had already been working as a Christian evangelist well before this rejection.

Although Equiano’s effort to become an African missionary failed, his attempt neatly encapsulates many of the themes that this dissertation has explored: the primacy of “native” preachers in British missions, competition with other international powers, the entanglements between Indian and African evangelical efforts, Atlantic-wide circuits of information and correspondence that knit these groups together, and the rancorous debate over the place of Indians and Africans in the future of Western Christendom. As we have seen, Native Americans, enslaved blacks, and Africans were absolutely central to early modern Protestant missionary activity from Puritan New England to Anglican South Carolina, the Moravian Caribbean to the New York frontier, and even from West Africa to India. While the conventional image of a missionary has been that of a white, middle-class Anglo-American who was ignorant of the culture and peoples he was attempting to convert, the presence – indeed, the astonishing ubiquity – of “native” preachers demands that we rethink the ways in which native peoples not only encouraged Christian missions, but actually led, organized, and directed them. While literary scholars and historians have acknowledged the historical import of a few of these individuals, such as Samson Occom, Joseph Johnson, and Rebecca Prottten, these remarkable figures were just three examples of a much wider effort to employ hundreds of Africans, Native Americans, black slaves, and subcontinental Asians in Protestant evangelical enterprises. Missionaries, in other words, were usually not the white, imperialistic, advance guard of Western colonialism that they have been made out to be.
Instead, more often than not they were native peoples’ leaders, neighbors, family, and friends.

The ability to tap into these networks of kin and country, as well as their fluency with native tongues, made native preachers invaluable assets to Protestant missionary organizations, and they were much more cost-effective than employing English missionaries, who were generally reluctant to march into the white man’s graves of West Africa, the New York frontier, and the slave quarters of the Carolinas. At the same time, Native American and Africa bodies were vital to the development of native missionary discourses and practices, for early modern divines believed that African and Indian bodies were particularly well suited to the climatological and epidemiological environments of their missions and well accustomed to the comparative material poverty and constant mobility of their charges. Ironically, the same rhetoric that characterized Indians as wandering savages and Africans as physically destined for slavery in tropical climes actually generated a space in which Indians and Africans could gain access to spiritual authority as Christian preachers, catechists, teachers, and evangelists.

But there was more than mere pragmatism at work, for Protestant missionaries were simultaneously fueled by a sense of sacred genealogy as well as an almost pathological obsession with comparing themselves to rival national powers. Protestant ministers certainly believed that, even though indigenous peoples were barbaric, savage, and uncivilized, they were fundamentally redeemable. In fact, the early history of Christian expansion throughout the Mediterranean had provided a model for how unconverted gentiles might be brought home (or “reduced”) to Christianity. Because the age of miracles was over and the gift of tongues had ceased, native preachers were expected to be even more important to the propagation of Christianity in the rapidly expanding Atlantic world than they were in the first period of Christian expansion in the Mediterranean. Thus, through an articulation of sacred
genealogy that traced all evangelists back to Christ himself, through ordination practices like the laying on of hands, and through an understanding of early Christian history, Protestant ministers carved out a rhetorical, theological, and operational space for native missionaries. Protestants also looked to the efforts of other nations – especially the Spanish and the French – as models for how to conduct their own missions. They simultaneously scoffed at and envied the inflated conversion numbers that Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries published in their reports, and they sought ways to match the armies of missionaries that Rome seemed to be producing every year. Some ministers, such as the resolute George Berkeley, even implied that Indian and African preachers might counterbalance the army of “regulars” that Catholics sent out yearly to their missions.\(^7\) As such, native evangelists were not only viewed as a potential scourge to barbaric religious practices; they were also understood as a crucial wedge in the increasing competition between Protestants and Catholics in the early modern Atlantic world.

Few groups were more sensitive to these tensions than the Puritan New Englanders who initiated Christian missionary activity to the Massachusett Indians in the 1640s. Although John Eliot has been universally heralded as the “Apostle to the Indians,” seventeenth century New England actually contained dozens of “apostles,” and most of them were Indians. They embraced some aspects of Christian evangelism for a wide variety of reasons (spiritual power, monetary reward, or because their kin were doing the same), but they were not forced into believing. Indeed, their choices during King Philip’s War and their attempts to create sustained Christian communities in the wake of war demonstrate the multivalent ways in which native peoples appropriated Christianity to fight their own

\(^7\) George Berkeley, *A Proposal For the Better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations, and For Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity. By a College to be Erected in the Summer Islands, Otherwise Called the Isles of Bermuda* (Dublin: George Grierson, 1725), 12.
Spiritual, social, and physical battles. Puritans were not alone in their dependence upon native evangelists, for Anglicans also employed indigenous preachers in their missions. However, their excessive reliance on native royalty, in addition to their clumsy conduct during sensitive imperial and Indian wars, often left those preachers ostracized and alienated. Anglicans consequently failed to create a native preaching corps in the Americas by the 1740s. And yet, their virtual participation in successful indigenous evangelical activities in India—as well as utopian schemes generated by divines like George Berkeley—kept native missionaries on the Anglican agenda. The era of revivals forced Anglicans to make the cultivation of native preachers a reality. Native missionary work began to spread to other groups, including Moravians, and black slaves were suddenly being trained by Moravians and even Anglicans for teaching and missionary posts. At the same time, this surge in evangelical revivalism resulted in the splintering of Indian churches and congregations that followed controversial, sometimes even illiterate, Indian preachers. In sum, the native missionary program that began in New England had, by 1750, now involved blacks as well as Indians, spread throughout the Atlantic world and beyond, and resulted in the gradual indigenization of Christianity by the very people upon whom Protestant missionary efforts depended.

Philip Quaque’s mission to the Cape Coast, the Algonquian Indians’ mission to the Oneidas and Mohawks, and John Quamine’s failed mission to West Africa seem, on the surface, to have little in common. And yet, these three case studies highlight the ways in which indigenous preachers operated as evangelists and struggled with the problems of empire and identity. Philip Quaque’s letters, for example, detail not only his failed mission to West Africans, but also his efforts to situate Africans into a sacred genealogy of Christian history even as he simultaneously described their religious practices as savage and barbaric. At the same time, Quaque’s vision of empire leaves little doubt that the relationship between
missions and empire – at least from the perspective of native missionaries – was much more
tenuous and ambiguous than we have previously recognized. The question of the relationship
between native preachers and their charges was also a key problem in the eastern
Algonquians’ mission to the Oneida and Mohawk Indians in the 1760s. While Eleazar
Wheelock claimed his “grand design” was an innovative method for Iroquois conversion, he
was in fact tapping into a longer history of indigenous evangelical leadership. The problem,
however, was that the Indians who went to Iroquoia were not actually Iroquois. Even as they
embraced opportunities for mutual collaboration with the Iroquois, these missionaries’
relationships with their potential converts, as well as one another, was fraught with discord
and tension. The failure of Wheelock’s grand design was readily apparent to Protestant
missionaries throughout the Atlantic world, but it did not necessarily mean that native
evangelical work was abandoned. In fact, organizers of later African missions, especially the
failed Quamine Project of the mid-1770s, would use Native American missionary history as a
model to help navigate the dilemmas implicit in using native peoples as preachers. The
Quamine Project simultaneously attempted to address the concerns of race, transatlantic
slavery, and Christianity during a period of revival and revolution. As disparate as these case
studies are, they demonstrate the ways in which black and Native American missionaries
confronted the challenges of empire, carved out a space for native peoples throughout
Western Christendom, created identities for themselves while characterizing the problems
and futures of non-Christian native peoples, drew upon Atlantic-wide connections of
fundraising and correspondence to fuel their missions, and entangled Indian and African
missionary histories to ensure that neither was completely isolated from the other.

The chronological scope of this dissertation ends just as the American Revolution
began, but it is worthwhile to look forward and note that missionary history changed
dramatically in the decades after the American Revolution. Although there was some
continuity – the SPG still employed Paulus to catechize Mohawk children, though it was in Ontario rather than New York – the revolutionary era created and coincided with some major shifts in native missionary work. Organizations like the SPG began receiving increasing competition from British-based Baptist and Methodist missionary organizations. The Baptist Missionary Society (1792), London Missionary Society (1795), and Church Missionary Society (1799) all began active missionary efforts within Britain’s second empire, spreading out to Africa, India, and East Asia. One Anglican asked rhetorically in 1786, if Anglicans treated the American Indian and “savage African” as “objects worthy of our attention; ought not the same charitable disposition to animate our hopes and excite our zeal towards the conversion of the Mahometan or the Gentoo?”

As the American Revolution ended and as the British empire reconstituted itself, British missionaries began to turn their eyes to the east. At the same time, the voluntary and involuntary displacement of peoples during the revolutionary era, the creation of the American nation-state, and the rapid rise of independent black and Native American religious congregations gave native preachers an opportunity to rip Christianity away from its Western moorings and form independent, Christian communities. This was a process that was, of course, underway before the American Revolution even began, for religious separatism was always a component of native missionary work. Baptist and Methodist preachers traveled the American itinerant circuits since the 1740s, but it was not until the 1760s and early 1770s that black preachers began to appear among the Baptist and Methodist congregations of the south. When they did, they did so in staggering numbers.

Harry Hosier (Black Harry), Jacob Bishop, Moses Wilkinson,

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8 Thomas Thurlow, *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; At Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-Le-Bow, on Friday February 17, 1786* (London: T. Harrison and S. Brooke, 1786), 23.

9 A summary of black churches before and after the Revolution can be found in Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British*
George Liele, and Andrew Bryan were notable black Christian leaders after the Revolution. But there were also lesser-known figures, most of whom were or had been enslaved. These included preachers by the names of Jupiter, Primus, Jem, Jacob, Simon, Lewis, and Martin.\(^\text{10}\) Not surprisingly, the number of black Baptists and Methodists in the south grew exponentially when they had examples of black leadership, and this journey to an Afro-Baptist and Afro-Methodist faith has been well documented by other scholars.\(^\text{11}\)

This pattern held true for the mid-Atlantic, where black preachers like Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Daniel Coker created independent congregations in Pennsylvania and Delaware while simultaneously riding itinerant evangelical circuits to spread the gospel. This was a push and pull process, as racist white clerical leaders often pushed black congregants out of their churches just as a black spiritual leadership emerged to pull them in. Black Methodist preachers were especially active in building their ranks. As Richard Allen explained, Methodism was particularly appealing to blacks because the founders of these churches were generally in opposition to slavery, they explained Christian doctrine through emotional appeals, their camp meetings were ecstatic and revelatory, and (most importantly), they cultivated black leadership more than any other denomination before them. Allen observed in his autobiography that Methodism was suited perfectly for blacks because:

\begin{quote}
The plain and simple gospel suits best for any people, for the unlearned can understand, and the learned are sure to understand; and the reason that the Methodist is so successful in the awakening and conversion of the coloured people, [is] the\end{quote}

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plain doctrine and having a good discipline...The Methodists were the first people that brought glad tidings to the coloured people. I feel thankful that ever I heard a Methodist preach. We are beholden to the Methodists, under God, for the light of the Gospel we enjoy; for all other denominations preached so high-flown that we were not able to comprehend their doctrine. Sure am I that reading sermons will never prove so beneficial to the coloured people as spiritual or extempore preaching. I am well convinced that the Methodist has proved beneficial to thousands and ten times thousands. It is to be awfully feared that the simplicity of the Gospel that was among them fifty years ago, and that they conform more to the world and the fashions thereof, they would fare very little better than the people of the world.\textsuperscript{12}

The collective labors of Allen, Jones, and other black preachers within the newly forming United States generated an astronomical surge in the numbers of black adherents to Methodist and Baptist Churches. In 1786 the Methodists counted 1,890 blacks among their ranks, but by 1797 that number had grown to 12,215. By 1793 the Baptists counted around 18,000 black congregants, a number which grew to 40,000 by 1813.\textsuperscript{13} Black preachers and religious leaders – both male and female – were absolutely crucial to the development of independent Protestant congregations in post-Revolutionary black communities.


\textsuperscript{13} Raboteau, \textit{Slave Religion}, 131.
At the same time that black preachers like Richard Allen were creating independent Christian congregations, the diasporic experiences of Afro-Americans and Native Americans also underlined the centrality of native preachers to constituting sustainable Christian communities after the American Revolution. On the surface it would seem that the historical trajectories of Christian Indians and Afro-Americans after the American Revolution were entirely dissimilar. After all, Indians dealt with unique problems of dispossession, disease, and involuntary migration while Afro-Americans confronted chattel slavery and institutionalized racism. And yet, a quick comparison of the Indian migration to Brothertown, New York and the creation of a black colony at Sierra Leone highlights some remarkable similarities between the Native American and Afro-American preachers who were on the move in the wake of revolution.

Just as Dunmore’s Proclamation allowed thousands of Afro-Americans to escape slavery in the American South and migrate to Nova Scotia in the 1770s and 80s, Christian
Indians also considered using the fissures created by revolutionary activity to migrate away from white colonial society.\textsuperscript{14} Joseph Johnson, a Mohegan preacher whose failed mission to the Oneida Indians was catalogued in previous chapters, championed the idea of moving eastern Algonquian Indians – particularly his own Mohegans – to land in within the territory of New York’s Oneida Indians. The plan got underway in the 1770s, but the American Revolution and Johnson’s premature death derailed it until the early 1780s. Samson Occom, Johnson’s father-in-law, took the mantle of community building from Johnson and, like William Cooper in Cooperstown, set about constructing a settlement on the post-Revolutionary New York frontier.\textsuperscript{15} Eeyawquitoowauconnuck, or Brothertown, was officially incorporated in November of 1785. It was about that same time, the early to mid 1780s, that black Christian leaders like David George, John Marrant, and Boston King began creating independent black Christian congregations in Nova Scotia, away from the menace of American racial slavery. Like their Native American counterparts in New York, the Nova Scotians had a rough go of it at first. In spite of their newfound independence, their


possession of poor land, the explosion of white racism in Nova Scotia, their material poverty, and unbearably cold winters forced them to consider other alternatives. When John Clarkson asked the community’s black leaders for voluntary migrants to establish a colony in West Africa for free blacks, they readily complied.

Both the Brothertown Movement and the creation of the colony of Sierra Leone were fueled by discourses on race, human progress, Christianity, and civilization. Migration was an answer to racism, only for Indians racism found its expression in dispossession and territorial wars while for Afro-Americans it found its brutal articulation in racial slavery. Establishing autonomous communities in New York and Africa was therefore a response to the racialized power struggles of the revolutionary era. But both movements were more than just a form of social escapism, for the founders of Brothertown as well as the religious leaders of the Sierra Leone experiment saw in their own migration a providential opportunity to redeem lost peoples, civilize the land, and bring Indians and Africans to Christ.

Agriculture and civilization schemes were central to both the Brothertown and Sierra Leone migrations. So was missionary activity, as Native American and African migrants understood their relocation as a key moment in the gospelization of the world. Not only would they civilize Africans and Indians by introducing them to agriculture, civilized English living, sedentary lifeways, and even the market economy, they would also use their newfound status as God’s chosen people to spread the gospel to the darker corners of both continents.

Even the biblical texts that black preachers, diasporic Africans, and Brothertown migrants employed were similar, for black and Indian preachers from Samson Occom to David George and Absalom Jones all used the scriptural text and metaphor of Exodus to explain their plight, articulate their identities as migrant Christians, and establish a space for themselves within a sacred genealogy of Western Christianity. When Samson Occom undertook his momentous trip from his Mohegan home to the budding community at
Brothertown, he found himself constantly preaching from the book of Exodus along the way. As Jim Sidbury has noted for the Sierra Leone migrants, they “all understood their migration through the metaphor of an exodus to a promised land.” It was no coincidence that one of the most dynamic of these evangelical leaders was a charismatic preacher named Moses. Absalom Jones, one of Philadelphia’s key black leaders, preached a thanksgiving sermon in 1808 to celebrate the official ending of the transatlantic slave trade. The starting point for his sermon was, of course, the book of Exodus. The text of Exodus, as well as the metaphorical meaning of it, became vital to Native American, Afro-American, and African colonial discourses on Christianity, race, and the spiritual futures of indigenous peoples during this crucial period of post-Revolutionary diasporas.

Native American and Afro-American evangelists experienced unique conditions in the wake of revolution, and this argument is certainly not intended to homogenize, essentialize, or over-generalize about the complex historical contexts in which black and Indian evangelists operated. And yet, their simultaneous attempts to create independent Christian communities away from the problems of dispossession and racial slavery, their understanding of those communities as missionary bases for future evangelization of others, and even their invocation of scriptural texts like the book of Exodus to explain their plight; all of these characteristics mark out similarities rather than differences. Most importantly, a

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reliance upon native evangelical leadership, in the form of people like Boston King, Samson Occom, David George, David Fowler, and Moses Wilkinson, became central to the development of these communities and the people who sought their future in them. It was therefore no coincidence that, when Paul Cuffee attended a Baptist meeting in Sierra Leone in December of 1811, the meeting actually read a letter from the Oneida Indians “to good satisfaction.” The very next day Cuffee delivered this letter to the Methodist congregation, so that both Baptists and Methodists in West Africa might learn from it “for the improvement of the people.”21 In spite of the vast distances and historical circumstances that separated them, Oneida Indians and Sierra Leoneans recognized, through their epistolary relationship, the common bonds that knit them together. By the end of the eighteenth century, Native Americans, American blacks, and Sierra Leonean migrants had all wrested ecclesiastical and spiritual authority from the clutches of white, Christian denominations. Their independent congregations and communities spoke to the problems of a people in motion, a people in exodus, just as their hopes for the conversion of Native Americans, Africans, and black Americans outlined their visions for a shared Christian destiny.22

A historical phenomenon that involves hundreds of individuals and a multitude of denominational groups working throughout the Atlantic world and beyond is difficult, if not impossible, to summarize, for the British Atlantic world was not only a massive space filled with dynamic and diverse characters; it was also an ever-changing one. The creation and development of native missionaries, including their efforts to translate elements of Christianity, their understanding of and experiences among the people they tried to convert,_____


22 For more on the idea of a shared African destiny, see Sidbury, Becoming African in America.
and their relationships with empire, were all constantly in flux. Native preachers, whether they were in Puritan New England, West Africa, the Caribbean, India, South Carolina, or the New York frontier, were not passive victims of an imperial conspiracy. Instead, indigenous evangelists were active and willing participants in Protestant missions who drew from Christianity to frame new identities, amass spiritual power, preserve their cultures, and protect their peoples during a period of unprecedented change. As such, native preachers were critical to the development of cultural contact between Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans during the most formative years of those encounters.
**Prodigal Sons: Indigenous Missionaries in the British Atlantic World, 1640-1780**

Edward E. Andrews, University of New Hampshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Speen</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Brother to Anthony - both are Teachers. John was at Natick from 1669 to 1675.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Speen</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>God &quot;broke his head.&quot; At Natick, with his brother John, from 1669 to 1675.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham Speen</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Preacher at Natick from 1669-1675.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nishokon</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Gave a sermon on Noah's flood, supposedly a bashful person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb Cheeshahteamuck</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained at Harvard as preacher but died (went by many last names).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained at Harvard as preacher but died (Hiacoymes's son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monequessin</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Was trained by Eliot as a schoolteacher but not sure where he went or how he taught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Takowompouit</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Teacher at Natick from 1685-1700 but it was falling apart by early eighteenth century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Larnel</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained at Harvard but he also died in the 17-teens. Last Indian to attend Harvard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Thomas, Jr.</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Preacher at Natick from 1714-1727.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Tuckappawillin</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Hasunimnusut (Grafton). His brother was the ruler there; scout in KPW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Printer</td>
<td>Mid/Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Printing press, teacher at Waenutug but fought against English in KPW, then at Natick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Speen</td>
<td>Mid/Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Pakachoog (Auburn) from 1672 to 1676. Set the tune for the Psalms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Awiniw</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Teacher at Punkapog (Canton) from 1656 to 1672.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Ahaton</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Punkapog (Canton) from 1674 to 1717.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos Ahaton</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Punkapog (Canton) from 1717 to 1743. Perhaps taking over his father's post?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Pornham</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Punkapog (Canton) around 1742.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Thomas, Sr.</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nashope, or Nashoba (Littleton) from 1669 to 1714. Alias Naamishcow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jethro</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Panatucket - see him from Rowlandson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Wamesit (Lowell) from 1669 to 1675.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Wamesit (Lowell) from 1670 to 1675. Spent some time at Harvard College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symon Beckom</td>
<td>Mid/Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Wamesit (Lowell) from 1675 to 1685. Led sabbath meetings during KPW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Sassamon</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nemasket (Lakeville) from 1673 to 1675. At Assawompsett, 1673 to 1675.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nemasket (Lakeville) from 1685 on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jocelin</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Assawompsett (Lakeville 2) from 1698 to 1711.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Nesutan</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Okkokonimesit (Marboro) from 1669 to 1675. Helped Eliot with translations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausquonit</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Okkokonimesit (Marboro) from 1669 to 1675, when he retired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampson</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Okkokonimesit (Marboro) from 1669 to 1675.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Notable Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Teacher at Okkokenimesit (Marlboro) from 1675 to 1676.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoset</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Waenung (Uxbridge) around 1674.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wohququoshadt</td>
<td>Mid/Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Magunkog (Ashland) in 1669.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Kattenanit</td>
<td>Mid/Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Magunkog (Ashland) in 1675. Noted for his &quot;piety and ability&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Magunkog (Ashland) in 1716.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waabesktamin</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Manchaug (Sutton) around 1674, and this was a very small village with only about 12 families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Chaubunagungamaug (Webster) from 1672 to 1676. He lived in Grafton with everyone else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southeastern Mass.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Aham</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Titicut (Middleboro) around 1698. Also at Cokesit (Rochester) at some point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Josmin</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Titicut (Middleboro) from 1710 to 1718.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Sekins</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Titicut (Middleboro) around 1712.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Felix</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Titicut (Middleboro) around 1712.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nehemiah Abel</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Titicut (Middleboro) from 1747 to 1757. Probably the son of John Simon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Symons</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Titicut (Middleboro) from 1672 to 1712.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hiacoomes</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Son of the first Hiacoomes, at Assawampsets (Lakeville 2) from 1598 to 1718. Also at Quittabut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian John</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Coosisset (Rochester) around 1685. Part of John Cotton's territory in SE Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Acoacet (Westport) around 1685. Associated with the Little Compton Indian congregation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Acoacet (Westport) around 1698.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bryant</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Teacher at Acushnet (New Bedford) from 1693 to 1713.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bryant</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Acushnet (New Bedford) around 1713.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Simmons</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nukkehummeees (Dartmouth) from 1695 to 1718. Ordained by Japhet of MV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Holms</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nukkehummeees (Dartmouth) from 1711 to 1718.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Simmons</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nukkehummeees (Dartmouth) around 1770 or so. Related to William Simmons (or Simons).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Church</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Watuppa Ponds (Fall River) from 1706 to 1716. Also at Sakonnet (Little Compton) from 1685.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simons</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Sakonnet (Little Compton) from 1714 to 1718. Also at Titicut (Middleboro) from 1698-1714.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Nonpash</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Sakonnet (Little Compton) from 1714 to 1718.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Sakonnet (Little Compton) around 1685.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Skipeng</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Saltwater Pond (Plymouth 2) around 1685, acting as a teacher and preacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuttanamattuk</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Bourne 2 (Mannamit Praying Town) around 1674.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meestawin</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Bourne 2 (Mannamit Praying Town) around 1674.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter (Sakantucket)</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Bourne 2 (Mannamit Praying Town) around 1674.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Jeffrey</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Bourne 2 (Mannamit) from 1757 to 1767, then Bourne 1 (Herring Ponds) from 1767 to 1770.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Nummuck</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Preached at Manomet Pond in the area around 1698. Alias Wanamuhkuhkowit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Wanno</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Manomet Ponds from 1713 to 1718.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monatunkanet</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Quantisset (Pomfret, CT) around 1669.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Moqua</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Manexit (Thompson, CT) around 1674 or so. Eliot presented him to this congregation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampson</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Wabquisset (Woodstock, CT) from 1674 to 1676. Brother of Joseph of Chaubunagungamaug.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Daniel</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Employed by Joseph Fish (Stonington) as Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Metatawan</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Taught at Samuel Whitman’s Farmington, CT school in the early/mid 18th century.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeobox</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Mohegan Mission in Norwich, CT around 1674.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tukamon</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Mohegan Mission in Norwich, CT around 1674.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cooper</td>
<td>Late 18th C.</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>At Mohegan Mission in Norwich, CT around 1790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Niles</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Sep. Baptist</td>
<td>Fighting with Joseph Fish, Separatist leader who defended Narragansett lands. Illiterate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon James or James Simon</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Sep. Baptist</td>
<td>Pequot Minister preaching at narragansett for 3-4 years before Niles took over.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Martha’s Vineyard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiacoomes</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>First native preacher on MV. Preached at Chappaquidick (Edgartown 1) from 1659 to 1690.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Tackanash</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nunnepoag (Edgartown 3) around 1698.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah Thomas</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nunnepoag (Edgartown 3) around 1698.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Russell (Peosin)</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Preached at Edgartown. Also at Sanchacantacket (Oak Bluffs) from 1698 to 1723.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Momutchegin</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Chappaquidick (Edgartown 1) from 1670 to 1703. Ruling elder who died in 1703.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Amos</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Chappaquidick (Edgartown 1) from 1703 to 1706. Also at Gay Head until 1706 sporadically.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mittark</td>
<td>Mid 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Despised by his own people. Sachem turned Pastor. Founded Gay Head Church in 1666.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Wuttomanonin</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Gay Head Indian Church from 1683 to 1698.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elisha (Pasonut)</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Preached at Gay-head from 1683 to 1714, when he died. Also at Gay Head 2 (smaller congregation).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abel Wauwompuhue, Jr.</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>A deacon in the Gay Head church from 1712 to 1722, when he died. Also at Chilmark sporadically.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issac Decany</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>At Gay Head from 1708 to 1720.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joash Panu</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Gay Head from 1713 to 1720. Succeeded Sowomog as Pastor (did he marry his daughter)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Ohquanhit</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Preached at Gay Head around 1724 or 1725. His will is in Ives/Goddard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Cony</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Gay Head around 1770 or so.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Hosuett</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Minister at Gay head around 1770, left a marriage register in Ives/Goddard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Setum</td>
<td>17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Petty Sachem of Sanchekantacket (Oak Bluffs) around 1667, went to the mainland to preach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wompanog</td>
<td>17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Alias Mr. Sam. Sachem and minister at Oak Bluffs. Died around 1689.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Nohnosno</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Sanchacantacket (Oak Bluffs) from 1670 to 1678.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Mashquattukkoit</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Sanchacantacket (Oak Bluffs) around 1688, when he died.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momonequem</td>
<td>17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nashakeimnuck (Chilmark 1) from 1651 to ???. Descendents also preached.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Tacknash</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nashakeimnuck (Chilmark 1) from 1670 to 1684 and Nashamemies from 1670 to 1684.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Lay</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Alias Panunun, urged Experience Mayhew to learn the Indian languages and become a preacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuttinomanomin</td>
<td>17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Alias David. Deacon of the Chilmark Church who died around 1698.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Sogkohkonoo</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Schoolmaster in Tackanash's church. Deacon from 1698 to 1703, when he died. At Sanchacantacket.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Another schoolmaster.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janawannit Hannit</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Uncle to Japhet Hannit (his Brother was Parshannit - a Sachem in Chilmark).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japhet Hannit</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Nashakemmuck (Chilmark 1) from 1683 to 1712. At Gay head from 1683 to 1712.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowomog</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Succeeded Japhet as Pastor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Momanequin</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Preacher at Chilmark and then later preacher at Dartmouth. Son of Momonovenum.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panupuhquah</td>
<td>17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Muckuckhonne (Chilmark 2) and died around 1664. Very small village.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Shohkow</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Seconchquet (Chilmark 3) from 1698 to 1713. Brothers with Daniel?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Shokau</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Seconchquet (Chilmark 3) from 1698 to 1718 but was also at Gay head.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wunnanaukunmun</td>
<td>17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Christianstown Indian Church (West Tisbury) from 1660 to 1676.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Amnhet</td>
<td>17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Christianstown Indian Church (West Tisbury) from 1670 to 1672.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Sepinnu</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Christianstown Indian Church (West Tisbury) from 1680 to 1683. Brother of John Tackanash.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Shokow</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Christianstown Indian Church (West Tisbury) from 1683 to 1690.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micah Shokow</td>
<td>Late 17th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Christianstown Indian Church (West Tisbury) around 1690 or so.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Ompny</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Elder, minister, and magistrate at Christianstown, 1713-1717.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabez Athem</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Christianstown Indian Church (West Tisbury) from 1718 to 1719.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosea Manhut</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Christianstown Indian Church (West Tisbury) around 1724 or so. Was an ordained minister.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Tisbury. Taught with brother Stephen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Nashokau</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Minister at Seconchquet and Christianstown (1698-1713). Died 1713.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Cosanan</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan?</td>
<td>Last name also Coshomom, Indian minister living in 1724.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Tackamasun</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan/Baptist</td>
<td>Son of a mainland Indian. Pastor of Nashakemmuck (Chilmark 1) from 1690 to 1708; later Baptist.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josias Hosseat</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>At Gay Head Baptist Church around 1702.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josias Hosseat, Jr.</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>At Gay Head Baptist Church from 1720 to 1727.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephraim Abraham</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>Minister of Gay Head Baptist Church sometime after 1727.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silas Paul</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Gay Head Baptist Church from 1763 to 1787. Has the gravesone, died when he was only 49.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Kakenewn</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>At Gay Head Baptist Church and died around 1763.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jeffers</td>
<td>18th/19th C.</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>At Gay Head Baptist Church from 1792 to 1818.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nantucket and Islands**

- John Gibs             | 17th/18th C. | Puritan     | Preached at Occawon (Nantucket) from 1665 to 1698.                                          |
- Job Muckemuck         | 17th/18th C. | Puritan     | Took over at Occawon (Nantucket) when John Gibs died. Preached around 1698.                  |
- Jonah Hosseit         | Early 18th C.| Puritan     | Also called Nonahauwasuit. Nantucket Preacher at Occawon Church at Nantucket from 1710-1718.  |
- Benjamin Tarshema     | 18th C.      | Puritan     | At Occawon (Nantucket) around 1770.                                                          |
- James Monnog          | Unclear      | Puritan     | Minister and justice of the peace for the Indians at Nantucket.                              |
- Caleb                 | 17th C.      | Puritan     | Could be the Caleb Cheese-guy from Harvard. At Second Indian Church on Nantucket ca. 1674.    |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Asherman</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Nantucket Preacher at Second Indian Church around 1698. This was a smaller congregation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quequenah</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Nantucket Preacher. Maybe same as Quequenomp, son of Nantucket Sachem named Wanachmanak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Hayt</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Nantucket Preacher at Wammasquid (Nantucket 3) but not sure when.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wunnohson</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Wammasquid (Nantucket 3) but not sure when.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Spotso</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Wammasquid (Nantucket 3) but not sure when.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netowah</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>At Wammasquid (Nantucket 3) but not sure when.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codpoganut</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Nantucket Preacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Nantucket Preacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Teacher on Gosnold, the Elizabeth Islands, around 1698.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jannohquosso</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>On Gosnold, the Elizabeth Islands, around 1700.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampson Natusoo</td>
<td>18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>On Gosnold, the Elizabeth Islands, around 1711.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed Indian Teacher</td>
<td>17th/18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>On Sandford's Island.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Moor's/Brothertown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samson Occom</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Best known native preacher, a Mohegan who undertook itinerant trips to London, Oneida, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Johnson</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Mohegan preacher who preached to the Oneidas, left Wheelock, and began Brothertown movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Fowler</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Montauk who taught (in 1765) among the Oneida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Fowler</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained at the Wheelock School. Was supposed to go with McClure out into the frontier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Woolley</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained at the Wheelock School. Delaware Indian who taught at Onaquaga in 1765.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Woolley</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Was the first Delaware (with Pumppshire) to come to Moor's. Princeton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hezekiah Calvin</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Delaware. Came with Joseph Wooley in spring of 1757.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham primus</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Mohawk. Too young to teach but used anyways. 127 students with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham secundus</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Mohawk. Too young to teach but used anyways. 127 students with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Pumppshire</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Sent to E.W. when he was 14 in December of 1754. Sent with Jacob Wooley, Delaware.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Mohawk. Too young to teach but used anyways. 127 students with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Johannes</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Mohawk. Too young to teach but used anyways. 127 students with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Brant</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained at the Wheelock School. Smith's interpreter, fought during 7YW; preaching after war?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Ashpo</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan/Baptist</td>
<td>1718-1795. Trained with E.W. Taught Indian schools in NY and later became a Baptist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Reed</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Oneida. Served as a schoolmaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah Uncas</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Trained by E.W. Mohegan Chief's son. Ill at the school - supported by London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Mohawk brought by DF to E.W in 1761.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negyes</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Mohawk brought by DF to E.W in 1761.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Mohawk brought by DF to E.W in 1761.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Matthews</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Trained by E.W at Dartmouth. Narragansett. Sent out to help SK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham Symons</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Trained by E.W at Dartmouth. Cousin to John Mathews. Was intending to go to Oneida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>Religion/Title</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobias Shattock</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Narragansett, trained by EW, went to England to protest King Tom's land policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Shattock, Jr.</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian?</td>
<td>Narragansett, trained by EW, went to England to protest King Tom's land policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPG Missionaries</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Macquillan Musoom</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Brought from Mozambique to England, learned at Bray's parish, then returned to vanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Chaung Musoom</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Brought from Mozambique to England, learned at Bray's parish, then committed suicide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George</td>
<td>17-teens</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Yamasee Prince trained as evangelist before the Yamasee War. Met King George I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miranda</td>
<td>1740s</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Worked for Azariah Horton on Long Island, then preached to the Delawares and Susquehannocks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed Teacher</td>
<td>1760s</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Kept a school for a missionary named Carter on Harbor Island (Bahamas); had 40 scholars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hendrick Tejonohokara</td>
<td>Early 18th C.</td>
<td>D.R./Anglican</td>
<td>Assisted William Andrews at Fort Hunter beginning in 1712. One of the &quot;Four American Kings.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornelius</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Mohawk. Don't confuse with Cornelius Bennet. Quit in 1746 because of unspent funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Mohawk. Quit in 1746 because of unspent funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Former Slave. Head of Charleston &quot;Negro School.&quot; School distanced when he died in 1764.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Former Slave. Head of Charleston &quot;Negro School.&quot; Eventually shipped to Codrington Plantation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bray Associates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>1760's</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Employed by Boucher in VA for the Bray Associates. Teacher on a plantation there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>India (the SPCK)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Early/Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>German Lutheran</td>
<td>Part of an English/Danish/German enterprise to spread the Gospel in India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego</td>
<td>Early/Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>German Lutheran</td>
<td>Part of an English/Danish/German enterprise to spread the Gospel in India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sattianadan</td>
<td>Early/Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>German Lutheran</td>
<td>Part of an English/Danish/German enterprise to spread the Gospel in India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajanaikan</td>
<td>Early/Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>German Lutheran</td>
<td>Part of an English/Danish/German enterprise to spread the Gospel in India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tondaman Mudy</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>German Lutheran</td>
<td>Former Pandaram who converted and taught in George H. 's Indian School. A former Hindu Priest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Catechist</td>
<td>Early/Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>German Lutheran</td>
<td>According to the Christian Monthly History, EVERY catechist is an Indian!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York/Pennsylvania</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Peter</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Worked with Hawley at Onaquaga. EW. Young when started. Became SK's main guy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Taulkyaanuserau</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Puritan</td>
<td>Worked with Hawley at Onaquaga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon Thomas</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Oneida Deacon and spiritual leader upon whom Samuel Kirkland relied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuscarora Catechist</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Preached when SK was not there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirom</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Indian catechist, younger than peter, Thomas, and Isaac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ansheggwanseri</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Oneida, used by SK in 1771 or so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thahnemtory</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Ran a school for SK. Taught the Psalms. Was also an Oneida Chief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doniat</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Ran a school for SK. Taught the Psalms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Calvin</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Delaware Interpreter, father of Hezekiah and Bart, schoolmaster at NJ Brotherton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartholomew Scott Calvin</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Delaware preacher, Princeton ('76), son of Stephen and brother to Hezekiah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papunhank</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Quaker/Moravian?</td>
<td>Munsee Indian Preacher who established a Christian community in 1752.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Jonathan</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Canajoharie. Took over when Paulus Sahontawi went away. 1764 chose him over Jacob Oel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses Tinda Hautamy</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Worked for David Brainerd as interpreter in the mid 1740's. Born around 1695.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Was training in John Brainerd's school for the ministry at the expense of the SSPCK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Tatami</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Probably the son or relation of Moses Tautamy. Aaron Burr drew money to educate him at CNJ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Wauwaumpequannunt</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Former Student of Sergeant's at Stockbridge, David Brainerd's interpreter/teacher at Kaunaameek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miranda</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>A man who worked with Horton on Long Island but died shortly after being appointed in 1741.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### West Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Capitein</td>
<td>Early/Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Dutch Reformed</td>
<td>From West Africa, educated in Netherlands, and then sent to Elmina Castle in 1742.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Quaque</td>
<td>1750's-1810</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Anglican African who was sent back to Cape Coast Castle, wrote over 40 letters over 50 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Cobors</td>
<td>1750s</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Traveled with Quaque to England for ministerial training in the 1750s; died of consumption in 1758.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cudjo</td>
<td>1750s</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Traveled with Quaque to England for ministerial training in the 1750s but went insane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Adoy</td>
<td>1750's-1810</td>
<td>Uncommitted</td>
<td>PQ tried to employ him as a preacher, but failed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Quamine (Quamino)</td>
<td>1772-1776</td>
<td>First Cong.</td>
<td>Sent to Princeton but Revolution intervened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>1770's</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>From Annamaboe and could have been employed, but wasn't.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmar Nubia</td>
<td>1790's</td>
<td>Second Cong.</td>
<td>SH wanted to revamp the missiona and send him with Bristol. He eventually does end up going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newport Gardner</td>
<td>1790's</td>
<td></td>
<td>SH wanted to revamp the missiona and send him with Bristol. He eventually does end up going.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Moravians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Proten</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Married to Rebecca Proten. From Accra, educated in Denmark/Saxony, returned to Gold Coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Proten</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Married to JP, began in the Danish West Indies (St. Thomas), went to Herrnhut, then Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Pedersen Svane</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Lived from 1710-1789, educated at University of Copenhagen and preached on the Gold Coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>Early/Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>From &quot;Copy of Three Letters&quot; - Was going to found a school in Genoa, Italy, and neighboring parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jans Baving</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Deacon. Danish Atlantic - sent to petition Danish King on behalf of St. Thomas slaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andries</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Deacon. Danish Atlantic - sent to petition Danish King on behalf of St. Thomas slaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Brother to Andries. Moravian &quot;helper.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrus</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Thomas. Moravian helper, brother to Christoph. Actually expelled (behavior) in May of 1762.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christoph</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Thomas. Moravian helper, brother to Petrus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Thomas, teacher, had more fire than Petrus, but under him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mingo/David</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Croix. Oldendorp says he was as &quot;good as free.&quot; Kept meetings when white Moravians absent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornelius</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Thomas. Son of Benigna and a young but talented preacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabca</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Croix. Wife of David and also a worker among women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanus</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Thomas/St. Croix. Installed as helper in February of 1745.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Denomination</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Maria</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Moravian helper. With Rebecca she led women's religious groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Thomas. Moravian helper, much older.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Thomas. Replaced Magdalena but then left for PA to get married.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>St. Thomas. Replaced Maria when Maria left for PA to get married.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every baptized convert</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Martin believed every baptized convert would have to be a preacher at some point or another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicodemus</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>In PA - Elder of an Indian Church who wrote confessional texts. See Moravian archives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every national helper</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>Almost every national helper among the Moravians black or Indian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>A Mohican operating at Shekomeko, New York in the 1730s and 40s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes</td>
<td>Mid 18th C.</td>
<td>Moravian</td>
<td>A Mohican operating at Shekomeko, New York in the 1730s and 40s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Revolutionary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston King</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone. Was a convert of Daddy Moses, but got his own congregation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Daddy&quot; Moses Wilkinson</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>See &quot;Epic Journeys of Freedom.&quot; Blind by 1779. NY, NS, SL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Hoosier</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Took part in 1784 Christmas Conference (with Richard Allen) in Baltimore. AKA &quot;Black Harry.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Jea</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Famous Accounts of Conversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Marrant</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Preacher to Africans/Cherokee (Account)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustavus Vassa/Equiano</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Uncommitted</td>
<td>Flirted with Missionary activity before major success as author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David George</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>Converted by George Liele, established churches throughout NS, missionary in Sierra Leone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Liele</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>Converted many in South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Jordan</td>
<td>After Rev.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Runaway slave who preached at Birchtown, then moved to Sierra Leone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Chavis</td>
<td>Late 18th/19thc.</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Educated by JW at Princeton, went back to North Carolina to preach and teach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absalom Jones</td>
<td>Late 18th/19thc.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Worked with Richard Allen to found Philadelphia churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Coker</td>
<td>Late 18th/19thc.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Worked with Allen and Jones, but also spearheaded a missionary trip to West Africa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** At least 280 indigenous missionaries, but probably many more unnamed ones.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT PRIMARY SOURCES:

Benjamin Colman Letters, 1728-1745, Massachusetts Historical Society. Boston, MA.

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