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Scottish Missions and Religious Enlightenment in Colonial America:
the SSPCK in Transatlantic Context

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For my parents

Candidate's Declaration of Own Work

This thesis has been composed by the candidate alone, and the work belongs fully to the candidate. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Rusty Roberson

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Abstract

In recent years, the relationship between religion and Enlightenment, traditionally cast in opposition to one another, has received increasing reconsideration. Scholars now recognise that even orthodox religion played a central role within the Enlightenment project. This development has marked a paradigm shift in Atlantic world and Enlightenment historiography. However, while the relationship between religion and Enlightenment has been greatly clarified, there remain major gaps in our understanding of the nature and parameters of this relationship.

This thesis contributes to the understanding of religion's function within Enlightenment thought and practice through a case study of the colonial missionary work of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK). Using primary sources such as institutional records, sermons, journals, diaries and letters, it examines evangelism within the framework of the Enlightenment. The study demonstrates first how both the founders of the SSPCK and the Society's most fervent advocates of missionary work in the colonies were simultaneously the foremost leaders of the British and American Enlightenment. It then traces the implications of this religious Enlightenment dynamic, illuminating not only the ambitions of the Society's leadership but also certain contours of intimate encounters between Native Americans, Native Christians and white missionaries. As the SSPCK's missionary endeavours demonstrate, the relationship between evangelism and Enlightenment not only changed all individuals and institutions involved. It also transformed the very landscape of British Protestant religion. This assessment points to the overarching conclusion that the Enlightenment shaped the very foundation of modern missions. In the process, however, British Atlantic Protestants of many different varieties wove the discourse of the Enlightenment into the tapestry of their understanding of evangelism as a primary means of identity formation, both personally and institutionally. Historiographically, this research forces a reexamination of the nuances of the religious Enlightenment. It also problematizes the static (albeit dominant) interpretation of evangelicalism by observing its emergence in light of the broader conditions of British Atlantic Protestantism.

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List of Abbreviations

- CMH, 1* -- James Robe, *The Christian Monthly History: or an Account of the Revival and Progress of Religion, Abroad, and at Home*, vol. 1 no. 1.
- CMH, 2* -- James Robe, *The Christian Monthly History, for the Month of May, 1745*, no. 2.
- CMH, 5* -- James Robe, *The Christian Monthly History: Or, An Account of the Revival and Progress of Religion, Abroad, and at Home*, no. 5, for March, April, & to August 1744.
- CMM, 4* -- SPCK Records: Minutes of Committee Meetings, vol. 4.
- CMM, 5* -- SPCK Records: Minutes of Committee Meetings, vol. 5.
- CMM, 6* -- SPCK Records: Minutes of Committee Meetings, vol. 6.
- CMM, 7* -- SPCK Records: Minutes of Committee Meetings, vol. 7.
- CMM, 8* -- SPCK Records: Minutes of Committee Meetings, vol. 8.
- CMM, 9* -- SPCK Records: Minutes of Committee Meetings, vol. 9.
- CMM, 10* -- SPCK Records: Minutes of Committee Meetings, vol. 10.
- DBJ* -- David Brainerd's Journal (1745-46).
- GMM, 1* -- Register of the Actings and Proceedings of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, vol. 1.
- GMM, 2* -- Register of the Actings and Proceedings of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, vol. 2.
- GMM, 3* -- Register of the Actings and Proceedings of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, vol. 3.
- GMM, 4* -- Register of the Actings and Proceedings of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, vol. 4.
- Ledger* -- S.P.C.K. Records: General Ledger (1709-1779).
- LJB* -- Thomas Brainerd, *The Life of John Brainerd, the brother of David Brainerd, and his successor as Missionary to the Indians of New Jersey*.

ODNB -- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online.

PCUSA -- *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*.

SRM -- Register of the Resolutions and Proceedings of a Society for Reformation of Manners, &c.

Introduction

Evangelism and Enlightenment

The Enlightenment, according to Jonathan Israel, ‘was the most important and profound intellectual, social, and cultural transformation of the Western world since the Middle Ages and the most formative in shaping modernity’. Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century and developing transatlantically, the Enlightenment consisted of ‘processes concerned with the central place of reason and of experience and experiment in understanding and improving human society’. Like previous ‘processes’ in the West such as the Renaissance and the Reformation, the Enlightenment began with ‘intellectual and doctrinal changes’ but ultimately ‘impacted on—and responded to—social, cultural, economic, and political context so profoundly that they changed everything’.¹

In accepting this all-encompassing narrative of Enlightenment as prescribed by Israel, this thesis explores the effects of the Enlightenment upon the understanding of missions and evangelism within non-Anglican British Protestantism. As has been identified in recent years, religion shaped the British Atlantic as much if not more than anything else during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Furthermore, British Protestant religion provided the means of common discourse between Scotland, England and the colonies. Therefore, when referring to the ‘British Enlightenment’, this thesis does not wish to ignore the real and potent distinctions between various national and regional manifestations of the Enlightenment. Rather, the term is meant to point to certain common themes that bound different countries, regions and colonies in the British Atlantic world to one another: religion was a core foundation of this interdependency and collaboration.²

For example, one theme of the British Enlightenment that made it both British and part of the Enlightenment was its emphasis upon moral virtue. As Gertrude Himmelfarb has argued recently, ‘it was virtue, rather than reason, that took

¹ Jonathan I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-*

² Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

precedence for the British, not personal virtue but the “social virtues”—compassion, benevolence, sympathy—which, the British philosophers believed, naturally, instinctively, habitually bound people to each other’.³ Throughout the British Atlantic, enlighteners saw some form of religion as the vehicle for transforming the ‘social ethic’ that spurred their ideas of reform.⁴ This perspective extends James Bradley’s argument that a ‘common heritage’ existed between dissenters and that they ‘often worked harmoniously together on various political and social reforms, regardless of their theological differences’.⁵ This thesis demonstrates how a broad swath of British Protestants invoked this common heritage as a means of promoting a particular social ethic through evangelism, and how they saw evangelism and enlightened social projects as complementary to one another.

While there were many tenets to this Protestant discourse that informed the British and religious Enlightenment (explained in detail below), this thesis explores both the role and implications of evangelism in the British Atlantic world. Although evangelizing efforts were found within all forms of Christianity, by the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a particular evangelical discourse emerged that produced what W.R. Ward called a ‘self-conscious Europeanism’ that stretched from the American colonies throughout the British Isles and Western Europe and into the evangelical communities of Halle.⁶ Ward argued that this new movement was defined by the ‘pan-Protestant phenomenon’ of revivalism.⁷ This was certainly true in the sense that everyone had to come to terms with their own views of ‘true religion’ in relation to the revivals particularly in the late 1730s and early 1740s. But as Susan O’Brien recognized, the Great Awakening was part of a ‘continuum of Protestant evangelical development, with its starting point in the seventeenth

³ Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: the British, French, and American Enlightenments* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 5-6.

⁴ Himmelfarb, *Roads to Modernity*, 6. Himmelfarb used the term ‘social ethic’ to argue that Enlightenment studies must recapture this element of the Enlightenment, which was so central to Britain during the eighteenth century.

⁵ James E. Bradley, ‘The Religious Origins of Radical Politics in England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1662-1800’ in *Religion and Politics in Enlightenment Europe* by James E. Bradley and Dale K. Van Kley, eds. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 192.

⁶ W.R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 93.

⁷ W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 13.

century’.⁸ Indeed, it is foundational to recognize, as Brian Stanley and others have in recent years, that the birth of evangelicalism is inextricably linked *not* to revivalism but rather to the establishment of modern missions.⁹ Equally important, however, was that all who participated in the early stages of modern missions were by no means evangelicals.

Of course, revivalism, and particularly the Great Awakening and the Great Revival, catalyzed evangelicalism like nothing else had before. But one must take into consideration what Erik Seeman called, ‘an important and often overlooked aspect of eighteenth-century religious culture’: that is, ‘the continuity of revivalism’.¹⁰ While revivals were the fuel of evangelicalism in the eighteenth century, it was evangelism that provided its operational framework. Indeed, many evangelicals would come to reject the Great Awakening and the Great Revival, and there was never unanimity over these events. But evangelism was a topic to which everyone could converge, even those well outside the realm of evangelicalism. For example, within the British Atlantic world, a wide array of non-Anglican Protestants participated in evangelistic and missionary efforts, many of which rejected sharply any impulse towards revivalism. These were reformers engaged in the early Enlightenment who were looking to improve society through the establishment of ‘true religion’ *and* the implementation of the new learning. For them, the support of missions was a productive way to achieve these ends.¹¹ These dual threads of the Enlightenment and Evangelicalism are at the heart of early modern British Protestant missions.

In order to shed light on the dynamic and contested relationship between evangelism and Enlightenment, this thesis provides a case study of Scotland’s first

⁸ Susan O’Brien, ‘A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755’, *The American Historical Review* 91 no. 4 (Oct. 1986), 815.

⁹ Brian Stanley, ‘Christian Missions and the Enlightenment: A Reevaluation’, in *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, ed. Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 2. Regarding the effects of revivalism on Evangelicalism, see William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 70; McLoughlin, ‘Timepieces and Butterflies: A Note on the Great-Awakening-Construct and Its Critics’, *Sociological Analysis* 44 no. 2 (Summer/1983), 108.

¹⁰ Erik R. Seeman, *Pious Persuasions: Laity and Clergy in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 1999.

¹¹ Stanley, ‘Christian Missions and the Enlightenment’, 3-4. Stanley argued that ‘emphases derived from the Enlightenment provided the defining or paradigmatic features of the Protestant missionary movement from its origins in the eighteenth century...’.

and only missionary society in the eighteenth century: the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK). Along with giving a chapter layout of the thesis, this introduction provides a historiographical backdrop for the SSPCK as well as for the study of the relationship between religion and the Enlightenment in hopes of establishing a proper framework for researching Scotland's first missionary endeavours. In looking at the relationship between evangelism and Enlightenment, this thesis not only probes that liminal space between enlightened and enthusiastic religion. It also traces the implications of this religious and social dynamic upon communities and individuals on the ground. This latter narrative is an integral dimension to the study of missions in the Atlantic world. It reveals the way missionaries and local communities received, absorbed, neglected and in turn shaped the message of Protestant evangelism during the eighteenth-century. With these preliminary definitions and clarifications in place, it is now possible to explore the particular topic of the thesis.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, a pervasive impulse towards personal and social improvement existed throughout much of Scotland and England. While many strands comprised this trend, one particularly important thread was the call for moral and civil reformation. The SSPCK was one of several clubs and societies that were founded in response to this particular call for improvement. First and foremost, the SSPCK was founded in order to civilise the perceived barbarism that existed on the Scottish periphery in the Highlands and Islands. Initially the Society established charity schools that emphasized improvement through both literacy and the core tenets of reformed Scottish Presbyterianism. But the Society soon expanded its mission to include Bible translation into Gaelic, financial support to hospitals and schools for trade and industry. The Scottish SPCK collaborated with England as well as Protestant countries throughout Europe in an effort to spread what it considered true religion as a means of spiritual salvation, social renewal and imperial stability. By the SSPCK's own standards, these Scottish ventures proved to be its most successful feats both in longevity and effectiveness.

But another important thread existed within the SSPCK during much of the eighteenth century that contributed to the Society's identity. This was the Scottish

Society's role as a missionary society to colonial America with plans to extend farther north into the Canadian territory and the continents of Africa and India. By 1730, the SSPCK had taken on a dual role both as educators in Scotland and as a missionary Society in America. Though often dismissed, its influence in America was substantial. To be sure, one should not overlook the SSPCK's identity as a promoter of education in the colonies. For example, it contributed to charity schools, provided bequests for Native Americans to receive a 'white' education at institutions such as Harvard and the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), and assisted financially with the founding of both Dartmouth College and the College of New Jersey. It also supplied books and supplies to each of these three colleges and worked intimately with their leaders and boards of directors. Alongside its colonial identity as an institution to advance education, however, the character of the Society altered distinctly once it took on the role of missionary Society in the colonies, assuming an evangelical flavour on both sides of the Atlantic.

The evolving identity of the SSPCK during the eighteenth century reflected not only the shifting terrain of British Protestantism but also certain commonly ignored historical threads of the Society's founding. Indeed, the SSPCK was born out of the early British Enlightenment's consciousness that emphasized moral and civil improvement. But the Society's roots stemmed simultaneously from Scottish praying societies: from this movement of piety came the societies for the reformation of manners who in turn founded the SSPCK. From the Society's genesis, then, a dual emphasis on Enlightenment reform and spiritual improvement was articulated.

While not ignoring the crucial educational dimension, this thesis examines the SSPCK's identity as a missionary society in colonial America. To do this requires a thorough analysis of the specific American communities and missionaries who interacted with the Scottish Society as well as the leaders who formed the SSPCK's colonial policies. But it also demands an understanding of the threads of continuity within the SSPCK that enabled it to function as a missionary society in the colonies with ambitions towards expanding throughout the world. By presenting a truly transatlantic picture, this thesis hopes to cast light on the SSPCK as an institution wrought out of an Enlightenment social milieu that was functioning in relation to the emerging constructs of Evangelicalism. Therefore, by revising the

story of the SSPCK, this thesis explains how components of Evangelicalism functioned in relation to, and sometimes within, the Enlightenment of the British Atlantic world. But this is only part of the story. This thesis also looks at the implications of these dynamics between evangelism and Enlightenment upon the local communities and institutions that were affected most significantly by the SSPCK's colonial operations. By exploring these themes, this thesis contributes to the historiographies of the SSPCK, evangelicalism, evangelism and missions and several overlapping narratives of the Enlightenment.

The SSPCK: a Historiography

The SSPCK received little scholarly attention until 1938. It was then that M.C. Jones wrote a book on the charity school movement in the British Isles and recognised the SSPCK as an important contributor to this movement. Jones emphasised the Scottish Society's collaboration with the British government and the English more generally in an effort 'to introduce Southern "civilitie" to a barbarous people' and secure the Protestant Hanoverian line. In a theme that few if any scholars have acknowledged since, Jones argued that the SSPCK had seeds rooted in English Puritanism: 'the twin devils of sloth and superstition were in themselves sufficient to spur to action men whose minds were formed in the puritan mould'.¹² Jones's research on the SSPCK was important, but the author's scope precluded a thorough examination of the Society or any aspect of its colonial project.

It was the *Scottish Church History Society* which resurrected the SSPCK from the dustbin of history. By 1972, Henry Sefton wrote an article on the SSPCK's work in the colonies that provided a departure point for the study of the SSPCK on its own terms. Like Jones, Sefton noticed that there were important comparisons and contrasts to be made between Native Americans and Highlanders. His conclusion that 'evangelisation and education, however, were really inseparable in the view of the Society' was a keen observation.¹³ Nonetheless, as will be shown in this thesis,

¹² M.C. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: a Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938; London: Thomas Nelson, 1964), 172.

¹³ Henry R. Sefton, 'The Scotch Society in the American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 17 (1972), 182; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 171.

the Society's strategies of education were transformed by the very evangelism it saw as inseparable from their educational objectives.

While Sefton's research served as an introduction to the colonial story of the SSPCK, it was Donald Meek who first suggested that 'there is reason to believe that its [SSPCK's] influence was much greater than has been realised hitherto'. Meek noted that the SSPCK's annual reports and sermons attracted a very wide audience. He also argued that the Scottish Society stood central to the 'pre-history' of modern missions and 'helped to stimulate' the 'new wave of missionary activity' during the late eighteenth century. The author highlighted the existence of a 'North Atlantic circuit', which related to the interface between Highlanders and Native Americans. But besides immigration patterns, the term North Atlantic circuit could apply to the intellectual and institutional transmission of ideas, as well. In short, Meek spotted important developments both outside and within the world of missions that made an impact upon and simultaneously was impacted by the SSPCK.¹⁴ His précis of the Scottish Society was a trailblazing report that suggested perhaps this modest Society in Scotland was much more significant than previously suspected both to the story of the British Atlantic world and to the entire span of modern global missions.

Though still a summary, the SSPCK's North American context received its most thorough treatment in the 1990s by Frederick Mills, Sr. Mills stated that three missionary societies in North America each 'played significant roles in Christianizing and civilizing the inhabitants of British North America'. These Societies were the 'Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England (the NEC, founded 1649), the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG, founded 1701), and the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK, founded 1709)'. Of these three major Societies, Mills contended that the SPG and the NEC had received a wealth of scholarly attention while the SSPCK 'has been virtually ignored'. His major contribution was in recognizing 'a cooperative or ecumenical quality about the SSPCK that characterized its relations with the NEC and SPG'. Mills perceived some larger religious and historical trends when avowing that 'the success of the SSPCK, however, was due in great part to its acceptance and implementation of the revised church-state

¹⁴ Donald E. Meek, 'Scottish Highlanders, North American Indians and the SSPCK: Some Cultural Perspectives', *Scottish Church History Society Records* (1989), 387-389, 393, 395-396.

relationship created by the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89'. The author was able to pinpoint the SSPCK as a reformed Protestant missionary society, which was working within the confines of a 'revised ecclesiastical policy'.¹⁵

While this point of consensus was insightful, Mills neglected the very significant differences and clashes that transpired between the SSPCK and other religious institutions and Societies. This stark imbalance has been corrected in recent years but not directly in relation to the SSPCK. For example, Ned Landsman argued in 2011 that fierce division persisted between ecclesiastical bodies after the Act of Union, and that the establishment of two state churches created sharp tension and 'asymmetry' within the Empire: this was the strain due to the 'divergent relationships of the two national churches to the new British state', and it had substantial implications on missionary work in the colonies. This thesis develops more fully the asymmetry to which Landsman referred. Contrary to previous suppositions, the thesis exposes the reality of sharp conflict both within the SSPCK and between the Scottish Society and its British rivals.¹⁶

While a few works dealt with the SSPCK in passing or in relation to anti-Catholicism in the Highlands and Islands¹⁷, the monograph that placed the SSPCK on the historiographical map was Margaret Szasz's *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans: Indigenous Education in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (2007). Szasz provided an institutional biography of the SSPCK that nicely wove together the major narratives of its story. Less successful was her ethnographical exploration of Highlanders and Native Americans that oversimplified these rich and varied cultures in an attempt to highlight the very real and important similarities. But Szasz told the story of the SSPCK in a way that was compelling and informative. As a historian of education, Szasz had conducted important research on Native American and colonial

¹⁵ Frederick V. Mills, Sr. 'The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in British North America, 1730-1775', *Church History* 63 no. 1 (Mar. 1994), 15-17.

¹⁶ Ned Landsman, 'The Episcopate, the British Union, and the Failure of Religious Settlement in Colonial British America' in *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America*, eds. Chris Beneke and Christopher Grenda (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 81, 83-85.

¹⁷ Colin Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal Peoples and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Clotilde Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 2004).

education before her book about the SSPCK.¹⁸ Naturally, then, she was most interested in the way the SSPCK used education as a way of cultural mediation both in the colonies and in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. She concluded that these ‘cultural encounters in the field of education forged a crucial thread of the eighteenth-century colonial frontiers that lay within Scotland itself as well as in the British colonies’.¹⁹ Szasz’s monograph was significant for introducing the details of the Scottish Society to a wider audience. However, while her research captured the importance of the SSPCK to larger themes of British Atlantic education, it neglected the Society’s prominent role as a missionary Society and overlooked the major religious and Enlightenment leaders who participated vigorously in the SSPCK’s operations. This thread of the Society’s story remains untold even though it was central to the Society’s identity and effected other religious communities, as well.

Since Meek’s seminal essay, only one brief article by John Grigg has broached the SSPCK’s identity as a missionary Society. Within this framework, Grigg anticipated some of the most important threads that demand a transatlantic methodology. Regarding missionary work in the British Atlantic world during the eighteenth century, Grigg argued that ‘historians frequently present a bifurcated process’ whereby ‘British-based mission boards and agencies provided funding and broad parameters, while colonial agents, ministers, and officials dictated the ways in which the missionaries themselves operated’. While Grigg agreed that, for the most part, a ‘disconnect’ certainly existed between the homeland and the colonies, he argued that ‘an exception to this practice can be found in the early attempts of the [SSPCK] to establish a mission presence in New England’.²⁰ Grigg’s article, though brief, presented the SSPCK as a missionary Society and emphasised the importance of using a transatlantic perspective as a way of understanding the Society’s colonial project. Grigg also mentioned several members of the SSPCK who were simultaneously pre-eminent figures in Protestant evangelicalism.

¹⁸ Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

¹⁹ Margaret Connell Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans: Indigenous Education in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 5.

²⁰ John A. Grigg, “‘How This Shall Be Brought About’: The Development of the SSPCK’s American Policy”, *Itinerario* 32 no. 3 (2008), 43.

Laura Stevens recently wrote an insightful article on the SSPCK that took its transatlantic identity into consideration. Stevens made new strides on confirming the SSPCK's affiliations with Empire. Though Szasz had investigated this theme quite thoroughly, Stevens brought into focus the SSPCK as representative by the late 1760s of 'Scotland's transformation from a land whose outer reaches required civilization to a full-fledged part of a burgeoning empire that spread Christianity abroad'. Furthermore, Stevens recognized that 'part of this participation in the imperial project involved Christian missions'.²¹ This recognition of Scottish imperialism and the SSPCK as a part of it is an important contribution. Nonetheless, it should be understood as working in tension with what Alexander Du Toit called as 'an anti-imperial bias' of Scots such as William Robertson who were working within 'a line in Scottish thought going back at least to the Renaissance, rooted in Scottish historical experience'.²² Furthermore, Stevens somewhat ignores Meek's North Atlantic circuit of non-Anglican British Protestants due to her imbalance and emphasis upon Empire.

Collectively, the historiography of the SSPCK offers a mosaic of a Society which strove to 'civilise' what its members perceived as inferior cultures using the tools of education and reformed theology. This thesis attempts to contribute to this historiography by filling in several important gaps in the scholarship. First, it maps out the SSPCK's rich heritage within the British Enlightenment. Second, this thesis develops more fully the evangelical function of the Society, which includes its involvement in revivalism and evangelistic propaganda and rhetoric. However, this evangelical component will be balanced by the equally forceful voices of moderatism found within the Society's leadership. These Church of Scotland liberals resisted fiercely the revivals even as they supported the Society's missionary endeavours in the American colonies. Such internal dynamics have never received attention, and will cast important light on the policies and ambitions of the Scottish Society's colonial expedition: a theme that problematises the common characterisation of a

²¹ Laura M. Stevens, 'The Souls of Highlanders, the Salvation of Indians: Scottish Mission and Eighteenth-Century British Empire', in *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, eds. Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 180-181.

²² Alexander Du Toit, 'Who are the Barbarians? Scottish Views of Conquest and Indians, and Robertson's *History of America*', *Scottish Literary Journal* 26 no. 1 (May/1999), 29.

firmly demarcated line between liberals and evangelicals. The reality was much more complex. Third, the transatlantic methodology of this thesis allows for a thorough investigation of individuals, communities, and networks within the SSPCK and the deeply significant implications of these relationships on both institutional policies and a host of personal and community relations. For example, exposing certain institutional dynamics in Edinburgh, London and urban centres of the colonies will impart a fresh perspective upon crucial turning points in American religious history such as the clearer articulation of Native Christianity and the heightened tension within evangelicalism expressed in missionary work after the Great Awakening.

Religion and the Scottish Enlightenment: a Historiography

To grasp the study of religion in relation to the Enlightenment in Scotland, one must first look historiographically to England. Historians have assumed traditionally that religion and Enlightenment were polar opposites. Peter Gay and Ernst Cassirer stand as representative of those scholars adhering to the traditional interpretation of finding very little in common between Enlightenment and religion. However, perhaps more than any other scholars, J.G.A Pocock and Roy Porter dismantled the once assumed meta-narrative of the Enlightenment as definitively secular and anti-clerical.²³ John Robertson recently placed Pocock at the helm of the new Enlightenment studies with his 1985 essay.²⁴ But one of the major breakthroughs came when Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich offered a sharp critique to the traditional historiography with their edited volume looking at thirteen varied national contexts in which the Enlightenment existed and flourished.²⁵ By the turn of the century, Porter had

²³ The historiography is enormous and could itself be a book. The representative works by Gay and Cassirer are: Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 Vols. (New York: Norton Press, 1966); Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* translated by Fritz C.A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove with a new foreword by Peter Gay (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009; first edition by Princeton University Press, 1951). For an exemplary example of the interpretation of Enlightenment and religion in the early twentieth century, see John Grier Hibben, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1910), 6.

²⁴ J.G.A. Pocock, 'Clergy and commerce: the conservative Enlightenment in England', in *L'eta dei lumi. Studi storici sul Settecento europeo in onore di Franco Venturi*, Raffaele Ajello, et. al., eds., 2 vols (Naples, 1985), 523-562. For more on this, see John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3-4.

²⁵ Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

articulated cogently a case for the reality of an English Enlightenment. A central motif of this work, however, was that ‘there never was a monolithic “Enlightenment project” even as enlightened people shared common traits such as tolerance and promoted ‘broad-minded’ dialogue and ‘pluralism’.²⁶ In some ways, this echoed Michel Foucault’s inquiry into the Enlightenment and modernity: ‘rather than seeking to distinguish the “modern era” from the “premodern” or “postmodern”’, Foucault suggested, ‘I think it would be more useful to try to find out how the attitude of modernity, ever since its formation, has found itself struggling with attitudes of “countermodernity”’.²⁷ This approach to Enlightenment as a disposition or attitude was a valuable contribution, and one that Jose Torre built upon recently when arguing that the Enlightenment must cease to be seen ‘as a progressive or linear development’ that moved towards certain events that then led to modernity.²⁸

Like Porter, J.G.A. Pocock focused on England during the eighteenth century as a way to disassemble the standard meta-narrative of the Enlightenment: England, according to Pocock, experienced a conservative Enlightenment, which extended to Scotland and northern Germany. In making this claim, Pocock sought to rebuff the ‘English exceptionalism imposed by a rigid application of the *philosophe* paradigm’. Like Porter, Pocock argued for multiple Enlightenments, and particularly pointed to a broader ‘Protestant Enlightenment’ as foundational to, for example, ‘the understanding of Gibbon in both his English and his Lausannais experience’.²⁹ The implication of this research, as Knud Haakonssen lucidly articulated, was an emergence of the idea that ‘conservation and modernization were thus one and the same thing, namely the Enlightenment’, because at the heart of the Enlightenment was the impulse to ‘preserve civilized society against any resurgence of religious enthusiasm and superstition’. The French Revolution, in this schema, was not the culminating moment of Enlightenment thought; rather, it was a ‘revolt *against*

²⁶ Roy Porter, *The Creation of the Modern World: the Untold Story of the British Enlightenment* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000), xxi; British edition printed as *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2000).

²⁷ Michel Foucault, ‘What is Enlightenment’ in *The Enlightenment: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, vol. 1 by Ryan Patrick Hanley and Darrin M. McMahon, eds. (London & New York: Routledge, 2010), 93.

²⁸ Jose Torre, ‘General Introduction’, *The Enlightenment in America, 1720-1825* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), xvii.

²⁹ J.G.A Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Volume One: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8-10.

Enlightenment values’ and ‘a relapse into the barbarism of religious enthusiasm’ [his italics].³⁰ Within the religious Enlightenment context, the Great Awakening would fit Haakonssen’s Burkean framework.

In the same year as Pocock’s seminal essay in 1985, Richard Sher was tapping into the fertile soil of the Scottish Enlightenment as a way of undermining the one-dimensional Gay-Cassirer thesis. Sher argued against Hugh Trevor-Roper’s depiction of the Scottish Enlightenment as a strictly philosophical phenomenon. Although Trevor-Roper contributed to scholars’ understanding of the very significant developments in philosophy and the social sciences in Scotland, his scope was ultimately too narrow. ‘If [scholars working within Trevor-Roper’s paradigm] help to provide a somewhat clearer idea of the chronology and composition of the Scottish Enlightenment’, Sher concluded, ‘they do so only at the expense of much that was undeniably vital in the culture of the eighteenth-century literati’.³¹ If one only searches for the ‘intellectual vitality’ of Scotland, Sher continued, then the very criteria of a ‘Scottish Enlightenment’ depends upon the constricted ‘realm of formal thought’. But such a narrow definition of the Scottish Enlightenment relegated the entire movement to ‘the study of formal texts: a Scottish Enlightenment that is narrowly intellectual rather than broadly “cultural” and narrowly textual rather than broadly contextual’. Sher’s subsequent question anticipated the next historiographical phase of Enlightenment studies: but what of the ‘full range of value, ideologies, ulterior motives, linguistic nuances, and *mentalités* that constitute the essence of what Quentin Skinner has called the “ultimate framework” within which a text must be read in order to discover the author’s meaning or meanings?’³²

Questioning the parameters of the Enlightenment in Scotland led naturally to a re-evaluation of definitions: who actually comprised the literati? While defining the Scottish Enlightenment as ‘the culture of the literati of the eighteenth-century Scotland’, Sher defined the term ‘literati’ in a way that gave texture to a new understanding of Enlightenment:

³⁰ Knud Haakonssen, Introduction, in *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Britain* by Haakonssen, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2-3.

³¹ Sher, Richard B. *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), 6.

³² Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 7.

‘Literati’ signifies men of arts and letters who adhered to a broad body of ‘enlightened’ values and principles held in common by European and American *philosophes*. These included a love of learning and virtue; a faith in reason and science; a dedication to humanism and humanitarianism; a style of civilized urbanity and polite cosmopolitanism; a preference for social order and stability; a respect for hard work and material improvement; an attraction to certain types of pleasures and amusements; a taste for classical serenity tempered by sentimentalism; a distrust of religious enthusiasm and superstition; an aversion to slavery, torture, and other forms of inhumanity; a commitment to religious tolerance and freedom of expression; and at least a modicum of optimism about the human prospect if people would take the trouble to abide by these principles and cultivate their gardens as best they can. By the term ‘literati,’ then, I mean not merely men of letters but men of the Enlightenment.³³

A few years later, Sher followed up on his ‘men of the Enlightenment’ definition by arguing that the terms of the Enlightenment would be understood and defined in a variety of ways that maintained the integrity of the concepts themselves but also differed amongst various enlighteners: ‘the fact that these words were interpreted rather differently by particular individuals and groups is an indication not of the poverty of the term “Enlightenment” but of the richness of the movement that term represents’. This interpretation in the Scottish context explained how the Enlightenment could be simultaneously ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘Scottish’.³⁴ Just a few years before Sher’s critique, Nicholas Phillipson was recasting the Scottish Enlightenment to reflect its specifically national components more accurately, arguing in 1981 that the Scottish Enlightenment was a response to the traumatic effects of the Act of Union in 1707 and resulted in a ‘unique contribution of the Scots to the philosophy of the Enlightenment’.³⁵ Going beyond philosophy, though, Phillipson’s analysis forced scholars to grapple with the way social and political realities shaped the formal thought and philosophy of the literati.

By this time, a flurry of research had begun that looked at the national contexts of the Enlightenment as a way of fully grasping both the unity and diversity of the Enlightenment project. But this trend also led to a fear amongst many Enlightenment scholars that the term itself would lose all meaning. Indeed, post-

³³ Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 8.

³⁴ Richard Sher, ‘Storm Over the Literati’, *Cenrastus* 28 (Winter 1987/88), 42-43.

³⁵ Nicholas Phillipson, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’ in *The Enlightenment: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, vol. 1 by Hanley and McMahon, eds., 202.

modern scholars extended Porter's contention that no Enlightenment *project* existed by claiming that no *Enlightenment* ever existed. Scholars such as John Robertson sought to expose what he considered the egregious pitfalls of such a conclusion. In doing so, he recognized both the benefits and hazards of Porter's conclusions. In specific reference to Scotland, Robertson suggested that 'if the new prominence accorded the Scottish Enlightenment has been one of the most obvious gains of approaching the Enlightenment context...there have also been losses'. Particularly troubling was the 'tendency to treat national Enlightenments such as the Scottish in isolation, losing sight of the extent to which the Scots' intellectual interests, their concepts, methods and subjects of inquiry, were common to contemporaries across Europe'.³⁶ Balancing the symmetry between the regional, national and trans-national expressions of Enlightenment has been an ongoing concern for scholars.

Robertson added recently to his previous analysis on the need for recognizing the existence of the Enlightenment. While promoting the practice of the new intellectual history practiced by Sher, Phillipson and other scholars of Scotland's Enlightenment, Robertson argued that 'if a case for the Enlightenment is to be made at all, it must begin with ideas'. Robertson continued that the 'intellectual coherence of the Enlightenment may still be found' and recognizable in the enlighteners' 'commitment to understanding, and hence to advancing, the causes and conditions of human betterment in this world'. But Robertson added a second criterion that made the Enlightenment project actual: 'the Enlightenment was committed to understanding' or, put another way, 'to analysis on the basis of good argument, leading to reasoned conclusions'. In Robertson's estimation, 'there was a core of original thinking to the Enlightenment: it was not simply a matter of common aspirations and values'. Yet 'within that core the understanding of human betterment was pursued across a number of interdependent lines of enquiry'.³⁷ This rationale was reinforced by Jonathan Israel in many of his works on the Enlightenment.³⁸

³⁶ John Robertson, 'The Enlightenment above National Context: Political Economy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland and Naples' in *The Historical Journal* 40 no. 3 (Sep., 1997), 670.

³⁷ John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25, 28-29.

³⁸ Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); *Enlightenment contested: philosophy, modernity, and the emancipation of man, 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Colin Kidd has offered recently a way of moving forward in the study of the Scottish Enlightenment. In reference to Robertson's *The Case for the Enlightenment* (2005), Kidd stated that it was 'not only a brilliant work of comparative cultural and intellectual history, but is also a devastatingly original—and compelling—account of the first stirrings of the Scottish Enlightenment'. Kidd did disagree sharply with Robertson on several issues including his definition of Enlightenment and his neglect of its English manifestation. Kidd also lauded the 'magnificent compendium' of Roy Porter's national context thesis articulated in *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (2000), but he critiqued how Porter 'demotes the Scottish Enlightenment to the status of a provincial variant of an English-dominated British Enlightenment'.³⁹

Acknowledging what he considered the pitfalls of these two views of the Scottish Enlightenment, along with his affirmation of the inadequacies of Hugh Trevor-Roper's thesis of Enlightenment as a slippery slope towards liberalism, Kidd offered fertile paths by which study of the Scottish Enlightenment should embark. Along with taking more seriously 'the central role of feudal law in the agenda of the Scottish Enlightenment', Kidd suggested that scholars 'assign a more central role to the theology of latitude which emerges in Scottish Restoration churchmanship as a harbinger of Enlightenment'. Thomas Ahnert has offered steps toward a better grasp of this 'theology of latitude' in this recent call for a more ambivalent and nuanced perspective of Francis Hutcheson's 'Christian Stoicism'.⁴⁰

But Kidd also argued provocatively that the 'English influences' on the Scottish Enlightenment were significant and should not be ignored: 'This question of an English Enlightenment—or indeed a British Enlightenment—is the other current issue that the historiography of the Scottish Enlightenment needs to confront, but has so far evaded'.⁴¹ This thesis speaks to two of the three suggestions made by Kidd. It gives an example of the significance of the English influence on early Enlightenment Scottish institutions by the turn of the eighteenth century. It also recognises the way

³⁹ Colin Kidd, 'On Heroes, Hero-Worship and Demonology in Scottish Historiography: A Reply to Dr. Ferguson', *The Scottish Historical Review* 86, 1 no. 221 (April, 2007), 111-112.

⁴⁰ Thomas Ahnert, 'Francis Hutcheson and the Heathen Moralists' *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 8 no. 1 (Spring 2010), 51-62. Ahnert argued that Hutcheson's view of classical antiquity's relationship to contemporary Christianity was much more qualified and reserved than previous scholarship has recognized.

⁴¹ Kidd, 'On Heroes, Hero-Worship and Demonology in Scottish Historiography', 111-112.

the Restoration generation in Scotland and England established important personal and institutional precedents. But the thesis also addresses the transatlantic nature of the Enlightenment in Scotland and America. It builds upon what Gideon Mailer called the ‘tense counterpoise between Scottish moral sense reasoning and Presbyterian evangelicalism, rather than to their singular and starkly binary contributions to colonial American ideology’.⁴²

Religion and the American Enlightenment: a Historiography

As early as 1939, Theodore Hornberger published a prescient article on the American Enlightenment that problematized the traditional historiographical binary between religion and Enlightenment. Hornberger submitted the results of having researched the approximately ninety works of the SSPCK leader and New England minister, Benjamin Colman. Hornberger concluded that, ‘on the evidence that has been presented, it seems safe to suggest that among the focal points of Colman’s thought were, despite his careful adherence to the Calvinist system, the great abstractions which meant so much to the Age of the Enlightenment: Nature, Reason, and Humanity’.⁴³ Colman was an orthodox Calvinist with evangelical tendencies whom Hornberger located squarely within the Enlightenment tradition. Nonetheless, his path-breaking research would not be extended in any meaningful way for over thirty years.

Ironically, it was Daniel Boorstin who helped to resuscitate the notion of an American Enlightenment and set the stage for the current historiographical dialogue. In Boorstin’s opinion, the American Enlightenment never existed: it was but an illusion constructed by scholars. Or, to put it in his own words, ‘the notion of an American Enlightenment may best be described as a set of highly sophisticated oversimplifications’.⁴⁴ Henry May, author of *The Enlightenment in America* (1976),

⁴² Gideon Mailer, ‘Nehemias (Scotus) Americanus: Enlightenment and Religion Between Scotland and America’ *The Historical Journal* 54 no. 1 (2011), 241.

⁴³ Theodore, Hornberger, ‘Benjamin Colman and the Enlightenment’, *The New England Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Jun., 1939), 239.

⁴⁴ Daniel J. Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe: Reflections on American Thought* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), 66. It should be noted that May referenced this citation, but that it only partially represents Boorstin’s sentiments about the American Enlightenment. Furthermore, Boorstin was not anticipating postmodernism with his critique. Rather, he was responding very specifically to the onslaught of the social sciences and what he believed was the attempt to ‘deprive[d] the historian of his traditional vocation as the high priest of uniqueness’. To Boorstin, the historian was a humanist

strongly disagreed. Six years before publishing his magisterial work, May released an article where he rebutted sharply the premises established by Boorstin:

To say that there is no American Enlightenment must mean one of the following things: that there is no periodization possible in the history of thought, that the European Enlightenment is itself a delusion, that American intellectual history is quite separate from European intellectual history, or that Americans are not interested in ideas. I cannot accept any of these statements. To say that the people differ about the definitions and dates of the Renaissance or the Romantic period – or the Enlightenment – does not mean that these terms cannot be used at all, rather that historians using them must define their terms more carefully.⁴⁵

In this article, not only was May forging a new path in the understanding of an American Enlightenment, a contribution of which reached its acme with *Enlightenment in America* (1976). Even further, his response to Boorstin, though an oversimplification and caricature of Boorstin's argument—foreshadowed the transatlantic underpinnings that are necessary for understanding the American Enlightenment itself: 'The American Enlightenment, like American Romanticism or for that matter American Christianity can be at once American, Anglo-American, and European; one does not have to make a general choice but to discriminate among different elements'.⁴⁶ Around the same time, Ernest Cassara was also emphasising the Enlightenment as a 'transatlantic intellectual movement' even though he continued within the common historiographical vein of portraying the persons of the Enlightenment as two-dimensional and homogenous in their understanding of God and religion in relation to reason, nature and tradition.⁴⁷

who could 'note the rich particularity of experience, to search for the piquant aroma of life...as well as of the universal significance of each human life'. Boorstin placed this in direct contrast to 'the abstract, antiseptic dullness of numbers, "cases", and prototypes'. On page 67, Boorstin argued with force and cogency that 'our greatest historians...have somehow added to our understanding of precisely what it meant to be alive in a particular time and place in the past. Today it is especially important that the historian preserve the ancient naïve assumption that in many ways the experience of different times and places, and of different men and women, are *not* commensurable with each other' (his italics). It is also vital to realize the importance of Boorstin's critique of the term 'American Enlightenment'. Like other abstract notions, Boorstin believed it took away from the definitively incoherent and unsystematic way of thought and life that characterized American culture. Even if one thinks the term American Enlightenment is useful and productive, one must come to grips with the fact that, on many levels, Boorstin's assessment was accurate and must be taken seriously. Also see Boorstin, *The Americans: the Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958), 393-394.

⁴⁵ Henry F. May, 'The Problem of the American Enlightenment' in *New Literary History* 1 no. 2, A Symposium on Periods (Winter, 1970), 203-204.

⁴⁶ May, 'The Problem of the American Enlightenment', 204.

⁴⁷ Ernest Cassara, *The Enlightenment in America* (Boston: Twayne, 1975), 16-18.

May's seminal work, *The Enlightenment in America*, recognized 'two clusters of ideas' that guided colonial America during the eighteenth century. The first cluster came from seventeenth and eighteenth century Protestantism, especially Calvinism, stemming from seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe. May believed these ideas were 'developed' and 'institutionalized' most fully in New England. Also migrating from seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe, the second cluster of ideas was associated with the European Enlightenment. May then made a groundbreaking contention that continues to define American Enlightenment studies: 'the relation between these two major idea systems is basic to the understanding of eighteenth-century America, and indeed, I would say, the understanding of America in any period'.⁴⁸

May's definitive work set the standard for American Enlightenment studies. He portended the complexity of the Enlightenment period when he asserted that equating the Enlightenment with 'democracy, modernity, or secularism' does more to 'obscure' the movement that illuminate its inner workings: the dynamics between religion and Enlightenment were extraordinarily complex. It is significant that May began his venerated study of the American Enlightenment with a look at religion. He acknowledged that politics was indeed very important to colonial Americans; 'yet I think we may be able to understand their political thought better if we start where they nearly always did, with religion'. He continued by emphasizing the necessity of seeing the Enlightenment as more than homogeneous and monolithic, and categorized the American Enlightenment into four major stages: moderate or rational; sceptical; Revolutionary; and Didactic. Alongside this taxonomy, May asserted that 'for all that, it remains true that at some times and places some kinds of Enlightenment spread fairly widely in America, often inextricably mixed with Christian ideas': furthermore, for many British people on both sides of the Atlantic, what they recognized as Protestant and Enlightenment were 'two faces of the same happy history, whose great milestone was the rational and Protestant Revolution of 1688'.⁴⁹ This corrected the impulse within American historiography towards a pattern articulated in 1933 by Gustav Adolf Koch. In the name of 'objective history', Koch presented a type of germ theory where deism spread throughout

⁴⁸ Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), xi-xii.

⁴⁹ May, *Enlightenment in America*, xiii-xviii, 3.

society and allowed for freedom of religion, reasonableness and tolerance. According to Koch, these were quintessentially ‘attributes of the deistic temper’ which he later called ‘the religion of the American Enlightenment’.⁵⁰ May was presenting a different reality.

In the same year as May’s monograph, he concluded with David Lundberg that ‘Americans were exposed to all the major currents of the eighteenth-century French and British Enlightenment except perhaps for the extremes of French materialism, though Helvetius was not unknown’. Furthermore, May and Lundberg recognized the dialogue between ‘enlightened radicalism’ and the ‘countervailing power of the Scottish Common Sense realists and of Christian apologists through that period’. In specific relation to the pre-Revolutionary American Enlightenment, the authors stated that the trends were ‘pretty similar to the English, except for the more prominent position accorded to works representing Commonwealth and Dissenting authors’. May and Lundberg based these conclusions on their report and development of a quantitative database describing how certain major European Enlightenment authors were received in America.⁵¹

A contemporary of May’s, Norman Fiering produced a series of articles in the 1970s that culminated with his study of the early American Enlightenment, published in 1981. In 1976, for example, he nodded to (though recognizing it as nothing new to scholars) the ‘pervasive influence of the English genteel periodical on colonial American letters’.⁵² But he was using this article to ask one of the foundational questions both of the American Enlightenment and the transatlantic republic of letters. In some respects, this question remains elusive: ‘how did Cotton Mather, Samuel Johnson of Connecticut, Jonathan Edwards, or James Logan learn about new books published, new ideas advanced, and the state of the argument on any given issue?’⁵³ Fiering’s articles contested the compartmentalization of religious and

⁵⁰ G. Adolf Koch, *Republican Religion: The American Revolution and the Cult of Reason* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1933); these citations from the original preface were found in *Religion of the American Enlightenment* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1968), vii-x, xvi.

⁵¹ David Lundberg and Henry F. May, ‘The Enlightened Reader in America’ in *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2, Special Issue: An American Enlightenment (Summer 1976), 262, 268, 271.

⁵² Norman Fiering, ‘The Transatlantic Republic of Letters: A Note on the Circulation of Learned Periodicals to Early Eighteenth-Century America’, *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 33, no. 4 (Oct. 1976), 642.

⁵³ Fiering, *The Transatlantic Republic of Letters*, 643.

Enlightenment knowledge of the eighteenth century, and paved the way for future research on religion and Enlightenment.⁵⁴

Building on the work of Fiering, Hornberger and May, John Corrigan's path-breaking work on the American Enlightenment placed religion at the centre of Enlightenment discourse in America. Corrigan argued that, between 1700 and 1740, a group of Congregationalist ministers in New England established the early Enlightenment in America. These ministers, according to Corrigan, were able to reconcile their ideas of the 'order and reason of the "beautiful" cosmos' with their commitment to 'the notion of the necessity for regeneration through supernatural grace'.⁵⁵ Taking May's argument even further, Corrigan argued that 'the American Enlightenment was not a static, monomorphic phenomenon': rather, the American context of Enlightenment was defined by its lack of homogeneity. The evolutionary nature of both the Enlightenment and American society meant that the American Enlightenment 'developed emphases that sometimes were peculiar to a very specific context' even as these early enlighteners strove towards 'a toleration and even a blending of English methods and Anglican philosophical premises'.⁵⁶ Corrigan's work put to rest any vestiges of the Enlightenment imagined by those such as Henry Steele Commager, who located the beginning of the American Enlightenment in Philadelphia from 1769 to 1790. Commager's vision was a 'new world of nature and

⁵⁴ Norman Fiering, 'Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37 no. 2 (Apr.-Jun., 1976), pp. 195-218; Fiering, 'Early American Philosophy vs. Philosophy in Early America' in *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 13 no. 3 (Summer, 1977), pp. 216-237; Fiering, 'President Samuel Johnson and the Circle of Knowledge', *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 28, No. 2 (Apr., 1971), pp. 199-236; Fiering, 'Benjamin Franklin and the Way to Virtue' in *American Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1978), pp. 199-223; Fiering, 'Will and Intellect in the New England Mind' in *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 29, no. 4 (Oct. 1972), pp. 516-558. Perry Miller's contribution in taking Puritan thought seriously and placing it within a larger environmental and literary context was no doubt significant for Fiering's developments. See, for example, Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Sloane Associates, 1949); Miller, *The New England Mind: from Colony to Province* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953); Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956). Fiering himself pointed out that Miller 'concentrated on the *internal* forces for change in New England, particularly the working out of the alleged inner logic of covenant theology, which, it is said, ineluctably drove New England religion toward such Arminian doctrines as conditional salvation and an emphasis on the rational foundations of Christianity'. Fiering questioned and critiqued Miller and his students' localistic interpretation, but even this rebuttal demonstrated Miller's important contribution to the study of religion and Enlightenment. See Fiering, 'The First American Enlightenment: Tillotson, Leverett, and Philosophical Anglicanism', *The New England Quarterly* 54 no. 3 (Sep. 1981), 315-316.

⁵⁵ John Corrigan, *The Prism of Piety: Catholick Congregational Clergy at the Beginning of the Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), vii.

⁵⁶ Corrigan, *Prism of Piety*, vii-viii, 4.

man' where America had realized the Enlightenment to which Europe had aspired.⁵⁷ Building off of the historiography, Corrigan presented a much more textured, dynamic and symbiotic process that included both sides of the Atlantic.

One of Corrigan's most original contributions was his insistence that, during this period, 'new ideas were embraced, but old ideas were not abandoned'. While recognizing the importance of previous scholarship on the Enlightenment's influence on religious thinkers, Corrigan rebutted the idea that the new synthesis between 'old ways and new' was a slippery path towards secularism. Rather, the early American enlighteners utilized both Puritan precedent and contemporary Anglican philosophy in order to construct an 'explicitly religious view of the world' that contributed markedly to the Enlightenment itself. Corrigan's 'catholick clergy' of the American Enlightenment were Benjamin Colman, Benjamin Wadsworth, Thomas Foxcroft, Ebenezer Pemberton and Nathaniel Appleton. It is important to note that these ministers were deeply committed to maintaining orthodoxy even as they sought to integrate the new learning to their faith.⁵⁸ In a dissertation just a few years later, Leslee Koch Gilbert added to Corrigan's critique. In applying this line of reasoning to the later Revolutionary era, Gilbert argued that 'Enlightenment concepts were not devoid of religious belief. Rather, religious concepts were a fundamental and important part of the Enlightenment philosophy as expressed in scientific and political thought'. She also recognized the importance of understanding a variety of theistic thinkers in relation to one another within a common spectrum.⁵⁹ This helps explain Gordon Wood's suggestion that religiously-focused enlightened principles such as toleration and freedom of conscience were intertwined with ideas of Providence during the later stages of the American Enlightenment such as that during the age of revolution.⁶⁰ This process, however, had begun at least a century beforehand.

While these ministers disagreed in certain areas of doctrine, Corrigan argued that a particular Enlightenment disposition was distinct in them all. While not

⁵⁷ Henry Steele Commager, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977), 1, 15, 40, 176.

⁵⁸ Corrigan, *Prism of Piety*, ix-x, 3-4.

⁵⁹ Leslee Koch Gilbert, *The American Enlightenment: Science, Politics, and the Religion of Reason* (Diss: University of Kentucky; Ann Arbor, MI: UMI), 9-10, 13.

⁶⁰ Gordon Wood, 'The American Enlightenment' in *The Enlightenment: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, vol. 1 by Hanley and McMahon, eds., 5, 13.

forsaking (though more loosely interpreting) covenant theology, they maintained that the guiding force to salvation was love: both of one's self and within the community. Like Scotland's clergy during this period, Corrigan's ministers promoted the benefits of toleration and strove for the cultivation of both intellect and emotions as central to the self. Corrigan concluded that, 'in general, catholick thought was characterized by an optimism about the possibility for unity, understood not only as the unity among persons of differing religious backgrounds (Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Anglican) but as the intertwining of body and soul in the person, and as the affectionate bonding of the individual to God and to others in the world'.⁶¹

Indeed, the SSPCK's leaders on both sides of the Atlantic—men such as Benjamin Colman and Jonathan Dickinson in America, Daniel Williams and Edmund Calamy in England, and William Carstares and William Hamilton in Scotland—were well aware of the dangers of extremism on both sides of the middle ground they sought. The enthusiasm and extremism that occurred during the civil wars of the seventeenth century were matched by and connected to the lack of toleration and oppression throughout that same century. Consequently, this early transatlantic Enlightenment was not only a response to the new learning; it was also a reaction to these religious extremes of the previous century. This made the missionary endeavours of the SSPCK in the colonies all the more interesting and heated: were their efforts contributing to a new and harmonious religion? Or was it fuelling enthusiasm in America, which was the very thing they were trying to escape. This was one of the clearest threads running through the SSPCK's conversation about its own work, and the debates were played out in the colonies in new and surprising ways.

A Transatlantic Religious Enlightenment: a Historiography

Scholars of both the Scottish and American Enlightenment have recognized in recent years the important function of religion within a variety of national and regional contexts of the Enlightenment. These scholars have pointed out the error in assuming that all of what constituted the Enlightenment was by definition secular and anti-clerical. They have also highlighted features of the Enlightenment that were

⁶¹ Corrigan, *Prism of Piety*, 4-9.

distinctly religious. But it is only in recent years that scholars have begun to grasp the full significance of religion to the Enlightenment. Previous taxonomies have contributed greatly to our understanding of the Enlightenment by showing it to be comprised of various components: didactic, revolutionary, moderate and radical. The first three of these categories had religious elements that influenced the process of new learning and a new understanding of the affections. But in recent years scholars have begun to realize the more pervasive influence of religion on the very processes and understandings of the Enlightenment itself. This has led to breakthrough research on the reality of a religious Enlightenment that fits comfortably within the larger Enlightenment spectrum.

Hugh Trevor-Roper first argued that the Enlightenment in England was led by liberal theologians (Socinians and Arminians) in the seventeenth century who emphasized religious liberty as expressed through free will, religious tolerance and a more powerful laity. This same group in England sought to rebuff the hysteria both of revolution and of a resurgent millennialism.⁶² Roy Porter blazed a new path when arguing that—as in Italy, Austria, Scotland and America—the Enlightenment ‘throve in England *within* piety’, not in response to it.⁶³ Jonathan Clark followed up on this line in reasoning in later years when arguing that those who created binaries between the pre-modern-theistic and the modern-secular England were partaking in their own ‘historical formations, part of the early nineteenth-century assault on what is here identified as England’s “old order”’. England’s successes during the long eighteenth century came not as a result of the historiographically constructed either/or logic of the nineteenth century. Rather, according to Clark, it was successful during this period of Enlightenment, ‘because it combined monarchy *and* liberty, religion *and* science, trade *and* landed wealth with a minimum of friction’ (his italics).⁶⁴ Pocock

⁶² Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans & Puritans* (London: Fontana Press, 1989), xi-xii; Roper, ‘The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment’ in *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, ed. Roper (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 193-236. This latter reference taken from Himmelfarb, *Roads to Modernity*, 50, 248.

⁶³ Porter, ‘The Enlightenment in England’, *Enlightenment in National Context*, 6.

⁶⁴ J.C.D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 14-15. Clark has carried this theme even further in recent years, arguing in 2006 that, after the Restoration, ‘England, Scotland, and Ireland all had their national churches, and each shared a vision of a homogeneous Christian society that the status of these churches expressed’. See Clark, ‘Great Britain and Ireland’ in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. vii: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution, 1660-1815*, eds. Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 54.

was also revising the narrative of Enlightenment, similarly hoping to ‘reshape the geography and definition of Enlightenment’ as a way of including England.⁶⁵ Arguing from a narrative that began with the English Civil War, he forced scholars to consider the ‘beginnings of Enlightenment in the British kingdoms as brought about in large measure by the endeavors of the Church to reestablish itself at the turning points of a series of crises’. In 1999, just one year after his article on enthusiasm and Enlightenment, Pocock argued provocatively that ‘the Enlightenment was “a product of religious debate and not merely a rebellion against it”’.⁶⁶

A growing body of scholarship has argued that a distinctly religious Enlightenment project was underway during the eighteenth century, and that it contributed to and overlapped with other dimensions of the Enlightenment. Colin Kidd laid a foundation for this approach when arguing, ‘for most of the early modern period, the foundations of human knowledge were not naturalistic. The Bible, along with the writings of the ancients which it trumped, informed the whole terrain of intellectual endeavour’. This implied an organic landscape of religiously informed ideas and actions which, according to Kidd, had major implications on the development of certain threads of identity and nationalism.⁶⁷ Within the American context, Nina Reid-Moroney broke new ground by using Philadelphia’s experience of the Enlightenment as a way of arguing that ‘the supposed tension between Enlightenment and Christianity is largely a problem of our own making’.⁶⁸ Her use of the Great Awakening and Christian thinkers within the framework of the Enlightenment continues to be a landmark in the field.

Also by the turn of the century, David Sorkin had confirmed that ‘the Enlightenment was, first and foremost, not unremittingly secular or secularizing’, nor were ‘religion and Enlightenment...polar adversaries’. On the contrary, according to Sorkin, the Enlightenment ‘emerged out of theological controversies and was in the first instance a reinterpretation, and in many cases an entirely orthodox

⁶⁵ Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, 9.

⁶⁶ J.G.A. Pocock, ‘Enthusiasm: The Antiself of Enlightenment’, in Lawrence E. Klein and Anthony J. La Vopa, eds. *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1998), 7-9. Regarding Pocock’s contention that the Enlightenment was a product of religious debate, see Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment*, 3.

⁶⁷ Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 11.

⁶⁸ Nina Reid-Maroney, *Philadelphia’s Enlightenment, 1740-1800: Kingdom of Christ, Empire of Reason* (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 2001), xiii.

reinterpretation, of revealed religion'. Sorkin broke new ground by placing theology at the heart of Enlightenment studies. 'Eighteenth-century theology is patently too important to be left to theologians and students of religion', Sorkin provocatively contended. He then called on historians to 'reclaim theology for the Enlightenment'. This process, according to Sorkin, requires that 'the canon of Enlightenment thinkers must be dramatically expanded to include the vast theological literature of the eighteenth century'.⁶⁹

By 2008, Sorkin had articulated a specific framework by which the religious Enlightenment could be positioned along the Enlightenment spectrum:

In the century from England's Glorious Revolution, which kept the monarch Protestant and safeguarded fundamental rights, and its Act of Toleration (1689), to the French Revolution and its Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790), religious enlighteners attempted to renew and rearticulate their faith, using the new science and philosophy to promote a tolerant, irenic understanding of belief that could serve a shared morality and politics. Aiming to harmonize faith and reason, and thinking themselves engaged in a common enterprise with all but the most radical enlighteners, the religious enlighteners enlisted some of the seventeenth century's most audacious, heterodox ideas for the mainstream of eighteenth century orthodox belief. For Christians, the religious Enlightenment represented a denunciation of Reformation and Counter-Reformation militance, an express alternative to two centuries of dogmatism and fanaticism, intolerance and religious warfare. For Jews, it represented an effort to overcome the uncharacteristic cultural isolation of the post-Reformation period through reappropriation of neglected elements of their own heritage and engagement with the larger culture'.⁷⁰

Sorkin's articulation and delineation of a specifically religious Enlightenment—along with his demonstration of the variety of ways in which it was manifested throughout Europe—was the culmination of a fifty-year historiographical evolution in Enlightenment studies. His research has helped scholars to understand more fully the role of religion in the Enlightenment project.

Sorkin's work in 2008 marked a paradigm shift due to his extensive articulation of a definitive religious Enlightenment. But his monograph is limited by its sweeping generalizations that ignored crucial features of the religious Enlightenment itself. It was Thomas Ahnert and Helena Rosenblatt who by 2006

⁶⁹ David Sorkin, 'Reclaiming Theology for the Enlightenment: The Case of Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten (1706-1757)', *Central European History* 36 no. 4 (2003), 503-505.

⁷⁰ Sorkin, *Religious Enlightenment*, 6.

were wrestling in compelling and trailblazing ways on what's been deemed the Christian Enlightenment. Looking at the German Enlightenment leader, Christian Thomasius, Ahnert revised the standard narrative by emphasizing 'the intellectual importance of religion for the origins of the German Enlightenment'. Rather than seeing Thomasius's religious beliefs as disingenuous or utilitarian, Ahnert contended that Thomasius's religion was central to his activity in the early German Enlightenment: this was due in some ways to his renowned heterodox views of religion. Unlike rational dissenters, however, Ahnert noted that Thomasius's heterodoxy drifted not towards rational dissent but 'often appeared dangerously close to a form of religious "enthusiasm", which was associated with politically and theologically subversive millenarian sects'. Ahnert concluded that Thomasius was one example of how 'religious concerns formed an integral part of enlightened thought'.⁷¹

In a similar vein, Helena Roseblatt argued that, in Germany as well as many other parts of Europe and in Britain, the Enlightenment not only did not battle religion, it 'took place *within* the Christian churches themselves' [her italics]. Although she did not elaborate, Rosenblatt asserted that Scotland was an important example that substantiated her argument. It was in Scotland that 'the church leader, university principal, respected historian and clergyman, William Robertson, espoused a "broad, world-affirming theology" characteristic of the Christian Enlightenment as a whole'.⁷² Colin Kidd had made this point forcefully six years prior. Looking at Robertson's historical works, Kidd argued that 'within the global sweep of these works Robertson was able to expound a providentialist theory of the rise of religious knowledge in parallel with the development of societies and civilisations, a history of progress whose current terminus was the enlightened Protestantism of the post-Reformation era'.⁷³ As this thesis demonstrates, Robertson constructed precisely this narrative in his sermon to the SSPCK in 1755 that helped to legitimate and reinforce the Scottish Society's missionary work.

⁷¹ Thomas Ahnert, *Religion and the Origins of the German Enlightenment: Faith and the Reform of Learning in the Thought of Christian Thomasius* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 1-2.

⁷² Helena Rosenblatt, 'The Christian Enlightenment', in *The Enlightenment: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, vol. 1 by Hanley and McMahon, eds., 342-343.

⁷³ Colin Kidd, 'Scotland's invisible Enlightenment: subscription and heterodoxy in the eighteenth-century Kirk', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 30 (2000), 52-53.

Both Rosenblatt and Sorkin emphasised a few core criteria to their understanding of the religious Enlightenment. Amongst these values was a commitment to ‘reasonableness’ in all aspects of life. As Sorkin explained, the term reasonable was not synonymous with rational, ‘the term scholars commonly employ to assert the Enlightenment’s primary if not exclusive reliance on reason’. The antonym of reasonable, on the other hand, was unreasonable: ‘to religious enlighteners, unreasonable meant an exclusive embrace of either reason or faith. Faith untempered by knowledge, or combined with excessively partisan forms, produced intolerant, dogmatic, or enthusiastic religion’.⁷⁴

Rosenblatt also argued that Christian enlighteners used the framework of reasonableness as their guiding light. ‘It was in the name of this reasonableness that they championed a simpler, clearer, more tolerant and morally efficacious religion’, she maintained. These figures ‘subscribed to a relatively optimistic view of human nature and had a generally positive attitude towards both reform and progress’. In a perspective that could be said of so much of Enlightenment discourse, Rosenblatt submitted that ‘perhaps most importantly, they saw themselves as moderates charting a middle course, what one called “a wise, enlightened and reliable piety”, equidistant from fanaticism and superstition on the one hand, and irreligion on the other’: and this despite their incessant theological wrangling.⁷⁵

Both Rosenblatt and Sorkin contended that central to the religious Enlightenment was the influence of Dutch ideas within the national context of England. It was Dutch ideas, according to Rosenblatt, that laid the foundation for the ‘first matrix of religious Enlightenment ideas’, but the second ‘matrix of ideas’ and its first physical manifestation occurred in England. She continued that ‘England’s role in the elaboration and dissemination of the Christian Enlightenment was seminal’.⁷⁶ The examples chosen by both of these scholars came from England and

⁷⁴ Sorkin, *Religious Enlightenment*, 11-12; Rosenblatt, ‘The Christian Enlightenment’, 343.

⁷⁵ Rosenblatt, ‘The Christian Enlightenment’, 343. The last quote comes from Rosenblatt who quoted Sorkin from “‘A wise, enlightened and reliable piety’”: *The religious Enlightenment in central and western Europe, 1689-1789*, Parkes Institute Pamphlet 1, (University of Southampton, 2002), 12.

⁷⁶ Rosenblatt, ‘The Christian Enlightenment’, 343-344, Rosenblatt continued that, ‘tired of internecine Protestant warfare, and convinced of the need to protect civilized society from it, an influential group of English thinkers favourably disposed towards Dutch Arminianism began to view reason as a valuable ally against the resurgence of religious fanaticism and sectarianism’. Sorkin concurred when remarking that, ‘Dutch developments were so influential as to comprise the first matrix of religious Enlightenment ideas’ and further still that ‘the first fully realized example of religious Enlightenment,

the European mainland. For Rosenblatt, this was due to the limitations of space in her article, and for Sorkin he chose six religious enlighteners who represented the diverse membership comprising his unified theory.⁷⁷ As Rosenblatt hinted in her article, however, Scotland was one of most important places where the Christian Enlightenment materialized.

SSPCK leaders in Scotland, England and America were moving past the orthodoxy of the previous century. No longer resigned to a literal reading of various covenants, these ministers sought for a way to restore the affections while also promoting reason and social benevolence. *Both* evangelical and liberal Calvinists departed from the more orthodox views on total depravity and human volition. As Marilyn Westerkamp has recognized, by 1715 Scottish Presbyterians espoused what they considered ‘a single Presbyterian tradition’ that they believed had persisted from 1560 onwards, ‘unscathed and unchanged’. The National Covenant of 1638 made a similar claim. Nonetheless, as Westerkamp made clear, it was a recurring theme for Scottish Presbyterians to pronounce that they were ‘returning to their origins’ when in reality they were in the process of ‘still establishing the nature and boundaries of those origins’.⁷⁸ However, despite these shifts in orthodoxy on both sides of the spectrum, evangelicals and liberals both remained within the established Church of Scotland as a way to invoke both civil and ecclesiastical reform.

Like Scotland, colonial leaders such as Benjamin Colman, Jonathan Dickinson and Ebenezer Pemberton also remained part of their respective established churches and sought to use the ecclesiastical structures in place as a way to refine and reform the culture in which they lived. Importantly, these established religious figures promoted policies that took a life of their own once they were transmitted to communities in the colonies. Native Christians, along with Native and white missionaries, applied the message of ‘true religion’ to their own circumstances and in their own ways even as they ostensibly promoted orthodoxy. It is this large mosaic that constituted the SSPCK. This thesis looks at all of the above contexts as a way of

and its second matrix of ideas, was the Church of England’s “moderation”. See Sorkin, *Religious Enlightenment*, 8-9.

⁷⁷ Rosenblatt, ‘Christian Enlightenment’, 343; Sorkin, *Religious Enlightenment*, 9-11.

⁷⁸ Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625-1760* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 17.

better understanding the contested nature of non-Anglican British Protestantism as well as its effects upon local communities and individuals.

Enlightenment, Evangelism and Missions: an Assessment

Thomas Ahnert has argued recently that Christian Thomasius's 'enlightened intellectual reform cannot be understood without his "enthusiastic" religious beliefs'. The relationship between these two aspects of Thomasius's thought and action were, as Ahnert rightly noted, 'complex' and deserve much more consideration than previously supposed.⁷⁹ By looking at British Enlightenment leaders and their relationship both with evangelicals and institutions of evangelism, this thesis examines that uneasy and contested borderland between reasonable and unreasonable religion and reform. Enlightened reform efforts came with a variety of motivations, and played out in extraordinarily different ways on the ground. Therefore, rather than conceiving of the Enlightenment as a static, monomorphic phenomenon, this thesis recognizes what Jose Torre recently called 'a dialectic of Enlightenment, that encompasses both reason and emotion, both absolute universal truths and increasingly subjective ideas and values'.⁸⁰

Non-Anglican British Protestants of all stripes were searching for the proper balance between faith and reason in their collective quest for what constituted true religion. Some of these members saw the solution through an emphasis on rationality; others accentuated the role of the affections. But while institutionally the SSPCK was united in its attempt to expand true religion to the edges of the Empire and beyond, the individuals who comprised the Society were in a heated contest over the nature and parameters of true religion.⁸¹ Even while they differed greatly over doctrinal issues and strategies, however, many of them worked within the framework and assumptions both of the Enlightenment milieu of their day as well as their

⁷⁹ Ahnert, *Religion and the Origins of the German Enlightenment*, 5.

⁸⁰ Torre, 'General Introduction', *Enlightenment in America*, x.

⁸¹ Wayne Hudson has shown that the beliefs even amongst English Deists were much more complex than previously assumed. In Hudson's research on the early stages of the Enlightenment in England, he demonstrated that an early Enlightenment figure may very well take several contradictory positions on a variety of issues 'without much concern for their coherence'. This could lead such a figure to 'argue against belief in revealed religion in some contexts, but insist that they were sincere Christians in others', Wayne Hudson, *The English Deists* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 115-116. Within the American context, one example includes Peter Onuf, *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2007).

particular religious tradition. And others who explicitly rejected the Enlightenment's influence were no less shaped by the cultural constructs of their era, and they worked with religious Enlightenment figures to achieve certain goals.⁸²

Indeed, these cultural constructs bound disparate groups together within a common Protestant interest. Thomas Kidd has identified three core criteria to this consensus: the imperialism following the Revolutionary Settlement, the emergence of print culture and anti-Catholicism. Kidd contended that 'by 1727 the friends of the Protestant interest in New England had become thoroughly committed to a broad British Protestant identity, finding common cause with the Hanoverian monarchy and Whig Anglicanism'.⁸³ This thesis identifies the Protestant interest as particularly important within the context of the SSPCK. The leadership on both sides of the Atlantic found each of these tenets of the Protestant interest as foundational to its major objectives.

But material interests alone do not go far enough in addressing the relationship between evangelism and Enlightenment. Phyllis Mack mused over this paradoxical dynamic in her discussion of Jonathan Wesley:

John Wesley believed wholeheartedly in the Augustinian view of debased and impotent human nature and in the Pietist concept of 'heart religion', which emphasized passivity and feeling rather than reason and good deeds. But he was also a man of the Enlightenment who had Newton's *Principia* taught at his school for poor children and made one of the earliest copies of Benjamin Franklin's electricity machine which he used to give shock treatments to the physically and mentally ill. Adapting the sensationalist psychology of John Locke, Wesley viewed sanctification as both an ecstatic and a sensible experience: sensible in every sense of the word. Adapting Enlightenment ideals of education and progress, he urged his followers to improve their rational and physical capacities in order to achieve useful, balanced, 'happy' lives. His insistence on the importance of reason and

⁸² David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 74. Bebbington demonstrated another dimension to the Protestant-Enlightenment matrix that went beyond the slippery-slope-to-deism narrative. 'What has rarely been seen', Bebbington contended, was 'that other strands of Protestantism, despite being tenaciously orthodox, were equally affected by the Enlightenment atmosphere...the Evangelical version of Protestantism was created by the Enlightenment'. This, of course, should not lead to the conclusion that evangelicals were therefore enlightened. Furthermore, Bebbington overstated his case when assuming evangelicals were monolithic as a ground and that they were orthodox. As noted above, eighteenth century orthodoxy for most religious factions (including evangelicals) was the heterodoxy of the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, Bebbington's conclusions proved important for future discussions of how evangelism fit into the discussion of religion and the Enlightenment.

⁸³ Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004), 1, 27.

common sense, his acceptance of the limits of reason in understanding religious truths, and his conviction of the malleability of human nature were as much the produce of the Enlightenment values as they were of Pauline Christianity; so was his impulse to evaluate his followers' ecstatic behavior by techniques of empirical evidence, interviewing countless new converts and distributing questionnaires to 652 sanctified Methodists to determine whether the gift of perfect love was granted gradually or instantaneously.⁸⁴

Mack's provocative assessment lends credence to Himmelfarb's redefinition of Enlightenment that includes people like Wesley, 'as well as a score of lesser-known (in our time, although not in theirs) philanthropists and reformers who gave practical meaning to that social ethic'.⁸⁵

During the eighteenth century, the Western world was forced to, as Louis Dupre explained, 'go through a prolonged period of critically examining the validity of its spiritual vision'.⁸⁶ SSPCK leaders on both sides of the Atlantic were engaged in this process of reflexive probing and identity formation. They were engaged in Enlightenment projects of reform even as they were challenging the spiritual and religious motivations behind that reform. They understood themselves as part of a religious enlightenment project, but their competing spiritual visions were under intense scrutiny. Evangelism provides an important platform for understanding these dynamics. Evangelism was an important nexus for attempts at spiritual and social improvement. It served in many ways as the bridge for conciliation but also the sword on which to battle for true religion. Therefore, by telling the story of the SSPCK's colonial missionary project, this thesis hopes to contribute to the scholarly conversation on the relationship between evangelism and the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century British Atlantic world.

Chapter Structure

When assessing the SSPCK as a leading missionary society, it is imperative not to reify the Society by placing it above its environs. Therefore, chapter one traces the birth and development of the SSPCK. Using primary source records from both the

⁸⁴ Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 13-14.

⁸⁵ Himmelfarb, *Roads to Modernity*, 6.

⁸⁶ Louis Dupre, *The Enlightenment & the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), ix.

SSPCK and the Edinburgh society for the reformation of manners, this chapter situates the Society within the confines of the early British Enlightenment's drive for both social and cultural reform along with personal and spiritual improvement. Chapter one continues by complementing this institutional dimension of the Society's identity with the personal links and networks that also existed within the SSPCK: an imagined community existing in England, Scotland and colonial America with ties to Ireland and throughout Protestant Europe. Scholars have identified many of the foremost leaders of the SSPCK's colonial project as central leaders in the early British Enlightenment. Therefore, using evidence both from its institutional policies and its leadership's personal correspondence and networks, chapter one attempts to re-position the SSPCK within the framework of the early Enlightenment.

The SSPCK's work as a missionary society became a reality in the 1730s. By 1730, the Society had planted three missionaries in Massachusetts. In the mid-1730s it had sent a Scottish minister from the Isle of Skye to accompany a community of Highlander immigrants to Georgia. The scant and fragmentary research on these two expeditions has usually depicted them both as failures. But as chapter two demonstrates, failure was only one dimension of the story. The SSPCK's efforts at evangelizing and educating Native Americans in Massachusetts and Highlanders in Georgia during the 1730s was part of a much larger transatlantic discourse. In Scotland, England and the American colonies, religious leaders and religiously-centred political leaders were collaborating in what they perceived as the dawning of a new age. Chapter two also begins to explore the way this larger transatlantic discourse played out on the ground. This latter thread of the story reveals the cracks within the ideals of the 'evangelising version of the Enlightenment'.⁸⁷

The first two chapters establish the SSPCK as a colonial missionary society with deep institutional and personal links throughout Europe but particularly in England, Scotland and the American colonies. But these chapters also demonstrate the distinct role of Scotland's first missionary society within the larger Enlightenment ideas of improvement and reform. Within the framework of the early

⁸⁷ Susan Manning and Francis Cogliano, 'Introduction' in *The Atlantic Enlightenment*, eds. Manning and Cogliano (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 6. Manning and Cogliano argued that this evangelizing version of Enlightenment 'expressed itself fully in a transatlantic context'. Within this volume, Daniel Walker Howe presented a transatlantic narrative of John Witherspoon as an example of this category of Enlightenment.

Enlightenment, these two chapters allow for a closer inspection of the function and identity of early Protestant missions.

The SSPCK's operations during the 1740s provide a particularly significant window for grasping the way Presbyterian leaders of the Enlightenment perceived themselves as well as their relationship both to missionary work and the increasing strength of evangelicalism. Ironically, it was the revivals that catalyzed a discussion within the SSPCK about some of the overarching themes of the religious Enlightenment. Emphases upon reasonableness and the dangers of, on the one hand, scepticism and, on the other, enthusiasm, all came to the fore of the SSPCK's dialogue, particularly in letters and sermons. But also evident are the evangelical themes both of conversion and a direct encounter with the Spirit as the path towards the New Birth: a morphology of salvation that defied the earlier evangelistic emphases on civilization and education as the means towards salvation and renewal. Both sides in this debate appealed to history; both sides appealed to true religion; and both sides were vocal leaders of the SSPCK. In chapter three, these dynamics are assessed both within the institutional context and amongst larger transatlantic networks. This chapter reflects the contested nature of the missionary movement itself. In many ways, the SSPCK's debates were part of the larger battle for the soul of evangelism and evangelicalism. The very interpretation of Christian history, ecclesiology and theological legitimacy were at stake.

Chapters four through six balance the Society's ideals and their leadership's ambitions with the individuals and events on the ground in the colonies. Chapters four and five position the missionaries of the SSPCK during and just after the Great Awakening within both their local and larger institutional and transatlantic contexts: a method that illuminates certain contours of intimate encounters between Native Americans, Native Christians and white missionaries. Scholars have looked at the local contexts of the SSPCK's missionaries and have highlighted significant attitudes and approaches within these communities. But the missionaries and the Native Americans were acutely aware of other observers both in colonial urban centres and in Edinburgh and London. As they recognized, these observers may not have held all of the power, but they did hold the purse strings so the dialogue between and amongst them was crucial. Capturing this transatlantic dimension helps to place

local situations in sharper focus. In the process, it conveys the way that local, regional and transatlantic contexts of the SSPCK were bound up together in ways that were at once multidimensional and multivalent. For these reasons, an overarching theme of chapters four through six is that Native Americans, missionaries and religious leaders were influenced deeply by one another. These relationships were dynamic, contested and never one-sided or static.

It was the evangelical fervour of revivalism that led to the SSPCK's most successful attempts in the colonies. But these successes came at a cost, dividing sharply the SSPCK's membership and fragmenting British Protestantism on both sides of the Atlantic. As chapter six illustrates, however, these evangelical activities surrounding revivalism ironically helped to carve spaces for toleration and freedom of religious expression. In London, Edinburgh and the colonies, the voice of Native Christianity within the SSPCK becomes particularly strong and influential during this post-Awakening period. Chapter seven highlights the influence of Samson Occom in shaping Native Christianity as a Mohegan in response to Great Awakening leaders such as Eleazar Wheelock. As a minister, educator and missionary, Occom utilized the new evangelical discourse of equality and instant, personalized salvation as a tool for promoting a distinct Native Christian identity that was at once evangelical, Calvinist and Native. Occom's synthesis embodied the changes brought on by revivalism and the reactions by Native American evangelicals to white post-Awakening Protestantism. However, it is crucial to understand his religious responses within the backdrop of his experiences on both sides of the Atlantic: experiences formed in many ways by the SSPCK as Occom was an SSPCK missionary and also received permission to raise money in Scotland as a result of the Society's endorsement of him. But this chapter echoes a theme from previous chapters that constructs how missionaries and especially Native American communities were alienated and dispossessed often by a lack of funding and by inadequate support from their patron societies.

Chapter seven concludes the thesis by re-visiting Edinburgh, the hub of Scottish missions and the SSPCK. This chapter demonstrates how continuity existed between the early leaders of the SSPCK who were simultaneously leaders of the early British Enlightenment and the later leadership of the SSPCK who were

members of the Edinburgh literati. But evangelical leaders also participated passionately in the SSPCK's work both before and after 1750. This chapter demonstrates how, just as in the first half of the eighteenth century, leading thinkers and policymakers in Edinburgh many times took the helm in the policies of the SSPCK. Following from this section, the chapter looks closely at William Robertson's sermon to the SSPCK in 1755. This sermon articulated distinctly Robertson's vision for Christian Enlightenment, a phenomenon he saw unfolding in part by way of societies such as the SSPCK. But this period is also rich in correspondence about missions between SSPCK members in Boston and Edinburgh. Therefore, chapter seven utilizes the SSPCK's colonial and transatlantic context as a way to understand larger British Protestant sentiments of evangelism, Enlightenment and missions leading up to the American Revolution.

Taken together, this case study on Scotland's first missionary society sheds light on the relationship between Evangelism and Enlightenment during the eighteenth century: a phenomenon that transformed the very landscape of British Protestantism. Its conclusion will be that the Enlightenment directed the path of British Protestantism and shaped both modern missions and the very foundations of evangelicalism itself. In the process, however, they all appropriated Enlightenment discourse into their common rhetoric as the primary means of identity formation, both personally and institutionally. This research also suggests that the SSPCK established the precedent for later Protestant missionary endeavours. Andrew Walls recently corrected the assumption amongst missiologists that modern missions began with William Carey's 1792 missionary manifesto. Instead, Walls contended, 1792 marked the date of 'British entry into a well-established continental tradition' of evangelical pietism. This European movement was catalyzed, according to Walls, by British voluntary associations: 'the organizational capacity for mission was given new scope by the voluntary society, for development of which, especially given the conditions of a major continental war, Britain offered the fullest possibilities'.⁸⁸

While Walls correctly revised the standard narrative of modern British missions beginning in the late eighteenth century, his sole focus on continental Europe ignored the missionary movement that was taking place in Scotland by the

⁸⁸ Andrew F. Walls, 'The Eighteenth-Century Protestant Missionary Awakening in Its European Context' in *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* by Stanley, ed., 29-30, 34.

early eighteenth century. This thesis corrects this oversight by looking at Scotland's first missionary movement that established the precedent for future missionary projects. It shows the continuity in voluntary associations who spearheaded evangelism: a precedent that the SSPCK helped to establish. It must be remembered (as the first chapter will demonstrate) that the very foundation of Scotland's culture of clubs and societies was founded upon religious voluntary associations. Therefore, the culture from which the SSPCK emerged, and the ensuing course taken by the Scottish Society, was a prototype of nineteenth century missions as well as the parent of future clubs and societies in mid-eighteenth century Scotland that would give vibrancy to the Enlightenment itself. As chapter seven demonstrates, it is more than coincidence that many leaders of the Edinburgh literati were also leaders or active participants in some way with the SSPCK: the germination of *both* missionary work *and* voluntary societies in Edinburgh came from the same soil.

Chapter One

Scotland and the Age of Improvement

Introduction

Georgian Edinburgh nurtured a distinctly sophisticated and vibrant culture of clubs and societies that was more advanced and numerous than in any other city besides London.⁸⁹ This chapter demonstrates how the SSPCK's birth came directly from this early milieu of improvement through voluntary associations. In many ways, clubs and societies were one of the best spheres of compromise between England, Scotland, Ireland and the colonies. Those leery of the English Church and Crown but even more suspect of Catholics and Jacobites could meet on these associational terms that promoted improvement while downplaying formal English institutions. The collaboration between Scotland and England during this time served the interest of both and promoted a far-reaching Protestant interest that spanned both the Atlantic and the European Continent.

Central to Scotland's call for improvement was religion. Spearheaded by ministers and leaders of the Church of Scotland, the earliest voluntary associations emerged from their urgings of spiritual renewal alongside social reform. Scottish religious leaders integrated the English model of reform into their theological understanding of Church and State. While scholars have attempted since at least the 1830s to map out the Augustan 'club as an institution',⁹⁰ they have not adequately demonstrated the way that voluntary associations bent on improvement during the early Enlightenment served as a primary interface between social ideas of reform and religious ideas of piety and virtue.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5. On page 4, Clark contended that 'by the eighteenth century the image and concept of a voluntary society increasingly penetrated every nook and cranny of British social and cultural life...in North America communities were named after societies...Addison and Steele employed a club framework for the satirical conceit and, having the best of all worlds, argued for the social and cultural role of associations in the dissemination of English civility'.

⁹⁰ Robert J. Allen, *The Clubs of Augustan London* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), vii.

⁹¹ McElroy, *The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth Century Scotland, and their influence on the literary productions of the period from 1700 to 1800* (Thesis: University of Edinburgh, 1951-1952), 8-9. The three terms 'association', 'clubs' and 'societies' are synonymous in this thesis. I adhere to D.D. McElroy's contention that 'in the eighteenth century, as to-day, there was very little distinction made between the words association, clubs, and societies in common usage'. Though not

With these premises in place, the first section of this chapter argues that the SSPCK's identity stemmed from the religious impulse towards moral and personal reform within the Church and State of Scotland at the turn of the eighteenth century. Out of this early collaboration came the SSPCK's first efforts to improve society through the promotion of education in the Highlands and Islands. From the beginning, however, their eyes were cast towards America.

With this foundation established, the second section of this chapter charts the personal and institutional links that provided the impetus for the SSPCK's missionary work in the colonies. With the SSPCK's identity confirmed as a Reformed educational society, a network of British Protestants in England, Scotland and the American colonies began working together to make the initial prospect for a colonial project a reality by 1730. By the 1710s, the networking and funding apparatus of the SSPCK reflected the distinct influence of English Presbyterians. Both they and their Scottish counterparts served as the catalyst for the SSPCK's colonial aspirations. Theologically, socially and ecclesiastically, these men were the leaders of enlightened liberalism in Britain, and they viewed the Scottish Society's efforts as part of their larger aspirations for religious and social enlightenment.

Improvement in Scotland: the Minister's New Role

In the eyes of Protestants, the first real era of improvement began with the Reformation. This revolution refined Christianity by clearing it of the dross of Popish superstitions. For many dissenters in the British Isles, the Irish Articles of 1615 validated further the dichotomy between the Popish Antichrist and the true church comprised of what Crawford Gribben has termed a 'robust homogenization of Protestants'. However, as early as the mid-1640s, this neat division between the false and true church 'collapsed with the implosion of protestant solidarity'. Now, as Gribben explained, 'the influence of error had penetrated the ranks of the godly, and

being definitive, McElroy added that the term association sometimes connoted a more formal business spirit in contrast to less-formal clubs that were sometimes charged with a more convivial spirit. A society could also imply a 'more sober purpose, a more business-like procedure, and a more formal method of choosing candidates for admission'. In the case of the SSPCK, McElroy's generalization certainly holds true. But McElroy emphasized correctly the need not to be dogmatic in these distinctions.

the adherents of Antichrist were among the protestant elect'.⁹² It is important to note that, amongst British Protestants, this rhythm from solidarity to fragmentation, from purity to Antichrist and back again, was built into the fabric of their theology and history. In Scotland, sharp division began at least by the early 1580s, only about twenty years after Knox's Revolution and the official establishment of political and religious Protestantism.⁹³ Hewn out of this early Protestant narrative, the idea of social and religious reform was a feature of the nation's collective past.

By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, however, Scotland's national inclination for reform was understood within the context of the early Enlightenment's articulation of improvement. According to Alan Craig Houston, improvement during the eighteenth century meant 'the pursuit of knowledge, the cultivation of friendship, the preservation of freedom, and the satisfaction of need.' Improvement also included a host of political and social reforms: indeed, it was another way of discussing the 'civilizing process'. The understanding of improvement in this way began in the seventeenth century but flourished by the eighteenth; it was by no means a static term with a singular meaning. According to Houston, there were three overlapping frameworks by which improvement could be understood. The first was through individual self-interest, the second was found through Spartan-like sacrifice to a strong centralized government and the third way, as Houston put it, 'was predicated on moral and religious reform'.⁹⁴

But while one's perception of the concept of improvement could indicate one's perspective on politics and social reform, these three categories established by Houston were neither mutually exclusive nor necessarily incompatible with one

⁹² Crawford Gribben, 'The Church of Scotland and the English Apocalyptic Imagination, 1630 to 1650', *The Scottish Historical Review* 88 no. 225 (Apr. 2009), 35-36.

⁹³ Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 13-14. As Schmidt explained, along with Knox's Revolution being a reaction against Catholicism, it was simultaneously an act of defiance by Scottish nobles against what Schmidt called the 'French political domination over Scotland embodied in the regent Mary of Guise'. Furthermore, it was through the 'local church court' that 'the Reformed Kirk would make perhaps its most direct impact on the laity, and its strongest bid for hegemony over the mores of the people'; M.A. Stewart, 'Religion and Rational Theology' *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 32. Stewart reminded scholars that by the beginning of the eighteenth century Scotland had been a Calvinist country for more than a century, even though it had vacillated between Presbyterianism and Episcopal Church polity.

⁹⁴ Alan Craig Houston, *Benjamin Franklin and the politics of improvement* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 12.

another. In Scotland, like Ireland, institutional efforts at improvement were modeled on the English societies for the reformation of manners. According to James Livesey, this ‘campaign for the reformation of manners fostered institutions in which an individualistic, disciplined, productive community could be created’. It was a movement geared towards ‘a community of individuals’ working off of the ‘Protestant ideals of asceticism’. Simultaneously, however, societies for the reformation of manners ‘gave clergymen a new role’ in society.⁹⁵ For centuries, ministers or priests were integral to maintaining order and stability in Scottish parishes.⁹⁶ But while the ministers’ role as community leader was nothing new, their identification with the concept of improvement through institutions such as the societies for the reformation of manners did create a different dynamic. ‘They were not just to have the care of souls’, stated Livesey, ‘they were also to be the agents of something called improvement’.⁹⁷

Scottish ministers now joined with other social and spiritual leaders in an effort to extinguish vice and establish ordered virtue and social reform. As one might expect, improvement by way of reforming manners and preserving culture had a distinctly religio-political overtone: it was markedly Protestant and overtly anti-Catholic. This sentiment was the essential glue that bound Scotland and England to one another politically for the cause of ‘righteousness’ and social reform. The urgency for reform was fuelled by persistent conspiracies of the ‘other’. It was feared that vice was running rampant as a result of foreign agents who sought to undermine the English Crown and Protestant religion: ‘it was Stuart vice, Jacobite vice, Popish vice, French vice’. In addition to an ever-changing political climate, social factors such as the accelerating process of urbanization coupled with an

⁹⁵ James Livesey, *Civil Society and Empire: Ireland and Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 82.

⁹⁶ John R. McIntosh, *Church and Theology in Enlightenment Scotland: the Popular Party, 1740-1800* (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell, 1998), 15-16. The author argued that the Church many times played a central role in treating behavior that went against the mores of the larger community: ‘the fact remains that for offences such as wife-beating, minor assault, drunkenness, and general anti-social behavior there was possibly no redress other than recourse to the Kirk session and presbytery’.

⁹⁷ Livesey, *Civil Society and Empire*, 82.

expanding social and economic environment precipitated much movement and change during this period.⁹⁸

The Protestant, and in this case British, idea of improvement finds further expression when placed in juxtaposition with France.⁹⁹ In France, refinement was established by ‘norms of civility developed at the royal court by the French nobility’, and it was centred on the trends surrounding court life. An extension from this was the French concept of improvement which, as Norbert Elias has explained, meant the ‘refinement of aristocratic manners, not the "useful" improvements’ emphasized in Scotland, England and the colonies.¹⁰⁰

In the midst of such flux, the call for improvement of British society helped to amalgamate a ‘complex constellation of associations which enlightened the British social firmament’. These clubs and societies were conceived after the Revolutionary Settlement and continued to flourish throughout the eighteenth century. So definitive were clubs and societies that Peter Clark called them ‘one of the most distinctive social and cultural institutions of Georgian Britain.’ Clark continued provocatively that ‘if a British Enlightenment did exist...then one of its principal engines was the Georgian voluntary society’. Across the British Empire these voluntary associations ‘may have served as a vector for new ideas, new values, new kinds of social alignment, and forms of national, regional, and local identity’.¹⁰¹

But it was not only the fear of political takeover, social change and moral degeneracy that led to the Scottish call for improvement. Scotland desperately needed financial assistance at the beginning of the eighteenth century as persistent famine, the Darien disaster and the ensuing economic recession proved overwhelming.¹⁰² Ironically, for the Scottish nation to survive it needed to improve

⁹⁸ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, viii. These social changes could be seen in everything ‘from spas and seaside resorts to hobbies and spectator sports, illuminated streets, window-shopping, and eventually steam-powered factories’.

⁹⁹ Houston, *Benjamin Franklin and the politics of improvement*, 12.

¹⁰⁰ Houston, *Benjamin Franklin and the politics of improvement*, 12. As Houston directed, see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. Trans. by Edmund Jephcott with some notes and corrections by the author (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

¹⁰¹ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, ix, 1-2. Clark estimated that in the English-speaking world there were potentially 25,000 clubs and societies in existence during the eighteenth century. Of those, he suggested that approximately 130 different types existed in the British Isles.

¹⁰² Christopher A. Whatley, ‘The Issues Facing Scotland in 1707’ *The Scottish Historical Review* 87 Supplement (2008), 1-30.

its culture by learning from and emulating England. This was expressed even before the Act of Union with Edinburgh's societies for the reformation of manners.¹⁰³

The Early Scottish Culture of Clubs and Societies

Scottish clubs and societies were founded in response to extreme cultural fluidity and change. But these social reformers took a distinctly religious approach to their endeavours. In his thoroughly researched class analysis of Edinburgh societies, Andrew Dalglish argued that most societies were in many significant ways religious: 'the objectives of charitable and (especially) educational ventures were never only secular'. Furthermore, 'the encouragement of literacy (enabling access to religious scriptures), inducements to industry for the destitute, the "reclaiming" of the blind, insane and diseased, were all seen as means of saving souls as much as improving the prosperity of the community'.¹⁰⁴ Piety, then, stood central to the Scottish efforts at public reform; this would explain why ministers and religious leaders played such an important role in the process.

The vibrancy of voluntary associations tended to ebb and flow many times in response to rapid economic and social changes.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, a creative tension stood at the centre of voluntary associations as they attempted to appropriate and stabilise innovation. As Dalglish explained, Edinburgh's clubs and societies were a 'mix of modernity and traditionalism':

Voluntary associations characteristically reaffirm traditional values and attitudes while also promoting a progressive outlook, experimenting with new practices and emphasizing ideological perspectives and forms of behaviour appropriate to the changing social structure. In this sense they act as a kind of cultural bridge.¹⁰⁶

Around the turn of the eighteenth century, societies for the reformation of manners allowed space for the progressive goals surrounding the project of improvement to coalesce with traditional cultural and religious mores. These associational bodies were on the cutting edge of reform, using the latest innovative

¹⁰³ McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement*, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew J. Dalglish, *Voluntary Associations and the Middle Class in Edinburgh, 1780-1820* (Ph. D. Thesis: University of Edinburgh, 1992), 139. Dalglish researched a later period, but it is clear that the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century voluntary associations set the stage for the later development even into contemporary times. See pp. 1, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Dalglish, *Voluntary Associations*, 8.

¹⁰⁶ Dalglish, *Voluntary Associations*, 9-11.

tools to achieve their goals. However, their goals were quite frequently the preservation of a traditional religious and social order. As Andrew Gordon Craig has reported, British society at this time had distinct ‘levels’ that ‘were linked by deferential obligations (subject to ruler, man to master, child to parent)’. Manners, understood in this time to be proper behaviour, stood at the heart of an ordered society; the strong link they saw between ‘deviance and the fortunes of human societies’ meant that upholding proper behaviour was inextricably linked to the preservation of a nation and even a civilization. It was only natural, then, to utilize the most progressive and innovative means possible in order to preserve society.¹⁰⁷ For political, social and religious reasons, it became clear that ‘if the [Glorious] revolution was to be a success, it would have to be a moral as well as a political revolution’ as reformers sought for ‘radical change in the methods of controlling vice’.¹⁰⁸

Scotland’s cult of improvement had its roots in the mid to late seventeenth century as the Scots Parliament sought to alleviate poverty and ignorance through improvement of education, manufacturing and trade.¹⁰⁹ By the turn of the century, though, Scotland’s ideals of improvement had adapted to England’s model, which centred on using religious societies to promote piety and moral reform.¹¹⁰ In England, two great waves of reform—for piety and the reformation of manners—transpired during the 1690s. While it is important not to exaggerate the differences between these two waves of reform, there were certain distinctions. As early as the 1670s, the first group of reformers met to discuss and promote piety in and around London: they were devoted to self-examination and discussion of their spiritual lives, but these communities also reached out to the sick and poor. A second group was mainly ‘Churchmen’ who sought to improve society by ‘enforcement of the existing laws against vice’. Thomas Bray, for example, founded the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) within the same spirit as other reform societies: to

¹⁰⁷ Andrew Gordon Craig, *The Movement for the Reformation of Manners, 1688-1715*. (Thesis: University of Edinburgh, 1980), 1, 293.

¹⁰⁸ Dudley W.R. Bahlman, *The Moral Revolution of 1688* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 8, 14, 17-19, 22-25, 29-30.

¹⁰⁹ Davis D. McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement: A Survey of Eighteenth-Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Washington: Washington State University Press, 1969), 1.

¹¹⁰ W.K. Lowther Clarke, *A Short History of SPCK* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; New York: MacMillan Co., 1919), 13.

eradicate ignorant, improper practices amongst parishioners. Many of these early institutions arose at least in part from the conviction that both Church and society at large were becoming cold, bland and dissolute.¹¹¹

Societies for the Reformation of Manners: the Scottish Context

The Scottish societies for the reformation of manners and the SSPCK were the ‘first indications of a deep desire among the Scottish people to improve their nation through voluntary co-operative effort’.¹¹² As D.D. McElroy has persuasively demonstrated, this first wave of voluntary associations in Scotland provided the seeds for improvement through national development, which was flourishing by the 1720s. Indeed, associational movements of the 1720s such as agricultural societies conveyed a religious-like fervour in their zealous drive for national reform.¹¹³ More generally throughout Britain, as Anne Skoczylas affirmed, ‘the British intellectual climate of the 1720s was one in which the nature of virtue and the criteria for ethical standards were under intense scrutiny’ in this ‘new society of consumers’.¹¹⁴

In 1698 several men, including some ‘of weight and distinction’,¹¹⁵ formed a praying society in Edinburgh.¹¹⁶ These men were already corresponding with societies for the reformation of manners in England. An important figure in the nascent development of the praying society was the minister, James Kirkwood. Kirkwood was a Scottish correspondent for the English SPCK, and had been ousted as a minister from the Episcopalian establishment. From Kirkwood, along with other SPCK connections in London, the men of the Edinburgh praying society learned that English reformers believed ‘the education of the children of the poor’ was ‘the

¹¹¹ Clarke, *Short History of SPCK*, 13-14.

¹¹² McElroy, *The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth Century Scotland*, 18.

¹¹³ McElroy, *The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth Century Scotland*, 18-30.

¹¹⁴ Anne Skoczylas, ‘Archibald Campbell’s *Enquiry into the Original of Moral Virtue*, Presbyterian Orthodoxy, and the Scottish Enlightenment’, *The Scottish Historical Review* 87, 1, no. 223 (Apr. 2008), 71.

¹¹⁵ R. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, Vol. III, 193. Found in Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 176.

¹¹⁶ F.W.B. Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies, 1520-1799* (St. Leonards on Sea, U.K.: Budd & Gillatt, 1963), 150. Bullock explained that the Scottish praying societies ‘were an outcome of the Covenanted times after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and of episcopacy in 1661’. He continued that ‘in 1683 there were eighty of these Praying Societies with 7,000 members, prepared to defy Charles II, and later his successor, James II. After the Revolution of 1689 and the recognition of Presbyterianism as the Establishment, Praying Societies were maintained as an Evangelical nucleus in the Church of Scotland. One such Society, which included a number of prominent person, met about 1698 in Edinburgh every Monday afternoon for prayer and conference’.

panacea for social, religious and political ills': virtuous children would establish ultimately a virtuous society.¹¹⁷ Kirkwood anticipated and embodied the later societies for the reformation of manners and the SSPCK. He was pressing for a Bible in Gaelic during the 1680s. He also advocated educational reform through the establishment of charity schools, and was a founding member of the SSPCK. Ironically, he was also a non-juror, which caused suspicion of Jacobitism amongst his Presbyterian colleagues. Despite differences, Kirkwood was central in the development of Scotland's early voluntary associations.¹¹⁸

By 1700, the Church of Scotland formally extended the efforts of Edinburgh's informal praying society. The General Assembly commissioned several of its members to investigate the nation's moral condition. The commissioners reported back that 'much immorality and vice do still abound in this nation' due to 'the neglect of the due execution of the laws against prophaneness'. Some of these commissioners had read *An Account of the Societys for Reformation of Manners with a perswasive &c.* and were so inspired that they determined to motivate 'persons of all ranks to a more thorough Reformation in their own lives, and advancement thereof among others'. The commissioners made a clarion call for piety to stand central to the project of improvement, believing it was 'their duty' to ensure that 'all piously disposed persons'—ministers, elders, and themselves—should 'imitate the laudable zeal of these worthy Societies' that were proving so successful in England and Ireland. These efforts, however, should only go 'so far as may be suitable to the circumstances and laws of this nation, and the constitutions of this Church'. The commissioners believed that establishing these societies for the reformation of manners was 'absolutely necessary to the prosperity and welfare' of Scotland along with the glory 'of Church and State'.¹¹⁹

From the embryonic stages of Scotland's culture of clubs and societies, the improvement of both Church and State stood central to the reform measures. And just as in England, what began as a praying society transitioned by September of 1700 into two Scottish societies for the reformation of manners. Within five months

¹¹⁷ Jones, *The Charity School Movement*, 176.

¹¹⁸ Murray C. T. Simpson, 'Kirkwood, James (b. c.1650, d. in or after 1709)' *ODNB* (2004): accessed 11 August 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15682>.

¹¹⁹ D.D. McElroy, *Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth Century Scotland*, 16.

there were eleven. Each of these societies typically focused on one parish.¹²⁰ As will be shown, the SSPCK emerged from the consolidated Edinburgh society for the reformation of manners—labeled numer two—that came into existence during this time.¹²¹

But Josiah Woodward had reported by 1704 that thirteen of these societies existed in Edinburgh alone, and that the magistrates of the city ‘lately erected a new court against immorality’. According to Woodward, Edinburgh was a model for this new wave of reform: ‘tis hop’d that, with God’s blessing, a great part of the Christian World will be influenced hereby’. Furthermore, recordings of their activities were already translated into Latin as well as French and High Dutch ‘for the propagating the same glorious design in other nations, by which means a great part of the world will be soon acquainted with this undertaking and the success of it, and, it may reasonably be expected, will be excited to an imitation’. ‘In our Northern Plantations in America’ there were also sent reports of these societies in hopes ‘for promoting a Reformation, by these methods, in those parts of the world’. Woodward was already reported that ‘a more remarkable Reformation’ was already transpiring in America ‘than is in either of Her Majesty’s Kingdoms’. Particularly, in Boston, reformation societies were making great strides using the English methods that Edinburgh has so successfully appropriated.¹²²

The Edinburgh Society for the reformation of manners first met on 10 September 1700.¹²³ There were approximately fifteen in attendance. The attendees were men of rank, and several were part of the city’s law enforcement. But their collaboration with the ministers is striking; it was with ‘most of the ministers’ of Edinburgh whom they had first consulted ‘concerning the forming and constituting a society for mutual edification and the reformation of manners’: again, personal and

¹²⁰ McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement*, 1-2.

¹²¹ Allen, *Clubs of Augustan London*, 100. For more on Edinburgh societies for the reformation of manners as part of a broader reform effort that began in London after the Revolution of 1688, see Bahlman, *The Moral Revolution of 1688*, v.

¹²² Josiah Woodward, *An Account of the Progress of the Reformation of Manners, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, And other Parts of Europe and America. With Some Reasons and Plain Directions for our Hearty and Vigorous Prosecution of this Glorious Work*, 12th edition (London: Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing in Bartholomew-Close near West-Smithfield, 1704), 8-9.

¹²³ Register of the Resolutions and Proceedings of a Society for Reformation of Manners, &c, 3. Hereafter this reference will be called SRM followed by the appropriate page number (or date where a page number is not listed).

social cultivation were interlocked.¹²⁴ Before establishing the rules of the Society, the minutes record a very telling statement about the society's overarching philosophy:

Seeing by the acts made by our King and Parliament, it is recommended to all persons whatsoever, the doing of their duty, for restraint of vice and immoralities; and the commission of the late General Assembly, by virtue of a special remit, have recommended for this end such Societies as are entered into by private persons in our neighbor Kingdoms, It is resolved, that for mutual aid in promoting the Glory of God, the good of others, and our own edification, especially by obtaining in a careful manner, conformed to our respective stations, the laws made against profanes to be execute.¹²⁵

The Society would meet weekly and discuss ways to promote their policies but they would be 'subservient' to either the 'Civil or Ecclesiastic' laws of the nation. Of course, they themselves needed to be 'blameless' if they were going to correct others. Furthermore, theology played an important role in the Society's objectives and selection of membership. The minutes stated rigidly that 'none are admitted to our Society, who do not zealously own the true Reformed Protestant Religion, as it is now established by law and professed within this Church and Kingdom'.¹²⁶ While the Society relied upon Christians outside their Reformed Presbyterian scope to help them get established, they would not tolerate such heterodoxy within their own ranks: this was both a theological and national distinctive and they were assertive in its pronouncement.¹²⁷ In one of the most revealing statements of the leaders' view of religion and the public space, the society in their opening statements and rules declared it their duty to maintain an organic, unified culture that mutually supported the reformed state religion, the legal code, and other expectations of civil society. From the first meeting, the manners society said they were in communication with London in order to obtain English methods of operation.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ SRM: 3.

¹²⁵ SRM: 3.

¹²⁶ SRM: 3-4.

¹²⁷ I recognize that other motives could have been at play such as the appeasement of an anxious Church of Scotland. And they may have looked the other way with some of their colleagues. But these possibilities do not take away from my larger argument that theology mattered deeply to these leaders and informed their decisions about how they would conduct reform measures.

¹²⁸ SRM: 6.

Pervasive throughout the minutes, which the society recorded from 1700 to 1707, was a concern over the methods for maintaining constables as well as the process needed for eliminating vice and immorality. One example was a 1702 question and answer session—structured like a catechism—that provided very detailed information on how constables and other members of the society could combat vice.¹²⁹ The Society would also designate a specific day in December of 1700 to pray ‘on behalf of the conquest of God both abroad and at home’ and also for the Parliament session that was currently taking place.¹³⁰ J. Cameron Lees explained that the Society for the Reformation of Manners took their pious gestures even one step further: by conducting a weekly service in the High Church, St. Giles, which at least for a while was brimming with ‘a distinguished and even fashionable audience’.¹³¹

In 1701—the same year that the Act of Succession precluded the Catholic Stuart line from assuming the Crown—the manners society of Edinburgh re-stated their rules in the same spirit as the year before. They maintained a rigid adherence to the ‘true reformed Protestant religion’ and reiterated that it was ‘their duty, as much as they can to procure the execution of the laws against immoralities by the proper magistrates’. In another nod to their view of an organic and pious social fabric, the minutes declared that, as Christian men and ‘fellow subjects’, each member was ‘bound by all lawful and decent means to promote the Glory of God, promote the public good and extend charity to the souls of others’.¹³² These stated actions, done by private men, were ‘agreeable to the word of God, but also consonant to the acts of parliament council and General Assembly’. They hoped God would bless them in a similar way as he had blessed Ireland and England. Although many manners societies would be erected in Scotland, the members emphasised harmony and ‘joint’ collaboration amongst them, and they asked each manners society in Scotland to

¹²⁹ SRM: 30 March 1702. Also, see 1 April 1707, for examples of members patrolling the streets to help eliminate vice.

¹³⁰ SRM: 7.

¹³¹ J. Cameron Lees, *St. Giles’, Edinburgh: Church, College, and Cathedral from the earliest times to the present days* (Edinburgh & London: W. & R. Chambers, 1889), 248-249. Lees argued that one reason for the decline was that other attractions such as the theatre held the attention of distinguished citizens of the city. This implies, though, how trendy the ideas of improvement as well as the public articulation of it were to fashionable people of the day. It also speaks to the centrality of the sermon as a form of entertainment and inspirational and spiritual guidance.

¹³² SRM: ‘Rules to be Observed by the Societies for Promoting the Reformation of Manners in Themselves and Others’ (14 Jan. 1701).

nominate someone to meet once a month with the other delegates ‘as a committee of the whole societies’. These policies would hopefully expand their endeavours.¹³³ Soon, these proposals led to a ‘loose federation’ called Society Number Two, which was based in Edinburgh.¹³⁴ It was in October of the same year that the manners society first proposed funding charity schools in the Highlands.¹³⁵

Society Number Two recognized early on that they could not support charity schools on private donations alone. Therefore, the Society appealed to the Church of Scotland for supplementary funds.¹³⁶ In 1704 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland ‘made an act and recommendation for a contribution for the purposes’ of Society Number Two’s desire to educate the Highlands and Islands. They then formed a committee to assess the situation in the region more properly. By 1707, the General Assembly officially formulated a proposal for Society Number Two’s establishment of charity schools to the Scottish Highlands and Islands and abroad. They submitted this official proposal to the Crown.¹³⁷

It was this loose federation of societies for the reformation of manners that Daniel Defoe joined in 1707. Defoe was in Edinburgh as a secret agent of the Crown sent to persuade the Scots to support the Act of Union. He was ambivalent towards societies for the reformation of manners. McElroy pointed out that Defoe sharply criticized what he felt was these societies’ prudish surveillance of vice in the broader community (especially the lower classes) without a reformation of their own lives.¹³⁸ Defoe reprimanded, ‘that no man is qualified to reprove other men’s crimes, who allows himself in the practice of the same’, and he was outraged by those ‘who pretending to suppress vice, or being vested with authority for that purpose, yet make themselves the shame of their country, encouraging wickedness by that very authority they have to suppress it’.¹³⁹

¹³³ SRM: ‘Rules to be Observed’ (14 January 1701).

¹³⁴ McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement*, 1-2. As McElroy pointed out, this name derived from it being the second oldest society for the reformation of manners.

¹³⁵ SRM: 7 and 14 October 1701.

¹³⁶ McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement*, 7.

¹³⁷ Alexander Belsches, *An Account of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, from its Commencement in 1709. In which is included, the present state of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland with regard to Religion* (Edinburgh: A. Murray and J. Cochrane, 1774), 4.

¹³⁸ McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement*, 2, 5.

¹³⁹ Daniel Defoe, *Reformation of manners, a satyr* (London, 1702), preface.

But while Defoe was disgusted by those who practiced the very vices they claimed to suppress, he also urged passionately for reform, complaining that ‘vice should have so much shelter from civil power’. He admonished that ‘if none but faultless men must reprove others the Lord ha’ mercy upon all our Magistrates; and all our Clergy are undignified and suspended at a blow’. Indeed, his major problem with reform efforts came when they were used to harbour vice. Interestingly, though, it was religious and pious motivations that led to Defoe’s call for immediate reform: ‘how long may heaven be banter’d by a Nation, With broken Vows, and Shames of Reformation, And yet forbear to show its Indignation’: a primary example of such ‘shams’ could be seen with individuals whose religion was nothing more than ‘a masquerade’.¹⁴⁰

Despite Defoe’s acerbic view of reform efforts, he would soon praise Edinburgh’s society for the reformation of manners for its effectiveness: he regarded the society as superior to its counterparts in England. He also applauded the leadership’s efforts toward establishing the SSPCK.¹⁴¹ Despite his scepticism of England’s moral progress, he recognised that they excelled in their ability to coordinate and administrate reform movements. Therefore, he helped to write a letter to England in order to receive advice about the best methods of operation. Defoe later told the Scottish society that English societies had agreed to send ‘manuals’ of instruction to guide them and ‘for encouraging the work of reformation’. On 21 October 1707 Defoe presented letters from Mr. Thomas Morison on behalf of the ‘Societies in London’.¹⁴²

Edinburgh’s Society Number Two demonstrates the way religious piety informed the public discourse on improvement in Scotland. But the approach to promoting social piety and virtue was beginning to change. No longer did leaders depend upon punitive measures such as patrolling the streets. Now, educational reform was understood to be the most effective means of improvement. When looking overseas to the colonies, both the Church of Scotland and the Church of England, as well as English Presbyterians and Independents, coupled education with missionary work. Missions, like charity schools, sought to reform ‘backward’

¹⁴⁰ Defoe, *Reformation of manners*, preface, 1, 12.

¹⁴¹ McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement*, 3, 7-9.

¹⁴² SRM: 21 Oct. 1707 and 22 April 1707.

communities and improve their culture through catechesis and preaching. As seen with the SSPCK, educational reform converged with missionary activity during the SSPCK's colonial American ventures.

Improvement through Education: the Establishment of the Scottish SPCK

Purportedly, the cultivation and dissemination of knowledge held the same promise for Scottish ministers as it did for Scottish scholars and educators: 'it promised actual moral improvement, an incalculable benefit to which troubled Scottish minds of all persuasions were irresistibly drawn'.¹⁴³ After founding the English SPCK, Thomas Bray founded the Society for Propagating the Gospel to Foreign Parts (SPG) in order to spread the message of religious improvement to distant locales through education and the proper placement of Anglican clerics. As seen above, the Scottish Society for the Reformation of Manners followed suit with their initiation of the SSPCK. Both of these new societies were endorsed formally by the Monarchy.

The SSPCK led the way in thinking about innovative methods of improvement.¹⁴⁴ Scotland in general was particularly well suited to lead educational reform. Out of the four countries of the British Isles in the early eighteenth century, only Scotland could boast of a national system of education.¹⁴⁵ But even as the SSPCK established its reputation as an educational society to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, from their first year in operation they also had their eyes on foreign lands. While supported by the Monarchy, the SSPCK received much less money from the Crown than other societies such as the SPG.¹⁴⁶ This forced the Society to be more efficient and less reliant on the state. Therefore, a natural autonomy sprang up that allowed the SSPCK to politically support larger British aims while simultaneously negotiating with institutions outside the British imperial mainstream. This was particularly true when the SSPCK began what is considered its civilizing mission to the New World.

¹⁴³ David Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 12.

¹⁴⁴ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 85.

¹⁴⁵ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 166.

¹⁴⁶ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 178-79. Jones specified that 'It remained for all these contributions a poor Society, whose work was narrowly circumscribed by inadequate funds. Until the last decade of the century its income was less than £2000 a year'.

As mentioned earlier, England was the model for erecting societies in Scotland. Specific to the SSPCK, it is likely that William III's intimate adviser, William Carstares, carried the details of the English SPCK back from London to Edinburgh.¹⁴⁷ From the beginning, England's institutions for improvement loomed large in the Scottish imagination. But the SSPCK would function in increasingly different ways from the SPCK. The English Society, for example, was not incorporated and they could, with minimal use of their private funds, often persuade wealthy landowners to establish a school in their area. One major reason was because no other school existed. The SSPCK, on the other hand, encountered wealthy heritors in the Highlands who had already funded a school for their parish, even though the parish might be rural with many people having little or no access to the school. Depending neither on Crown nor landholders, the SSPCK evolved into a much more centralized institution with tighter administrative control and arguably more tactical maneuverability.¹⁴⁸ Whereas the SPCK functioned more like a public relations body that promoted certain schools but 'left the control of the schools in the hands of locally elected trustees and managers,' the SSPCK centralized its bureaucracy so that it 'controlled the schools as a central organizing and controlling body'.¹⁴⁹ As will be shown in later chapters, however, this held true only in the Society's Scottish context: it relied heavily upon 'locally elected trustees and managers' in the American colonies.

The SSPCK's Early Philosophy

A marked sense of optimism pervaded the SSPCK's opening minutes in 1709. They pointed to the growth and success of charity schools in England but also in Dublin, Holland, Switzerland, Prussia, and Saxony.¹⁵⁰ Presbyterians in Scotland and England had looked to Europe since the sixteenth century to see what 'the best

¹⁴⁷ Edwin Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World: Dr. Daniel Williams & the Scottish SPCK* (London: Dr. Williams's Trust, 1996), 5.

¹⁴⁸ Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 5-6.

¹⁴⁹ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 177-178.

¹⁵⁰ Register of the Actings and Proceedings of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, vol. 1 (November 3, 1709--March 6, 1718), 3. All volumes in this record will be hereafter referred to as GMM followed by the appropriate volume and page number; Belsches, *An Account of The Society*, 2-4.

reformed churches do'.¹⁵¹ It was in this spirit that the Society attached educational progress to the Reformed theological understanding of God's kingdom. Quoting a 'Jewish maxim', it argued that 'the prayer in which there is no mention made of the Kingdom of God is no prayer at all'. Furthermore, the minutes stated the Society's conviction that it was fulfilling the 'promises concerning the Kingdom of the Messiah'. Importantly, this kingdom would come in response to knowledge being spread. The Society pointed to other Protestant reformed societies—especially in the Netherlands—where missions, charity schools and libraries all existed to help with the reformation of manners. These educational projects caused them to 'see ground to hope for better and greater things to come'.¹⁵²

Specifically, the SSPCK sought to educate and thereby enlighten the 'inhabitants' of uncivilized communities in the Empire who were filled with 'rudeness and barbarity'. These 'uncivilized savages' were 'truly deplorable' and had not benefited in the least from the 'blessings' of the Glorious Revolution. Such backwardness stemmed from the 'nature of their country, of their religion and government, and of their language'.¹⁵³ As mentioned above, the primary way of reforming—and by default integrating—these subjects of the British Empire came through education. Proper pedagogy offered the potential of reforming churches and schools while also enlightening the 'barbarism' of inferior cultures.¹⁵⁴ The minutes claimed that this logic could apply not only to the Highlands and Islands but also throughout the colonial world.

The opening session reported 'sad complaints that in diverse of the plantations in America, there is great want of the means of knowledge and pastors to teach them'. The Society then recorded an admonition that 'so great a part of the world is to this day living in ignorance and without the knowledge of the true God...perishing for lack of knowledge'. This was due to a lack of charity, which they recognized as a virtue which followers of Judaism, Islam and even Paganism admired. They lamented that Christians were not showing charity even though they

¹⁵¹ James Kirk, "'The Polities of the Best Reformed Kirks": Scottish achievements and English aspirations in church government after the Reformation', *The Scottish Historical Review* 59, 1: no. 167 (April, 1980), 22.

¹⁵² GMM, 1: 1-4.

¹⁵³ Belsches, *An Account of the Society in Scotland*, 1.

¹⁵⁴ GMM, 1: 1.

were commanded to do so.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, the SSPCK would respond to this mandate through education in areas of highest need. But such a daunting task demanded competent and well-trained schoolmasters who could teach not only all denominations of Protestants but also ‘Papists...and all persons whatsoever’.¹⁵⁶

Educators would also teach students the ‘first principles of religion’, which would be conducive to the ‘improving of morality and civility’.¹⁵⁷ Students would also learn first how to read the Bible and other ‘pious books’, which would be followed by ‘the common rules of arithmetic’ alongside other practical and useful areas of knowledge that would materially improve the students’ lives.¹⁵⁸ The Society leaders stressed that schoolmasters ‘be particularly careful to instruct their scholars in the principles of the Christian Reformed religion’, which required catechizing of the students twice a week and a public prayer twice a day. Although they were willing to teach students who were not of the Reformed faith, they asserted that ‘Popery is not Christianity’. In their estimation, some of the areas in greatest need were places where Catholicism still prevailed.¹⁵⁹ Ignorance ran rampant and stemmed from both paganism and Popery: the fundamental job of the Society, therefore, was to spread civilization by promoting Christian knowledge.¹⁶⁰ ‘Liberal contributions’, of course, was one way everyone could effect this change, and while the projected ideals of the Society were distinctly Reformed, the request for ‘sums of benevolence’ extended to all who would give: it was ‘not only the duty of magistrates and ministers but of private Christians’.¹⁶¹

The Queen formally and financially supported the SSPCK’s goals to increase ‘piety’ and ‘virtue’ and to remove ‘error, idolatry, superstition, and ignorance’ which all saturated the ‘remote areas’ of her empire.¹⁶² Interestingly, these records report the story of the gentlemen who first met informally to discuss the ‘deplorable’ state of the Highlands and Islands. These men, according to the records, recognized that the region was deplorable *because* of ‘the growth of popery and the abounding of

¹⁵⁵ GMM, 1:1.

¹⁵⁶ Belsches, *An Account of the Society in Scotland*, 5-6.

¹⁵⁷ GMM, 1: 4.

¹⁵⁸ Belsches, *An Account of the Society in Scotland*, 5-6.

¹⁵⁹ GMM, 1: 2.

¹⁶⁰ Belsches, *An Account of the Society in Scotland*, 5-6.

¹⁶¹ GMM, 1: 1-4.

¹⁶² GMM, 1: 1.

atheism ignorance and profaneness occasioned through want of other means of Christian Education'.¹⁶³ This causal connection was a fundamental tenet of British improvement efforts, and various groups could agree upon this rationale. In line with the Queen's Letters Patent, the Lords of Council of the Court of Session constituted the SSPCK and they also nominated its members. The members who were nominated included 'nine Peers, the Lord Provost and some of the Magistrates of the City of Edinburgh, fourteen Lords of Council and Session, twenty-one Ministers, the Principals of the Four Universities and others in various professions'.¹⁶⁴ On 3 November, the Society held its first meeting, which was attended by many influential leaders of the city and surrounding areas along with most of the ministers of Edinburgh.¹⁶⁵

The Queen's involvement as early as 1707 was timely: her support coincided with the Act of Union. The Crown's endorsement of a reformed Scottish institution must have been viewed as auspicious to the Scottish elite who no doubt hoped for further national support from the Crown. But certainly the Queen would have been sceptical of the Society's Calvinist mission to 'instruct the people in the Christian Reformed Protestant Religion as may be competent'.¹⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the Society's ideals helped to administer law and order in some of the most difficult peripheral regions of the Empire. As Defoe's visit to Edinburgh demonstrated, the Queen desperately needed support from leaders in Edinburgh and throughout Scotland, and believed that all Protestants should rally around her efforts to defend the Empire from her most imminent threat: the Catholic Empire of France as well as its Jacobite allies.

But while the Queen's participation pointed to larger imperial threats, the SSPCK did not define its ambitions on these terms alone. As mentioned previously,

¹⁶³ GMM, 1: 4.

¹⁶⁴ I. Graham Andrew and A.G. Cairns, *The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh: C.J. Cousland & Sons, 1957), 13.

¹⁶⁵ Belsches, *An Account of the Society in Scotland*, 5. For context, see John Clive and Bernard Bailyn, 'England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America', *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 11, no. 2, Scotland and America (April, 1954), 206. Clive and Bailyn explained that in Edinburgh 'in the course of the century, social and cultural leadership had fallen to the professional classes, and especially to the legal profession'. The top social positions 'in order of rank was headed by the Lords of Session, Advocates, Writers to the Signet, and Lords' and Advocates' Clerks'. The SSPCK's membership and regular attendees included a whole host of people from this level of society. In addition, leading ministers also sat on the committee boards.

¹⁶⁶ GMM, 1: 1.

the Crown never substantially funded the SSPCK. Furthermore, the Society's Reformed theological mission, along with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland's deep abiding interest in the project, reflected the SSPCK's distinct role as not only a Scottish voluntary association but also as a trans-national, Reformed religious society. This role came to light during their early correspondence with Holland, England, Germany and Ireland. As later chapters demonstrate, the Society's identity developed further during the first three decades of the eighteenth century as certain English dissenters grew more interested in the Scottish Society's work. This trans-national dimension came into its own with the SSPCK's colonial undertaking.

But accompanying these religious ideals were material realities. The 'economic priorities of trade and colonization' that Alexander Murdoch has argued stood central to Scottish missionary statements would certainly apply to the SSPCK's institutional expansion both at home and abroad.¹⁶⁷ Daniel Williams illuminates the intertwined nature of the material and the spiritual during a sermon in 1689 giving thanks for the preservation of Protestantism during the Irish Rebellion of 1641. From Irish descent, Williams was an English Presbyterian and leading non-conformist in London.¹⁶⁸ His bequest to the SSPCK was what made the Society's colonial project even possible. During his sermon that was published the following year, Williams gave a warning that could just as easily apply to Scotland or the colonies in the eighteenth century: 'Ireland is the place that England's doom depends on'.¹⁶⁹ His outspoken support for union with Scotland and his promotion of dissenting causes throughout the British Isles and in the colonies verified a common belief that the fate of the outlying nations would determine the fate of England itself.¹⁷⁰ The SSPCK could promote its own national and institutional interests while simultaneously sharing Williams's anxieties over the state of true religion.

¹⁶⁷ Alexander Murdoch, *Scotland and America, c. 1600-c. 1800* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan), 126.

¹⁶⁸ Within the context of my thesis, I define British non-conformity as a specifically English response to the Church of England. This could also include those English colonists who were operating within this particular context. However, I do not include Scotland in this definition since it had an Established Church that was recognized as such by the British monarch.

¹⁶⁹ Daniel Williams, *The Protestant Deliverance from the Irish Rebellion, Begun October 23, 1641. Being a Thanksgiving-Sermon, Preached the 23d of October, 1689* (London: Printed for Tho Cockerill, at the Three-Legs in Poultry, over-against the Stocks-Market, 1690), 19, 26, 34.

¹⁷⁰ David L. Wykes, 'Williams, Daniel (c.1643–1716)', *ODNB* (Oct. 2009): accessed 24 January 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29491>.

During its earliest years, however, the SSPCK was courting not only the liberal ministers of the early English Enlightenment but also the early evangelical constituencies throughout England and in Europe. As early as 1706 the SSPCK was raising support through subscriptions. Attached to its advertisements for funding was an English translation of August Hermann Francke's *Pietas Hallensis*. Pietist groups in England such as the Methodists especially liked the Halle model of structuring charities, establishing schools and ministering to orphans.¹⁷¹ American Puritans deeply revered Francke and the work at Halle¹⁷² and, according to E. Brooks Holifield, 'Pietists attitudes' more generally 'would filter into America especially through the mission established by Francke at the University of Halle'.¹⁷³ The Scottish Society's genuflection to German piety suggests that, while the SSPCK emerged from the impulse for social and religious reform in Scotland, vibrant and variegated influences were shaping religious and social discourse throughout the North Atlantic World and the Continent. These personal networks and transnational collaborations will come into sharper focus in the next section.

The SSPCK's Trans-national Network

As seen above, common goals of improvement provided a means for comity between institutions such as the English SPCK and the Scottish SPCK. Furthermore, the Scottish Society borrowed heavily from the English Society's advice and precedent. But the two institutions differed significantly in their funding and administrative approaches. They also differed dramatically in doctrine. The English SPCK was distinctively Anglican. It received support from the Crown and strongly supported Anglican bishops. Thomas Bray, the founder of the SPCK, was at times wary of dissenting Protestant groups. The members of the Scottish SPCK, while closely aligned with and usually a part of the established Church of Scotland, were dissenters within the English context. Their theology was reformed, and they identified more

¹⁷¹ Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 5. It should be remembered that some Methodist communities espoused a theology centred on Calvinism while others were Arminian.

¹⁷² Ward, *Early Evangelicalism*, 93. As Ward pointed out, the Mather's in Puritan New England forged a strong connection to Halle. For example, Mather tried to send Halle his *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), stating that "the American Puritanism [being]...much of a piece with the Frederician Pietism".

¹⁷³ E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 399.

with Calvinist and Puritan communities throughout the Atlantic World. They, as much as anyone, had resisted infringement by the Church of England.

The doctrinal and associational fissures between the Scottish and English SPCK were reflected by the decision of many English Dissenters to support the Scottish rather than the English Society. The Scotsman William Carstares was a central figure in gaining support for the Scottish Society amongst English Presbyterians and Independents. Indeed, his background is representative of many English and Scottish Presbyterians who formed their 'political and religious sensibilities' during what Tristram Clarke called 'the harsh early attempts of the Restoration government to crush Presbyterian dissent'. Carstares worked as William of Orange's secret agent, and he experienced physical persecution because of his rebellious acts towards the English Crown. Later, Carstares served as King William's chaplain, acquiring the nickname 'Cardinal' because of his strong influence in court. Like King William, Carstares hailed from a staunchly Calvinist tradition, but his experiences across Europe had taught him tolerance and moderation: it broadened his contacts and his mind.¹⁷⁴

After the King's death, Carstares moved back to Scotland and accepted the position as principal of Edinburgh University in 1703. During his tenure, he infused the university with unprecedented academic rigour and administrative sophistication, which attracted more and more students. He abolished the Regent system at the university and replaced it with the Dutch model of academic specialization. In 1705 the General Assembly elected Carstares as its moderator, and many historians and commentators as early as Daniel Defoe viewed Carstares's contribution in the Act of Union as extremely significant. Nonetheless, Carstares remained suspicious of Episcopal operations, and his policies consistently promoted the Kirk and the Crown. As 'An orthodox but broad-minded minister, warm in his piety and sermons', Carstares fought for 'a broader base for the church than the covenants offered'. Known as a 'liberal before his time', Carstares is recognized as the forerunner of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland.¹⁷⁵ Without his connections and

¹⁷⁴ Tristram Clarke, 'Carstares, William (1649–1715)', *ODNB* (2004): accessed 3-4 Nov. 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4777>.

¹⁷⁵ Clarke, 'Carstares, William (1649–1715)', *ODNB* (2004): accessed 3-4 Nov 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4777>.

correspondence in London, the SSPCK's operations might have looked very different.

One of Carstares's prominent connections was Daniel Williams, the well-known dissenting English Presbyterian minister of Hand Alley, London. Williams was one of the first young men to preach as a English non-conformist after the 1662 Act of Conformity required ministers to adhere to the Book of Common Prayer. Like Carstares, Williams's formative years as a minister coincided with the Great Ejection when nearly two thousand non-conformist ministers exited their positions due to acts of exclusion that have become known as the Clarendon Code. Nonetheless, Williams abhorred antinomianism and recognised it to be 'a creed that could be a curse in more ways than one'.¹⁷⁶ Scotland's admiration for Daniel Williams came into clear focus in 1709 when Williams received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity (D.D.) from both the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow: this was the same year as the SSPCK's founding.¹⁷⁷ Incidentally, this would have been the first year that the University of Edinburgh had transitioned its curriculum from a regenting to a professorial system.¹⁷⁸

As suggested above, Williams and Carstares were the central figures in developing the English support of the Scottish Society and translating that support back to Edinburgh. Williams had promised personally a payment of £100, and was already sending the Society the interest by way of Carstares. The SSPCK asked Williams to be a correspondent and to find others in London who were willing to do the same. These correspondents would shape policy in important ways. Besides raising support by way of correspondents and subscriptions, the SSPCK worked with a London bookseller to distribute 500 copies of their charter as a way to advertise their message and increase their revenue. Although dissenters formed a consensus in vocally supporting the SSPCK, the overwhelming majority of financial contributions

¹⁷⁶ Thomas, Roger. *Daniel Williams: 'Presbyterian Bishop'*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1963), 15.

¹⁷⁷ Walter D. Jeremy, *The Presbyterian Fund and Dr. Daniel Williams's Trust: with Biographical Notes of the Trustees, and Some Account of Their Academies, Scholarships and Schools* (Edinburgh & London: Williams and Norgate, 1885), 81; Ernest A. Payne, *A Venerable Dissenting Institution: Dr. Williams Library, 1729-1979* (Leicester Printers: Church Gate Press, 1979), 8.

¹⁷⁸ Christine Shepherd, 'University Life in the Seventeenth Century', in *Four Centuries: Edinburgh University Life, 1583-1983* by Gordon Donaldson, ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 4.

in England came from Scotsmen living in London.¹⁷⁹ This was partially due to a growing Scottish network that created strong commercial and social ties between Scottish people living in various cities on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁸⁰ Such community networks were not unlike, and very much related to, the social and reformist networks that first led to the creation of the SSPCK.

As a leading dissenter in London, Williams eagerly agreed to generate support for the SSPCK by way of subscriptions. He coordinated a sub-committee to raise and collect these funds: it was comprised of seven Presbyterian ministers, two Baptist ministers and three ‘gentlemen’. In 1710, sixty Dissenters of a variety of denominations planned to convene in London to support the SSPCK. This meeting was thwarted, however, by the Sacheverell riots that decimated a large amount of dissenters’ property and meetinghouses.¹⁸¹

The story of the SSPCK in London must also include the renowned dissenter, Edmund Calamy. An SSPCK correspondent and close friend of Daniel Williams, Calamy was a Presbyterian minister and historian in London. He worked consciously within the tradition of his father and grandfather who had been ejected from their positions because of their non-conformity. In 1690, Calamy received funding to attend the University of Utrecht: the money came from the English non-conformist’s Presbyterian Fund.¹⁸² While visiting Leiden in 1691, Calamy became friends with William Carstares who was looking for suitable faculty members for the University of Edinburgh. Calamy studied the issues surrounding conformity while at

¹⁷⁹ Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 6-7. Welch explained that the SPCK correspondents had much more influence in supervising the schools and other hands-on tasks. The SSPCK’s major role was that of providing funds. Even though Welch argued this valid point, this thesis demonstrates that London also influenced policy in substantive ways outside of sheer financial decisions. Also, the SSPCK’s colonial leaders played an active role in the lives of the missionaries and the direction of the Society’s policies.

¹⁸⁰ For works of Scots working in London and throughout the Atlantic, see David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge, 1995); Stana Nenadic, *Scots in London in the Eighteenth Century* (Lewisburg, PA, 2010); Richard Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and America* (London, 2006); Tawny Paul, ‘The Role of the St. Andrews Society in the Formation of Business and Credit Networks in Colonial Philadelphia (American History Seminar in Edinburgh, 2010).

¹⁸¹ Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 6-7. Incidentally, Henry Sacheverell preached his famous sermon against non-conformity in 1709: as mentioned above, in Scotland during this same year the SSPCK was being founded and the English Presbyterian leaders Daniel Williams and Edmund Calamy were receiving their honorary doctorates.

¹⁸² Olive M. Griffiths, *Religion and Learning: A Study in English Presbyterian Thought from the Bartholomew Ejections (1662) to the Foundation of the Unitarian Movement* (Cambridge University Press, 1935), 178.

Oxford before then moving to London. There he eventually became Williams's assistant at Hand Alley as well as a guest preacher at the famed Salters' Hall. Calamy is best known for his *Abridgement of Mr. Baxter's Narrative* (1702), which provided a history of dissent and was both praised and lambasted with much vigor by opposing sides: this led to his role as a leading figure amongst non-conformists. An example of the veneration of Calamy amongst Scottish intellectuals comes from the celebrated Robert Wodrow who requested that Calamy read a manuscript version of his *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*.¹⁸³ During his reform efforts at the University of Edinburgh, it is important to note that Carstares worked with Edmund Calamy to construct 'a residential hall for dissenters, but it caused a competitive squabble with Glasgow University, and failed for lack of support'.¹⁸⁴ Still, Calamy's influence not only in England but also in Scotland was clearly substantial.

William Carstares invited Calamy to Scotland for his health in 1709. But Calamy visited for more reasons than that. As David Wykes has pointed out, he was hoping 'to establish a correspondence on behalf of English dissent with the ministers there following the union with Scotland'. While in Scotland, the London dissenter visited the General Assembly and preached at the New Church. Calamy remarked that the Assembly's proceedings appeared like 'the Inquisition revived': a statement that reflected his apprehension about Scottish Presbyterianism's rigidity. During his trip he was made a free Burgess of Edinburgh, and he interacted with a 'wide circle of leading figures' including social elites such as the high commissioner. But Wykes said that Calamy 'relished the claret of his hosts more than their church government'. Nonetheless, in April and May of 1709, the University of Edinburgh conferred upon him respectively an honorary Master of Arts (M.A.) and a D.D. King's College, Aberdeen and the University of Glasgow would follow suit with honorary D.D. degrees. Calamy was an eminent voice of dissent and, after Williams's death in 1716, was the 'leading Presbyterian minister' in England. During this time, he was also the leader of the SSPCK's work in London. Known as a moderate—indeed his

¹⁸³ David L. Wykes, 'Calamy, Edmund (1671–1732)' *ODNB* (2004): accessed 2 Nov. 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4357>.

¹⁸⁴ Clarke, 'Carstares, William (1649–1715)' *ODNB* (2004): accessed 3-4 Nov. 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4777>.

book *Defence of Moderate Non-Conformity* helping to verify this position—Calamy established the framework whereby historians continue to understand early English non-conformity.¹⁸⁵

Although Calamy appeared hesitant if not troubled with aspects of Scottish religious culture, his relationship with Williams and Carstares was strong. Indeed, this circuit of leading ministers reflected strengthening ties between Scottish Presbyterians and English non-conformists. Olive Griffiths has reported an overwhelming ‘number of English dissenters who were enrolled in Scottish universities’ once these universities became Presbyterian in 1690.¹⁸⁶ In any case, during the same year that these two leading London dissenters received honorary degrees from the University of Edinburgh, William Carstares was helping to enact the legislation to obtain a Letters Patent for the SSPCK.¹⁸⁷ Williams and Calamy’s visit to Scotland highlights the flourishing relationship between London and Edinburgh: a relationship that was integral to the newly founded SSPCK.

The SSPCK was a productive conduit within which the two liberal, non-Anglican religious communities in London and Edinburgh could operate. Carstares, Williams and Calamy were deeply involved in the affairs of the SSPCK: all three were correspondents and Calamy was a trustee of Williams’s estate. In London, Calamy and Williams also played very important roles in the SSPCK’s project in Massachusetts. Indeed, virtually all of the SSPCK’s London correspondents—many also linked to Williams’s Trust and the Presbyterian Fund—were liberal dissenters working within the heritage of Puritan and Independent non-conformity that stretched back to the sixteenth century.¹⁸⁸ The SSPCK’s relationship to English dissent became very important during the Scottish Society’s voyage across the Atlantic.

¹⁸⁵ Wykes, ‘Edmund Calamy’ *ODNB* (2004): accessed 2, 20 Nov 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4357>.

¹⁸⁶ Griffiths, *Religion and Learning*, 68.

¹⁸⁷ *GMM*, 1: 1-4. The General Assembly recommended the SSPCK to the Crown on 19 April and the Queen’s issued the Society’s Letters Patent in May.

¹⁸⁸ For more information about these members, see Jeremy, *The Presbyterian Fund*.

Daniel Williams and the Colonial Identity of the SSPCK

Carstares was the most important Scottish link between Edinburgh and London, but it was Daniel Williams who actually established a presence for the Scottish Society in London. It was also he who provided the financial means for the SSPCK to expand to the American colonies. Williams had acquired a sizable fortune due to two marriages, and he spent his time and money liberally to promote several dissenting societies and causes.¹⁸⁹ In their earliest documents, the SSPCK had proclaimed their desire to expand to the American colonies. However, the ‘narrowness of their funds’ confined their initial efforts to the Highlands and Islands.¹⁹⁰ It was not until Williams’s bequest in 1717 that the Society could consider seriously a project across the Atlantic. Williams bequeathed the £100 he had promised with interest at 6%, which, as mentioned before, he probably began donating during his lifetime. Williams also left, in the words of his will, ‘all my lands and tenements in and about Catworth in Huntingdonshire, being let at about sixty eight pounds *per annum*’ to the Society.¹⁹¹ In the enlightenment-era emphasis on building libraries on both sides of the Atlantic, Williams established perhaps the most renowned library of nonconformity and one that continues to exist in London.¹⁹²

This substantial financial arrangement came with demands. First, the Society would not receive the lands and tenements until they had ‘sent three qualified ministers to abide in foreign infidel countries’ for one year on their own expense. Furthermore, the Catworth estate would remain in the hands of the SSPCK ‘as long as the said Society continues to carry on the said attempt, for the conversion of Infidel countries, and that the members of the said Society are permitted to be freely elected’. If the Scottish Society ‘dissolved’, if they stopped freely electing members, or if they would ‘cease to send and maintain a competent number of well qualified ministers in Infidel foreign countries’ specifically ‘to endeavour their conversion to

¹⁸⁹ For a full list of causes Williams supported, see his Will (cited below). Also see Jeremy, *The Presbyterian Fund and Dr. Daniel Williams’s Trust*, 83.

¹⁹⁰ Excerpt from Report of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (1774), frame 35 (hereafter referred to as ‘Excerpt’); Belsches, *State of the Society in Scotland*, 13-14.

¹⁹¹ *A True Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the late Reverend Daniel Williams, D.D.* (London: Printed for R. Burleigh in Amen-Corner, 1717), 17.

¹⁹² Stephen Kay Jones, *Dr. Williams and His Library* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1948). As Jones pointed out, much of Williams’s library was comprised of the library he bought from Dr. William Bates, a ‘prince’ amongst dissenters during his day. See Jones, 1-4.

God in Christ', then the Catworth estate would go to Williams's 'heirs and trustees'.¹⁹³ In response to these demands, the Society commissioned its ministers in the colonies to preach to the 'heathen Nations lying adjacent to New-England' and to educate them 'in the principles of the Christian reformed Protestant Religion'. Along with the ministers' task to 'preach and catechize', they were simultaneously commissioned to 'keep a school' for teaching the Bible 'and other good and pious books, writing and arithmetic, to understand and speak the English language, and to direct them how to pray and to carry as becometh the gospel'.¹⁹⁴

While Williams's gift to the Scottish Society was very generous, its stipulations were demanding. To be sure, the tensions between the SSPCK's educational objectives in the Highlands and Islands and the missionary impulse in the colonies prescribed by Williams did not go unnoticed by the Society. Edwin Welch argued that the excruciatingly slow pace at which the Catworth estate was being transferred to the SSPCK was due to the Scottish Society's own hesitance to accept the 'new venture'. The SSPCK balked at the opportunity, according to Welch, because they were 'very successful in founding schools' in the Highlands and Islands and 'had little wish to do more'. From 1720 to 1722, the SSPCK's schools in Scotland increased from forty-eight to fifty nine. With such success, they did not want to risk funding three colonial missionaries for the first year. It was true that British leaders saw the East Indies and North America as the two ripe venues for missionary work. But how would they even find ministers for this venture in the colonies? These variables all caused the SSPCK to hesitate at the idea of starting a mission overseas in America.¹⁹⁵

Welch's hypothesis is compelling and merits some validity, but it could only reflect the SSPCK's sentiments during this early period of transition between 1716 and 1728. Indeed, during this period the SSPCK's minutes portray at times a Society struggling to meet the requirements of the bequest. But this does not equate with the SSPCK's hesitancy to proceed, but speaks more to the difficult requirements of the bequest. Even during the early part of the century, inclusive of the 1716 to 1728

¹⁹³ *A True Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the late Reverend Daniel Williams*, 17.

¹⁹⁴ 'Commission and Instruction to Missionaries in New-England, November 5, 1730', in *An Abridgment of the Statutes and Rules of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Fleming and Company, 46-47.

¹⁹⁵ Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 9.

period, the SSPCK was keen to compete with other associations and there is no solid indication that it was content to remain in Scotland. The Society was advancing the idea of expansion to colonial America as early as 1709 during its opening minutes, and they were no doubt aware of the English SPCK's missionary work in India. In addition, they would have been keenly cognizant of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) as well as the New England Company (NEC), and were ready to compete for global significance with the other major missionary societies.

There were several much more likely factors involved in the delay. The first pertained to the bickering and questioning of certain parts of Williams's will and the allocations he had prescribed. For example, David Wykes has explained that 'Williams's sister and heir-at-law, Mrs. Elizabeth Roberts, who was entitled to all property that he had not legally devised, questioned the legality of some parts of the will...'.¹⁹⁶ John Grigg has highlighted how repairs of the bequested Catworth estate along with other 'largely technical issues' explained the protracted transfer to the Society in the 1730s. The executors may also have hesitated due to questions of how the SSPCK had organized itself in the colonies: an issue that also certainly came into play during the 1730s.¹⁹⁷ It appears clear, then, that the logistics of managing a large estate combined with the burdensome demands of the bequest were the major factors that hindered the progress of the SSPCK in its overseas ambitions to colonial America.

The decision-making body of the SSPCK consisted of fifteen men in Edinburgh called the Committee of Directors. The Directors received and sent correspondence, convened every week or two in order to deliberate policy, and ultimately recommended policies to the General Meeting's quarterly sessions (when all members were expected to attend). It was during committee meetings that the decisions for the Society were made. The men who comprised the Committee varied significantly, but typically included ministers, professors and solicitors as well as writers to the signet, physicians, merchants and members of other professions.

¹⁹⁶Wykes, 'Williams, Daniel' *ODNB* (2009): accessed 24 Nov. 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29491>.

¹⁹⁷ John A. Grigg, "'How This Shall Be Brought About": The Development of the SSPCK's American Policy' *Itinerario* 32 no. 3 (2008), 50-51.

As late as December of 1727, the prominent Director William Hamilton, a minister and also professor at the University of Edinburgh, gave a report to the committee of his trip to London. He had talked to Dr. Calamy about Dr. Williams's legacy, and Calamy reiterated that the Society must 'perform the conditions' or else they 'could not expect their Legacy'.¹⁹⁸ This implies, as suggested above, that the Scottish Society was eager to acquire the funds even though the logistics were still not in place. Nonetheless, by 1728 the SSPCK had 78 schools and 2,757 pupils in the Highlands but still no representatives in the colonies.

A London-Edinburgh Re-Negotiation: the Colonial Embark

In October of 1728, Sir James Campbell, Mr. Robert Hepburn, professor William Hamilton and the Society's treasurer, Joseph Cave, met at John's Coffee Shop in Edinburgh. At the coffee shop, they selected a London contact that would assist them in transferring the bequest to the Society. The SSPCK had waited over a decade and still could not access the estate: they now seemed more determined than ever. The Society was ready to pressure the hesitant board of trustees in London that controlled the Williams's estate.¹⁹⁹

Dr. Williams had stipulated that the SSPCK should correspond at least once a year with his executors in London.²⁰⁰ In 1728, they established a board of correspondents there. A major influence in this process was Alexander Dundas, a London correspondent who wanted to contribute more to the SSPCK. As a 'member of a well-connected Scottish merchant family',²⁰¹ Dundas took a keen interest in the SSPCK's pursuits. In London, he formed close ties with the newly appointed Massachusetts governor, Jonathan Belcher, before Belcher headed to his colonial post. While Dundas's relationship with Belcher served his interests as a merchant, Scotsman and SSPCK correspondent, it also helped Belcher. As a native of

¹⁹⁸ SPCK Records: Minutes of Committee Meetings, Vol. 4 (April 13 1727 to January 13, 1732), 44. All volumes in the Directors Committee Meeting Minutes will hereafter be referred to as CMM followed by the appropriate volume and page number.

¹⁹⁹ CMM, 4: 108-109.

²⁰⁰ *A True Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the late Reverend Daniel Williams, D.D.*, 18. Williams left his estate in Essex to the New England Company (NEC). Williams also left money for itinerants in the West Indies. He gave funding both to Glasgow and the 'College of Cambridge in New-England' (now Harvard) and seemed to have confidence and close relations with the ministers of Boston. He also bequeathed money to the Society for the Reformation of Manners specifically 'for the education of youth'. See pages 9, 19, 20, 30, 35.

²⁰¹ Grigg, 'How This Shall Be Brought About', 46.

Massachusetts, the new governor realized the importance of having connections in London: interests that could serve his larger ambitions as governor.²⁰²

But Belcher was also eager to cultivate piety and promote true religion in the colony. One of the leading dissenters in London, Isaac Watts, was thrilled to hear the news of Belcher becoming governor, and many others lauded the idea of a 'pious administration' in the colonies. Belcher was communicating closely with renowned catholic clergyman, Benjamin Colman, who praised the new governor as 'more worthy to represent His Royal Person' than any other.²⁰³ In 1729, Alexander Dundas wrote the SSPCK in Edinburgh and suggested, amongst other things, that the Society could make the best use of the bequest by commissioning missionaries in the colonies who were already familiar with Native American language and culture. It was during the late 1720s that John Dundas and Baillie Dundas also sat on the Committee of Directors in Edinburgh.²⁰⁴ Within the SSPCK alone, this Dundas faction played an important transatlantic role that intertwined issues of commerce, politics, religion and family interest.

Despite these efforts, by 1730 the London correspondents informed Edinburgh that the bequest could not sustain three missionaries. As a result, the Society needed to add more funds in order to fulfil the obligations of the bequest. Heeding the advice of Dundas, the Society decided both to find missionaries in the colonies and to 'make the poor heathen people in New-England the first objects of their care in these places'.²⁰⁵ One major reason for this was that New England churches resembled Scottish churches doctrinally.²⁰⁶ Another reason was that non-Anglican English and Scottish Protestants had historical ties going back to the seventeenth century:²⁰⁷ as pointed out above, dissenters in England supported the SSPCK rather than the English SPCK. In the colonies, too, the SSPCK associated with Calvinists whom they believed continued within the tradition of certain non-

²⁰² Grigg, 'How This Shall Be Brought About', 47.

²⁰³ Clifford K. Shipton, *New England Life in the Eighteenth Century: Representative Biographies from Sibley's Harvard Graduates* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963), 50-51.

²⁰⁴ CMM, 4: 44, 203, 244-245.

²⁰⁵ 'Commission to Correspondents in New-England, September 14, 1730' in *An Abridgment of the Statutes and Rules of the Society*, 44.

²⁰⁶ Mills, 'The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge', 18; Grigg, 'How This Shall Be Brought About', 46; GMM, 2: 198.

²⁰⁷ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 92-95.

Anglican, Protestant ideals. But a third reason, shown above, was Dundas's connection to New England: a relationship that deeply affected the Scottish Society's initial efforts in that region. Indeed, the commercial ties ran very deep between Glasgow and Boston, and many merchants on both sides of the Atlantic participated in the ventures of the Scottish Society until the Revolutionary War.

The SSPCK's links between London and Edinburgh reflected the significant influence of dissenters in the Scottish Society's missionary aspirations. From 1662 onwards, Dr. Williams and, after his death, his Trustees consistently rejected acts of conformity by the Episcopal establishment.²⁰⁸ Carstares also defined himself firmly within the tradition of Scottish Presbyterianism even as he emphasized freedom of conscience and identified strongly with leading English dissenters. This continuity between Scotland and England within the SSPCK can be seen clearly through William Hamilton. As mentioned above, Hamilton's leadership in the SSPCK loomed large, whether in a coffee shop, a formal Directors' meeting or amongst the religious leadership in London and Edinburgh. As leading minister, educator and social reformer, Hamilton sheds light on the role of piety and missions in Scottish ideas of improvement and reform.

William Hamilton's Dilemma: Piety, Leadership and Freedom of Conscience

William Hamilton was one of the most important figures representing the SSPCK in the 1730s.²⁰⁹ He played a prominent role in acquiring the proper connections and support in London so that the SSPCK might pursue its colonial ambitions. Henry Sefton has argued that Hamilton embodied the transition between the religious warfare of the seventeenth century and the ecclesiastical controversies of the eighteenth'.²¹⁰ Gordon Donaldson recognized Hamilton as an important example of

²⁰⁸ Jeremy, *The Presbyterian Fund*. Jeremy provides biographical information of each trustee and each person who served on the board for the Presbyterian Fund. This information reveals the striking components of non-conformity and freedom of conscience that stood at the heart of the beliefs of Williams and his colleagues in London and Edinburgh.

²⁰⁹ It was Hamilton, as Moderator of the General Assembly in 1730 until his death just months after his sermon to the SSPCK mentioned below, that worked to extend patronage and quiet an increasingly restless faction of the Church. See Laurence A.B. Whitley, 'William Hamilton (1669-1732), Church of Scotland Minister' in *ODNB* (2009): accessed 12 July 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64386>.

²¹⁰ Henry Sefton, "Neu-lights and Preachers Legall": some observations on the beginnings of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland' in *Church, Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929* by Norman MacDougall, ed. (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1983), 188. Sefton was offering this interpretation of Hamilton as a corrective to William Law Mathieson's view of Hamilton as, in

how heterodoxy and scepticism were seeping into the Church of Scotland.²¹¹ But in an important critique of Donaldson's assertion, Sefton argued that Hamilton was not simply a stock character or prototype of enlightened progress towards secularization. He was raised in a Covenanting community. As the University of Edinburgh's Professor of Divinity since 1709, he admonished his students to respect the 'fathers of the Church' who did not have access to 'literature and liberality of sentiment so amply provided in the happy times'. His nuanced view of Scotland's Covenanting history, along with his correspondence with dissenters both inside and outside of England, are significant not only because of his prominent role in the SSPCK but also because his exceptional influence on British and especially Scottish religion, education and missions.²¹²

While Hamilton appreciated his Covenanting heritage, he spurned 'inflexible adherence to traditional dogmas'. Some questioned his orthodoxy because of his liberal and 'reticent' approach to doctrinal issues. It has recently been said that 'his influence was crucial in helping the Kirk to advance from the bitterness of the seventeenth century into the era of the Enlightenment'.²¹³ Indeed, his reticence was no doubt due to his belief that students should wrestle with complex issues and make an informed decision based upon rational inquiry rather than a formulaic creed. But it would be hasty to dismiss or overlook Hamilton's desire to wrestle *within* his Scottish Presbyterian tradition.

Hamilton preached to the Scottish Society's annual meeting in 1732. This was the same year that his persistent negotiations with the Williams's Trustees and other London colleagues bore fruit: three SSPCK minister missionaries were now working in Massachusetts.²¹⁴ In his sermon to the SSPCK, Hamilton gave an interpretation of history that informed both his and the Scottish Society's understanding of improvement and reform. He contended that 'the delusions of

Sefton's words, 'a representative of the moderation of the seventeenth century and Hutcheson as a typical eighteenth-century Moderate'.

²¹¹ Gordon Donaldson, *The Faith of the Scots* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1990), 103-105. Donaldson quoted a contemporary of Hamilton who stated that the divinity professor 'departs from the Calvinistic doctrine taught in the Church, though he has the wisdom to keep himself in the clouds'.

²¹² Sefton, "Neu-Lights and Preachers Legall", 188.

²¹³ Whitley, 'William Hamilton', *ODNB* (2009): accessed 12 July 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64386>.

²¹⁴ CMM, 4: 304. This is one of several examples in the records of Hamilton leading the Society in their colonial mission.

Popery' had deeply tainted 'primitive Christianity' until the 'blessed Reformation next was brought about among us by the good hand of God'. In a historiographical spirit foreshadowing William Robertson while simultaneously echoing Richard Baxter, Hamilton continued that the Glorious Revolution and the Protestant Hanoverian Succession were two clear manifestations of the progress of the Protestant Reformation. Together these worked to defeat ignorance and Popish superstition and promote true religion and 'all our precious liberties sacred and civil.'²¹⁵ It is crucial here to note Hamilton's perspective on secular and sacred space. According to him, the Reformation refined and enlightened true religion; this caused a political revolution. This framework explained the recent political and religious negotiations that culminated in Union. Again, the continuity and refinement of piety, true religion and civil reform was a constant appeal and justification during the first half of the eighteenth century in Scotland.

But Hamilton's views on piety revealed the complex tension within non-Anglican British Protestantism. He acknowledged that the first church experienced 'miraculous gifts and powers' during 'the first sudden propagation of the Gospel'. After that initial downpour, however, God left the propagation of the Gospel to 'the ordinary way of human instruction, by men who have the promised assistance of his Spirit'. Out of those who had received the Spirit, it was this '*certain order*' of men—'the preachers of the gospel'—who 'have it more immediately for their work and business to instruct people in the knowledge of Christ' [my italics]. Hamilton contended, therefore, that an educated ministerial elite who had received formal training should represent true religious liberty to those who were oppressed, ignorant and deceived.²¹⁶

Hamilton invoked the Spirit in his argument for religious freedom: a nod towards piety being necessary for true religion. But this rationale dovetailed with his desire for a clerical class to form and espouse rational theological opinions about the Spirit. Put another way, freedom of conscience for Hamilton demanded prudence that could only be realized with the guidance of a sophisticated social elite. This

²¹⁵ William Hamilton, *The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion. A Sermon Preached in the High Church of Edinburgh, Monday, January 3, 1732. Upon Occasion of the Anniversary Meeting of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge; And published at their Request* (Edinburgh: Printed by R. Fleming for Gavin Hamilton, 1732), 25-26.

²¹⁶ William Hamilton, 'The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion, 29-30.

tension in what one might call a directed or qualified freedom of conscience was not only for children: it could liberate all who were ignorant and oppressed. For Hamilton, like the SSPCK as an institution, expanding what they considered the enlightenment and liberty found in true religion was an exercise in benevolence. In Hamilton's estimation, the SSPCK was the ideal vehicle for spreading liberty through the promotion of education and piety.²¹⁷

Conclusion

As Scotland's first official voluntary association, Society Number Two's records contain echoes of its roots as a praying society, which emulated England institutionally as a way of promoting improvement and reform: this was another aspect of the 'homogenizing process of Anglicization' that occurred from 1688 to 1763.²¹⁸ Number Two's determination to found an educational society led to the formation of the SSPCK. While improvement through education was part of a larger movement throughout European countries and the colonies, the SSPCK built upon the earlier discourse of improvement that emphasized the cultivation of piety and virtue and the extermination of vice. Though institutionally based upon the English model of voluntary associations, the SSPCK relied not on their formal political union with the Crown but rather their spiritual union with Protestant Calvinists (broadly termed) on both sides of the Atlantic and throughout Europe and Ireland. Once established, the SSPCK's colonial work brought together the two major trends of social improvement in Georgian Edinburgh: educational reform and missions.

²¹⁷ A clear historiography within the records and sermons of the SSPCK was emerging that informed the Society's self-perception. This story began with the early church and then connected this 'true' church with John Knox's defeat of Catholicism in Scotland. Superstition and ignorance dominated until true religion and knowledge transformed both Church and State. Members of the SSPCK believed the Society was perpetuating this narrative.

²¹⁸ Colin Kidd, 'North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotisms', *The Historical Journal* 39 no. 2 (June 1996), 378-379; Clive and Bailyn, 'England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America', 202. Clive and Bailyn argued that cities like Edinburgh were being linked more closely to places such as Boston and Philadelphia, which were beginning to experience, if not a 'cultural renaissance' like Scotland, at least a 'cultural blossoming'. For a sampling of this colonial-provincial debate, see Donald H. Meyer, *The Democratic Enlightenment* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976), ix-xi; Ned C. Landsman, *From Colonials to Provincials: American Thought and Culture, 1680-1760* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 3, 7; James Livesey, *Civil Society and Empire: Ireland and Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009), 11; P.J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain India and America c. 1750-1783* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2005).

The SSPCK's first leaders and promoters of colonial missions represent the religious Enlightenment's belief in reform through education as an extension of and in line with the Protestant Reformation. This interweaving of Reformation and Enlightenment narratives puts into sharp relief F.W.B Bullock's contention that these religious societies in the early eighteenth century were in continuity with the Reformation tradition. According to Bullock, these reform movements within the Church—'ecclesiolae in ecclesia—grew mainly out of the particular needs of the respective ages in which they flourished' even though distinct 'links' existed between these movements between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.²¹⁹

As William Hamilton told his SSPCK colleagues, theirs was the task of continuing the age of improvement by transmitting enlightened religion to the edges of the British Empire. But Hamilton's dual emphasis upon missions and enlightened religion through ministerial education yielded a taut strain that would prove problematic in the upcoming years. As the next chapter demonstrates, the SSPCK's first project in America conveyed to the Society the scarcity of qualified ministers in the colonies as well as the overall difficulty negotiating—both politically and culturally—the parameters of their new project of enlightenment through missions.

²¹⁹ Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies*, x. For examples of Bullock's direct link of these societies to missionary activity in the eighteenth century, see pp. 105-108 and 123-125. Bullock's treatment of Societies for Reformation of manners begins on p. 135 where he tries to distinguish between them and other religious societies. Regardless of one's view of the relation between religious societies and the societies for reformation of manners, the link between them in the Scottish context is incontrovertible. For further evidence of the link between Reformation-era societies and confraternities and that of Enlightenment-era religious clubs and societies, see, for example, Frederick Deland Leete, *Christian Brotherhoods* (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings and Graham, 1912), 205-218.

Chapter Two

Piety and Religious Instruction: the SSPCK's First Colonial Endeavour

Introduction

In the eyes of those participating in the SSPCK during the 1730s, the robust expansion of knowledge and liberty was providential. These reformers were religious leaders who viewed the SSPCK as both a missionary society and an educational institution that could help to bring about the spiritual and cultural reforms they felt were needed. As this chapter submits, the SSPCK provided a platform for religious figures of the early Enlightenment to engage with one another on both sides of the Atlantic. However, this process of transatlantic collaboration was frustrated throughout the 1730s by the colonial events on the ground.

This chapter first describes the significant people and policies of the SSPCK in Edinburgh and London that led to its first two expeditions in America. It also looks at some of the earliest individual brokers of the SSPCK in the colonies and explains their significance to the Society's overall direction. These were the leaders of the new clerical class that John Corrigan argued was forming in the early eighteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic. These ministers 'believed that body and soul, matter and spirit, functioned together in such a way as to form the whole person and that the affections were a product of the cooperation between these two sides of a person's nature'.²²⁰ With Corrigan's framework in mind, a central focus of the chapter will be upon the SSPCK's most important colonial leader in the 1730s, Benjamin Colman. Colman demonstrates the complex ways that many religious thinkers throughout the Atlantic world were seeking to reconcile the new learning with their orthodox faith and their impulse towards evangelism and missions. The way that colonial leaders such as Benjamin Colman reconciled these tensions led to the SSPCK's new direction in the 1740s: a process that later chapters develop more fully. Colman represents a shifting and contested identity amongst many British Protestant leaders who participated in the early Enlightenment. These leaders embraced a more enlightened religion, but were worried about what they perceived

²²⁰ Corrigan, *Prism of Piety*, 6.

as an increasingly sterile and lifeless church. The developments of the SSPCK's policies are foundational for understanding this colonial story. Combined with an understanding of the Society's members who were evolving and negotiating with larger religious and cultural trends, this chapter also sets up the important shift in policy and action on the ground during the 1740s.

Finally, this chapter tells the story of the SSPCK's first two colonial projects during the 1730s. Reflected in this story is London's central role in the decision-making policies of the Society's colonial project during this decade. This was due to Daniel Williams's Trustees and his Presbyterian Fund along with the SSPCK's prominent London correspondents such as Secretary Adam Anderson. As this chapter makes clear, the Society's expansion to colonial America was followed by institutional instability. The initial campaigns of the early Enlightenment members of the SSPCK in Edinburgh and London were proving disheartening when transferred to the colonies. Their desire to civilize the colonial outposts of the Empire had turned into frustration and loss. Indeed, by the end of the decade, the Society itself needed salvation.

The SSPCK and the Politics of Missions, 1729-1738

In December of 1729, two of the most influential SSPCK members in London, Alexander Dundas and secretary Adam Anderson, wrote to the Edinburgh Directors. In the letter, they recommended that the missionaries to the colonies would need to be from the colonies rather than the British Isles. This was not a new idea. Months earlier, Dundas had recommended that the Society find three missionaries in the colonies. Not only would this decision save them money, selecting local colonial ministers 'would create a greater esteem amongst the people that join with them in worship, and make them contribute more freely towards furthering such a design'.²²¹ But now he and Anderson were going a step further.

Dundas and Anderson proposed that 'some Divines of a Sister Church' in the colonies should assist them. In the letter, they included 'a list of some Divines' that were part of this church: these men were 'pastors of fixed congregations and understand the Indian Language'. Dundas and Anderson saw this as a great

²²¹ CMM, 4: 203.

opportunity for the Society. By offering them ‘an additional salary’, these ministers could most effectively ‘civilize and instruct those Indian families amongst whom they dwell’ if they would ‘apply themselves’ with ‘a pious intention’. The Londoners assured the Edinburgh Directors that the ministers they recommended were of ‘a very good character’. Furthermore, it was the Presbyterian Church in America, in their opinion, which should drive the Scottish Society’s colonial presence. The Edinburgh Directors responded that they would wait until they heard back from the Philadelphia Synod,²²² to whom they had written the previous June, ‘intimating what is now proposed by the Society and their Correspondents at London towards making Doctor Williams’s Legacy effectual’. This letter, in the Directors’ words, was ‘craving that Synod’s advice and assistance in the matter’.²²³ The Scottish Society knew they needed strong institutional and community links in order to be successful in America. Perhaps their successful endeavours in the Highlands and Islands taught them to value sturdy institutions and local support. In any case, the plea to the American Presbyterian Church in America was clear.

It is significant that Dundas and Anderson wrote to the Edinburgh Directors. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Dundas was very influential in helping to establish links for the SSPCK between Scotland and England. But he had died by 1732.²²⁴ It was Adam Anderson who interacted constantly with the Scottish Society for decades until his death in 1765. Anderson was an Aberdonian Scot who had moved to London as the clerk of the South-Sea Company some time around the events of the 1720 South Sea Bubble. He advanced into the highest ranks, eventually becoming chief clerk of the Company. Although Anderson has not received the scholarly attention he deserves, he has recently been regarded as ‘one of the first serious historians of commerce’ who anticipated Adam Smith in several important ways. The little recognition Anderson does receive stems from his work as an historian of commerce, specifically with his book, *An historical and chronological*

²²² CMM, 4: 245.

²²³ CMM, 4: 295. Specifically, Prof. Hamilton wrote this letter in 1729. See CMM, 4: 213.

²²⁴ CMM, 4: 23.

deduction of the origin of commerce,²²⁵ which he dedicated to the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. Anderson believed firmly in utilizing Britain's colonies both from a financial and imperial perspective.²²⁶

But despite his prominence in commerce, he also played an important role in philanthropic societies. With the Scottish population surge in London, Anderson was renowned within the expanding Scottish networks: he served as a pivotal member 'of the court of the Scottish corporation'. Particularly noteworthy in relation to the SSPCK was that he served as a non-parliamentary trustee of the colony of Georgia. By the mid-1730s the Society had sent a Scottish minister along with a community of Highlanders to settle in southern Georgia. It appears likely that this expedition was a result at least in part to Anderson's tireless efforts within the SSPCK as well as his influence and connections with his fellow trustees. Alastair Durie has noticed that, as a trustee, 'he was raising funds to assist the Atlantic passage of poor potential emigrants, and took part in a scheme to establish parochial libraries in Britain and the colonies'.²²⁷ As a central figure of the SSPCK, Anderson fits squarely within the Scottish Society's heritage of promoting piety as way to reform communities and cultivate personal improvement.

By the mid-1730s there was sharp discord between Georgia Trustees due in part to Georgia's leading promoter, James Oglethorpe, and his interest in promoting Anglicanism in the colony. Dissenting trustees protested in various ways: they would no doubt endorse a Presbyterian community in Georgia as a way to combat what they considered an Anglican hubris.²²⁸ In any case, as a vocal leader and secretary of the SSPCK in London, Anderson served as a direct connection between London and the colonies, and demonstrates the strong influence of London dissenters during the 1730s. As will be seen in a later section, however, the SSPCK's attempts in Georgia showed the distinct disconnect between the leadership and the missionary-ministers and communities during the 1730s.

²²⁵ The title is *An historical and chronological deduction of the origin of commerce from the earliest accounts to the present time, containing an history of the great commercial interests of the British empire* (London, Millar, 1764).

²²⁶ Alastair J. Durie, 'Adam Anderson (1692–1765)', *ODNB* (2007): accessed 20 Nov. 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/462>.

²²⁷ Durie, 'Adam Anderson', *ODNB* (2007): accessed 20 Nov 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/462>.

²²⁸ A. A. Hanham, 'Trustees for establishing the colony of Georgia in America (act. 1732–1752)', *ODNB* (2004): accessed 20 Nov. 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95206>.

Anderson and Dundas's recommendation, along with Edinburgh's letter to the Philadelphia Synod, left both Edinburgh and London poised and eager for a response. In March of 1730, Jonathan Dickinson, the moderator of the Philadelphia Synod, wrote to Professor Hamilton of Edinburgh University who in turn presented the letter to the Edinburgh Directors in September. In the letter, Dickinson explained that the colonial Presbyterian Synod had 'defer[red] a conclusive answer' until they could discuss the matter in their September session. Dickinson continued that the Synod felt it was 'their duty to give the Society their most hearty thanks for their religious regards to the spiritual welfare of these parts of the world'. They also received another letter from Dickinson to Dr. John Nicol of New York. In it, Dickinson described the circumstances in the region. During this same meeting and perhaps in response to the Philadelphia Synod's hesitation on the matter, the Directors recorded 'there were several worthy persons in New England, particularly the members of the Synod of Philadelphia who have expressed a hearty approval'. By forming a sub-committee comprised in part of their Praeses, William Hamilton, they began to discuss whom they should propose for correspondents.²²⁹

Just three months later, in December, the Edinburgh Directors received a letter from the Philadelphia Synod posted in September: the author was probably Jonathan Dickinson. The letter gave 'a particular narrative of the State of their bounds and Infidel places on the Frontier thereof'. After giving this description, Dickinson's synod 'earnestly plead [ed] for the Society's assistance and specially for the benefit of Doctor Williams's legacy'. The Synod's tone had changed from apprehensive to eager, but their moment had passed. The Edinburgh Directors responded that they were going a different direction: by now they had already planned to settle in New England.²³⁰ They did leave the door open, however, by telling the Philadelphia Synod that 'if the Society's fund happen to increase' enough

²²⁹ CMM, 4: 303-304.

²³⁰ *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841), 98. Hereafter this source will be referred to as PCUSA with page number following. In September of 1731, the minutes stated that 'the Synod received a letter from Mr. William Grant, president of the society for propagation of Christian knowledge in Scotland; and another from the reverend Associated Ministers of Boston, in New England, (in answer to theirs to them last Synod,) both of said letters bearing relation to the will of Dr. Daniel Williams of London, deceased, the said letters were read and ordered to be kept *in retentis*.

to where they could ‘give assistance to them in propagating the knowledge of Christ among the Infidels adjacent to their colonies they will very readily and with the utmost cheerfulness bestow what they can spare for that end’.²³¹

Presumably, the Philadelphia Synod’s hesitation helped to convince the Society to pursue the opportunities in Massachusetts. This sensible shift in policy reflected the prominence of the London Trustees and Correspondents. By August of 1730, just one month after the Philadelphia Synod had agreed to support the SSPCK (and *before* this acceptance had reached Edinburgh), the Edinburgh Directors received news that Dundas and Anderson had attended a meeting of the Williams’s Trustees. This meeting removed all doubt that the SSPCK’s project would be in New England. In order for the SSPCK to receive the funds allotted by Williams in his bequest, the Trustees demanded that, among other things, the Society deliver an annual report to them of the work in the colonies from the ‘Governor of New England’ as well as ‘the Divinity Professor of Harvard’s College’.²³²

In other words, the Williams Trustees in 1730 required that the provincial governor and Harvard’s Divinity professor—the most exemplary models of English non-conformity in the colonies—hold the missionaries accountable. With this and other prescribed mechanisms of accountability in place, the Directors’ sub-committee for colonial affairs asserted that local correspondents would ‘be the fittest judges of the proper places to fix the missionaries in, so as they may not interfere with a Dissenting Society in England for the like purpose’. This, no doubt, was in reference to the New England Company (NEC).²³³ The Trustees had several very practical reasons for making this qualification, two of which are important to mention here. First, many of them would have been Independents or English Presbyterians, and would therefore have been very interested in seeing the NEC flourish in the colonies. Second, the Williams Trustees funded *both* the NEC and the SSPCK in substantial ways. Therefore, strife between these two societies meant a conflict of interest within their own board.

The interactions at the Trustees’ meeting reflected the major influence that English non-conformists continued to exert over the Society, particularly in relation

²³¹ CMM, 4: 331-332.

²³² CMM, 4: 299.

²³³ CMM, 4: 299.

to their colonial expedition. Because of Williams's bequest, London alone held the purse strings. As mentioned above, the London correspondents and Williams's Trustees were staunchly non-conformists, and many came from the background of English Presbyterianism. During the same Trustees meeting, Dundas requested to Governor Belcher of Massachusetts that he be the 'Patron' of the Society's work in the colonies. Belcher agreed and suggested several men to assume the correspondent positions for the Society: amongst the correspondents were Benjamin Colman, Joseph Sewall, and Harvard's Divinity Professor, Edward Wigglesworth.²³⁴ Dundas's breakthrough with Belcher in London ensured that the Society would focus on New England just as Anderson's leadership amongst the Georgia Trustees made conditions more amenable for a project in Georgia. The correspondents in Massachusetts, along with the Massachusetts assembly, would make the decisions for the SSPCK in New England, and the provincial assembly would provide extra funding for the Massachusetts project. The Society's New England relationship ensured that the SSPCK's colonial project would continue in the English tradition of dissent in the colonies. The Presbyterian Church in America would exercise very little influence on the Society during the 1730s.

Benjamin Colman and Transatlantic British Protestantism

The SSPCK's English Presbyterian and non-conformist lineage was embodied in the Society's foremost colonial leader, Benjamin Colman. Recognized as 'one of the key advocates of transatlantic Protestantism', Colman was the central leader of the SSPCK's project in New England.²³⁵ Two years before his birth in 1673, Colman's parents moved to Boston from London. Like Daniel Williams, Colman was ordained within the tradition of English Presbyterianism.²³⁶

English Presbyterians were never an Established Church, and typically saw themselves in contrast to their Presbyterian neighbours to the north. Throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, English and Scottish Presbyterians debated

²³⁴ CMM, 4: 298-299.

²³⁵ John A. Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: the Making of an American Evangelical Icon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 48.

²³⁶ Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Class 1690-1700 with Bibliographical and Other Notes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933), 46. Part of the Sibley's Harvard Graduates Series, Vol. 4: 1690-1700, 120.

fiercely over various issues surrounding the relationship between orthodoxy and freedom of conscience. Interestingly, as late as the nineteenth century, both sides invoked Daniel Williams as their patron whom they sought to represent consistently and faithfully.²³⁷ Daniel Williams himself was charged with heterodoxy (Socinianism) during his lifetime, an accusation he and others soundly denied.²³⁸ By the early nineteenth century, English Presbyterianism had evolved into a church with a Unitarian theology and progressive scientific sociology.²³⁹ During certain periods of the early Enlightenment, however, Presbyterians from Scotland, England and the colonies collaborated with one another as well as Independents in England and the colonies. Many dissenters such as Colman, Hamilton, Williams and Calamy tried to create a unified dissenting landscape, even though often the strides towards unity were rent by numerous doctrinal and ecclesiastical quarrels.

Benjamin Colman studied at Harvard during the 1690s under the distinguished tutor, John Leverett.²⁴⁰ It was Leverett who most ardently sought to modernize New England religion: as Richard Bushman pointed out, he ‘encouraged Episcopal works as the best books to form the pupils’ minds’ because, as Leverett himself put it, these works could help to moderate non-conformists “in religious matters and preserve us from those narrow principles that kept us at a distance from the Church of England”.²⁴¹ Colman lived in England until 1699 where he received his ordination. From his initial acquaintance with the famous publisher and dissenter, Thomas Parkhurst,²⁴² Colman gained a ‘wide acquaintance among the Dissenting clergy’, as he preached in London and was ‘noticed by the distinguished

²³⁷ Richard Slate, ‘To the Editor of the Manchester Gazette’, in *The Manchester Socinian controversy; with introductory remarks, and an appendix [containing ‘A list of the chapels in England, Wales, and Scotland, which with their endowments are now appropriated to the propagation of the Socinian doctrines’]*, ed. John Birt (London: Printed for Francis Westley, 1825), 42-44.

²³⁸ Wykes, ‘Williams, Daniel’ *ODNB* (2009): accessed 24 Nov. 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29491>.

²³⁹ Birt, *Manchester Socinian controversy*, 42-44.

²⁴⁰ Shipton, *Harvard College Graduates*, vol. 4, 120.

²⁴¹ Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 174.

²⁴² Harold Love, ‘Parkhurst, Thomas (c.1632–1711)’, *ODNB* (2004): accessed 17 Aug. 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21366>. Love explained that in ‘1705 he was described by John Dunton, a former apprentice, as “the most eminent Presbyterian bookseller in the three kingdoms”, and a specialist in “practical” divinity’. Parkhurst played an important role as a non-conformist publisher during the turbulent period of the Restoration, and he published works that promoted unity between Presbyterians and Independents.

ministers of the day'. Daniel Williams's Presbyterian Fund chose Colman to preach in Cambridge before taking posts in Ipswich and Bath.²⁴³

It was Colman's tutor, Leverett, that joined with what Bushman called 'the broad-minded brothers William and Thomas Brattle' to found the Brattle Street Church in Boston, where Colman would be pastor.²⁴⁴ In a letter to the Bishop of London, Henry Newman said this church 'is recon'd midway between the Church of England and Dissenters': Anglicans, for example, could take communion at Brattle Street.²⁴⁵ To the consternation of conservatives, Colman also admitted people into the Brattle Street Church without 'a narrative of conversion', and he welcomed with open arms the new spirit of compromise and unity he witnessed developing as a result of his newly formed Brattle Street Church, his colleagues in England and his alma mater, Harvard.²⁴⁶

Colman was 'cosmopolitan, tolerant, and polished'; an elegant man who held John Tillotson²⁴⁷ in high esteem. Tillotson was recognized as the 'the politest preacher of his time', but he also presented very controversial themes of rationality: that is, that reason superseded scripture when they contradicted one another. Norman Fiering confirmed that 'Tillotson was an extraordinary popular force, a literary phenomenon whose sermons were probably the most widely read works of religious literature in America between 1690 and 1750'. This popularity emerged in the Anglican South just as much as the Congregational-centred New England, and it made Tillotson the symbolic arch-enemy of later evangelicals such as George Whitefield.²⁴⁸

Colman wriggled out of Tillotson's logic on rationality by arguing that reason and scripture never contradicted one another. Colman embodied what E. Brooks Holifield called 'the evidential temper' of the 'natural theologian' who

²⁴³ Shipton, *Harvard College Graduates*, vol. 4, 121-122.

²⁴⁴ Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, 174.

²⁴⁵ Shipton, *Harvard College Graduates*, vol. 4, 123-124.

²⁴⁶ E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America*, 81.

²⁴⁷ It would be difficult to overstate the significance of John Tillotson during this period. Stewart Brown has recently explored Tillotson's works and his effect upon society. In the words of Brown, Tindal 'argued that the particular revelation of God's will in the Bible was superfluous, given the capacity of human reason to comprehend essential truths, and that where Scripture is unreasonable, it can be discarded as superstition'. Colman could have respected this rationale while claiming that no part of scripture is inconsistent with reason. See Stewart J. Brown, 'The "Deist Controversy" and the Moderate Enlightenment in England', Lecture, University of Edinburgh, 2009.

²⁴⁸ 'Norman Fiering, 'The First American Enlightenment', 309-310.

believed ‘that reason, reflecting on either the visible world or the workings of the human mind, could produce evidence for the existence of a transcendent God apart from the revelation in scripture or the tradition of the church’. Holifield continued that these natural theologians differed from the ‘natural religion’ of deists due to ‘the further claim that natural theology pointed toward and confirmed truths above the capacity of reason to discover—truths accessible only through special revelation’.²⁴⁹ Indeed, in a striking scientific vein of logic, Colman insisted that any apparent contradictions arose due to a lack of knowledge that would eventually unfold. But the impact on Colman by English thinkers such as Tillotson and Leverett, along with the influence of Anglican theology and culture, was monumental as the young minister returned from England to the colonies.²⁵⁰

Returning to Boston, Colman’s prominent new position as minister of Brattle Street Church invoked harsh criticism by traditional Congregationalists such as Increase Mather. These traditionalists were outraged at the church’s Presbyterian polity and its ‘Episcopalian gentility’; critics ridiculed Colman for ‘powdering his hair’ and “‘carry[ing] on the Apostasy””.²⁵¹ Although controversy surrounded Colman initially, by 1700 much of it had subsided, and many had even adapted somewhat to his views. This was in no small part due to his moderate perspective, his mild demeanour and his refusal to engage in venomous controversy.²⁵²

Colman participated actively in the development of Harvard College. He also contributed substantially to the early literary tradition of America, writing an astonishing ninety books and introducing certain seventeenth-century poetry to colonial America for the first time.²⁵³ He has been acclaimed as an important part of the American Enlightenment,²⁵⁴ and the ‘most versatile of the Boston ministers’. While doctrinally an orthodox Calvinist, Colman’s ‘liberalism’, as Theodore

²⁴⁹ Holifield, *Theology in America*, 5.

²⁵⁰ Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 174; Shipman, *Biographical Sketches*, vol. 5, 120; Ebenezer Turell, *Life and Character of the Reverend Benjamin Colman* (Boston, 1749), 1-3.

²⁵¹ Shipton, *Harvard College Graduates*, vol. 4, 123.

²⁵² Shipton, *Harvard College Graduates*, vol. 4, 123-124.

²⁵³ Marcus Cunliffe, *The Literature of the United States* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 29. Cunliffe explained that Colman published Edmund Waller’s poems for the first time in the colonies in 1699.

²⁵⁴ Theodore Hornberger, ‘Benjamin Colman and the Enlightenment’ *The New England Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Jun., 1939), 227, 239.

Hornberger aptly put it, ‘was partly a matter of church polity’ and ‘partly a temperamental aversion to debates of the hair-splitting variety’.²⁵⁵

Contemporaries extolled Colman for his ‘fine taste for the sublimer improvements of modern philosophy’. He also possessed ‘uncommon beauties of imagination’ and ‘a dignity of sentiment and an ardour of divine eloquence’. This description of Colman was published in 1749. They are qualities that would have been harshly criticized on both sides of the Atlantic by evangelicals who viewed such sentiments as a dilution of the gospel. Yet the praise Colman received just after his death revealed how venerated he was ‘for his learning and piety...his praise is in the churches for his usefulness, courage and fidelity’.²⁵⁶

Colman attempted to maintain a complex balance between the new learning and orthodox Calvinism. While never contradicting the orthodox tenets of Calvinism, he promoted repeatedly the developments of the new science, particularly to support his strong views on the incomprehensibility of God. The overwhelming emphasis of his extant works was upon reason. He even claimed that ‘if reason had been hearkened to, man would never have fallen’: crucially, however, Colman sought to understand this proposition within the framework of reformed doctrines such as grace and human depravity. Indeed, if read out of context, Colman’s ideas could be understood as deist in tone; but Colman’s God maintained personal and Christian qualities deists simply could not accept.²⁵⁷ E. Brooks Holifield captures the paradoxical situation that Colman found himself in during this period:

He urged his readers to seek the divine majesty by reading ‘the vast Roll of Nature, written within and without’ in the light of the ‘new philosophy’, with its marvellous discoveries of motion, gravitation, and planetary attraction. The cosmos conveyed to him the immensity of God. Yet he never called Calvinist theology into question, and he combined his interest in natural theology with a conventional supernaturalism. While he thought that earthquakes resulted from secondary causes, he thought also that they signified the wrath of God. While he urged modesty in eschatological speculation, he felt that it was not immodest to say that Christ would make his physical return only after the fall of the Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, and the church’s period of peace and tranquillity, just before the final battle with Satan. He insisted that his ‘favourite subject’ was the covenant of

²⁵⁵ Hornberger, ‘Benjamin Colman and the Enlightenment’, 229.

²⁵⁶ M. Byles, Ellis Gray and Samuel Cooper, Preface to Ebenezer Turell, *Life and Character of the Reverend Benjamin Colman*.

²⁵⁷ Hornberger, ‘Benjamin Colman and the Enlightenment’, 236-240.

salvation through Christ, and he was said to have never referred to natural theology without linking it to the revelation in Christ. Although he asserted that reason alone could discern God's existence, he thought 'the book of nature' fully legible only to the mind illumined by biblical revelation.²⁵⁸

Colman borrowed heavily from the Enlightenment's ideas of science and the 'study of man' as a way to know God. His ideas were compatible with British Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke and Shaftesbury, and his correspondence with SSPCK leaders reflected his strong transatlantic connections with a variety of British Protestants.²⁵⁹ His publications, along with his extensive correspondence with leading dissenters such as Edmund Calamy, Bishops Kennet and Hoadly as well as Dr. Isaac Watts led to him receiving a Doctor of Divinity in 1731.²⁶⁰ Nonetheless, it was the SSPCK who recommended that Colman receive this honour. Specifically, it was Belcher who first recommended that Colman and Joseph Sewall receive the title. Interestingly, Belcher contacted the SSPCK for this favour, and it was Professor Hamilton who made the formal request to the University of Glasgow.²⁶¹

But while Colman drew heavily from the Enlightenment's emphasis upon reason and science, perhaps the most important concept he appropriated was the British Enlightenment's emphasis upon philanthropy and humanitarianism. While maintaining the doctrine of total depravity, he also accentuated not only the potential of rationality but also the 'instinct' within human beings to be 'generous, compassionate, obliging, grateful, beneficent'.²⁶² For a developing doctrine of evangelism and missions, this shift away from extreme Calvinism provided fertile soil. The Boston minister was attempting to reconcile traditional Calvinist doctrine with new Enlightenment principles about human beings, nature and society. Evangelicals would later use this shift as a way of legitimizing their own agenda for religious renewal and personal conversion.

Although Colman and others embraced the infusion of Anglicanism into their understanding of a catholic faith, it was perhaps what Bushman has called the 'aggressive proselytizing stance of the Anglicans' during the first quarter of the

²⁵⁸ Holifield, *Theology in America*, 81.

²⁵⁹ Hornberger, 'Benjamin Colman and the Enlightenment', 236-240.

²⁶⁰ Shipton, *Harvard College Graduates*, vol. 4, 126. On this same page, the author notes (albeit with no citation) that Colman gave advice to the SPG from time to time along with the SSPCK and NEC.

²⁶¹ CMM, 4: 370.

²⁶² Hornberger, 'Benjamin Colman and the Enlightenment', 239-240.

eighteenth century that caused ministers such as Colman to distance themselves from the expansion of Anglicanism in the colonies.²⁶³ While the Bostonian initially sought to ‘absorb Anglican culture’ even while maintaining his non-conformist ideals, he eventually felt threatened by the Church of England’s colonial arm, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). In addition to more assertive evangelism techniques, by the turn of the century the Church of England acted on its desire to supply the colonies with a more educated and polished clerical class. Consequently, as early as 1702 the SPG helped Trinity Church in New York City secure farmland for a new college.²⁶⁴

Whereas ministers such as Colman backed away from the Anglican Church, other ministers such as Samuel Johnson and the Rector of Yale, Timothy Cutler, moved closer to Anglicanism and ultimately embraced the Church of England. But even though Congregationalists rejected the Church of England, they continued to embrace certain Anglican forms, seeing Anglicization as a way to *combat* the revival of the Church of England.²⁶⁵ They borrowed Anglican intellectual and cultural developments even as they raced against them to win the hearts and minds of the American colonials. With such an urgent contest for hegemony, it was no accident that Massachusetts religious and political leaders were in contact with the major British dissenting societies for the propagation of Christian knowledge.

Piety and Providence in Colonial America: Benjamin Colman and Joseph Sewall During the Ordination of the SSPCK’s First Colonial Missionaries

As mentioned above, Benjamin Colman was the central figure in organizing and promoting the SSPCK’s work in the colonies. Joseph Sewall was also an important figure. Sewall was ordained as the minister of South Church in 1713. Son of Samuel Sewall, he was an esteemed man known for his theological sophistication and articulation. In 1724 Harvard College asked him to become president, but his

²⁶³ Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, 176. Bushman continued that the ‘bellicose attacks of a few Anglican pamphleteers’ served to ‘upset even the most tolerant New England clergy’. Nonetheless, Bushman’s interpretation should be qualified by the fact that non-Anglican British Protestants were aggressively expanding and becoming increasingly hostile to Anglican clerics and forms in the process: the pushing match went both ways.

²⁶⁴ Gaustad, *Religious History of America*, 85.

²⁶⁵ Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 176. This nuance is captured profoundly by Colin Kidd. See Kidd, ‘North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotisms’, *The Historical Journal* 39, no. 2 (June 1996): 361-382.

church would not allow it. After Colman resigned in 1728, Seward was elected a fellow of Harvard's Corporation. In later years, Charles Chauncy would recollect that Seward took 'a great and sincere concern for the interest of religion and learning in that Society' [the SSPCK]. Receiving his Doctor of Divinity in 1731 from the University of Glasgow, Seward obtained an appointment as a commissioner to the NEC, and he also became a correspondent for the SSPCK.²⁶⁶

Colman and Sewall wrote a dedication to the SSPCK that was printed as the preface to Sewall's sermon, which officially ordained the Scottish Society's first three missionaries in the American colonies. The three missionaries were called from their posts to Boston where they stood for their ordination 'before a vast multitude which regarded the young men as heroes'.²⁶⁷ In the 1730s the Boston ministerial elite supported the work of the Society, and saw the SSPCK's work in continuity with their ancestors of the last century. Sewall, quoting the royal charter from William and Mary, stated that they should strive to live a 'good life' and have 'orderly conversation' so that they 'may win the Indians, Natives of the country' to the 'knowledge and obedience of the true God', which, Sewall continued, was the 'royal intentions' of 'our royal Grand-father King Charles the First, in his said Letters Patents'.²⁶⁸ With this continuity in mind, Colman and Sewall highly lauded the prestigious Society as well as their 'glorious design' to spread 'the principles of the Christian Protestant religion in places that are indeed perishing for want of it'. Although their labours were fruitful in the Highlands and Islands, 'clouds and darkness...encompass' their work in the colonies due to 'the prejudices of Popery sown in the minds of the savages by the Jesuits and Friars who sojourn among them'.²⁶⁹

But hope in the progress of the Kingdom of God persisted throughout the ministers' dedication. In an attempt to interpret what they perceived as a new and enlightened age, the authors declared they all 'are happily' living during 'those times

²⁶⁶ Charles Chauncy, *Discourse Occasioned by the Death of The Reverend Dr. Sewall, Late Colleague Pator of the South-Church in Boston: Who Departed this Life, On the Evening of June 27, 1769* (Boston: Printed and Sold by Kneeland and Adams in Milk-Street, 1769), 36-40.

²⁶⁷ Shipton, *Harvard College Graduates*, vol. 9, 89.

²⁶⁸ Sewall, 'Christ victorious over the powers of darkness', 17.

²⁶⁹ Benjamin Colman and Joseph Sewall, 'To the Honourable and Reverend The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, at Edinburgh', in Joseph Sewall, *A Sermon Preached in Boston, December 12, 1733*, 2.

whereof the Divine Spirit spake to the Prophet Daniel, when many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased'. This was the consensus amongst British Protestants: knowledge was increasing because of providential design. Echoing Richard Baxter, Colman and Sewall argued that the scientific, social, and political progress of the current era demonstrated that 'the Blessed and Only Potentate in these His times is performing this by the navigation of Great Britain, and other Kingdoms of Europe'.²⁷⁰

This expansion of knowledge and cultivation of piety was 'the promise of the great God which stands so near the prophecy before mentioned from the book of Daniel'.²⁷¹ The 'proper work of Societies and combinations of men' such as the SSPCK, then, was to 'turn the world to righteousness...under the countenance of Christian Princes'.²⁷² Colman, writing with Sewall, expressed a view of eschatology and history that complemented that of the SSPCK. Working with Godly monarchs, Societies should improve and civilize culture in the anticipation of God's kingdom.

Joseph Sewall's sermon bolstered his and Colman's preface, but added another telling caveat to the story. In this published sermon that many on both sides of the Atlantic would have read, Sewall proclaimed that 'societies in the South and North Britain should provoke us to an holy emulation; especially considering God hath given us the possession of this good land which their ancestors once inhabited, and that this was the professed intention of our pious progenitors, the first planters of

²⁷⁰ Seward and Colman's eschatology confirms that non-Anglican colonial American Protestants were following (as W.R. Ward argued was true of Scottish Presbyterians) the logic of the Puritan Richard Baxter who at least as early as the 1680s concluded that there 'was to be no millennial rule of Christ' but rather 'that God ruled through Christian Emperors and national churches'. In this way, then, William III would be the savior on earth to 'establish the Christian Empire' to which so many eagerly 'yearned' to realize. See Ward, *Early Evangelicalism*, 88-89. Also, Baxter was a crucial theological intermediary for non-conformists on both sides of the Atlantic. See Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 82. Jeremy here explained the intimate relationship between Baxter and non-conformists. In regards to Daniel Williams, Jeremy remarked that, 'upon the death of his friend Richard Baxter in 1691, Mr. [Daniel] Williams was chosen his successor as one of the Tuesday Lecturers at Pinners' Hall. Some of his colleagues at that place advocated ultra-Calvinistic doctrines, which he, on the other hand, controverted. The result was a violent controversy, in which he was accused of favoring Socinianism, followed by a separation of the two parties. The Independents withdrew from the Fund, and the Presbyterians withdrew from Pinners' Hall....'. With the support of Dr. Bates, Williams 'instituted a new Tuesday Lecture at Salters' Hall, which eventually acquired celebrity'.

²⁷¹ Colman and Sewall, 'To the Honourable and Reverend The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, at Edinburgh', 3.

²⁷² Colman and Sewall, 'To the Honourable and Reverend The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, at Edinburgh', 3-4.

this country'.²⁷³ This interpretation by Joseph Sewell reflected a debate for some time on both sides of the Atlantic as to whether North America was a cursed continent or the land of Christ's second coming. Joseph's father, Samuel, had affirmed the latter in a sermon in 1713 entitled, *Proposals Touching the Accomplishment of Prophecies*, where he drew deeply from recent events in Europe.²⁷⁴ His son was now extending this line of reasoning.

It is important to remember that both the preface and the sermon mentioned above were written in 1733 during a year that a supposed religious renewal was gaining strength in Massachusetts. Colman and Seward defended what they perceived as pious expressions of the affections from the attacks of the Anglican SPG and their allies. There is no doubt that people such as Colman saw themselves within the tradition of the venerated English ministers who were subjected to ridicule due to their stance of non-conformity during the Restoration. In this context, it is only natural that the two men would have remembered and even supported the Connecticut revival of 1720-22 as an expression of religious freedom.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, it should be remembered that ministers such as Colman were concerned with what they perceived as the increasingly stale faith that emphasised reason over the affections. These early flickers of emotionalism could be viewed by ministers such as Colman and Seward as a way of balancing the affections with reason. It should be noted that Harvard and Yale followed the same path as Colman even though they later bitterly spurned the revivalism in the upcoming years.²⁷⁶ In the eyes of British Protestants, evangelism—by missionary societies or by local ministers—was the most effective means of spreading what they perceived as true religion.

²⁷³ Joseph Sewall, 'Christ victorious over the powers of darkness, by the light of his preached Gospel. A sermon preached in Boston, December 12, 1733 (Boston: printed and sold by S. Knefland & T. Green, in Queen-street, 1733), 17; David S. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1985), 18.

²⁷⁴ W.R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 90.

²⁷⁵ Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: the Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004), 64-65. Noll argues that a continuity of revivalism and yearning for revivals existed throughout 'New England's Puritan history'.

²⁷⁶ Douglas Sloan, ed. *The Great Awakening and American Education: A Documentary History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1973), 18.

Isaac Watts and the Cultivation of Transatlantic Piety

Colman soon sent Jonathan Edwards's account of his Northampton revival to Isaac Watts and John Guyse in London. Guyse had been a correspondent in London since January of 1733.²⁷⁷ Watts had close ties to dissenters, and seemed to have been a trustee in London at least since 1730.²⁷⁸ He was a dear friend to men such as Sir John Fryer, a dissenting trustee whom Daniel Williams personally appointed to his board. Watts would have been intimately aware of the perceived religious suppression in England. Fryer, for example, was prohibited from expressing publicly his views of non-conformity because of his elite social position (Fryer maintained his social position, however, and imperceptibly supported the cause of non-conformity).²⁷⁹ Surrounded by this English precedent of what non-conformists considered to be political and social repression, Watts's response to Edwards's account of Northampton was consistent with the call of many British Protestants for a growth of piety to balance out the new learning. It also verified what Sewall and Colman were arguing: that is, that Old World religion should learn from the New. The revivals, Watts stated to Colman, were 'little specimens of what Christ and his grace can do when he shall begin to revive his own work and to spread his Kingdom through the earth'. If God's work 'begins in America, I adore his good pleasure and rejoice, but wait for the blessing in European countries'. Watts believed that this 'same power' had the potential to 'change heathens and papists as well as formal Protestants into lively Christians'.²⁸⁰ Many British Protestants believed, moreover, that this new age of the Spirit was complementing the new learning, and that this was further evidence of true religion: enlightened, balanced and reasonable.

Watts personified the early religious Enlightenment and the transatlantic tradition of dissent. As a leading English non-conformist, Watts received his doctor of divinity from the University of Edinburgh. In response to his receipt of this honour from the University, the great English writer, Samuel Johnson, encapsulated

²⁷⁷ CMM, 5: 74. This record stated that a Dr. Guise became a correspondent along with Mr. James Drummond of Meggins and Mr. Patrick Dunbar of Burmaddon. It would appear highly likely that this is the same Guyse to which Colman sent the account.

²⁷⁸ CMM, 4: 276-277. This record gives the name Mr. Watts as a correspondent, which in context would appear to be Isaac Watts.

²⁷⁹ Jeremy, *The Presbyterian Fund*, 122.

²⁸⁰ Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: the Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), 21-22.

Watts's reputation as a leading enlightenment figure when remarking that, 'academic honours would have more value if they were always bestowed with equal judgment'.²⁸¹ His celebrated hymnal was published in 1707 in England and in Boston in 1720, and it played a major role in the improvement of music in dissenting churches. It was representative of the way that Anglicanism influenced dissenters in church architecture, decoration and music. Watts's revolutionary new way was portrayed as the cultivation of the religious life through 'Augustan gentility'. But it also informed Native American Christianity, which was seen most clearly by the reports of Native Christians singing his hymns as well as the way it shaped Samson Occom, who composed the first hymnal written by a Native American. In 1741, Watts wrote *On the Improvement of the Mind*, which played a definitive role in the understanding of refinement even throughout much of the Victorian era.²⁸²

Colman, Sewall and Watts—like Hamilton, Carstares, Calamy and Williams in the last chapter—were attempting to reconcile new cultural trends and intellectual currents with older forms and expressions of piety. They embraced the new learning and spurned the shackles of what they perceived as oppressive religious conformity. But they simultaneously strove to cultivate piety, seeing this as a way to strike a proper balance to a culture flush with rationality. Within Christianity itself, a natural tension exists between orthodoxy and piety. The space and value of subjective emotional piety and collective community experiences was diminishing amidst what a wide range of people considered a form-driven, rational and ultimately vapid age. How would these figures cultivate piety while also promoting both the new learning and orthodoxy? Leaders of the SSPCK sought to utilize the Scottish Society as a way to solve this Herculean task. But to add even further complexity to their intellectual concerns, these seemingly incommensurate ideals would need to function within the exigencies of colonial life.

²⁸¹ A.C. Cheyne, *Scottish Piety: A Miscellany from Five Centuries* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2007), 59.

²⁸² Azariah Horton, 'First Journal of Mr. Azariah Horton, the Society's Missionary in Long-Island, near New-York, from August 5th 1741 to November 1st that Year', in James Robe, *The Christian Monthly History: Or, An Account of the Revival and Progress of Religion, Abroad, and at Home*, no. 5, for March, April, &c. to August 1744 (Edinburgh: Printed by R. Fleming and A. Alison, 1744), 37. Hereafter Horton's journals and any other materials in this issue of Robe's journal will be called CMH, 5 followed by the appropriate page number; Gaynell Stone, ed. *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 2nd ed. (Stony Brook, N.Y.: Suffolk County Archaeological Association: Nassau County Archaeological Committee, 1993), 57; Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 177, 283, 349.

The Colonial Disconnects: Ideals and Practices in the American Borderlands

As the SSPCK's colonial operations officially began, they appointed 'other gentlemen of character and influence in New England' to be their correspondents in the colonies.²⁸³ Of the six they chose, one was Harvard University's first professor of Divinity, Edward Wigglesworth. This was sensible on several fronts. Daniel Williams also funded Harvard College, and English non-conformists had associated Harvard with missionary activity for many years.²⁸⁴ Wigglesworth was renowned for his catholic and undogmatic spirit: he was tolerant, moderate and avoided all extremes.²⁸⁵ As mentioned above, Benjamin Colman and Joseph Sewall were two other correspondents who had close alliances with Harvard College. Governor Belcher was also a correspondent, and had recommended the above representatives. Before Belcher left London, both Dundas and Calamy continued to persuade him that the Scottish Society had great potential but needed his full support (which he promised to give).²⁸⁶ With its correspondents in place by 1730, the SSPCK 'unanimously resolved to employ several ministers of the Gospel, as their missionaries for the conversion of Infidel foreign countries'.²⁸⁷ They allowed their correspondents in Boston to employ missionaries they deemed qualified as long as they did not work for any other society.²⁸⁸

The SSPCK supported three missionaries by 1734 on a fixed salary of £20 Sterling²⁸⁹: they were to educate and minister to the Native Americans on the New England frontier. For ordained ministers who were already in high demand in the colonies, this offer was not extremely attractive. After a lot of advertising, only one person, Joseph Seccombe, agreed to take the position. After graduating from

²⁸³ Excerpt, Frame 35.

²⁸⁴ William Kellaway, *The New England Company, 1649-1776* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1961), 267.

²⁸⁵ John Corrigan, *The Hidden Balance: Religion and the Social Theories of Charles Chauncy and Jonathan Mayhew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 23. For an articulation of the meaning of moderation in the West, see Robert M. Calhoon, *Political Moderation in America's First Two Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-81.

²⁸⁶ Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 11.

²⁸⁷ 'Commission to Correspondents in New-England, September 14, 1730', 44.

²⁸⁸ These three missionaries were not Scottish.

²⁸⁹ S.P.C.K. Records: General Ledger (1709-1779), 235-237 [hereafter referred to as Ledger]. This records indicated that Hinsdale received funds from 1732, but that the other two's salaries began in 1734. However, while Hinsdale and Parker were paid around £20 annually, Seccombe received over £36 in 1734, which meant he received payment retroactively.

Harvard, Seccombe had ‘kept school’ at Ipswich before returning to Harvard as a Hopkins scholar. But he forewent this opportunity in 1732 in order to ‘take part in a missionary venture which excited the pious in both New and old England’. In the winter of 1731-32, Seccombe sailed for Fort George (now St. George, Maine). Governor Belcher sent word to John Giles who was located at the fort and requested that he accept Seccombe. Belcher told Giles that the young minister would preach to the garrison, but that Giles should try and get Native Americans to stay and listen to Seccombe, as well. Giles was to translate for Seccombe while also providing him training in the Native American language. From Belcher’s initial instructions, one will recognize the shift away from Native American evangelism and towards a position as a military chaplain. According to Colman’s first letter to the Society in November of 1732, Seccombe had travailed nine or ten months at the fort before Colman and Belcher could find other missionaries to accompany him.²⁹⁰

A second missionary, Ebenezer Hinsdale, travelled to Fort Dummer on the Connecticut River, and a third, Stephen Parker, worked at Fort Richmond. Both of these locales were ‘places of resort for the Indians’.²⁹¹ In May of 1733, Benjamin Colman wrote the Directors in Edinburgh. He sent them ‘transcripts’ of letters written to Colman by Seccombe and Parker. Colman explained that there were a few ‘hopeful beginnings’ and that the missionaries ‘sometimes travel and hold Sabbath’ and are ‘invited by the Indians sometimes’. The missionaries were attempting ‘to gain the esteem and affection of these poor people’ and they took great pains to learn their language and to teach them English ‘in order to their reading and understanding the Holy Scripture’.²⁹²

The Directors’ records then afforded a rare glimpse into the SSPCK’s colonial interactions with Catholicism even though this was a predominant theme of theirs in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.²⁹³ Colman commented in his letter to the SSPCK that, even though the missionaries were attempting to integrate and

²⁹⁰ CMM, 5: 3.

²⁹¹ Benjamin Colman, Commentary published as part of *A Sermon Preached in Boston, December 12, 1733, at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. Stephen Foster, 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: Printed and Sold by S. Knefland & T. Green, in Queen-Street, 1733), 28-29.

²⁹² CMM, 5: 103.

²⁹³ Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*.

teach the Indians the English language, ‘this is so much opposed by some fryars [sic] who tell them that learning will do them hurt, and that the more they know the more they would have to answer’. Colman included a letter he had written in Latin to a Jesuit located at Penobscot: this letter was approved by Governor Belcher. It appears that the Jesuit had complained about the allowance of rum to Indians, which was destroying their communities. Colman assured him that ‘the English Governor and other inferior officers take all pains to prevent the said abuse’. Colman then explained to the Jesuit a central tenet of enlightened British Protestant missions. The New England minister wrote to Edinburgh that, ‘after asserting and maintaining several of the most important Protestant principles’, Colman lucidly explained to the Jesuit that it was ‘the hearty design of our correspondents and missionaries to put the whole Word of God into the hands of the poor Indians that they may read his will and see clearly the way of their own salvation’.²⁹⁴ In the name of enlightened religion, Colman was offering the Bible to those who could not read it even as the Jesuit priest warned this would be opening a Pandora’s box. But it was at this point that the Massachusetts government intervened.

By 1734, Governor Belcher lobbied the General Court of Massachusetts, which highly lauded the mission and offered additional support to each missionary for five years.²⁹⁵ The court determined that ‘£100 *per annum* of their currency should be paid out of the public treasury to each of the aforesaid missionaries’, as long as they would ‘usually reside’ at either the assigned place mentioned above ‘or at such other places as should be named by the said General Court, and there perform the duty of chaplains’.²⁹⁶ This was a crucial shift in the operation. A substantial portion of the missionaries’ salaries now came from Massachusetts with the stipulation that the three missionaries serve as military chaplains. As London philanthropist Thomas Coram pointed out early on, however, this dual mission in the colonies was doomed to fail. Coram had sent books and gifts to the three missionaries, but warned Colman that the Williams’s Trustees would not sign over the bequest unless these missionaries actually lived with the Native Americans.

²⁹⁴ CMM, 5: 103.

²⁹⁵ Colman, Commentary published as part of *A Sermon Preached in Boston, December 12, 1733*, 28-29.

²⁹⁶ Alexander Belsches, *An Account of the Society in Scotland*, 14, Excerpt, Frame 36.

Furthermore, Coram had spent time in the colonies and knew that effective missionary activity to Native America required close and systematic contact with the Indian nations. From the Society's and from Colman's perspective, Coram's words proved to be prophetic.²⁹⁷

The SSPCK and their colonial correspondents spoke of the Massachusetts venture with much enthusiasm and optimism. Nonetheless, from the Society's initial letters to their colonial missionaries, they clearly anticipated a very difficult journey ahead.²⁹⁸ As early as May of 1733, Governor Belcher had 'express[ed] his concern' for the prospects and 'design of spreading Christian knowledge' to Native Americans, but he promised to do all he could and he did not doubt that the other correspondents would do the same.²⁹⁹ Despite much preparation, the hardships and lack of calibration overwhelmed members, correspondents, and the missionary ministers. Gleaning from Coram's words, the Society emphasized that they were not successful primarily because their missionaries did not reside among the Native Americans.³⁰⁰ By October of 1737, the Directors recorded their desire to find other missionary ministers, 'who shall undertake to live and inhabit with the Indians in the wilderness where they are much more numerous than among the English settlements, and thereby have access to instruct them in principles of the Christian religion'.³⁰¹

But one reason the missionaries lived in forts was because a substantial portion of their salaries came from the Massachusetts assembly. Employed by the province, their primary job was to minister as chaplains in and around the forts.³⁰² This obligation, however, directly conflicted with the Williams's bequest, and it also belied the Society's original intent to educate and minister to Native Americans.³⁰³

²⁹⁷ Grigg, "How This Shall Be Brought About", 51.

²⁹⁸ 'Letters of Instructions to the Missionaries', *An Abridgment of the Statutes and Rules of the Society*, 47.

²⁹⁹ CMM, 5: 98-99.

³⁰⁰ GMM, 4: 57. The SSPCK recognized this clearly by this time.

³⁰¹ CMM, 5: 340.

³⁰² Belsches, *An Account of the Society in Scotland*, 14.

³⁰³ GMM, 4: 57. As early as 1646, John Eliot had learned to preach in the Algonquian language, and had consequently reported a great amount of success. Eliot's belief 'that piety leaned on learning' as well as his presentation of Native Americans with their first literature in their own language caused him to be highly revered both in the Scottish Society and amongst other English non-conformists. Eliot published a catechism for the Algonquians in 1654, and in 1663 he achieved his dream of publishing a Bible for the Algonquians in their own language. Within this context, the SSPCK's demand for integrated, language-based teaching made sense: it was the precedent that the Society had recognized as successful. Learning and piety were seen in tandem for a long time within the various

In June of 1737, Edinburgh received a letter from Gov. Belcher saying two of the three missionaries were 150 miles northeast of Boston in areas of strong Catholic influence along with much ignorance and drunkenness.³⁰⁴ By autumn of 1737, they had been dismissed: the colonial correspondents terminated their first three missionaries due to the ‘unsuccessfulness in their work, and their declining to live and inhabit among the Indian Natives’. Immediately, the Directors in Edinburgh sought advice from London as to whom they would commission for another project.³⁰⁵ This immediate consultation with London may be a result of the Trustees’ discontent with the Massachusetts project. The Williams’s bequest specifically stated that if the funds were used inappropriately, then the executors were to regain control of the bequest. As Coram had intimated to Colman, working as chaplains in forts did not fall within the parameters of the Williams’s bequest: the Society was essentially out of compliance. There were also other technical problems with transferring the estate such as inefficient lawyers, but the executors’ hesitation to transfer the bequest entirely to the Society is well worth acknowledging during this crucial first colonial endeavour.³⁰⁶ For the SSPCK, it was caught between two contractual obligations: a bequest stipulating missionaries and a colonial government mandating chaplains. These obligations left little time for the Society’s overarching goals in religious education and the cultivation of piety.

A similar model of collaboration with colonial governments and London leaders was implemented in Georgia during the mid-1730s. Unlike Massachusetts, though, the SSPCK would send a missionary-minister from Scotland along with a Highlander community. Though certain differences are worth noting, it is also important to recognize the similarities in both projects as the SSPCK continued in its early stages of colonial missionary work.

stripes of British Atlantic Protestantism. See Gaustad, *Religious History of America*, 52; Kellaway, *New England Company*, 83-85

³⁰⁴ GMM, 4: 36-37.

³⁰⁵ CMM, 5: 340.

³⁰⁶ Grigg, ‘How This Shall Be Brought About’, 51. Grigg suggested that there was a high probability that this indeed was the case.

The Southern Experiment: the Darien Disaster in Georgia

In 1735, the trustees of the colony of Georgia had arranged for a community of Scottish Highlanders to settle along their turbulent southern border.³⁰⁷ With the socio-economic conditions rapidly declining in the Highlands (many wanted to reclaim wealth lost during the 1715 Jacobite uprising), and with the British government now ‘attempting to disarm and defuse the Highlands’, communities now considered emigration an option. Georgia leaders viewed these Highlanders as soldiers of ‘martial prowess’ and ‘hardy character’ that could protect their frontier from Native American and Spanish attacks. Therefore, they supplied each man with ‘firearms, a broad sword, an axe, shield, and tartan plaid’. As a result, 160 Mackintosh clan members from Inverness settled in Georgia.³⁰⁸ This community was led by John Mackintosh and, according to received tradition, he established close ties with Native Americans while also cultivating the community and ultimately ‘giving his life to the cause’.³⁰⁹ Overall, the settlement appeared successful in its goals to ward off Spanish attacks and serve as a cultural and physical buffer for the rest of the colony.³¹⁰

The new settlers spoke only Gaelic, and the Georgia officials knew that a sustainable community required intermediary agents.³¹¹ They also wanted to provide a spiritual guide who understood the Gaelic language,³¹² so the trustees began searching for a Presbyterian minister who would preach in Gaelic but would teach and catechize the Highlander children in English. They asked the SSPCK for a minister who could perform these tasks while also serving as a missionary for ‘instructing the Native Indians’.³¹³ This minister would both affirm the Highlanders’ culture while simultaneously pushing it outside of the mainstream colonial society.³¹⁴

³⁰⁷ The leader of Georgia, James Oglethorpe, was also recruiting Salzburgers, Germans and Swiss for his new colony. For this context, see W.R. Ward, *Protestant Evangelical Awakening*, 15-16.

³⁰⁸ Duane Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina, 1732-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 66.

³⁰⁹ Michael Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough: The Legacy of the Scottish Highlanders in the United States* (Auburn, N.H.: Windhaven Press, 2001), 69-70, 109.

³¹⁰ Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina*, 66.

³¹¹ Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, 233.

³¹² Anthony W. Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia: the Recruitment, Emigration, and Settlement at Darien, 1735-1748* (Athens; London: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 43.

³¹³ Excerpt, Frame 37.

³¹⁴ I am referring to the model of the SSPCK in the Highlands where the Society eventually decided to integrate Gaelic (ca 1750) into its instruction, yet the overarching goal was eventually to exterminate this ‘inferior’ language from the Highlands and Islands both linguistically and culturally.

The Georgia trustees also requested that the Society pay the minister until the colony could afford to sustain his salary on its own. The commissioners, in return, would supply 300 acres ‘in perpetuity’ to the acting minister/teacher of this settlement.³¹⁵ This level of commitment from both sides of the Atlantic displayed the high hopes they had for the Georgia experiment. By 1736, the minutes record the SSPCK discussing ‘letters to Georgia’ in anticipation that the books, funding, and minister they sent would be successful.³¹⁶

The SSPCK commissioned John Macleod from the Isle of Skye to work with the community in Georgia.³¹⁷ Macleod’s tasks included building a church, establishing a school, converting the Indians and serving as a minister to the Scottish Highland community. And if these objectives were not challenging enough, Macleod settled in Darien, Georgia: a settlement with rural, frontier conditions as precarious as the name itself was for Scottish people.³¹⁸ By 1737, James Oglethorpe (the prominent commissioner and the acting governor of Georgia), and Lt. Hugh Mackay praised Macleod for his preaching and example to the community.³¹⁹ By June of 1739, however, the Society was already receiving complaints from McLeod about the lack of adequate funds, the absence of a church, and the generally poor conditions in the new settlement.³²⁰ In 1740 many Darien settlers participated in the raid of St. Augustine, which ended in utter disaster for the Highlander settlement.³²¹

³¹⁵ Excerpt, Frame 37.

³¹⁶ GMM, 4: 52.

³¹⁷ Macleod took the ship to America with John Wesley and a group of Moravians. Wesley was very impressed with the Moravians, and his experiences with them allowed his knowledge to expand on matters of Protestantism in Central Europe. MacLeod’s experience with these Protestant figures would also have expanded his awareness of broader networks, though we can only speculate on the impression it would have made. See Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans*, 118-119.

³¹⁸ I would speculate that Scots viewed this name as a second chance for them to establish their identity as colonial settlers. See Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and its First American Colony, 1683-1765* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

³¹⁹ GMM, 4: 48-49.

³²⁰ GMM, 4: 111. Among other things, McLeod asked for servants to help clear the land, earnestly sought for more money, and complained because Oglethorpe had not provided a Presbyterian church. Even by this point, the situation seemed overwhelming.

³²¹ *The Report of the committee of both Houses of Assembly of the province of South-Carolina, appointed to enquire into the causes of the disappointment [sic] of success, in the late expedition against St. Augustine, under the command of General Oglethorpe. Published by order of both Houses* (1742); Grigg, ‘How This Shall Be Brought About’, 52. Grigg’s analysis on this occurrence is helpful (see his footnote 64). He explained that ‘the raid on St. Augustine was an early action in the War of Jenkin’s Ear which became part of King George’s War. About half of the raiding force had been recruited from the Scots at Darien, where McLeod ministered. Surprised in their encampment, the raiders were cut to pieces. Of the sixty-seven Darien Scotsmen in the force, fifty-one were killed or

The SSPCK continued their efforts in Georgia for a brief time, but the Georgia project was crippled irreparably. Soon, MacLeod left Georgia, and the Society's efforts ceased to exist in the South.³²²

This was the closest that the SSPCK came to facilitating a Highland community in the colonies using the tactics of their Highland and Island model in Scotland. As mentioned above, Scottish soil provided a much-needed familiarity of social and ecclesiastical infrastructure. Even though the Scottish Society feared and loathed its Catholic and Episcopal adversaries in Scotland, its schools could still function more successfully within the given social structures. Not so in the American colonies. The SSPCK quickly saw that it could not establish a community in Georgia the same way they could in Scotland; the Darien venture proved to be the first and only time that they attempted to send a Scottish minister with a community to the colonies.

The Difference of Two Worlds: a Comparative Analysis of the SSPCK in Scotland and America

The SSPCK's projects in the Georgia and Massachusetts borderlands showed the Society just how different the colonial situation was from Scotland. The SSPCK's mission in Scotland was built upon an established infrastructure. Charity schools in the Highlands and Islands, along with other endeavours by the Society,³²³ received more adequate funding and local parish support. The SSPCK's educational policies also complemented the Established Church's efforts at conversion and catechesis. Teaching, preaching and ministering could all exist comfortably as an operational unit. Furthermore, the Empire could support these Reformed efforts in Scotland, because it benefited from the promulgation of the English language, the spread of Protestantism and the eradication of Catholicism. Finally, the conservative Enlightenment of the British Empire fit neatly into the Society's calls for

captured'. The best resource on this Georgia Highlander settlement is Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia*. As Grigg pointed out, the St. Augustine disaster can be found in Parker, 77-81.

³²² For McLeod's further actions in the South as well as other requests to the SSPCK in that region, see the 1 April 1742 minute (GMM, 4: 280).

³²³ Including a schoolmaster they provided for the Edinburgh orphan hospital. See William Brown, *The Benefit and Comfort of the Christian Revelation. A Sermon preached in the High Church of Edinburgh, Monday, January 5, 1736, upon Occasion of the Anniversary Meeting of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Printed by Mr. Ja. Davidson and Co., 1736), 25.

improvement, order and progress by innovative educational means. These latter two reasons were just as true in the colonies, but appeared less urgent than the situation in the Highlands and Islands.

For nearly a century (though one could argue back to Knox himself or even further) a distinct approach to education was intertwined within the larger Scottish culture. This fact can clearly be seen in the *Education Act* of 1696's affirmation of continuity with preceding educational acts from 1646 and beyond: it advocated the continuance of any 'former laws, customs, and constitutions made for establishing and maintaining of schools within the Kingdom' as long as they did not contradict the current act.³²⁴ By the 1720s and 30s, the infrastructure for Scottish education was firmly entrenched, and was working with the established Church of Scotland to transform parishes. Indeed, a distinctive quality of the Scottish Enlightenment was not only that so many professors led the way in Enlightenment thinking but also that so many ministers were actually the professors. Douglas Sloan argued that this distinct phenomenon in Scotland actually helped to 'legitimate Enlightenment thought and interests in the eyes of many of religious persuasion, and to broaden the appeal of distinctively Scottish expressions of the Enlightenment'.³²⁵ This organic Scottish landscape offered a solid foundation for the SSPCK's educational and religious ideals.

This cogency fragmented when crossing the Atlantic. In the colonies, very few institutions existed to organize and perpetuate the systematic expansion of any type of education. Furthermore, Presbyterianism was not the established religion of any of the colonies, and the Society did not have an administrative body with which to collaborate in the colonies such as the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Most practically, the SSPCK's funding for the colonies was appropriated in very different ways than the funding for Scottish projects. As shown above, funding for the Society's mission to America was made possible by colonial governments and a very detailed bequest from an English Presbyterian minister who sought to evangelize Native Americans. Throughout the extant sources in relation to

³²⁴ *Education Act*, 1696. Found in Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Historical Documents* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1970), 263-264.

³²⁵ Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971), 13-14.

the Society, there is an incessant concern over fulfilling the stipulations of the bequest in order to receive the funds: the SSPCK was consistently in danger of losing this money. The colonial government funds from Massachusetts and Georgia also remained in jeopardy and came with specific obligations. In all of the above ways, the SSPCK's colonial negotiations were within a very tenuous and contested space. The Scottish Society constantly manoeuvred between the sometimes-contradictory constraints of its contractual obligations, its educational goals and the ideals of its Reformed faith.

Conclusion

During the 1730s, many members of the new ministerial class sought to spread religious knowledge throughout the Empire by means such as the SSPCK. But simultaneously there were concerns that religious knowledge was being stifled by an imbalance between reason and the affections. Colonial leaders such as Benjamin Colman, like so many of his colleagues, were seeking to reconcile the new learning with the need for piety found within their common religious tradition of English non-conformity and even more broadly within non-Anglican British Protestantism. Colman's central role in the SSPCK was not coincidental: the Scottish Society personified and manifested Colman's ideals of expanding both knowledge and piety to the hinterlands of the Empire.

As future chapters delineate, the failed operations in New England and Georgia during the 1730s altered their future colonial policies in significant ways. For both practical and idealistic reasons, the Scottish Society would embrace key elements of evangelicalism during the 1740s as a way both of recruiting ministers and counteracting the supposed imbalance caused by the new learning. Still, one should not dismiss the SSPCK's projects during the 1730s as a complete failure. This was Scotland's first attempt at missions overseas, the first step in a long history of Scottish missionary work that continues into the twenty-first century. Within this context, the SSPCK first expeditions in colonial America are a crucial beginning to an important story of Scottish religious history.

Chapter Three

The SSPCK and the Great Awakening, 1740-1745

Introduction

Across many areas of colonial America by 1740, the gale-force winds of revivalism were upending the religious and social landscape.³²⁶ In Scotland, the clerical leaders could see the storm crossing the Atlantic. Just as in the colonies, Scotland would debate fiercely over whether these winds were the breath of God or the hot air of foolish men. But the debate over revivalism was merely a continuation of a conversation that started at least as early as the Restoration over the nature and parameters of true religion, religious liberty and freedom of conscience. These became acute issues for the SSPCK in the colonies. The implications were immense and included questions of just how autonomous their missionary-ministers should be as well as to what extent the institution would go (and what precedents they were willing to abandon) in order to evangelize those on the periphery.

This chapter points to three ways that revivalism shaped the SSPCK. The first stemmed from the exigencies of their mission in the colonies. As previous chapters have demonstrated, the SSPCK's hopes for expanding enlightened religion in the colonies were being dashed by material realities and administrative logistics. Their practical (and desperate) need for qualified missionary-ministers as well as some measure of institutional success coincided with leading American Presbyterian ministers' ostensible attempts to further reform true religion and preserve religious liberties. This first relationship of the SSPCK to revivalism demonstrates the complex web of relations and sentiments that surrounded early revivalism. By no means a black and white issue, British Protestants on both sides of the Atlantic were attempting to understand how far evangelism and freedom of conscience could reasonably be taken. By demonstrating this reality within the confines of the SSPCK, this chapter helps to confirm the hypothesis that most ministers were neither New nor Old Lights. Rather, as David Harlan has explained, 'the great majority of ministers were neither, or both'. On both sides of the Atlantic they 'confronted not

³²⁶ Michael J. Crawford, 'Origins of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelical Revival: England and New England Compared' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Oct., 1987).

mutually-exclusive abstractions but mutually-compelling allegiances. And they responded not by aligning themselves with one side or the other but by trying to reconcile their multiple commitments'.³²⁷ This was certainly true of many leaders of the SSPCK. However, the material and logistical realities mentioned above serve to complement and refine Harlan's argument.

Related to this first impact of transatlantic revivalism on the SSPCK was the Society's rhetoric both as a coherent institution and as individual religious leaders. The SSPCK decided to move its colonial headquarters to New York by 1738 (a process traced in the first section of the chapter). This decision was a direct response to their dire need for access to ordained ministers and to new strategies for success. Nonetheless, the Scottish Society did not commission its first missionary in New York until August of 1741.³²⁸ While the official records during this transitional period are nearly silent, the Society's leaders in Edinburgh were actively engaged in this trans-national conversation over the proper shape of piety within the discourse of non-Anglican British Protestantism. This was seen most clearly in both letters and anniversary sermons published by the SSPCK and its leaders that alternated between support and criticism of the revivals, showing the institutional as well as individual divisions over this issue. Importantly, it was the SSPCK that published the first Scottish critique of revivalism: a sermon preached to them by one of its most esteemed members. Indeed, the SSPCK's individual leaders, along with its official sermons and publications, proved crucial to the debate over revivalism in Scotland. Furthermore, these debates played a central role in shaping the Society's colonial policy over the next decade.

A final way that revivalism shaped the SSPCK was through evangelical revivalists' appropriation of the SSPCK in the public sphere as a way to justify and promote their cause. The specific example used is James Robe and his transatlantic evangelical journal during the 1740s. Robe used the SSPCK's colonial actions as a way to prove the legitimacy of the revivals. Using Reformation history, invoking piety and absorbing the narrative of progress and the end times, Robe cast the

³²⁷ David Harlan, 'The Travail of Religious Moderation: Jonathan Dickinson and the Great Awakening' in *Journal of Presbyterian History* 61 no. 4 (Winter 1983), 411. This was a path-breaking article for dispelling the binary narrative of distinct and hard-fast Old and New Light divisions during the Great Awakening. It continues to be one of the most important articles on the subject.

³²⁸ Ledger, 238.

SSPCK's colonial work in a particular way in an attempt to justify the revivals and place the movement safely within the Reformation narrative of true religion. By tracing these three phenomena—the exigencies of colonial missions, the internal dynamics of the SSPCK and the external perceptions and appropriations of the Society by evangelical revivalists—this chapter situates the SSPCK in proximity to the Great Awakening. It argues that, while questions of conscience had taken several forms in Britain since the Restoration,³²⁹ the responses by the leaders of the Scottish Society to the Great Awakening were part of a particular discourse over the last half century concerning piety's relation to the new learning. As revivalism was reaching a shrill pitch, SSPCK leaders were debating just how these events related to the larger questions of enlightened religious discourse and the expansion of civil and religious liberties. The consequences for all involved were momentous.

An Enlightened Ministerial Class: Clerical Ordination and the Inherent Tension in the SSPCK's Quest for Missionaries in America

From the start, the SSPCK demanded that their missionaries be ordained Presbyterian ministers. Clerical ordination helped to safeguard the fragile balances of enlightened religion: this was part of what William Hamilton presented to the SSPCK in the 1730s as the key to true religion.³³⁰ But ordained colonial ministers were not very interested in the SSPCK's offers of employment. Considering the high demand for their services throughout the colonies, it would not behove an ordained, educated and well-trained minister to live in what he would have deemed the most precarious and rugged conditions within the British Empire. Therefore, ministerial ordination was an issue that consistently plagued the efforts of the SSPCK. The

³²⁹ Conscience debates have existed throughout Church history, of course, and gained momentum during the Protestant Reformation. For the purposes of my discussion, however, I have begun at the Restoration, which I think is not only more useful but also quite accurate within the context of British non-conformity.

³³⁰ See chapter one of this thesis. William Hamilton, 'The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion. A Sermon Preached in the High Church of Edinburgh, Monday, January 3, 1732'; for more on the SSPCK and colonial ordination, see, for example, CMM, 6: 169. In direct relation to the New York context, see 8 September 1743.

Society demanded the seemingly impossible: that ordained ministers journey to the ‘wilderness’.³³¹

Evangelism and ministerial ordination seemed incompatible in Native America and other ‘borderland’ regions. To be considered for ordination, one had to receive training from Harvard, Yale or a European university. Issues surrounding ordination created sharp divisions within the American Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia, and the urgency of the debate was compounded by the influx of Scottish and Scots-Irish immigrants, which further heightened the demand for colonial Presbyterian ministers.³³² As one minister lamented, ‘many calls are perpetually presented to our Synod and Presbyteries, which for want of ministers we are unable to comply with’. Throughout the colonies, people were craving the ‘Bread of Life’, he continued, but the Synod could send nothing but ‘some occasional supplies’.³³³ As seen in chapter two, the SSPCK and the Philadelphia Synod first corresponded around 1730, but for various logistical reasons the SSPCK directed their efforts to Massachusetts and Georgia. By 1738, however, Philadelphia and Edinburgh had begun formal talks once again. For distinct though overlapping reasons, both sides needed creative ways to supply ministers to the edges of the Empire.

The Philadelphia Synod perceived the Church of Scotland as a major leader of true religion.³³⁴ Indeed, they looked to the Church of Scotland as the prototype of true religion. Also, since the Synod’s earliest years, a strong link existed between it and Scotland because many of the American Presbyterian ministers had been trained in Scotland. As Douglas Sloan highlighted, ‘of the twenty-six men known to have been received into the Presbytery of Philadelphia before 1717, twelve were graduates

³³¹ See, for example, CMM, 4: 369-370 and CMM, 5: 3. It seemed constantly on the SSPCK’s mind to try and find adequate and competent missionary-ministers. This problem cropped up in several important ways, which one can recognize running throughout this thesis.

³³² PCUSA, pages 173 and 174 provide one example. The Dutch Reformed were also having the same problem, and the Philadelphia Synod recognized this dire issue. On this, for example, see page 174.

³³³ Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *Princeton, 1746-1896* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 9-10.

³³⁴ PCUSA, 140. In 1737, for example, the Synod sent Governor Gooch of Virginia a letter on behalf of ‘brethren’ who were currently ‘mediating a settlement’ in the ‘remote parts’ of his jurisdiction. Emphasizing how well these new settlers could help stabilize the ‘backcountry’, the Synod asked Gooch to maintain these settlers’ religious and civil liberties since their counterparts in Europe had repeatedly shown their loyalty to the Empire. Furthermore, the Synod was quick to assert that these new settlers were of the ‘same persuasion with the Church of Scotland’.

of the University of Glasgow or had taken courses there, and four had received training at the University of Edinburgh'.³³⁵ It was consistent, then, for the Philadelphia Synod to reject the idea of lowering ministerial standards for ordination; they adhered to the Scottish Church's tradition of rigorous standards of education for their ministers. Throughout the 1720s and 1730s the Philadelphia Synod had promoted a version of religious liberty that was predicated upon proper education and adherence to the Westminster Standards.³³⁶ Although the entire Synod recognized the desperate need for more ministers, the majority of members refused to lower clerical standards in order to fill this demand. For the same reasons, they also rejected itinerancy as a way to fill vacant pulpits. For the Philadelphia Synod, ordination and itinerancy were two issues on which there was no room for compromise.

In 1738, however, the stakes were raised even higher. It was in this year that a vocal minority challenged the Philadelphia Synod's refusal to alter the regulations around ordination and itinerancy. In May, the New York Presbytery petitioned for a separate Presbytery of New Brunswick.³³⁷ The newly founded Presbytery of New Brunswick then ordained a Log College Academy-trained minister, John Rowland, in direct response to the Synod's decree that only ministers trained in a European or New England university could receive ordination. New Brunswick said such regulations infringed upon their religious liberties.³³⁸ The Synod responded in the same vein as William Hamilton had in his 1732 sermon. Lowering ministerial standards would lead to an uneducated and ill-informed clerical class: this was a recipe for enthusiasm, ignorance and ultimately the destruction of religious liberty found in true religion.

But for the New Brunswick Presbytery, it should be recognized that its decisions were not mere brinkmanship. Within English and Irish Presbyterianism, there was a strong precedent of rigorous ministerial education by the means of dissenting academies. Extremely sophisticated academies emerged in Ulster and

³³⁵ Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971), 40-41.

³³⁶ Bryan F. LeBeau, 'The Subscription Controversy and Jonathan Dickinson', *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54, no. 3 (Fall 1976), 326.

³³⁷ PCUSA, 136-137.

³³⁸ Wertenbaker, *Princeton*, 13.

throughout England that provided education for those non-conformists (and other non-Anglican British Protestants) barred from Oxford and Cambridge after the Restoration. Many times these ministerial hopefuls would then attend a Scottish University. It was within this profound and time-honoured tradition that the New Brunswick Presbytery ostensibly ordained a Log College minister. New Brunswick's 'missionary theology' of evangelizing the remote parts of the colonies would also have resonated with the Edinburgh leaders of the SSPCK, and the tradition across the Atlantic of dissenting academies would also have been seen as an auspicious development.³³⁹

But also deeply enmeshed in the identity of non-Anglican British Protestantism was New Brunswick's concern over a lack of piety. As seen in prior chapters, early Enlightenment members of the SSPCK on both sides of the Atlantic were worried that true religion was being lost and that the Church was growing sterile. Within this tradition, then, Samuel Blair's lamentation in 1745 in reference to the Philadelphia Synod's decision to dismiss certain of its members might also have reverberated deeply with the Society's leadership. 'It is no new or unheard-of thing, that in a degenerate decayed state of the visible Church, when the power and life of true religion is far gone, those who faithfully and diligently bestir themselves for the restoring and promoting it' get opposed by their professed friends in the faith.³⁴⁰ This was certainly a type of rhetoric that British Protestants had been using for a century as they faced perceived oppression and threats from a powerful institution or fellow ministers. As explained later in the chapter, this common rhetoric is crucial in helping to explain the SSPCK's acceptance of aspects of revivalism even while publishing *against* the revivals on both sides of the Atlantic.

³³⁹ Sloan, *Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*, 56, 65, 68-69. Sloan argued that 'the concrete needs of the New Side ministers and the drive of their missionary theology and enthusiasm led them to perpetuate the Ulster academy tradition with new vigour'.

³⁴⁰ Samuel Blair, *A Vindication of The Brethren who were unjustly and illegally cast out of the Synod of Philadelphia, by a Number of the Members, from Maintaining Principles of Anarchy in the Church, and denying the due scriptural Authority of Church Judicatures: Against The Charges of the Rev. Mr. John Thompson, in his Piece entitled, The Government of the Church of Christ, &c.* (Philadelphia: Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1744), 3. Seen within this tradition of non-conformity, Blair spoke of men such as Jonathan Dickinson, Alexander Webster and James Robe as this era's defenders of true religion. They were the great reformers of the day, defending the 'Work' from its detractors. Once again, the common rhetoric on all sides of this issue is crucial for understanding the SSPCK's decisions as well as the surrounding milieu of British Protestantism. See p. 6.

Some of the leading Presbyterian ministers in New York such as Ebenezer Pemberton and Jonathan Dickinson expressed sympathy and even defended the New Brunswick Presbyterians on these issues they associated with religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Still, Dickinson—perhaps the SSPCK’s first contact in America and a prominent leader in the American Presbyterian Church—stood aghast at the possibilities of the spread of antinomianism and enthusiasm. He, like Pemberton, sought for conciliation and continued to strive for a proper equipoise in what Leigh Eric Schmidt called his ‘consistent vision of a renewed social and religious order’.³⁴¹

It is more than coincidence that, by November of 1738, New York ministers wrote the SSPCK Directors in Edinburgh and announced that they wanted to supply the Society with ordained ministers in the colonies.³⁴² Also significant was that this letter arrived in Edinburgh *only months after* the Synod controversies of 1738: it is not likely that the Edinburgh Directors would have even known about the schism or its potential to divide Presbyterians in America. For the Edinburgh leaders, the promise of having ordained Presbyterian ministers was a much-needed solution to a problem that had plagued them from the beginning of their colonial pursuits. For the insubordinate faction of the Philadelphia Synod, however, this transaction gave their defiant actions *legitimacy*. For one thing, this relationship allowed them to attach their names to a prestigious European institution and perhaps even the Church of Scotland. For another, it provided much-needed funding so they could work more independently from their rivals in Philadelphia. In a revealing irony, nonetheless, this transaction caused the SSPCK inadvertently to support looser regulations of

³⁴¹ Leigh Eric Schmidt, ‘Jonathan Dickinson and the Making of the Moderate Awakening’, *Journal of Presbyterian History* 63 no. 4 (Win. 1985), 341-343, 348-351. Within this, Schmidt also noted Dickinson as a central conduit between New England Congregationalists and Middle Colony Presbyterians. He also pointed to more research needed on Dickinson’s relationship to the Enlightenment; Bryan F. LeBeau, ‘The Subscription Controversy and Jonathan Dickinson’, *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54 no. 3 (Fall 1976). LeBeau demonstrates the clear thread from which Dickinson and similarly minded non-conformists were working. The ‘scruples’ clause during the subscription controversies was extraordinarily important to ministers such as Dickinson. While similar clauses had been formulated in Ireland and England, Dickinson was a leading architect of the subscription controversy in the colonies. With his lead, the Philadelphia Synod implemented the Adopting Act of 1729, which allowed dissent from the Westminster Confession on appeal to one’s conscience. This was the quintessential backdrop for understanding Dickinson’s reaction to the Philadelphia Synod in 1738. Also see Bryan F. LeBeau, *Jonathan Dickinson and the formative years of American Presbyterianism* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

³⁴² CMM, 5: 417-418.

education and ministerial ordination in the colonies, because the Log Colleges were overwhelmingly inferior to the ministerial training of formal universities. There is no indication that the Society understood this phenomenon. Indeed, its demand for ordination from a legitimate Presbytery showed its commitment to proper education and formal institutional authority as the means of spreading what it considered true religion through evangelism. But this fact makes the developments on the ground even more ironic.

Evangelism and the Transatlantic Presbyterian Alliance

Dickinson and Pemberton asked the SSPCK to appoint evangelists to travel from place to place in the hinterlands of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. The Society contemplated this change in policy for nearly six months. On 4 January 1739, the general meeting announced that the committee had ‘been deliberating upon some expedients proper for attempting the conversion of infidel Indian Natives’. The Society seemed open though divided over the proposal to shift its colonial strategies in order to achieve its goals.³⁴³ Also in 1739, the SSPCK received letters from two communities which each requested a minister who would function in a similar manner as McLeod had in Georgia. The Society was also inquiring into the possibility of expanding to ‘east India’. Importantly, the SSPCK hesitated to give support to any of these endeavours, and ultimately never supplied the funding or the ministers that were requested.³⁴⁴ As late as November of 1739 the SSPCK was corresponding with Dr. Benjamin Colman, Governor Belcher and one of the most famous missionaries, John Sergeant, in search of a suitable person they could employ. The Society also wrote Pemberton and Dickinson and asked them to look for ministers there who ‘would undertake such mission’.³⁴⁵ The gradual but seemingly inexorable shift was well underway.

³⁴³ GMM, 4: 96.

³⁴⁴ GMM, 4: 112-116. One community was going from Argyllshire to Carolina. The second community was ‘in the back settlements next the Indians in Maryland’ and they came from ‘some north of Ireland Presbyterian congregations’. In the 1740s the Society received several requests from Scottish communities in need of ministers. For requests to the SSPCK in that region, see the 1 April 1742 minute (GMM, 4: 280). For this Highlander relationship via the SSPCK, see Murdoch, *Scotland and America*, 110-114.

³⁴⁵ GMM, 4: 112-116.

The Society's next official word on the subject indicated their acceptance of a new direction. On 27 October it received another letter from Ebenezer Pemberton, which it discussed in the general meeting of 1 January 1740. Pemberton told the Society that the Synod³⁴⁶ had agreed to find a 'suitable man who will reside among the Indians frequently, catechize and teach them to read and preach among them till by getting the Indian tongue he shall be able to preach to them in their own language'. Pemberton continued that John Sergeant, a successful missionary for the New England Company (NEC),³⁴⁷ had already started to 'prepare the way for their reception of the gospel when it can be sent among them'. That Sergeant was trawling for talent and preparing the communities must have set the Society at ease because, as seen above, it had relied on him as much as Colman and Belcher in 1739.³⁴⁸

Pemberton's letter was read aloud to the entire Society in the General Meeting, which then heard the fifteen-person committee's opinion. Crucial to the direction of the Society's colonial project was the next decision to 'not only renew the powers granted to the committee' last January but also to employ one or two missionaries in the said foreign parts. The General Meeting authorized the Directors to independently commission correspondents in the New York area who would 'oversee the said missionaries and give directions to them agreeable to their instructions from this society'.³⁴⁹ Throughout the rest of 1740, the Society waited eagerly for the response from New York and even sent its London correspondents a copy of the letter they sent to New York in order for London to send a 'fresh letter'.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁶ Though not directly stated, this would have been the Philadelphia Synod. Just one year later came the formal schism between the Synod of Philadelphia and the Synod of New York (1741).

³⁴⁷ The SSPCK was very fond of Sergeant and proposed hiring him. The Williams estate, however, precluded the Society hiring someone who was already employed by another. Besides Sergeant's work 'preparing' the Native Americans along the Susquehanna, he also trained David Brainerd during his time in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

³⁴⁸ In the SSPCK's minutes, they said they were going to write these three men. I have not found evidence that they did, but I am working off the assumption that this correspondence took place. Otherwise, I believe it would have been indicated in the records.

³⁴⁹ GMM, 4: 124-125.

³⁵⁰ GMM, 4: 149. On 1 January 1741 the minutes implied an impatience with the silence from New York. Interestingly, the 1740 minutes reflected the Society's desire to remain within the Presbyterian tradition in the colonies. They sent word to Georgia (what remained of the mission) that the minister was to always be a member of the Church of Scotland (see GMM, 4: 140).

It was very significant to the SSPCK's North American story that, at this point more than ever before, the General Meeting of the SSPCK was highlighting the extensive powers given not only to the fifteen-person Committee of Directors but also to the newly formed New York board of correspondents. The fifteen Directors in Edinburgh held the reins of power over the Society's formal decision making. But one very crucial point regarding the colonial boards of correspondents is consistently overlooked and should be mentioned here. While the SSPCK had Boston and Savannah boards throughout the 1730s, its Massachusetts and Georgia projects were bound by contractual obligations to the respective colonial governments: the colonies were providing a substantial portion of the funding. In New York, SSPCK members were free from the restrictions of any other jurisdiction, leaving New York correspondents with much more power than their Boston and Savannah predecessors if for no other reason than by the sheer fact that the New York board was free to make recommendations to Edinburgh without any interference from other colonial governing bodies.

In 1740, as the SSPCK in Edinburgh was making vital decisions about its New York project, its membership has been estimated at 113. Of these, Peter Clark has calculated that, '19 per cent were landowners (including a big clutch of nobles), 27 per cent were associated with the law, another 30 per cent belonged to other professions (academics, medical men, clergy) and a smaller cluster had a mainly mercantile background'.³⁵¹ The Committee of Directors was no less diverse, and would have varied significantly on matters of religious liberty. In 1740 this Committee of Directors had a substantial Moderate or liberal presence. One example was William Wishart who stood as a Director in 1740. M.A. Stewart has called Wishart 'one of the most significant and progressive figures at Edinburgh University and in the Scottish church in the generation between William Carstairs and William Robertson': it should be remembered that William Carstairs played a central role in the SSPCK's founding.³⁵²

³⁵¹ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 213.

³⁵² M.A. Stewart, 'Williams Wishart', *ODNB* (2004): accessed on 10 July 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40217>.

Wishart studied and worked on the faculty at Leiden, joined the Rankenian Club when returning to Edinburgh, and lauded the works of figures such as Shaftesbury. He rejected the orthodox Calvinism of previous Presbyterian generations, and he worked closely with non-subscribers to the Westminster Confession. While receiving his Doctor of Divinity in London, he interacted with the most cosmopolitan and progressive minds of the budding British Enlightenment. As Stewart put it, ‘he moved freely in London dissenting circles and among liberal Anglicans like Hoadly and Rundle’. This activity was scandalous to some in Scotland, and no doubt contributed to the Edinburgh Presbytery considering him ‘theological[ly] and politically subversive’. Indeed, the Presbytery put excruciating limitations on him in an attempt to censure him from influence. Nevertheless, with Lord Islay’s support, Wishart became principal of the University of Edinburgh in 1736.³⁵³ Incidentally, both Lord Islay and William Carstares were on the SSPCK’s first Lords of Council and Session. They were part of the group who made ‘the first nominations of the members of the said Society, out of the subscribers and contributors toward the pious design’.³⁵⁴ Despite such outrage at Wishart’s cosmopolitan and latitudinarian tendencies, he was elected to the fifteen-person decision-making heart of the SSPCK, the Committee of Directors, in 1740. This was a telling example of the continuity of Scottish liberals participating in the highest ranks of Scotland’s first missionary society.

Piety Defined: Evangelism, Enlightenment and the Contested Narrative of Revivalism

But the Popular Party of the Church of Scotland also had vocal representation on the Committee of Directors. Alexander Webster, one of the best-known Scottish evangelicals during the 1740s, donated three hundred merks to the SSPCK in 1740. This was the first record of contact between the Society and Webster. As a result of his donation, the Directors recommended to the Praeses that he become a member. It

³⁵³ Stewart, ‘William Wishart’ *ODNB* (2004): accessed on 10 July 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40217>.

³⁵⁴ *GMM*, 4: 3.

should be noted that, on the same day that the Society received Webster's donation, they thanked William Wishart for preaching the annual sermon just months before.³⁵⁵

Webster moved swiftly into leadership positions on committees and sub-committees that he would continue to hold for many years to come. In January of 1741, the SSPCK convened for its annual meeting, which was a large affair when all members were expected to attend. During this meeting, Webster preached the Society's annual sermon and was also placed on the Committee of Directors.³⁵⁶ Just a few years prior, in 1737, he had married Lieutenant Colonel John Erskine's daughter, Mary, and had become a minister at the Tolbooth Church in Edinburgh where he was very popular as a preacher. He was a leader in the evangelical faction of the Church of Scotland, and he embodied the evangelical revivalist thread within the Popular party.³⁵⁷ In his sermon to the Society, his passion for evangelism was ardent and clear. But his acceptance of evangelism as a means of revivalism stood in stark contrast to many other more moderate members.

Webster preached that true reform came only through illumination by the Spirit, which transpired when one was 'enlightened' by 'supernatural revelation'. He invoked Scotland's forefathers, saying they had been delivered 'first from heathenish darkness and afterwards by Popish superstitions and damnable delusions'. Scotland was an elect nation to whom God had chosen to reveal true religion.³⁵⁸ Undoubtedly in reference to the colonies as well as the Highlands and Islands, he concluded his sermon by lamenting that, where 'the mist of barbarity and ignorance' still prevailed, the people 'have not hitherto been enlightened with divine revelation'. Webster hoped that 'according to the ancient prophecy the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, and the waters cover the sea; and the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ'.³⁵⁹ In direct response to the perceived threat of

³⁵⁵ CMM, 5: 470-471.

³⁵⁶ CMM, 6: 1; GMM, 4: 149.

³⁵⁷ Mary Margaret Stewart, 'Alexander Webster' in *ODNB* (2004), accessed on 10 July 2010, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28939>. Incidentally, Stewart pointed out that 'Webster's wife's elder sister, Euphemia, was the mother of James Boswell and Webster his uncle; he and his children formed an important part of Boswell's social circle and are frequently mentioned in Boswell's journals.

³⁵⁸ Alexander Webster, *Supernatural Revelation the Only Sure Hope of Sinners. A Sermon preached in the High Church Edinburgh, Monday January 12, 1741. Upon Occasion of the Anniversary Meeting of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Printed by R. Fleming and A. Alison; and at London by J. Oswald, 1741), 39-41.

³⁵⁹ Webster, *Supernatural Revelation*, 49.

deism, the evangelical minister repeatedly asserted the necessity of ‘supernatural Revelation’.³⁶⁰ He emphasized that Socrates, though reaching the height of natural reason, remained in utter darkness, and he juxtaposed this view of reason with that of ‘an awakened sinner’. Webster concluded that it was the awakening kind of faith that actually purified a person’s soul.³⁶¹

Webster then used a discourse that manifested the revivalist spirit to which he operated: ‘to the first preachers of Christianity was given the gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as speaking with tongues, prophesying, and healing all manner of diseases’. But do recall that William Hamilton also invoked these special powers given to the early church. But whereas Hamilton used it as an example of something that has since become unnecessary since the Church is guided by reasonable and enlightened ministers, Webster tapped into the early church miracles to argue that ‘these works’ could never be of ‘created power’ or the ‘abilities of men’: clearly they were a result of ‘the immediate hand of God’ or at least ‘under the influence and direction of God’, because ‘wicked Spirits’ could not have ‘done such works in confirmation of a doctrine...to make men holy and happy’.³⁶² The implications of these differences were subtle but worlds apart. Hamilton was arguing that, whereas at the Church’s beginning God used exceptional and extraordinary powers, it was now a reasonable and enlightened clergy upon which the Church should rely. On the contrary, Webster was contending that the Spirit came down in a miraculous way during the first Church, and that this new age of religion was seeing the same thing happen once again.

In this anniversary sermon, Webster also looked towards evangelism in America. Like other places throughout the world, America had not received the gospel long ago: ‘perhaps’ its inhabitants were not ‘fit for receiving the refinements of Christianity’. Still, the ‘sun of righteousness’ has continued ‘gradually enlightening those dark places of the earth’. Furthermore, the ‘fullness of time’ was ‘fast approaching’ when ‘the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the seas, making both Jews and Gentiles one in Christ Jesus’.³⁶³ For Webster,

³⁶⁰ Webster, *Supernatural Revelation*, 1-4.

³⁶¹ Webster, *Supernatural Revelation*, 5, 13, 18.

³⁶² Webster, *Supernatural Revelation*, 21.

³⁶³ Webster, *Supernatural Revelation*, 29.

religious liberty and true religion sprang from the enlightenment of the Spirit; the revivals were evidence and affirmation of this Spirit, which to revivalists verified their existence within the larger history of the true Church. Again, this is a distinct turn from Hamilton's view when the SSPCK began its colonial operations a decade prior. Though Hamilton also believed in spiritual enlightenment through the Spirit, he also emphasized reason. Most significantly in contrast to Webster, he argued that an enlightened clergy was evidence of true and enlightened religion.

Webster delivered his January sermon about enlightenment through the spirit just months before Cambuslang, the revival movement in the west of Scotland that lasted from 1742 until 1745. Webster was an active promoter, preacher and server of the tables at the communion services of Cambuslang. Webster was integral to Cambuslang's success, and he assisted Whitefield at the revivals. Even further, it was Webster who called for an extended communion season at Cambuslang.³⁶⁴ His SSPCK sermon squared nicely with Cambuslang's central appeal to the masses for their need to experience the 'new birth'.³⁶⁵ Webster's sermon, like the thrust of the message at Cambuslang, placed the experience of the individual at the centre of true religion. Its democratic and atomized impulse threatened to undermine the enlightened hierarchy of the Church of Scotland.

More generally, Cambuslang, like Webster's sermon, pointed to an important shift for the Scottish Church. In the past, ministers emphasized these emotional events in relation to national or ecclesiastical covenants. Now, ministers such as Webster applied these revivals to what Ned Landsman called 'the question of individual salvation rather than to national and clerical causes'. Landsman continued that a century before Cambuslang the National Covenants would have bound both Presbyterian ministers and the laity together more closely. This was a time when 'one's personal fate seemed inexorably linked to the larger struggle' against the Episcopal and English establishment. The Seceders' logic followed this line of inquiry. They had broken from these 'innovators' who had accepted the Union and

³⁶⁴ Arthur Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival: the Scottish Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (Guildford & London: Billing & Sons, Ltd., 1971), 115, 120.

³⁶⁵ Ned Landsman, 'Evangelists and Their Hearers: Popular Interpretation of Revivalist Preaching in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *The Journal of British Studies* (April 1989), 126, 130.

other accompaniments of the ‘English connection’. For Seceders, the excesses of Cambuslang proved that the Church of Scotland had lost its way. At Shotts a century earlier the work of the Spirit proved results that were consonant with their creeds and the Bible. The contrast between Shotts and Cambuslang, for them, could not be clearer.³⁶⁶ Within the SSPCK itself, however, came another fierce critique of Webster and the logic espoused at Cambuslang. In the same line of reasoning as William Hamilton’s SSPCK sermon a decade prior came a cry for reason and order amidst the swells and fury of enthusiasm.

The Plea for Balance: George Wishart’s Fiery Critique of Extremism

If Seceders were vocal conservative critics of Webster’s ideas concerning the revivals, the liberals were just as strident. The Wishart family was one of the quickest to speak out against revivalism. Perhaps their own family lineage had taught them the lessons of itinerancy and evangelical enthusiasm. In the 1540s, years before the Knoxian Revolution, their ancestor, George Wishart, was preaching as an itinerant in the fields of Scotland.³⁶⁷ By the eighteenth century, Scottish liberals like William Wishart, *Secundus*—who preached the SSPCK’s annual sermon in 1740—appealed to the enlightened progress of true religion. Like the Seceders, though, they renounced the revivals as excessive and out of line with the Reformation narrative.

At the SSPCK’s annual meeting in January of 1742, just one year after Webster’s fiery promotion of revivalism, the brother of William Wishart, *Secundus*, now stood behind the lectern. George Wishart presented a passionate sermon in a city buzzing about religious enthusiasm to a Society whose colonial future hung in the balance. George Wishart had stood on the floor and discussed the New England project in 1730.³⁶⁸ He had also served on the Committee of Directors since at least 1732.³⁶⁹ In this sermon to the Society, Wishart’s foremost anxiety was that true

³⁶⁶ Landsman, ‘Evangelists and Their Hearers’, 132, 135, 147.

³⁶⁷ Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 13. In another historical twist of irony, the sixteenth-century George Wishart associated with John Erskine of Dun, suggesting what Martin Holt Dotterweich deemed his ‘evangelical leaning’ even at an ‘early stage in his career’. See Dotterweich, ‘Wishart, George (c.1513?–1546)’, *ODNB* (2004): accessed 10 August 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29793>.

³⁶⁸ GMM, 3: 206.

³⁶⁹ GMM, 4: 44; CMM, 4: 449-450. Hamilton and Wishart were influential during the same period as leaders for the SSPCK, and they seemed very concerned with the colonial project based on the records and their sermons. Also see CMM, 5: 6.

Christianity was being lost amidst ‘these offences’ that ‘have arisen from the bad lives of many Christians’.³⁷⁰ Christianity, in the rhetoric of the Enlightenment that was also a direct rebuttal to Matthew Tindal’s relatively new deist tome *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1731),³⁷¹ was ‘an excellent and useful institution’ that ‘was designed for the Reformation of Mankind, and their Improvement in goodness’.³⁷² Throughout the sermon he responded to the claim by many non-Christians that the Christian religion had caused more harm than good. The minister emphasised charity as the goal of Christianity and the ‘design for which the Christian faith is to be improved’. He relied heavily upon his interpretation of history as a way to prove this and other core themes.³⁷³ One of his foremost arguments, however, was his vehement case against the revivals that he saw around him.

Wishart gave an enumerated definition and historical analysis of Christianity before lambasting revivalism. He bemoaned that ‘men’s passions have a strange power over their judgements, to accommodate their notions of Christianity to their prevailing inclinations’. Later in a scathing diatribe, Wishart thundered, ‘that false religious zeal...belongs to enthusiasm and superstition when people have not been at pains to exercise their reason and judgement in religious matters, but have given themselves up to the dictates of wild fancy and imagination’. While noting that ‘enthusiasm or superstition’ also took place outside of Christianity, he argued that this ‘zeal and bigotry’ stemmed from ‘no other than that insatiable spirit of ambition’. More specifically, ‘worldly views often intermix ostensibly with blind zeal in the same person’ and it is very hard to discern ‘the workings of the different

³⁷⁰ George Wishart, *The Case of Offences against Christianity considered. A Sermon Preached in the High Church of Edinburgh, Monday, January 4, 1742. Upon Occasion of the Anniversary Meeting of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Printed by T.W. and T. Ruddimans for G. Hamilton [?] and J. Balfour, 1742), 4. Do note the publishers! As chapter seven points out, Hamilton and Balfour were both members of the SSPCK. They seemed to publish several of the SSPCK’s sermons, but they did not publish Alexander Webster’s Anniversary Sermon from the previous year.

³⁷¹ Wishart, *The Case of Offences*, 7, 47.

³⁷² Wishart, *The Case of Offences*, 7-8, 14. Wishart responded to Tindal several times in an effort to refute his book, which came to be known as the ‘Deists’ Bible’. In the words of Stewart Brown, Tindal ‘argued that the particular revelation of God’s will in the Bible was superfluous, given the capacity of human reason to comprehend essential truths, and that where Scripture is unreasonable, it can be discarded as superstition’. See Brown’s Lecture, ‘The “Deist Controversy” and the Moderate Enlightenment in England’, Autumn 2009.

³⁷³ Wishart, *The Case of Offences*, 16. Wishart’s view of history had a fascinating recognition of contingency in it. His arguments on the first church are reminiscent and perhaps serve as a precursor to William Robertson’s sermon to the SSPCK in the 1750s. For an example of each of these, see pages 18 and 21.

passions concurring to the same action'. As a result, 'very often the zeal of the simple ignorant sort hath been employed as a tool to serve the ambitious purposes of those in power'. Indeed, he continued, it was the enthusiasts who were persecuting true religion. Echoing Hamilton, Wishart exhorted that it was the place of the 'ministerial order' to 'remove' any infidelity to truth.³⁷⁴ Several times he invoked the theme of declension and condemned the 'luxury' and 'debauchery' and general unbelief that were contributing to a corrupting society. Both revivalists and 'worldly' people were extremely troubling to the minister, and he was viscerally grappling with a way to navigate between the two extremes in order to secure what he considered 'pure, original Christianity', which was helpful and blameless and virtuous for the world.³⁷⁵

Like Webster just one year before, history served as Wishart's evidence in his argument for true religion.³⁷⁶ And so did eschatology. Both men, like the Seceders, invoked the end-times narrative and both argued for the right to mandate true religion. Both men utilized the same Christian narrative of the apostolic church, corruptions and, in the words of George Wishart, 'the good hand of God at the glorious Reformation'. They also saw their contemporary times as extraordinarily ripe for true religion to thrive.³⁷⁷ But their evidence for true religion was far removed from each other.³⁷⁸

It is noteworthy that, besides the Seceders' criticisms, Wishart's sermon to the SSPCK was the *first Scottish critique* of revivalism. The only other non-Seceder criticism came in May of 1742. After Wishart released the potential for Scottish Presbyterians to critique the current revivals, however, those who questioned the validity of revivalism increased dramatically. In May a Bostonian printed a piercing letter in Glasgow that criticized the revivals in New England as counterfeit occurrences of wild and outlandish enthusiasm. Along with giving damning

³⁷⁴ Wishart, *The Case of Offences*, 40-46, 59. For the material at the beginning of the paragraph, see pp. 22-23, 29.

³⁷⁵ Wishart, *The Case of Offences*, 26-27, 32-33.

³⁷⁶ Wishart, *The Case of Offences*, 16.

³⁷⁷ Wishart, *The Case of Offences*, 52.

³⁷⁸ These two Anniversary Sermons, given within one year of each other, demonstrate the contested rhetoric of non-conformity. It does appear that Webster has conflated reasonable with rational with the antithesis being the emotions. On the other hand, Wishart seems to follow the reasonable/unreasonable binary that the Sorkin-Blatt model emphasized as a fundamental tenet of the religious Enlightenment.

examples of grotesque excesses, he continued that the revivals had not in fact produced good works. The author, called A.M., presented excerpts from leading colonial anti-revivalists such as Charles Chauncy, Samuel Mather and John Caldwell. Importantly, this pamphlet also included pious colonial religious leaders who warned sharply about the excesses of revivalism. These men included Ebenezer Turell, Jonathan Parsons, and, most crucially for the SSPCK, Benjamin Colman.³⁷⁹

The Bostonian liberal Charles Chauncy specifically played a pivotal role in Scottish ministers' critique of the revival movement in their native land. Michael Crawford demonstrated Chauncy's prominence when explaining that William Hooper, a Boston minister and graduate of the University of Edinburgh in 1723, introduced Chauncy to 'Scottish liberals' in the summer of 1741. Hooper wrote to the University's history professor, Charles Mackie, about the possibility of granting Chauncy a Doctorate of Divinity from Edinburgh. The reason, as Anglican minister in Massachusetts Alexander Malcolm (probably the A.M. in the letter above) stated to Mackie in a letter, is significant: 'it would be of use to the cause of reason and religion, if in the present situation of things such a mark of distinction were put upon a man of worth that dares to oppose such a tide of nonsense and madness'. The University of Edinburgh honoured Chauncy with the Doctorate of Divinity in March of 1742,³⁸⁰ just eight months before his scathing letter would hit the Scottish press.

It was the American ministers' proclamation that the American revivals were not of God that gave Scottish ministers the nod to issue their own criticisms of revivalism on their home soil. And the ministers' resolve to begin their critiques received its 'finishing stroke', as one liberal Scottish minister put it, with Chauncy's letter, published in Scotland just days after Whitefield left Scotland for England.³⁸¹ The letter was published in Scotland on 8 November 1742 with a preface by George Wishart. Clearly, this was a battle for the heritage and identity of non-Anglican British Protestantism as a distinct thread of the Reformation.

³⁷⁹ Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 170-171.

³⁸⁰ Alexander Malcolm to Charles Mackie, 22 July 1741, Historical Manuscript Commission, *Report on the Laing Manuscripts* (London: HMSO, 1925, 2: 327-328). I obtained this quote from Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 171.

³⁸¹ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 170-171.

The Correspondence and Collaboration of George Wishart and Charles Chauncy

In the same year that George Wishart delivered his sermon on true religion to the SSPCK, he wrote his preface to Chauncy's letter 'to the world in justice to the cause of truth' and in order to 'prevent the like extravagancies from ever prevailing with us under a name of religion'. He described Chauncy as having 'one of the best characters in the country where he lives, for good understanding, integrity, and sincere regard to religion'. Wishart stressed that Chauncy was 'Calvinist in his judgment, though far from confining Christianity to the distinguishing doctrines of Calvinism'.³⁸² For Wishart, toleration was a marked tenet of true religion on both sides of Atlantic.

In the letter, the famous Bostonian lamented the fact that Whitefield was received in the colonies as 'an angel of God, yea, a God come down in the likeness of man'. Chauncy described the hysteria, which he attributed to the weaker sorts of people, and he resented the fact that if people 'did not express a very high thought of Mr. Whitefield' then they were 'stigmatised as enemies of God and true religion'.³⁸³ Chauncy also criticized the lack of tolerance amongst revivalists; he then condemned the results of the revivals. People not only acted in wild ways during the services—antics he included were screaming, trances, visions and hysterical laughter—they also did not improve their actions or curb their vices: there continued 'the same luxury and intemperance, the same lying and tricking and cheating, as before this gentleman came among us'. Furthermore, Christians were engaging in 'such a Spirit of bitter, censorious, uncharitable judging' and pride that had never been experienced before the great revival.³⁸⁴ In a penetrating anecdote, Chauncy used Gilbert Tennent as an example of a revivalist who embraced Whitefield with the utmost zeal and strove to follow in his path. Indeed, many esteemed Tennent, like Whitefield, as a man filled with the Spirit for powerful preaching. Although some in Scotland had praised the Moravians, Chauncy explained that Tennent had finally turned from revivalism when he saw the 'confusion' that the Moravians caused in their pietistic fervour and their unqualified emphasis on the Spirit. In a dramatic step away from

³⁸² George Wishart, 'To the Reader'.

³⁸³ Chauncy, 'A Letter', 8.

³⁸⁴ Chauncy, 'A Letter', 9.

revivalism, Tennent now ‘expresses himself much as those did whom before he had sent to the Devil by wholesale’.³⁸⁵ Chauncy was arguing that proof of the illegitimacy of the revivals was the fact that one of the most famous and effective proponents of the Great Awakening had now changed his views about these events.

But the Bostonian minister took his own view a step further by arguing that the current degree of enthusiasm was unprecedented. ‘For my self, I am among those who are clearly in the opinion that there never was such a spirit of superstition and enthusiasm’ like the present day. He continued that there were ‘never such scandalous reproaches on the Blessed Spirit, making him the Author of the greatest irregularities and confusions’. For ‘persons not acquainted with the history of the world’, he remarked with aplomb, these revivals are ‘unaccountable’. Although he did hope that the enthusiasm had proved to many (like Tennent) the need for temperance and true faith, he believed that the evil factions, pride and disorderly emotionalism ‘have been carried too far’ and that ‘unless God mercifully interpose...we should be over-run with enthusiasm’. Chauncy concluded by encouraging Wishart to ‘guard the people’ of Scotland against Whitefield and his ‘extravangancies’.³⁸⁶ It is interesting to remember that the Seceders were presenting the same arguments against revivals as Moderates in Scotland and anti-revivalists in the colonies were making.

Chauncy’s letter from Boston, and Wishart’s preface and publication of the letter in Edinburgh, was one example of a vibrant transoceanic network of letter writing and identity construction. Both pro and anti-revivalists were communicating with one another from the centres of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Boston and London.³⁸⁷ Specific to the context of this thesis, Wishart was a major leader of the SSPCK, and Chauncy would soon be a correspondent, as well. As Michael Crawford explained, ‘with the publication of these writings, Scots no longer needed to assume the validity of the American Awakening, and if the American revivals produced little good and much disorder, then what was to be expected from their exact parallel in

³⁸⁵ Chauncy, ‘A Letter’, 10-20.

³⁸⁶ Chauncy, ‘A Letter’, 21-24.

³⁸⁷ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 167.

Scotland?’³⁸⁸ American anti-revivalists such as Chauncy played a major role in the criticism of Scottish revivalism by the early 1740s.

Since its inception, members of the Society had believed themselves to be promoting the British Enlightenment’s ideas on improvement of society through the expansion of enlightened religious and civil liberties. Various theological frameworks converged cogently within the framework of this evangelizing version of Enlightenment. But the SSPCK members’ convergence on various ideas related to evangelism was manoeuvred in particular ways by evangelical supporters of the revivals. An example of this comes from the evangelical minister and historian, James Robe, who appealed to the Society’s colonial policies in defence of the revivals’ legitimacy. His argument for evangelical revivalism, and his savvy appropriation of the Society as promoters of revivalism, presented a persuasive case for the revivals as the next phase in the Reformation project.

‘A Great and General Reformation’: A Historian Defends the Revivals

In 1743, about a year and a half after the eruption at Cambuslang, James Robe reflected upon the nature of revivalism in his journal, the *Christian Monthly History*, which followed in the same spirit as the *Glasgow Weekly History*. These periodicals recorded individual accounts of the revivals both for the sake of posterity and as a way to test and promote the revivals as a legitimate work of God. As W.R. Ward explained, these Christian journals, ‘attempted to give a synoptic, even cosmic, view of the revival as a whole’.³⁸⁹

A Scottish minister and local historian, Robe had already begun recording revival experiences both in his parish and nearby at Cambuslang.³⁹⁰ Robe’s account of the SSPCK was significant. Many people—both those who supported and those who opposed the revivals—would have read Robe’s journal. Furthermore, the *perception* of the SSPCK by those observing it from outside the Society was just as important as the debates going on inside the Society. On both sides of the Atlantic,

³⁸⁸ Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 170-171.

³⁸⁹ W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 336.

³⁹⁰ Fawcett, *the Cambuslang Revival*, 4-5.

people read about the Society's colonial work from Robe's analysis, and had to interpret what it meant in light of the other events and publications of the period.

Though not listing them by name, Robe addressed the critiques of revivalism made by Chauncy and Wishart. He was no doubt using his journal to respond to James Fisher, as well. Fisher was a vocal Seceding minister from Glasgow who argued in 1743 that the revivals were a sign of 'the righteous judgment of God' because these revivalists believed a 'strong delusion'. Once they have believed this lie, 'reasoning with them is entirely needless' as they will not heed even the 'strongest arguments from scripture or reason'. Fisher wrote this rebuke of revivalism directly in response to James Robe's depiction both of Cambuslang and the revivalist minister's own parish of Kilsyth.³⁹¹

Robe acknowledged that most people who opposed the revivals did so due to their interpretation that these events were 'the work of the Devil, delusion and enthusiasm' or that no 'outward moral change' had occurred in the individuals who claimed to have received the Spirit. He contrasted this view with his perspective that the revivals were 'a genuine work of the Holy Spirit, and the effect of that outpouring of the Comforter, zealous Christians have been praying, longing, and waiting for'.³⁹² There was no question that the revivals were occurring and affecting many people. The question was, of course, just how to interpret them. Robe addressed the Seceders, the Moderates and concerned evangelicals who questioned the validity of the revivals because of the extraordinary excesses occurring in America. Robe countered this concern by arguing that the opposition inflated American excesses *in order to* quell the revivals in Britain. Indeed, he continued, critics had already started to conspire in the same way against the events at Cambuslang.³⁹³

But Robe's defensive stance soon transitioned to one of reconciliation. He argued that certain points of the revivals evidenced 'the Lord's blessings and countenancing the doctrines of grace, received and confessed in the Protestant

³⁹¹ James Fisher, *A Review of the Preface to a Narrative of the Extraordinary Work at Kilsyth, and other Congregations in the Neighborhood, written by the Reverend Mr. James Robe, Minister at Kilsyth*, 2nd ed. with preface illustrating the enthusiastical doctrine of imaginary ideas. (Glasgow: Printed for John Newland, Merchant in Glasgow, 1743), 3.

³⁹² James Robe, *The Christian Monthly History: or an Account of the Revival and Progress of Religion, Abroad, and at Home*, vol. 1 no. 1. To be published monthly. For November. (Edinburgh: Printed by R. Fleming and A. Alison, 1743), 3. Hereafter this issue of Robe's journal will be called CMH, 1 followed by the appropriate page number.

³⁹³ CMH, 1: 4-6.

Churches'. He appealed to the broader ecumenical urge that had existed in the British context since the Restoration, and asserted that the revivals emphasized doctrines upon which all orthodox Protestants could believe. The revivals, in his estimation, had remained orthodox; they did not drift 'towards Antinomians on the one side, or the Arminians on the other'. He concluded his argument by stating that 'we have in these facts' of the revivals, which even the opposition 'grant at least a presumptive evidence of such of the gospel as the friends of this work assert and publish'. In other words, all non-Anglican British Protestant religious leaders could agree that certain aspects of the revivals were positive; this fact should say something about the validity of the revivals as a whole. Furthermore, all people could assess over time whether there was evidence of good works following the revivals. Continuing to address 'the contested facts' of good works stemming from revivalism, he would 'observe another remarkable concession of several in the opposition' that some good works had indeed come from the revivalist movement.³⁹⁴

But it is significant that Robe makes a sharp distinction between himself and the radical revivalist, James Davenport. He also objected to errors including 'intemperate zeal' as well as 'illiterate exhorters' along with his carefully worded phrase, 'some divisions in some churches'. It was the 'contradicting parties' on both sides of the true revivalists that were either creating or spreading propaganda about the disorders.³⁹⁵

Robe then established his framework for the debate: two parties within British Atlantic Protestantism were competing for control over the interpretation of the revivals. The differing 'accounts' of the 'great and general Reformation' demanded evidence: 'I mean these facts which are the primary probable marks of conviction and conversion'. Observers should therefore use the 'rules of just reasoning, about the proper evidence of facts, which is credible testimony, to prefer that of the friends and asserters of the good work, to that of the opposers'. He supported this by saying 'that when matters of fact are attested by witnesses, who have sufficient means of knowledge or information and *causa scientiae*, and when the character of the witnesses is known to be good, especially if their number is known to be considerable, and there is no apparent defect in the testimony itself, then

³⁹⁴ CMH, 1: 10.

³⁹⁵ CMH, 1: 12.

an assent to testimony is well founded, and we are obliged to give it'.³⁹⁶ He argued that the opposition—which he regularly referred to as the Seceders, some ministers in the Church of Scotland and some New England ministers—was at a disadvantage because his side had 'sufficient *causae scientiae* and means of knowledge and information, which the other side altogether or in a great measure want'.³⁹⁷

Both the Great Awakening and the Great Revival were symptomatic of the crisis within British Atlantic Protestantism. If an imperial Protestant interest existed based on fear of the French Empire, a Protestant theological anxiety simultaneously existed over what it meant to be a true Protestant. Robe reflected this dynamic from an evangelical perspective. He appealed to evidence and history as a way of supporting the truth of his claims. Yet he bitterly critiqued Seceders for leaving the sacred confines of the Church of Scotland. Importantly, Robe's premises time and time again relied on the character of the individuals involved. He argued, for example, that the revivalists' testimonies were sound, because the individuals interviewed were of integrity.

Robe appealed to his enemies' individual characters, as well. In contrast to the revivalists who had integrity, anti-revivalists such as 'Mr. Mather' defended 'Caldwell', whom Robe called the thief from Ireland. This was more than likely Samuel Mather, later a correspondent and leader of the SSPCK in America. Robe continued, though, that Seceders could not be trusted because they had left the Church of Scotland: 'is truth to be expected from men taking to themselves such liberty, especially when the Church of Scotland is concerned'? Like Moderate ministers who claimed that an educated elite would preserve true religion, Robe consistently appealed to the integrity of individuals as a way to bolster true religion from false.³⁹⁸

Robe's core argument—that the revivals were valid expressions of true religion—was supported by his claim that no minister of the Church of Scotland had considered the revivals illegitimate. Even in Boston, he insisted, the condemnation of the events was not related to the revivals but the disorder springing from them. Indeed, as mentioned above, Robe was correct in this assertion. Other than one

³⁹⁶ CMH, 1: 14-15.

³⁹⁷ CMH, 1: 16, 18.

³⁹⁸ CMH, 1: 24-25.

piece, no Church of Scotland minister at this point had spoken out against the revivals in Scotland. Robe's repeated reference to letter writers between Scotland and New England reflected his and other pro-revivalists' concern over the increasing rejection of the movement. In a striking condemnation seemingly directly aimed at Wishart, he concluded that 'as to the letter-writers from this country, who have given unfavourable accounts of this work here, to their friends abroad, all I incline to say, is, near in the words of the letter-writer from Scotland to New-England, that they are not rigid Presbyterians'.³⁹⁹

Robe was appealing to *orthodoxy* as a way to defend the revivals, and was appropriating the concerns of enlightened Protestants such as Benjamin Colman who feared an imbalance stemming from rigid rationalism. Robe was attempting to say that the revivals were preserving the balance. This strong statement by a renowned Church of Scotland minister and historian manifested the significance of this debate. Robe was implicitly questioning whether one could be Presbyterian and part of true, balanced and orthodox religion if that same person did not support this revival movement. This issue of legitimacy led to Robe's incisive employment of the SSPCK to bring home his point most forcefully.

James Robe and the SSPCK's Colonial Identity with Revivalism

The support of revivalism by the SSPCK would have been convincing proof for many trying to decide whether the revivals were legitimate or not. It appears that the first historical commentary on the SSPCK from someone outside the Society itself was Robe in the *Christian Monthly History*. Robe devoted an entire issue of his well known and much-read evangelical journal to the colonial work of the SSPCK. Published in 1744, the author viewed the SSPCK's role as Providential: 'in the worst of times' people have always assembled together 'who feared the Lord'.⁴⁰⁰ In Scotland, he argued that this remnant emerged after the Reformation, but he placed a particularly important emphasis upon the period just after the Restoration: 'about the year 1663, when there was a cloud over this church, there were many such fellowships (as they were then called) in the City of Edinburgh'.⁴⁰¹ These

³⁹⁹ CMH, 1: 29-30.

⁴⁰⁰ CMH, 5: 3.

⁴⁰¹ CMH, 5: 3.

fellowships of the faithful, according to Robe, disintegrated during the fierce persecution of the late 1670s. After the Revolution, and particularly around 1699, several Societies were set up in the same way as the fellowships he had mentioned before. According to Robe, ‘several honourable gentlemen of weight and distinction...exerted themselves to curb the growing immoralities of the age’, which they were quite successful in doing. He continued that these men noticed the deplorable ‘barbarity’ and ‘superstition’ in the Highlands and Islands and, by way of ‘voluntary subscriptions’, established charity schools. Robe continued by explaining how the General Assembly and Crown agreed to the project, and how ‘many of the nobility took it by the hand’.⁴⁰²

Beginning after the Reformation, Robe’s narrative depicted what he viewed as a distinct continuity between those who faithfully feared the Lord and followed the authentic, reformed way: a pathway of progress that was now being continued by the SSPCK. His history of the Scottish Society prepared his readers for the core argument: that the revivals were authentically sent from God and part of the reformation tradition. He supported this claim by using his journal to ‘communicate to the public the great success the missionaries, employed by’ the SSPCK ‘have had amongst the Indians in America, for near four years past; particularly in Long Island’.⁴⁰³ Robe’s conclusion was extremely significant for the revivals and the identity of the SSPCK. The Scottish minister contended that the journals and correspondences of the Society have ‘vindicated’ the ‘late Awakening’ from the ‘aspersions cast upon it’.⁴⁰⁴ Put plainly, if such distinguished men of God within the SSPCK—understood to be historically within the authentic Reformation tradition—endorsed the revivals then they must in fact have been genuine.

Robe continued to construct a historical argument that echoed Webster’s shift towards a revivalist interpretation of religious liberty and history. He asserted that the way ‘poor Indians’ in the colonies had responded to the gospel gave observers

⁴⁰² CMH, 5: 3-4.

⁴⁰³ CMH, 5: 6. It is very peculiar that Robe describes four years of success in the colonies. With his Long Island remark, he is referring to the Society’s work in the Middle Colonies, yet no evidence exists that they funded anyone before Robe and scholars have identified Robe as the first missionary in the Middle Colonies.

⁴⁰⁴ CMH, 5: 6-7. Robe was officially hired in April of 1742. According to his journal’s title, he was writing the SSPCK issue for the year 1744 and for the months of March through August. This would have given him time to read the reports coming from Horton to the SSPCK. Perhaps Webster gave him the reports while ministering at Cambuslang in 1742.

and readers ‘some view of the distress the first converts from paganism’ would have experienced during ‘their first awakening’.⁴⁰⁵ He agreed with revivalism’s critics that, if emotionalism were practiced by the entire Church, Christianity would lose credibility. This is the reason for rational preaching.⁴⁰⁶ Therefore, Robe implied that the Native Americans’ emotionalism was typical of a culture’s first experience with what he considered true religion. But in the end, according to his Bible verses, reason and proper speaking would actually convince the ‘uninformed’ of the truth.

Robe quickly followed this argument with an appeal to the SSPCK for proof that the revivals were legitimate. He reminded his readers that the revivalist Azariah Horton, the SSPCK’s first missionary, had written journals regarding his revival experiences, which then ‘were presented and communicated to such a learned, pious and wise body’. In fact, the SSPCK had agreed to give Robe copies of Horton and Brainerd’s journals and to let him publish excerpts in *The Monthly Christianity History*.⁴⁰⁷ Robe’s next comments reflected his distinct way of viewing the Society in relation to the revivals:

they [SSPCK] have been so far from finding the fruits of the Reverend Mr. Horton’s ministry to be delusion, and the work of the Devil, that they were well pleased with his journals sent; and they acknowledge, to the Glory of sovereign and all-conquering Grace, the success of his labours.⁴⁰⁸

Robe hoped many people would be stirred up and excited about such a wise and pious group as the SSPCK, and that many of the rich would contribute to the Society.⁴⁰⁹ He then gave a very long and detailed summary of the SSPCK’s work in the colonies. The entire issue was centred on the SSPCK—its founding, its policies and its missionaries—in order to justify the revivals. To be sure, Robe’s inside sources to the SSPCK were revivalists and would have explained the Society in these evangelical terms. He had more than likely spent a lot of time in the early 1740s with Alexander Webster, and one could presume he acquired much of his information from Webster. More than likely, Webster was a central reason that, during the revivals in and around Cambuslang in which Robe’s native town of

⁴⁰⁵CMH, 5: 7.

⁴⁰⁶ I Corinthians 14:24-25. For the context paraphrased above, see verses 21-25

⁴⁰⁷ CMM, 6: 212.

⁴⁰⁸ CMH, 5: 7

⁴⁰⁹ CMH, 5: 7

Kilsyth participated heavily,⁴¹⁰ the SSPCK was associated directly with spreading revivalistic evangelism in the colonies as funding and awareness was raised for that explicit purpose.⁴¹¹ Even though ministers from within the SSPCK divided sharply over the question of the revival's validity, the perception of the Scottish Society in the colonies during the early 1740s received a revivalistic emphasis due to Webster's role at Cambuslang and Robe's absorption of the Society into the larger narrative of revivalism as part of Reformation history.

Conclusion

This chapter has uncovered the transatlantic battle during the late 1730s and early 1740s over the proper interpretation of revivalism in relation to the true religion of the Reformation. As debates raged over the revivals' relation to piety and true religion, the SSPCK's colonial project in New York began to flourish as a result of revivalist activities. The SSPCK's inner squabbles and uncertainty, however, did not trump its need to be successful in the colonies. Therefore, they unanimously endorsed revivalist activity in the colonies even while they divided fiercely over its legitimacy at home. This was due to exigencies on the ground along with the contested parameters of these events. Nonetheless, as this chapter has demonstrated and future chapters will develop, the revivals made an abiding and profound impact on the SSPCK.

But this narrative of discontinuity within the SSPCK is perhaps too simple. As the next chapter demonstrates, the SSPCK's colonial activities revealed the complexity on the ground of achieving the Society's goal of 'enlightened evangelism'. The Society's New York correspondents were some of the first to embrace the revivals and to argue that they were in continuity with Reformation history. But these same ministers would also re-think their position rather quickly. Also, even though Robe described the SSPCK's colonial activities as evidence of the legitimacy of revivalism, the Edinburgh Directors were responding much more to practical ways of being successful. Furthermore, the Directors still enforced strictly their demand for ministerial ordination, and there is little reason to believe that they understood the nuances of the American Presbyterian schism of 1741. Therefore, the

⁴¹⁰ Fawcett, *Cambuslang Revival*, 124-142.

⁴¹¹ Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, 216.

legitimacy and continuity of the Society's efforts could still remain intact, perhaps even for Scottish liberals.

As the next chapter explains, the correspondents and itinerants did achieve the success that Robe described. In an effort to cultivate piety as an antidote to what they perceived as stifling rationalism and episcopacy, however, they also met with circumstances that forced them to re-think their view of enlightenment, piety and the precarious condition of true religion.

Chapter Four

Encounters

Introduction

Some of the SSPCK's most successful ventures in the colonies came during the tenure of its first two New York-based missionary-ministers, David Brainerd and Azariah Horton. Both missionary-ministers had attracted and converted⁴¹² large numbers of Native Americans to the Christian religion. The catalyst for these gains was the Great Awakening. But the SSPCK's growth due to the revivals came at a cost. Bound up with the many personal conversions and institutional claims of success came instability and heterodox experiences of piety. How would the Scottish Society reconcile, on the one hand, this evangelical gravitation towards individualism and fragmentation found in the doctrines of the New Birth with, on the other hand, the Society's needs for stability and institutional progress towards 'enlightened' evangelism through projects that 'civilized' and 'stabilized' the periphery?

This chapter assesses the missionary work of Brainerd and Horton by examining letters and diaries written by the two missionaries. It argues that each missionary shaped the Society's colonial policy in four significant ways. First, both of these missionaries had intimate encounters with Native American communities: in this way they determined the direction of the SSPCK. Second, both Brainerd and Horton wrote letters and journals to the leaders of the SSPCK on the both sides of the Atlantic that served as the primary if not only means of intelligence about the local communities. The Society based its decisions on this information. Third, both missionaries participated in broader networks that linked the SSPCK to evangelicalism in the colonies. Finally, the leadership's analyses of the missionaries' interactions with local communities (by way of their journals) were significant towards shaping their perception of missionary-Indian encounters more generally.

⁴¹² Brainerd especially claimed that he converted many Native Americans. He also founded a new community for a large number of converts. Horton was not as successful, but was participating in missionary work on Long Island at the same time as the revivals were taking place there.

While demonstrating the four points of influence mentioned above, this chapter argues that Brainerd and Horton (and their Native American colleagues and community members) played an important role in shaping two specific areas related to the Society's identity. The first was the very nature of evangelism: was it to convert souls through a supernatural and even sudden work of the Spirit? Or was evangelism meant to expand the religious and civil liberties found in true and reasonable religion? As this chapter manifests, the New York correspondents understood this tension and were trying to portray both to the Edinburgh Directors.

The second contested feature of the Society's identity concerned the parameters of evangelicalism. In New York and Edinburgh during the 1740s, evangelical members of the SSPCK were not only quarrelling with liberal ministers over the legitimacy of the revivals within the narrative of Reformation history. They were also grappling with each other over how to define authentic revivalism: that is, at what point does revivalism become a breeding ground for antinomianism and enthusiasm? As shown in the last chapter, Charles Chauncy used this line of reasoning in his diatribe against revivalism, reminding evangelicals that Gilbert Tennent, one of the foremost leaders of the Great Awakening, had recanted much of the revivalism he helped to ignite. But as this chapter explains, missionaries such as Horton and Brainerd—like the historian and minister James Robe portrayed in the last chapter—were trying to maintain the integrity of the revivals even as they critiqued their excesses. Their journals reflect the perplexing way in which they felt the Spirit was working even as they tried to stave off what they considered unorthodox experiences and interpretations of this Spirit.

Ostensibly, the SSPCK supported the work of revivalism in the 1740s as a logistically pragmatic way of promoting evangelism in the colonies. But this pragmatic acceptance of revivalism as a way to civilize and educate the Empire's periphery ironically contributed to the disintegration of the very institutional frameworks that maintained what many British Atlantic Protestants and members of the SSPCK considered a stable religion with an educated and enlightened elite. Within the SSPCK on both sides of the Atlantic, the entire gamut of British Atlantic Protestantism—from liberals to radical evangelicals—debated piety, rationality and other issues related to true religion and the promotion of religious and civil liberties.

But Native Americans and white missionaries were grappling in different ways with concepts of the Christian faith. Local exigencies coupled with different existential assumptions and spiritual cosmologies forced white missionaries and especially Native Americans toward cultural and religious redefinitions. All of these dynamics would play important roles in how British Atlantic Protestants came to define evangelism in America during the post-Awakening years.

The Residents of the Northeast Woodlands

For at least 12,000 years, people have lived in the region where Azariah Horton and David Brainerd would settle as SSPCK missionaries. This area, known as the Northeast Woodlands, probably had two million Indian inhabitants by the seventeenth century. Most of these communities spoke a dialect of either Sioux or Algonquian, and they shared some generally accepted cultural and religious beliefs. For example, generosity, bravery and loyalty were core community values, and most if not all believed in a creative life force—sometimes associated with the heavens or the sun—that was balanced by evil spirits who manifested themselves in a variety of ways. Many American Indians placed a high value on dreams, believed in the eternal nature of the soul, and thought that both wicked and righteous souls would go to the ‘western god, from they have received their beans and corn, their pumpkins, squashes, and all such things’. The righteous ‘will exercise themselves in pleasurable singing and dancing forever’ while the wicked will have to endure ‘some hard servile labour, or some perplexing exercise, such as fetching water in a riddle, or making a canoe with a round stone, &c’.⁴¹³

The culture of this region declined sharply once the local residents were forced to relocate to white cultural trade centres. Venereal disease, smallpox and the plague of alcohol crippled the regional culture. As Barry Pritzker confirmed, ‘they were as unprepared for liquor as they were for smallpox, and unscrupulous traders took full advantage of the fact’.⁴¹⁴ Other factors came into play such as dietary

⁴¹³ Gaynell Stone, ed. *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 2nd ed. (Stony Brook, N.Y.: Suffolk County Archaeological Association: Nassau County Archaeological Committee, 1993), 152. This description came from Samson Occom in his ‘An Account of the Montauk Indians, on Long Island, Rev. Samson Occom, A.D. 1761’.

⁴¹⁴ Barry M. Pritzker, *A Native American Encyclopedia: History, Culture, and Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 398-401.

changes and malnutrition due to being driven off of their land. Implications of this displacement included a decline in fertility rates and a growing dependency upon imperial goods acquired through trade.⁴¹⁵

Specific to Long Island, the Montaukett community was very important in the region. They were ‘close relatives’ of the Shinnecoeks, Unkechaugs, and Matinecoeks who also lived in Long Island. In addition to this web of fraternal relations, they had formed solid and long-lasting relationships with southern New England communities such as the Pequots, Niantics, and Narragansetts.⁴¹⁶ The Montauketts were able to reinvent themselves in the eighteenth century. After the devastating effects of King Philip’s War in 1675-6, the Montauketts, led by Wyandanch, rose from the carnage and established a balance of power with white communities. This was a regional phenomenon that had a striking effect on religious culture. As Douglas Winiarski has reminded scholars, Native Americans did not ‘vanish from the historical landscape in the devastating wake of King Philip’s War’. Rather, Indian communities throughout the region formed a ‘distinctive religious culture marked by eclecticism, diversity, and hybridity’ that helped to create a ‘vibrant, regional, supernatural economy’.⁴¹⁷

But disease, alcoholism and dependency on imperial powers for trade goods disrupted what John Strong called the ‘middle ground shared by the two cultures’. Strong continued that Wyandanch’s initial negotiations were savvy and quite successful, but that, ‘his temporary gains were based on the market economy, a force that, as Richard White has so clearly demonstrated, eventually undermined Indian autonomy, making the Indians vulnerable to exploitation’. In Long Island, this market factor and what Strong referred to as ‘voracious entrepreneurs’ were forces to which Long Island native, Azariah Horton, like his indigenous neighbours, would have to come to terms.⁴¹⁸ Violence, oppression, and manipulation were the realities

⁴¹⁵ Neal Salisbury, ‘Native People and European Settlers in Eastern North America, 1600-1783’ *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of The Americas*, Vol. 1, Part 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 455-456.

⁴¹⁶ John A. Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2001), xiii.

⁴¹⁷ Douglas L. Winiarski, ‘Native American Popular Religion in New England’s Old Colony, 1670-1770’, *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 15, no. 2 (Summer, 2005), 148.

⁴¹⁸ John A. Strong, ‘The Imposition of Colonial Jurisdiction over the Montauk Indians of Long Island’ *Ethnohistory* 41 no. 4 (Autumn, 1994), 582. Regarding Strong’s reference to White, see Richard

of colonization for Long Island and Delaware Indians: these communities would suffer at the hands of the ones who held power. For all involved in this process on the ground, life in the region was precarious.

The Edinburgh members of the SSPCK required their missionaries to write journals, and the Society's leadership on both sides of the Atlantic relied on these journals as a way to gauge their policy decision and make adjustments accordingly.⁴¹⁹ Horton's journals reflected ways that Indians took the missionary's ideas not just as leverage but also as a way to stabilize and support their communities in the midst of continued abuses by white merchants and provincial governments.

Azariah Horton's Faith and the Montaukett Culture

During the first century after Europeans arrived in Long Island, their interest in profiting from the whale industry and real estate stood as the priority.⁴²⁰ Also during the seventeenth century, the first missionaries visited the Native Americans on Long Island. Reverend Thomas James, the minister at East Hampton who had learned the Indian's language, worked part-time with the Montauketts in East Hampton. In 1668, James sent an Indian convert named Frank to deliver his appeal for funds to Governor Francis Lovelace.⁴²¹ By 1660, the NEC funded James by providing him with first ten then twenty pounds for an interpreter and other requirements for religious instruction. Other missionary work in the seventeenth century included Rev. William Leveridge (Leverich) who worked with Native Americans on Long Island, mainly Oyster Bay.⁴²²

The Presbytery of Long Island was founded in 1716, but there are no written records about any missionary work that it attempted during those early years. In 1701, the Anglican SPG persuaded the Assembly to support its efforts at evangelism, which hagiographic Presbyterian historiography has argued was a 'hoodwinked'

White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁴¹⁹ 'Letters of Instructions to the Missionaries,' November 5, 1730', in *An Abridgment of the Statutes and Rules of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Fleming and Company, 1732), 47-48.

⁴²⁰ Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 63.

⁴²¹ John A. Strong and Zsuzsanna Torok, 'Taking the Middle Way: Algonquian Responses to the Reverend Azariah Horton's Mission on Long Island (1741-1744)', *Long Island Historical Journal* 12, no. 2 (Spring/2000), 145.

⁴²² Stone, ed. *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 161-163.

effort to promote and expand Episcopacy. The Quaker George Fox made ephemeral evangelistic efforts, and a Dutch Reformed missionary, Godfrey Dellius, also attempted evangelism on Long Island between 1680 and 1700.⁴²³ In 1713, Cotton Mather wrote an emotional letter to the New York governor that explained how desperately the Indians on Long Island needed to be ‘instructed in Christianity’. He also wrote the Long Island ministers in 1717 with similar concerns; still, no missionary activity transpired until 1741. It was then that James Davenport, the radical revivalist from Southold, Long Island, arrived with an interpreter and preached to the Montauketts.⁴²⁴ With Davenport, the revival fires had been fanned to the Indians of East Hampton.⁴²⁵

This same year, 1741, Horton received ordination from the Presbytery of New York, and the SSPCK also sponsored him to be a missionary on Long Island. Originally from Southold, Horton’s ancestors were members of the founding European settlers on the Island. In order to become a missionary to the Long Island Indians, Horton turned down an ‘encouraging parish’, probably in New Jersey, where he had been filling in as pastor.⁴²⁶ The young missionary’s first visit to the Montauketts was in the summer of 1741⁴²⁷ just as revivalism on Long Island was reaching fever pitch. A census taken during this year found that there were 162 Montauketts composed of thirty-two or thirty four families.⁴²⁸ Horton soon noted that many Native Americans could ‘read, write and cipher’. In addition to preaching and ministering, Horton served as a makeshift doctor and also established schools. It should be remembered that Horton went to Suffolk County, a parish that spans a

⁴²³ Stone, ed. *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 164, 166-167. Pages 166-167 are part of the article ‘Indian Missions on Long Island’ by Rev. Earnest Edward Eells in *The Journal of the Department of History* (The Presbyterian Historical Society) of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., vol. 18, September 1939, no. 7. Also see December 1939.

⁴²⁴ Stone, ed. *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 55.

⁴²⁵ Radical revivalists played an important role in the story of Native Christianity on Long Island. Horton began his journal by saying that two ‘ministers of the gospel’, James Davenport and Jedidiah Mills played an important role in nine Indians being ‘hopefully converted’ and ‘many others’ being brought ‘to some degree of thoughtfulness about another world’. See CMH, 5: 32.

⁴²⁶ Earnest Edward Eells, ‘Indian Missions on Long Island’, in *History & Archaeology of the Montauk* by Stone, ed., 170.

⁴²⁷ Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 63.

⁴²⁸ W. DeLoss Love, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England*, 2nd ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 42-43.

hundred miles. This variable of geography and the subsequent ambulatory nature of his missionary work played an important role in his tenure on Long Island.⁴²⁹

Horton's journals reveal aspects of his relationship with the Montauketts but also with other Native American communities on the Island. Nonetheless, he spent a lot of time with the Montauketts, and future SSPCK missionaries played an important role in this specific community. Indeed, the SSPCK's missionaries gained traction with this community perhaps due to the inroads made by radical revivalists during this period. Furthermore, there is sufficient data about the Montauketts that will shed light on the missionary-Indian dynamic and the important ways in which Native Americans shaped transatlantic relations of imperial power. Horton's six journals were printed in the Scottish minister, James Robe's, *Christian Monthly History* for the year 1744.⁴³⁰

Horton's first journal began on 5 August 1741.⁴³¹ He began by preaching to 'a considerable number' of English people, and approximately thirty Native Americans met to hear him later on in the day. From the beginning of his journal, Horton stated the central message he was bringing to the Long Island people:

I endeavoured to make them sensible that there was a God, a Being on whom they were dependent; that he was holy, and would punish the wicked. To set before them the sin of their natures, that this exposed them to God's anger and eternal displeasure. And, briefly to shew them the way of Reconciliation by Jesus Christ; then let them know, that my endeavours would prove ineffectual without the blessing of God and that it was a duty to pray for his blessing; and then prayed with them.⁴³²

John Strong has questioned just how much theological nuance the Montauketts would have grasped during this period, because of the major language barriers between them and Horton. Strong explained that Horton struggled even with an interpreter to convey his ideas in a coherent way during several meetings with the Montauketts. Furthermore, 'most Montauketts probably knew some English, but the language and delivery of the evangelical minister must have severely taxed his

⁴²⁹ Stone, ed. *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 55.

⁴³⁰ John Strong, 'Azariah Horton's Mission to the Montauk, 1741-1744' in Stone, ed. *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 191.

⁴³¹ Strong and Torok, 'Taking the Middle Way', 147.

⁴³² CMH, 5: 32-33.

listeners'.⁴³³ This was no doubt the case. Still, certain aspects of Horton's message would have resonated such as a God on whom they were dependent, the immortality of the soul and the idea of reconciliation. While the enthusiastic young evangelical would have baffled the Indians with his antics, they were also attracted to a more animated service that allowed them to participate more freely. For example, Horton encouraged the Native American communities on Long Island to participate in the services by testifying and singing hymns. He also emphasized a more emotional preaching style of exhortation, though these instances were used alongside more traditional approaches of teaching and Bible exposition.⁴³⁴

In August of 1741, Horton went to Easthampton only to find that the Indians had left the area due to a harsh drought. As a result, the young missionary travelled seven miles east to visit the Montauketts at Napeague in the Hither Woods. The Montaukett would remain in this location for a week or two before moving elsewhere. Horton spent three days with about twenty Montauketts who, according to him, took his message seriously and also treated him kindly: 'they rejoiced that I was come to teach them in the things that belong to their peace'.⁴³⁵

Repeatedly the journal described the Native Americans' despair over their 'vileness' and 'perishing condition'.⁴³⁶ Horton agreed with their assessment, referring to them often in such terms as 'poor, ignorant heathen'. But he also often described himself as a 'poor worthless worm' engaged in 'difficult work'.⁴³⁷ Ironically, it was to this self-loathing and despair that Horton's Calvinist message offered hope. He believed this feeling of worthlessness could lead to awakening and ultimately salvation: despair would lead to reliance on God. The young missionary noted several awakenings and hopeful conversions, and he also mentioned the Native Americans singing 'Dr. Watts' hymn' which they had learned in English. It is interesting that the music of the well-known English dissenter, Isaac Watts, had penetrated the Montaukett communities as early as 1741.⁴³⁸ He particularly noted a 'remarkable forwardness in old and young to learn to read, especially in the

⁴³³ Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 64.

⁴³⁴ Strong and Torok, 'Taking the Middle Way', 148.

⁴³⁵ CMH, 5: 33; Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 63.

⁴³⁶ CMH, 5: 35.

⁴³⁷ CMH, 5: 35.

⁴³⁸ In a previous chapter, I highlight the connection of London non-conformists such as Isaac Watts to the SSPCK in Boston and Edinburgh.

children'.⁴³⁹ Whether an individual member of the Montaukett actually believed in Christianity, the offer of learning English was very attractive for many Native American communities during this time. As Rowena McClinton has explained, many times the missionary would place the emphasis on religion whereas the Indian would emphasize education. Like McClinton's work on the Cherokee and Moravian interactions, it does appear that both Horton and the Long Island Indians were searching for a middle ground of principled accommodation.⁴⁴⁰

It is worth considering why the Montauketts listened to *any* white person talk about morality after the abuses they had experienced from them. Horton's journals provided some clues. The Montauketts appeared interested in a white man telling them how to overcome white plagues that had inflicted them. In Sebbonneck, Long Island, on 2 September 1741, for example, Horton wrote that the people had a deep interest in his message. Then he recorded that, 'some of the chief of the Indians consulted together, and told me just before I left them that they were resolved to break off their evil ways, especially Sabbath-breaking and the sin of drunkenness, which I had plainly warned them against'. According to Horton, these leaders then thanked him and asked him to return.⁴⁴¹ This practical reason of getting white insight on white afflictions dovetailed with the very real possibility that the Christian message resonated with some Native Americans who sought to internalize it as their own faith. This factor is particularly important in the SSPCK-Montauk relationship during the upcoming years.

As one peruses the SSPCK's missionaries' journals, it is striking to note the sincerity of the Native response. Of course, this response was filtered through the lens of the missionaries who were receiving funding from the institution reading their journals. This factor should not be forgotten. Nonetheless, the content of the journal cannot be solely discarded due to this factor. As James Ronda admonished as early as 1980, we cannot neglect the very real 'possibility of genuine conversion on the part of the Indians searching for spiritual meaning in an increasingly hostile

⁴³⁹ CMH, 5: 37.

⁴⁴⁰ Rowena McClinton, ed. *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees*, Vol. 1 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 20-1. Like John Strong cited above, McClinton cited Richard White's theory of the 'middle ground' between Indian and white cultures as an important way of understanding this dynamic. See White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, 1991).

⁴⁴¹ CMH, 5: 39.

world'.⁴⁴² Connected to personal desires for spiritual renewal stood community desires for renewal, which Douglas Winiarski recognized when arguing that an "Indianized" form of Christianity may have promoted cultural stability as Native families struggled to find a safe haven behind the frontier'.⁴⁴³

Native American communities would also have found enthusiastic revivalists such as Horton quite entertaining. Furthermore, they could connect revivalists' antics to their own local practices: for example, 'the native shamans also used emotional tones and furious body movements when they conducted religious ceremonies'. Perhaps, also, the Native Indians were interested in the actions of Horton that accompanied his message. Besides two brief visits to the Shinnecock, the young missionary spent ten weeks at the centre of Montaukett community life, probably on the North Neck of Long Island. As Strong pointed out, 'they had never had this much concentrated and energetic attention from a white man before'.⁴⁴⁴ Both Horton's commitment to the Montaukett and his intimate relationships with them would have contributed to their interest in his message.

Anywhere from five to over eighty individuals attended Horton's services. According to Horton, the average audience size was around forty persons. But Horton not only preached; he also visited individuals as he went from 'wigwam to wigwam', which he said the Native Americans enjoyed.⁴⁴⁵ The initial response by Long Island Indians was quite positive, and it is clear that some cultural exchange took place. On 4 September at Montauk, for example, three leaders of the community told Horton that they wanted to establish a 'Day of Thanksgiving to make returns to God for the good things they enjoyed'. Horton said the chiefs customarily did this for their other gods, but now wanted to have this celebration 'in my way, as they expressed it'.⁴⁴⁶ Throughout the journals, women were most interested in Horton's message.⁴⁴⁷ Montaukett women knew hymns such as 'The

⁴⁴² Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 117; Strong and Torok, 'Taking the Middle Way', footnote 2.

⁴⁴³ Douglas L. Winiarski, 'Native American Popular Religion in New England's Old Colony', 149.

⁴⁴⁴ Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 64.

⁴⁴⁵ CMH, 5: 37.

⁴⁴⁶ CMH, 5: 40.

⁴⁴⁷ Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600-1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999), 177. Westerkamp argued that primarily through piety or 'the door opened by the Holy Spirit' could women hope to acquire power:

Blessed Society in Heaven’, because they had memorized it in English after interaction with the Christian community in East Hampton.⁴⁴⁸

Horton’s emphasis on reform resonated deeply with the Montauketts who were eager to heal their communities from alcoholism. Horton’s assistant Miranda served as a positive agent for promoting this kind of change. In the *Christian Monthly History*, Robe described Miranda as one who had ‘imported the liquor to the Indians in such plenty, that they were base drunkards’. Since then, Miranda had ‘happily converted to God’ and he worked with Horton ‘as busy conveying the knowledge of Christ to them’ as he previously was selling them liquor.⁴⁴⁹ Horton lamented that the ‘sin of alcohol’ was dismantling his ‘civilizing’ mission to the Native Americans on Long Island even as white ‘civilized’ Christians in East Hampton were making sure alcohol was readily available to the Montaukett community.⁴⁵⁰ This was the most persistent and passionate critique of white culture amongst SSPCK missionaries.

Horton’s journal from October of 1742 to March of 1743 revealed only hints of himself and the American Indians. A time or two he mentioned a few details about a ‘squaw’ entering the covenant and getting baptized, and he appeared impressed at times by their knowledge of Christian faith and doctrines. He wrote about the Indians feeling distress and sorrow for their sins, but one of the more striking features of the journals was the paucity of information the missionary disclosed. He did mention that David Brainerd preached for him and that it was a moving service.⁴⁵¹

In his extensive travel of ‘the length of Long Island, mostly on foot, from Rockaway to Montauk’,⁴⁵² Horton conveyed a disappointment over his overall lack of recent success. But this seems relative to the particular time and audience to which he was writing. He wrote a letter to the patron of the SSPCK, the Marquis of Lothian, regarding his ‘travels and success among the Indians upon Long Island’.

‘God remained the ultimate authority, and if a person could lodge her claim within a divine call or revelation, then she could lay some claim to leadership, regardless of rank, gender, or education’.

⁴⁴⁸ Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 64-65.

⁴⁴⁹ CMH, 5: 14.

⁴⁵⁰ Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 65-66.

⁴⁵¹ Horton, ‘Mr. Azariah Horton’s fourth JOURNAL, from October 17, 1742, to March 6, 1743’, in *The Christian Monthly History, for the Month of May, 1745* Num. II, 43-49, ed. Robe. This record hereafter will be referred to as CMH, 2 followed by the appropriate page number.

⁴⁵² Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 66.

Horton told the Marquis that there were almost four hundred Indians who lived approximately four hundred miles away from one another. The SSPCK had originally wanted Horton to go to the Susquehanna River and work with Indians there, but Horton asked to stay in Long Island, expressing ‘his great concern’ that those in Long Island be instructed ‘in the way of salvation’: Long Island was full ‘employment for any one missionary’.⁴⁵³ Still, Horton wrote very brief entries in his journal. By the winter of 1743, the SSPCK’s first missionary in New York concluded that some faint hope still existed for the American Indians on Long Island. He believed that the Montauketts and Shinnecocks still held some potential, ‘though’, he continued, ‘I may observe not so encouraging as heretofore’. The prospects were even grimmer because ‘divisions and confusions are among the inhabitants of the adjacent places’ and also because ‘some exhorters that go in my absence... create jars and disagreements among them’ as a result of ‘their manner of procedure’.⁴⁵⁴

In some ways, Horton’s raw honesty and common despondency gives credence to the journals themselves. His perspective also provides hints of the evangelical climate during this period. As the decade faded, it appears that Horton took a more moderate theological position, which caused the radical ‘exhorters’ mentioned above to turn on him and convince many of the local Indians to do the same.⁴⁵⁵ More than likely, the radical ‘exhorters’ he mentioned above were excoriating him for the same reasons he had castigated enemies of the revivals in previous years. Specifically, it was Elisha Paine, the ‘Separatist’ preacher and former lawyer from Connecticut (before his banishment), who seemed to have fought and ‘won the Indians away from Horton’. Ironically, Horton’s initial fiery exhortations connected with Whitefieldian revivalism sparked his ministry on Long Island but ultimately led to its demise.⁴⁵⁶

There are no known extant journals from Horton after March of 1744 even though he remained employed by the SSPCK in Long Island for several more years.

⁴⁵³ CMM, 6: 127.

⁴⁵⁴ Horton, ‘Mr. Azariah Horton’s fourth JOURNAL, from October 17, 1742, to March 6, 1743’, in CMH, 2: 49.

⁴⁵⁵ Stone, *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 55.

⁴⁵⁶ Earnest Edward Eells, ‘Indian Mission on Long Island,’ in Stone, ed. *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 173-174.

As late as 1750, the SSPCK received his journal for the previous year along with a letter from him, which is also no longer extant.⁴⁵⁷ In January of 1753, Horton left his position as a missionary on Long Island,⁴⁵⁸ and he spent the rest of his career as a minister to various Presbyterian churches in the colonies. In the summer of 1743, Horton had shown unusual courage in tending to the Montauketts during what was probably an outbreak of smallpox. He combated smallpox (and alcoholism) throughout the 1740s. It was decades later that Horton would die from that very disease while tending to wounded Revolutionary War soldiers.⁴⁵⁹

‘God’s Presence...Even in a Poor Wigwam’: Horton’s Letter to the Edinburgh Directors

George Drummond, a member of the SSPCK in Edinburgh,⁴⁶⁰ wrote the Praeses of the New York Correspondents, Ebenezer Pemberton, in February of 1742. Drummond said that they were very pleased with Horton and his successful work on Long Island, and that they would gladly pay the missionary £40.⁴⁶¹ Pemberton responded from New York in July. He said that ‘a blessed work of Divine Grace is carrying on among’ the ‘Indians on Long Island’,⁴⁶² the New York ministers appeared eager to harvest what they perceived as the fruits from the fertile soil of the revivals.

These letters between Pemberton and Drummond reflected optimism about the transatlantic collaboration of missions. They also discussed the possibility of funding one or two Native American children to train for missionary work amongst their own communities, and there was still great interest in the region known as the Forks of the Delaware. Pemberton seemed wary, though, because a missionary needed to stay with the Native Americans for an entire term of approximately eight months. He must also know their language, since the communities had no understanding of English. However, Pemberton told Drummond that they were in

⁴⁵⁷ CMM, 6: 19-20.

⁴⁵⁸ CMM, 7: 193-194..

⁴⁵⁹ Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*, 65-66.

⁴⁶⁰ On George Drummond, see Alexander Murdoch, ‘George Drummond (1687-1766), accountant-general of Excise in Scotland and Local Politician’ in *ODNB* (2004): <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/view/article/8065?docPos=1>.

⁴⁶¹ CMH, 5: 15-16.

⁴⁶² CMH, 5: 16.

the process of recruiting a second missionary who would work in that region. In later letters Pemberton disclosed that his name was David Brainerd, and stated that Brainerd would need an interpreter for a year or two until he understood the language himself. Both sides were eager to continue the work in Long Island and expand into the region at the Forks of the Delaware.⁴⁶³

In October of 1742, Azariah Horton wrote the Directors in Edinburgh. While Horton's tone in his journals appeared rather melancholy, his letter that evaluated his own work was extremely optimistic. He even compared the recent revivals to the first converts to Christianity:

It is remarked, that, in the apostolic times, when Philip preached Christ to the people in the city of Samaria, many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed, and that the effect hereof was great joy---thus it will be in all ages, and all places where the ministration of the glorious gospel is accompanied with the Divine Energy and Blessing.⁴⁶⁴

Horton was arguing that the Native Americans were in the infant stages of Christian development, and that this helped to explain their raw reception of the 'Divine Energy'. His interpretation of the Long Island Indians' response to Christianity sounds very similar both to SSPCK Director, Alexander Webster, as well as James Robe, the evangelical Scot who was publishing the missionary's journals in his periodical.

Horton thanked the 'very worthy and honourable members' of the SSPCK for making 'provision for the publishing the glad tidings of peace among the poor despised natives of this land, who have been, for many ages past, groping in darkness, and perishing for lack of vision'. He said that the Native Americans also thanked them 'tho unacquainted and unworthy any near correspondence'. Although at first hesitant to accept the position, Horton said he now rejoiced to see the 'astonishing success' over his past year as the Society's missionary: 'it is more surprising and illustrious...that a very mean and worthless one should be made instrumental hereof'. He confirmed that what was happening truly seemed to be a work of God: 'God's presence was brought down to earth in the hearts of my dear people even in a poor wigwam!' The young missionary then stated his willingness to go to the Delaware and Susquehannah Indians, but again inserted that he cared

⁴⁶³ CMH, 5: 17-20.

⁴⁶⁴ CMH, 5: 21.

deeply for the Long Island Indians and worried that they would not have proper instruction, ‘seeing God ordinarily works by means’.⁴⁶⁵

The Society in Edinburgh wrote Pemberton again in March of 1743. They continued to have much satisfaction with the work in the colonies, and they allowed Horton to stay on Long Island since in that area ‘there is sufficient employ for any one missionary’.⁴⁶⁶ But shortly after Horton and his assistant, Miranda, received their commissions, Miranda died. While the Scottish Society lamented his death, they praised the achievements of him and Horton. So encouraged was the Society that it agreed to pay for ‘one or two of the Indian natives, or others, who understand their language’ in order that these persons should ‘be brought up at the Society’s charge while they are going on with their education, and then have a reasonable salary settled upon them to live in some reputation among their countrymen and devote themselves wholly to the ministry’.⁴⁶⁷ Horton’s missionary work on Long Island set the foundation for the SSPCK to benefit from the evangelistic energy and optimism built into the Great Awakening. It was also a chance for the Society to begin its agenda for education of the Native Americans. However, while SSPCK recorded that the Long Island mission was successful for a while, by November of 1743 the Society was reporting that Horton’s journals were only ‘somewhat encouraging’. Horton did work briefly with the Delaware Indians near the Forks of the Delaware, but he continued during most of his tenure to work on Long Island.⁴⁶⁸

Azariah Horton’s missionary work was important for several reasons. Horton was the first person to implement the SSPCK’s new policies of working from within Native American communities. This was also the first time the SSPCK had dealt with the colonial reality of revivalism. The debate over revivalism was nothing new for the Society in the abstract. But this movement now directly influenced the Society’s policies. Examples of this include the Long Island Indians’ unorthodox enthusiasm in embracing Christianity as well as the need for Horton to be an itinerant in order to minister to ambulatory communities on Long Island. Horton’s missionary work reflected the dilemmas facing the Society as it sought to expand by embracing

⁴⁶⁵ CMH, 5: 22-23.

⁴⁶⁶ CMH, 5: 25-27.

⁴⁶⁷ GMM, 4: 287.

⁴⁶⁸ GMM, 4: 314-315.

the 'Spirit' while seeking to bridle such enthusiasm in the name of true and reasonable religion. The Society's second missionary, David Brainerd, revealed this tension even further.

The Society was eager to employ its second New York missionary, David Brainerd, and agreed to provide him with an interpreter.⁴⁶⁹ Pemberton wrote to Edinburgh from New York in June of 1743 and informed the Directors that Brainerd and an interpreter were now with 'a branch of the Delaware Indians'. Most of the tribe was not in the village when Brainerd arrived, but those that were, according to Pemberton, rejoiced over the 'prospect of the sun's rising upon them, after so long a night of darkness'. Similar to some of Horton's reports mentioned above, it is not certain to what extent this jubilation actually existed amongst the Delaware. What is known, however is that Jonathan Sergeant informed the SSPCK that 'a body of Indians' were currently living in Kaunamauk, and that the New York correspondents saw this as 'too favourable an opportunity to be neglected'. They immediately sent Brainerd to these Indians with an interpreter (upon Jonathan Sergeant's recommendation). Brainerd did ask that his interpreter become the schoolteacher, and hoped he would try to get an education in preparation for the ministry.⁴⁷⁰

Although the New York correspondents jumped on what they perceived as an ideal opportunity at Kaunamauk, the Edinburgh Directors responded with some apprehension. First, regarding education, the Directors believed that the cost the New York correspondents had given them for educating young Native Americans was too high and perhaps inefficient. But the Directors ultimately left that decision in the hands of its leadership in New York. But they were even more hesitant about the logistics of the second missionary endeavour. Perhaps in an attempt to stabilise the situation, the SSPCK in Edinburgh reminded the New York correspondents that, 'whoever is sent among the Indians, must be an ordained minister of the gospel', because this would 'more effectually advance that good design' to which the Society strove: 'we therefore recommend to you to advise with the reverend ministers of your Presbytery, that, if they judge proper, Mr. Brainerd may be ordained'.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁹ CMH, 5: 25-27.

⁴⁷⁰ CMH, 5: 27-28.

⁴⁷¹ CMH, 5: 31.

The SSPCK and David Brainerd

David Brainerd grew up in an established Connecticut community. His father, Hezekiah, was a prominent social and political figure, and served in both the Connecticut Assembly and council.⁴⁷² Like Horton, Brainerd caught the zeal of revivalism while studying at Yale. Indeed, Brainerd, Horton and Long Island minister and revivalist Samuel Buell studied at the same time at Yale.⁴⁷³ But Brainerd was expelled from the college after questioning the legitimacy of certain administrators' salvation. He left Yale with a sense of uncertainty, and began to question his purpose in life. Particularly, he continued to grapple with the tension between his childhood religion based on community stability and order, and his college experiences filled with experiential fervour and individual enthusiasm.⁴⁷⁴ He had serious bouts of depression and seemed rather unstable. In this context, the SSPCK's offer to Brainerd to become a missionary was a potentially stabilizing force in his life.

By late 1742, Brainerd had signed with the SSPCK, but he did not begin his missionary tenure right away. His latest biographer said it took a while for him to 'come to grips with the new purpose in his life' and 'for the next eighteen months or so he was a young man somewhat adrift' as he questioned and doubted God's will for his life.⁴⁷⁵ During this time, Brainerd assumed a temporary position as minister of the Easthampton Church on Long Island. It was here that the two SSPCK missionaries met. Horton invited Brainerd to preach several times to his congregation, and it appears that Brainerd's first interactions with both Native Americans and missionary work in general went quite well. On March 14, 1743, Brainerd left the Montaukett community for New Jersey where he preached at Aaron Burr's church in Newark. Burr himself was an SSPCK correspondent, and Brainerd discussed his future with the Society's correspondents in Woodbridge, New Jersey. Although Dickinson and Pemberton had conveyed to the SSPCK a sense of

⁴⁷² Carol Sue Humphrey, *American National Biography*, vol. 3, eds. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (New York: Oxford University Press), 401-404.

⁴⁷³ Rev. Earnest Edward Eells, 'Indian Missions on Long Island,' in *History & Archaeology of the Montauk* by Stone, ed., 170-174. Buell was a leader in the Great Awakening, and was heading to the South to spread the revival fires when the New York correspondents sent him with a letter of recommendation to the Presbyterian Church in East Hampton.

⁴⁷⁴ John A. Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 3-5.

⁴⁷⁵ Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd*, 45.

desperation for peoples living in the borderlands of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the New York correspondents worried that the Delaware Indians harboured deep resentment against the English. This fear of resentment, along with the Kaunamauk Indians' request for a missionary, caused the New York correspondents to send Brainerd to live and work amongst the Kaunamauk. On 1 April, the young missionary left John Sergeant's house in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (he had only arrived the night before) and took the eighteen-mile trek across the border of Massachusetts and into New York where the Kaunamauk community resided.⁴⁷⁶ On 17 March 1743, the SSPCK reported that the New York 'correspondents had found...Mr. David Brainerd a candidate for the ministry' and decided to appoint him as a missionary to the 'banks of the river Delaware and Susquehanna'. The Society agreed that Brainerd would need an interpreter for one or two years until he learned the Native American language.⁴⁷⁷ Brainerd officially began receiving funds from the Society on 15 March 1743.⁴⁷⁸

If Brainerd already struggled to know whether his life was going in the right direction, his first missionary assignment proved no consolation. All alone, he lived twenty miles from an English village and six or seven from a Dutch community. He did not even live at Kaunamauk village, but resided instead with a Scottish Highlander family who lived a mile and a half away. The Highlander family lived crudely and only the father spoke English. During this time, Brainerd received a Native American interpreter, John Wauwampequunnaunt. Wauwampequunnaunt's training came from the well-known revivalists John Sergeant and Stephen Williams, and Brainerd seemed to depend greatly upon his interpreter's support.⁴⁷⁹ Soon, the young missionary met the correspondents in New Jersey to discuss the details of starting a school in Kaunamauk. In June of 1743, the school opened and, at Brainerd's request, John Wauwampequunnaunt was its first instructor.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd*, 45-50.

⁴⁷⁷ GMM, 4: 307.

⁴⁷⁸ Ledger, 237.

⁴⁷⁹ Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 53. Grigg pointed out that Brainerd's greatest fear was the European settlers ruining his ministry.

⁴⁸⁰ Ledger, 236. Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 151-154.

Although the Kaunamauk community started well, by March of 1744 Brainerd requested to relocate, stating that the numbers were too few. By this point, the young missionary was hesitant to continue his work with Native Americans, and his reputation as an effective revivalist preacher was continuing to grow. It was not until the spring of 1744 that Brainerd finally committed wholeheartedly to missionary work with the Native Americans. In May of 1744, Brainerd arrived at his new assignment. For nearly three years, he would work for the SSPCK as a missionary to the Native Americans and colonists in the Delaware Valley, New Jersey and along the Susquehanna River.⁴⁸¹

In 1746, Edinburgh received word about both missionaries' progress as the New York correspondents sent the Directors the journals from Azariah Horton and David Brainerd. While the Society mentioned Horton, they were clearly excited about Brainerd. Based upon his journal, they stated that Brainerd had achieved 'astonishing success'. He was situated in a 'different station' than Horton, because he was known 'frequently to travel far in the wilderness to meet with the Indians in their headquarters'. As a result, Brainerd suffered the 'open air' and 'innumerable other fatigues' in his duties. The Society gave his interpreter a raise from £9 to £12 Sterling, and gave £12 Sterling for the interpreter's son to be educated for the ministry. They also funded another 'young Indian among the late converts who appeared of a promising genius' and whom the correspondents thought 'should be educate[d] for the ministry'. There were high hopes for Brainerd's work, and already discussion about establishing a 'constant schoolmaster' for the Native American community.⁴⁸² With Brainerd's work in the mid-1740s, the SSPCK saw what they felt was clear progress as they were building a school, funding Native Americans to 'improve' their communities and funding a missionary who was actually living at least intermittently with the Native Americans. Brainerd's journal also described a 'stabilizing' Native American community that was settling land for a sedentary life of agriculture. This community was also converting to reformed Christianity and receiving instruction about the Christian religion. With a schoolmaster arriving and

⁴⁸¹ Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 63-64. For the larger context, explained briefly in the paragraph above, see Grigg, 50-64.

⁴⁸² GMM, 4: 374, 387.

teaching by early 1746, Brainerd's endeavours seemed to set the pace for the Society's colonial ventures.⁴⁸³

Like Horton, Brainerd utilized some very unusual tactics that even supporters of the revivals had begun to question by 1745. The 1745-46 journal of the young missionary portrayed experiences in the 'wilderness' that challenged the categorizations of accepted Calvinist dogma. The SSPCK in Edinburgh read this journal, and presumably accepted the questionable salvific and experiential portions of it within the larger context of the 'civilizing' process that was also transpiring. By commissioning Azariah Horton and David Brainerd, the Society was also employing the new, experiential practices of evangelism that remained true in rhetoric to Calvinist orthodoxy but pushed the pietistic side to its limits. The next section reflects the reality that Evangelicalism had come into its own, and the emphasis on personal experience that had dominated the revivals was a stamp left upon religion in the British Atlantic world.

Below is one of several stories in David Brainerd's journal that captures the uncertain terrain of evangelism during this period. While the saviour of the SSPCK's colonial project, Brainerd also became an evangelical icon recognized throughout the world even into the twenty-first century.⁴⁸⁴ Even though revivalism had faded by the mid-forties in New England and the Middle Colonies, a distinct tension surfaced between the new emphasis upon personal encounters with the Spirit promoted by many evangelicals juxtaposed with the desire of major religious leaders and institutions to maintain respectable and reasonable doctrinal and institutional boundaries. The following section provides an example of the contribution of missionaries and Native Americans to the SSPCK's policies and understanding of evangelism on the ground. These experiences should be understood within the backdrop of the SSPCK's internal debates over the validity of revivalism and the nature of true religion in the previous years that was explained in the last chapter.

⁴⁸³ David Brainerd's Journal (1745-46), 38. This journal will hereafter be referred to as DBJ followed by the appropriate page number.

⁴⁸⁴ Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 3, 6, 190-192.

The Question of Salvation: Brainerd's Encounter with the Spirit

One evening in late December of 1745, a Native American woman knocked on David Brainerd's door. Over eighty years of age, the woman fell into great distress and initially refused any comfort that the young missionary was offering. Over the last few months, he had pronounced rigid words of doctrine; she now felt the desolation and anguish of that doctrine. In sermon after sermon, she had heard Brainerd speak of humanity's inability to achieve salvation, and that God's favour fell upon those whom only He chose. The woman exclaimed that she felt tormented by fear that she would 'never find Christ' (according to the Brainerd's Calvinist doctrine of limited atonement and election, she might be right). Although she had heard the young man's sermons before, last Sabbath she 'felt it in her heart'.⁴⁸⁵

What followed was a sequence of events that Brainerd recorded as the 'most remarkable instance of this kind I ever saw'. The woman explained that one evening she and several of her neighbours were discussing doctrines of salvation and atonement in her home. Suddenly, the woman collapsed onto her bed, unable to rise. It was at this point she 'went away'. Brainerd assumed she meant she had a dream, but the woman flatly rejected that it was a dream. She said that she was transported to a crossroads where she had to choose between two paths. She chose the straight one but, as she was walking this path, she was jolted from this experience back to her bed. This happened, the woman concluded, because she had forsaken the path, which she recognized to be synonymous with Christ. She had abandoned the Saviour; now she was hopeless. She knew she was damned for hell and could do nothing about it. This event, both the story and the woman's late-December state of hysteria, deeply moved Brainerd. His recording of the event took many pages in his diary as he tried to make sense of the experience.⁴⁸⁶

Brainerd's emotional responses in his journal revealed the deep commitment to 'my People' (as he called the Native Americans in the village where he resided) and his keen desire to see them experience God's grace in the way Calvinists believed God ordained such things to happen. But the strict doctrine of Brainerd's reformed theological belief system proved incapable of explaining his experiences on the ground. The elderly woman demonstrated this reality. In Brainerd's journal, it is

⁴⁸⁵ DBJ: 15.

⁴⁸⁶ DBJ: 15-16.

as if he were two people grappling with this experience, empathizing with her yet trying to make it fit into the reformed theological framework that he had been taught and his patrons continued to endorse: it should be remembered that both his funding and ministerial license came from Presbyterians so much depended on him remaining an ardent Calvinist.

But one must remember an equally important variable: according to the evidence we have of Brainerd, he really believed what he taught his listeners. He believed God's grace was given freely but that the individual had no control over which persons God decided would receive salvation. With this in mind, Brainerd believed his role was to prepare the people for reception of God's grace. Though no guarantee, the formula of Christian living, prayer and communion could help barren vessels be available for the Spirit to fill. Equally important for Brainerd was determining which emotional experiences were legitimate conversions and which ones sprang from an evil spirit. Discerning good experiences from evil proved to be a very difficult task indeed. Truly, this dilemma of legitimate salvation riddled evangelicals with anxiety throughout the Great Awakening as well as the post-Awakening period.

The elderly woman's description of two paths invoked deep emotion in Brainerd. He was left in a quandary. According to his training, he recognized the danger of 'trances and imaginary views of things': these antics were tools of Satan to deceive people into thinking they have the spirit of God when in reality they are duped by evil forces. At first, he was convinced that this woman's experience was 'a delight of Satan' to undermine 'the work of God here by introducing visionary scenes, imaginary terrors, and all manners of mental disorders and delusions in the room of genuine convictions of sin and the enlightening influence of the blessed spirit'. With this in mind, he first decided to denounce the woman's experience and warn others against it. Upon further reflection, however, he decided to ask her a few basic questions in an attempt rationally to explain why her mind was being deluded and tormented. Perhaps she even had some 'just views of things' that caused her distress.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁷ DBJ: 17-18.

Brainerd asked the woman about ‘man’s primitive state and especially his preferred state and respecting her diverse own heart’. In Brainerd’s account, he was astonished that the woman had actually ‘answered rationally’. Furthermore, based on her response, Brainerd surmised ‘that a Pagan who was become a child through age, should in that state gain so much knowledge by any mere human instruction, without being remarkably enlightened by a divine influence’. In other words, the woman’s ‘civilized’ responses may not spring from God but merely from knowledge gained by listening to ‘civilized’ people.⁴⁸⁸

The woman needed to come to Christ, Brainerd concluded. As he tried to explain this to her, however, tears filled the woman’s eyes. In ‘anguish of spirit’ she beat her hands against her breast and cried, ‘I can’t come, my wicked heart won’t come to Christ’. In Calvinist form, Brainerd interpreted this dejection in a positive light. He reiterated her ‘sinfulness and misery and her need of a change of heart’. But in the depths of the woman’s anguish and her feelings of being rejected by God, Brainerd sensed a moment of hope. He reported in his journal that, ‘this exercise may have a saving issue. And indeed it seems hopeful’ because she ‘prays day and night’ and has an abiding ‘interest in Christ’.⁴⁸⁹

It must be remembered that the only record of this encounter between Brainerd and the elderly Indian woman came from Brainerd himself. Like Brainerd, however, there is no evidence from the journal to assume that the woman was not sincere in her experience. She was in despair over her condition, and was seeking advice from a missionary uncertain how to diagnose the situation. But Brainerd’s dilemma in determining legitimacy reflected a larger and overarching question surrounding the Great Awakening and the ensuing years of Evangelicalism. The revivalists had to decide who actually experienced God’s grace and who was being used by Satan to undermine the true work of God. Put another way, just what *were* the criteria for authentic faith and salvation? These questions stood at the heart of revivalists such as Brainerd. As he concluded the section in his journal on the elderly woman, he presented a reality more complex than many of his Edinburgh and maybe even some of his New York correspondents would have been comfortable with:

⁴⁸⁸ DBJ: 17-18.

⁴⁸⁹ DBJ: 17-19.

How far God may make use of the imagination in awakening some persons under these and such like circumstances, I can't pretend to determine. Or whether this exercise I have given an account of be from Divine Influence I shall have others to judge. But this I may say, that its effects hitherto bespeak it to be such.

It is clearly apparent that Brainerd was losing his certitude of how God worked. In a footnote, Brainerd continued his struggle to understand the event. He explained that, from his own experience, he knew that 'this exercise' could not have been 'rational' but rather the 'influence of some spirit, either good or evil'. After this experience, 'she never heard divine things treated of in such a manner as she now viewed them in'. Interestingly enough, to the young missionary's mind, the elderly woman's memory and insight alone spoke to the authenticity of her experience. Brainerd finally determined that her experience was part of the 'glories of this work of grace among the Indians, and a special evidence of it being from a divine influence'. He quickly asserted that such hysteria had not ever transpired among 'his' people; they usually experienced conviction of sin in a rational way. His entry, nonetheless, left the door open for the 'Spirit' to work in ways that could unleash the most uncertain results, pushing the limits of Calvinist piety even while his doctrinal message affirmed Calvinism's validity.⁴⁹⁰

Despite Brainerd's insistence that this experience was exceptional, his journal of 1745-46 described numerous cases where the young minister supported his claim of authentic revivalism by pointing to very emotional experiences felt by both Native Americans and whites. In numerous portions of his journal, Brainerd demonstrated the success of his mission by the emotional responses that were invoked. Physical descriptions such as 'newly awakened', 'wept and sobbed', and 'groans from the heart' filled his journal. But again, even for revivalists, the space between legitimate and illegitimate receptions of the Spirit was murky. For example, amidst the same pages that Brainerd wrote about the ecstatic reception of the Spirit by Native Americans, he critiqued the visions and emotional experiences of the Quakers and Moravians, and believed they actually needed a true awakening of the Spirit.⁴⁹¹ Indeed, the two major themes that emerge most distinctly from his journal are, first,

⁴⁹⁰ DBJ: 19.

⁴⁹¹ The emotional responses pervade Brainerd's journal. For his reaction to Moravians and Quakers, see DBJ: 63-64.

his dependency on the physical signs of the Spirit and, second, his constant enquiry over whether a particular experience belonged to good or evil forces: or as he would put it, an attempt to separate the ‘wheat’ from the ‘chaff’.⁴⁹²

Brainerd’s journal reveals the complexity of the successes by reformed missionaries in the eighteenth century. Most conversions amongst Native Americans came as a result of their emotional encounters with Christianity. How would the Moderate leaders of the SSPCK interpret this dilemma? They needed to demonstrate that their time and money in the colonies were successful, yet many of them dismissed the enthusiasm stemming from the revivals on both sides of the Atlantic. But on both sides of the Atlantic, the SSPCK’s colonial work was being used as a way to bolster the validity of the revivals and to align this evangelical movement within the larger narrative of the Protestant Reformation.

On the heels of such perceived success, the SSPCK received a letter dated 21 July 1747, from Ebenezer Pemberton, the longstanding Praeses of the colonial SSPCK. Pemberton described the colonial situation to the Edinburgh Directors. He first stated that Azariah Horton was extremely successful on Long Island and, as an attestation to this, he assured them that the ‘converted Indians evidence the sincerity of their change by a conversation becoming the Gospel’. Even more, ‘the numbers are lately increased by considerable additions from several places who all live together in a Regular Society’. Horton continued that the project for proper education was also moving forward: ‘an English schoolmaster is maintained among them by private contributions in these parts and many of their children make great progress in reading and learning the catechism’. The Directors recorded having received this report in October of 1747. In the same meeting, they also received word that David Brainerd was ‘very sick’, and that his brother, John, would replace him. The Directors recorded that John ‘meets with great acceptance and success among them’. The concern they must have felt about losing their much-celebrated missionary was mitigated by the unprecedented reports of success.⁴⁹³

Although the leaders of the SSPCK were divided fiercely over the nature of revivalism in Scotland and America, as an institution the Scottish Society pragmatically endorsed revivalism. Nonetheless, in his letter to the Edinburgh

⁴⁹² DBJ: 72.

⁴⁹³ CMM, 6: 449-450.

Directors, Pemberton's emphasis upon the Native Americans progress in being educated and civilized points to just how important these goals remained for the Society. The SSPCK as an institution accepted (at least implicitly) the new energy and dubious emotional and individual emphases as a sensible solution to each member's desire for enlightened evangelism through missions.

Conclusion

Jared Burkholder has recently demonstrated that by 1745 many moderate evangelicals in the Delaware Valley were wary of certain manifestations of revivalism. In their estimation, antinomianism was fragmenting true religion and creating moral and civil disorder: Gilbert Tennent's antagonism towards Moravians was just one example of what Burkholder called 'the theological diversity that existed among those who promoted religious awakening and the fact that they sometimes brought divergent theological assumptions to the evangelical enterprise'. As seen above, David Brainerd shared Tennent's feelings of antipathy towards Moravians but also towards Quakers, arguing in his journal that they needed an experience of true conversion. Both Horton and Brainerd's understanding of salvation bolstered what Burkholder called 'a narrow and standardized definition of authentic revival that was sceptical of...disorder'. This definition of authentic revival hinged upon a particular morphology of salvation, which 'had a specific order of experience at the individual level, specific methods, predictable patterns at the corporate level, and was perpetuated through revival narratives and a network of communications'.⁴⁹⁴ To be sure, the journals of the SSPCK's first two missionaries in the Middle Colonies reflected just such a view of salvation.⁴⁹⁵

As previous chapters have demonstrated, many of the SSPCK's leaders in Edinburgh did not support this sort of salvation experience. Even further, however,

⁴⁹⁴ Jared S. Burkholder, 'This "rends in Pieces all the Barriers between Virtue and Vice": Tennentists, Moravians, and the Antinomian Threat in the Delaware Valley' *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 135 no. 1 (Jan. 2011), 5, 25, 31.

⁴⁹⁵ Ned Landsman, 'Revivalism and Nativism in the Middle Colonies: The Great Awakening and the Scots Community in East New Jersey' *American Quarterly* 34 no. 2 (Sum. 1982), 150-151. Landsman used Scots in New Jersey as an example of this antagonistic posture being a result partly of a "nativistic revival", one that emphasized not the integration of diverse persons, customs, or values, but their separation or elimination from view'. Landsman's argument questioned the logic of 'the Awakening as a principal factor in unifying the American colonies and in creating a sense of national identity'. His contribution anticipated the logic espoused by Burkholder (and highlighted in this section) of fierce division amongst evangelicals.

Brainerd's journal (and Horton's in a more limited way) in this chapter highlights the way that Brainerd himself was inadvertently problematizing the standard schema of the evangelical conversion story. Native Americans were drawing from their own cultural and historical fabrics in order to make sense of the evangelical message being presented. Both Native Americans and missionaries were perplexed by the others' perspective, and both sides were shaping each other in significant ways. This was seen most clearly in Brainerd's journal to the SSPCK, and this theme will be developed more fully in later chapters.

Horton and Brainerd's journals and letters played an important role in determining the direction of the SSPCK's colonial mission. They also contributed substantially to the broader debates over revivalism. Brainerd's journals and story, for example, became an international success as Protestants on both sides of the Atlantic and on the European continent scrutinized his experiences as well as his analysis of those experiences. Importantly, it was at this particular juncture in the mid-1740s—just after the extremes of revivalism had expired—that moderate evangelicals such as Jonathan Erskine and Jonathan Dickinson were speaking the same language as detractors of the revivals such as George Wishart and Charles Chauncy: they all feared enthusiasm and strove to cultivate piety in a balanced, civil and orderly way. But finding this middle ground could prove quite tricky. As the next chapter demonstrates, the post-Awakening reality of Native Christian communities brought into full focus the implications of the New Birth model upon which the SSPCK had experienced its greatest achievements. Once again, the missionaries in post-Awakening America took the lead in critiquing the direction of the Society: critiques that spoke to a larger tension within evangelicalism that revealed its heritage within British Atlantic Protestantism.

Chapter Five

'To Live Like Christian People'⁴⁹⁶: Post-Awakening Evangelicalism in the Pennsylvania Borderlands

Introduction

For a century, Protestant missionaries had attempted to civilize what they derisively considered savage peoples in the New World: to them, it was only after this civilizing process that one could begin to consider salvation. The Scottish Society had adopted this approach, as well. However, through their missionaries and leadership on both sides of the Atlantic, the SSPCK by the 1740s had appropriated the Great Awakening's emphases on the new birth and separatism as legitimate avenues for personal (and, indeed, institutional) salvation.⁴⁹⁷ The first section of this chapter makes evident the way the SSPCK in Edinburgh was revelling by 1750 in a decade of colonial triumphs.

In large part, the Society's achievements were spurred on as a result of David Brainerd. Brainerd had converted many scattered Delaware families in New Jersey during the mid-1740s, and had written an internationally acclaimed memoir based on his journals. But when these Delaware families whom Brainerd had converted felt threatened once again by dubious white land claims around Crossweeksung, New Jersey, they collaborated with Brainerd to form Bethel:⁴⁹⁸ a community next to Cranberry and close to Trenton that would remain intact until the founding of Brotherton in 1760 in Burlington County.⁴⁹⁹ With the establishment of Bethel, not only had various Christian Delawares found a brief respite from repeated attempts of

⁴⁹⁶ John Brainerd, *A Genuine Letter from Mr. John Brainerd, employed by the Scotch Society for Propagating the Gospel, a Missionary to the Indians in America, and Minister to a Congregation of Indians, at Bethel in East Jersey, to His Friend in England. Giving an Account of the Success of his Labours, as well as the Difficulties and Discouragements that attend His Mission Among Those Savages* (London: Printed for J. Ward, at the King's-Arms in Cornhill, 1753), 5.

⁴⁹⁷ Donald E. Meek, "Scottish Highlanders, North American Indians and the SSPCK: Some Cultural Perspectives," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* (1989): 396; Alexander Murdoch, *Scotland and America*, 112.

⁴⁹⁸ Richard S. Walling, *Bethel Indian Town of New Jersey: Its History & Location Revealed* (East Brunswick, NJ, 2005), 4-5.

⁴⁹⁹ Henry Warner Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions: Studies in Cultural Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 152-155. A special thanks to Christine Patrick for information and insights on this subject.

dispossession. David Brainerd, who was forged in the fires of the Awakening, had also realized his dream of finding salvation both for himself and others by establishing a community distinct and separate from public or traditionally sacred spaces. Even his funding from the SSPCK was completely independent of any political or religious institution.⁵⁰⁰

But as the revival fires waned, evangelicals who had accepted the Awakening's legitimacy were entering a new phase of identity formation as separatist communities such as Bethel were forced to situate themselves in relation to their environs. For example, just two weeks after Delaware Christians had settled at Bethel, disgruntled neighbours began complaining to the New Jersey Assembly about the Indian community's presence: this renewed threat of displacement would continue throughout the existence of Bethel until its dissolution in 1760.⁵⁰¹ Furthermore, by the autumn of 1747, David Brainerd was dead. The SSPCK responded by sending his younger brother, John, to replace him as the missionary minister to Bethel as well as various Native American communities in Pennsylvania along the Susquehanna River. In their own ways, the SSPCK, John Brainerd, and the Delaware communities in Pennsylvania and New Jersey were left to make sense of the transformed religious landscape that the revivals had left in their wake.

Bethel's new missionary, John Brainerd, was just as much of a committed evangelical Calvinist as his brother, David. But his post-Awakening experiences with Native American communities caused him to re-evaluate the role of the spiritual in relation to material circumstances. Furthermore, it is very important to note that the Susquehanna Indian's acceptance of *Native* but *not white Christianity* informed Brainerd's sharp critique of the solely spiritual model of conversion that was moulded and articulated cogently during the Awakening. While the mid-eighteenth century revivals had changed Protestantism forever, their emphases were not sustainable. Therefore, evangelicals were forced to re-imagine and re-formulate their narrative of faith and community within an ever-changing colonial world.

By taking a closer look at John Brainerd alongside the Bethel and Susquehanna Indians, this chapter will cast a light on one manifestation of post-

⁵⁰⁰ Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 62. As noted in previous chapters, even though the SSPCK worked closely with the Church of Scotland, they were distinctly a voluntary society.

⁵⁰¹ Walling, *Bethel Indian Town of New Jersey*, 6.

Awakening Protestantism in the borderlands of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It will argue that a distinct thread of evangelicalism emerged during this period that emphasized the material alongside the spiritual; this was in direct response to the Great Awakening's emphases upon both separatism and the new birth. Both of these competing threads of evangelicalism co-existed uneasily with one another. As later chapters reveal, a synthesis between material improvement and spiritual separatism informed Native Christian identity in the upcoming decades, and the interplay between these two impulses served an important long-term function within evangelicalism itself. Therefore, the story of John Brainerd and the Bethel and Susquehanna Indians illuminates the evangelical tension between the spiritual and the material, between salvation of the individual soul and that of the body or the community, helping to shed light on the internal dynamics within this movement that was coming into its own during the mid-eighteenth century.

The End of an Era for the SSPCK's Colonial Project

By the autumn of 1747, the man who defined the SSPCK's mission to American Indians was dead. David Brainerd had suffered from the 'wasting effects' of tuberculosis and was finally overcome by it.⁵⁰² The young missionary had brought more success and popularity to the Society's colonial work than any other person.⁵⁰³ The Society in return had first introduced Brainerd to the Atlantic world: they published Brainerd's journal before anyone else.⁵⁰⁴ As he lay dying in the home of Jonathan Edwards, the SSPCK's colonial administrator for nearly twenty years was also on his deathbed. Jonathan Dickinson had led the Presbyterian Church since the 1720s.⁵⁰⁵ He had begun corresponding with the SSPCK at least by 1730,⁵⁰⁶ and

⁵⁰² James P. Walsh, *American National Biography*, vol. 3, eds. Garraty and Carnes, 402. Walsh explained that Brainerd contracted tuberculosis as a child and eventually died from the effects of the disease.

⁵⁰³ Grigg, 'How This Shall Be Brought About', 55.

⁵⁰⁴ David Brainerd, *Mirabilia Dei inter Indico 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*. Published by the Rev. & Worthy Correspondents of the said Society. With a Preface by them (Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by William Bradford, 1746). The SSPCK continued distribution of Brainerd's journals. For an example in 1748, see CMM, 4: 489-490.

⁵⁰⁵ In the 1720s his compromises and negotiations led to the famed Adopting Act of 1729, requiring ministerial subscription to the Westminster Confession but allowing for freedom of conscience and dissent to many of the articles of the Confession. Most importantly for the SSPCK, Dickinson had

helped to solve the Society's perpetual dilemma of finding ordained ministers who were willing to go to the edges of the British Empire. Both Dickinson and Brainerd died in October of 1747.

Just two months before their deaths, the most important liaison of the colonial SSPCK project also died. Benjamin Colman embodied the paradoxical nature of non-Anglican British Atlantic Protestantism. As an ordained English Presbyterian and member of Boston's catholick clergy, he linked Daniel Williams, Isaac Watts, Edmund Calamy and other English non-conformists to the cause of colonial piety. A friend of Anglicans and a proponent of both the new learning and sporadically of revivalism,⁵⁰⁷ Colman has been called one of the founders of the American Enlightenment.⁵⁰⁸ His contribution to literature and public health—for example, his advocacy for smallpox inoculation—equalled his contribution to theology and piety.⁵⁰⁹ Even when the SSPCK moved away from New England, focusing their energies on the Middle and Southern Colonies, they continued to correspond with Colman and looked to him for intelligence and advice.⁵¹⁰ He, too, was now dead.

The losses mentioned above were soon followed by the unexpected death of missionary and educator Jonathan Sergeant, the man who had won the admiration of

corresponded with the Scottish Society at least since 1730. It was his influence that bound the Society closely to the Presbyterian cause in America. On Dickinson, see Bryan F. LeBeau, *Jonathan Dickinson and the Formative Years of American Presbyterianism* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1997) and 'The Subscription Controversy and Jonathan Dickinson' in *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54 no. 3 (Fall/1976); Leigh Eric Schmidt, 'Jonathan Dickinson and the Making of the Moderate Awakening' *Journal of Presbyterian History* 63:4 (Winter/1985); Harlan, 'The Travail of Religious Moderation'.

⁵⁰⁶ CMM, 4: 303-304.

⁵⁰⁷ Harry S. Stout and Peter Onuf, 'James Davenport and the Great Awakening in New London' in *The Journal of American History* 71 no. 3 (Dec., 1983), 556. Onuf and Stout explained that Colman's books were burned by radical revivalists such as James Davenport. However, Colman also rejoiced at what he perceived as certain gains in piety that resulted from the Great Awakening even as he castigated certain antics and promoters of revivalism.

⁵⁰⁸ John Corrigan, *The Prism of Piety: Catholick Congregational Clergy at the Beginning of the Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4. The other four are Ebenezer Pemberton, Thomas Foxcroft, Benjamin Wadsworth, and Nathaniel Appleton.

⁵⁰⁹ Benjamin Colman, 'The Method of Inoculating the Small-Pox in New England' in *A Collection of Pamphlets: Containing the Way and Manner of Inoculating the Small-Pox both in Britain and New-England*. To which is added, a Letter by Dr. D. Cuming (Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, 1722), 17 ff; Theodore Hornberger, 'Benjamin Colman and the Enlightenment' *The New England Quarterly* 12 no. 2 (Jun., 1939), 227. Marcus Cunliffe, *The Literature of the United States*, 29. Cunliffe explained that Colman published Edmund Waller's poems for the first time in the colonies in 1699. Overall, Colman appeared very interested in cultivating colonial society through various means, and literature was a major way he saw to do that.

⁵¹⁰ Examples include CMM, 5: 460; CMM, 6: 111, 113. Do note that this latter case was from 1742 regarding an Anglican bishop's manual for Indian education, which Colman recommended to the SSPCK and they heeded.

Mahicans and British Protestants alike. It was Sergeant who first introduced David Brainerd to the world of Indian missions and education.⁵¹¹ He also corresponded with the SSPCK and their leaders, and finally became a member of the SSPCK's American Committee of Correspondents.⁵¹² It was he who corresponded with Colman about producing a manual on effective American Indian education.⁵¹³ By the time of his death at age thirty-nine, there were 218 Native Americans at Stockbridge. Of these, 182 had been baptized and forty-two were communicants.⁵¹⁴

These were many of the leading faces of the SSPCK in the colonies. Institutionally, the Scottish Society was aligned with the colonial Presbyterian Church, particularly in assigning leaders and correspondents and obtaining ministerial ordinations. But by 1745 not even the Church was a stabilizing force as it was now undergoing schism: like Scotland itself since 1733, there was now more than one Presbyterian Church in America. On the ground, though, the Society took its cues less from the Synod and more from these personalities mentioned above. They depended on these men's fieldwork, intelligence and administrative skills. With the Synodical schism and the death of almost all of their most renowned colonial members, the SSPCK leaders on both sides of the Atlantic no doubt felt apprehension at their losses and future insecurity. These leaders had tapped into evangelical revivalism in the late 1730s and early 1740s, which brought with it much success for the Society along with much instability and uncertainty. They were now experiencing the aftershocks of such a traumatic event even as they dealt with the loss of their central colonial correspondents.

⁵¹¹ Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 50-51; Rachel Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 34-35.

⁵¹² CMM, 5: 460; CMM, 6: 10, 48-49. The Edinburgh Directors received Sergeant's journal dated 4th August 1740 where they recorded reading his failures and successes with the Housatonic Indians as well as his 'design to visit a large tribe of Indians in strict alliance with those of Housatonic and known to them by the name of Showanoui being in the province of Pennsylvania' about 200 miles from Housatonic.

⁵¹³ *A Letter from the Reverend Mr. Sergeant of Stockbridge, to Dr. Colman of Boston* (Boston: Printed by Rogers and Fowle, for D. Henchman in Cornhill, 1743), 3.

⁵¹⁴ William Kellaway, *The New England Company, 1649-1776* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1961), 273.

Toleration or Fragmentation? The SSPCK's Work in the Middle Colonies

Amidst such uncertainty, Ebenezer Pemberton, the Praeses of the SSPCK's American Correspondents, wrote to the Edinburgh Directors from New York in April of 1749. Alongside Benjamin Colman, Pemberton's father is recognized as one of the 'catholick' clergy of New England who helped to usher in the American Enlightenment. John Corrigan has argued that these ministers helped to bring 'theological innovation' and refined taste to New England.⁵¹⁵ The Pemberton son was trained at Harvard but lived in New York. He was acclaimed as 'a friend to liberty of conscience' who 'closely resembled his fervent father, to whose once liberal orthodoxy he clung after a large part of the Harvard-bred clergy had advanced far towards Arminianism'. It was perhaps his fear of Arminianism that drove him towards revivalism. In any case, he would remain with the SSPCK until his death in 1777.⁵¹⁶ He had helped to lead the SSPCK's operations in the Middle Colonies since at least 1739, when chances for a regional project began to materialize.⁵¹⁷

In his letter to the Society in Edinburgh, Pemberton portrayed the New York mission in as hopeful a light as possible. He assured the Directors that most of the Native Indians who had professed experiencing 'a saving change' a few years prior 'continued to adorn their profession by a behaviour and exemplary conversation'.⁵¹⁸ On several fronts, this was of crucial concern for the Society on both sides of the Atlantic. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the outburst of extreme emotionalism during the Great Awakening caused many British Protestants to question the nature and effectiveness of the revivals. By the early 1740s, more than a few ministers in both Scotland and America were openly critical of the revivals' excesses, and even questioned the movement's validity. As a previous chapter has shown, as early as 1742 Edinburgh Director George Wishart criticized revivalism

⁵¹⁵ Corrigan, *Prism of Piety*, vii-x; 4-5, ff.; Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates, Vol. VI (1713-1721): Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1713-1721 with Bibliographical and Other Notes* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1942) vol. 4, 112 and vol. 6, 537-545.

⁵¹⁶ Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates, Vol. VI*, 537-538, 544, 540-541. It is worth noting that Pemberton resigned from the Synod and left New York in 1753. He accepted a warm invitation as minister of the New Brick Church in Boston in March of 1754. As later chapters show, the SSPCK established a Boston Board at least by 1760 once they deemed it was safe in the wake of the War. See Shipton, 540-541 and CMM, 8: 57. Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 18, 72.

⁵¹⁷ CMM, 5: 457-466.

⁵¹⁸ 'State of the Society...in the year 1750', 44.

and enthusiasm in front of all the members of the SSPCK.⁵¹⁹ In 1749, though, Pemberton was assuring them that the fruits of revivalism did not all turn sour, a point that appealed to the Society's ambitions as well as their fund raising campaigns. As a prominent promoter of the benefits of the revivals, Pemberton himself had a large personal stake in giving credence to their successes amongst the Delaware Indians. In reality, though, his affirmations to the SSPCK pointed to the overarching uncertainty during this period. Having lost their most prominent and effective members in the colonies, the Edinburgh Directors no doubt questioned the stability of the project itself.

The rest of Pemberton's letter focused on the work of David Brainerd's successor and younger brother, John. John had replaced his brother after the latter's illness forced him away from his mission at Bethel. Pemberton emphasized that 'Mr. Brainerd's Indians are daily forming themselves more and more into a civilized and orderly society' as 'the men cultivate their lands' and 'the women are learning to spin'. Furthermore, they had mostly 'abandoned that slothful course of life, which is so natural to all Indians' even though he said it was difficult to dislodge them from their old ways. They had grown very interested in learning to read and 'understanding the Word of God'. Such interest caused the schoolmaster to establish a night school where most of the children and even Indians forty or fifty years old learned to read the Bible.⁵²⁰ In his description, Ebenezer Pemberton was continuing the narrative of Providential design and piety that David Brainerd and other revivalists had promoted in previous years.

The Directors drew from this letter during the SSPCK's fiftieth anniversary in Edinburgh just one year later.⁵²¹ The themes laid out by Pemberton dominated the Society's explanation of their work in colonial America as they sought earnestly for funding. They specifically highlighted the successful endeavours of David Brainerd with the Indian communities where he ministered.⁵²² During the Anniversary

⁵¹⁹ Wishart, *The Case of Offences against Christianity considered*, 40-46, and 59. These pages are just a few examples of his diatribe against enthusiasm.

⁵²⁰ 'State of the Society...in the year 1750', 44-45.

⁵²¹ Jeffrey R. Smitten, 'Robertson, William (1721-1793)', *ODNB* (2008): accessed 5 May 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23817>. The Society's became incorporated in 1709, but Smitten explains that they celebrated their fiftieth anniversary in 1750 since their rise in operations initially began in 1700.

⁵²² 'State of the Society...in the year 1750', 44-47.

Sermon, Hugh Blair proclaimed that they must ‘co-operate with God for advancing his Kingdom of the Messiah, and work upon his plan with all the force of eternal Providence on our side’.⁵²³ Even those like Blair, who vehemently opposed revivalism, could come together under this theme of evangelism as a means by which to expand civility and fulfil the designs of Providence. With the worst of revival excesses in the past, these Moderates could convene more easily with their evangelical colleagues in discussion over their missionary enterprise in the colonies.

But despite this effervescent institutional narrative of optimism, the events on the ground suggested a different story taking shape. John Brainerd embodied a reality that ultimately the Society did not want to see. His varied correspondences, though filled with promise and hope of progress towards ‘civilizing’ the Indians, simultaneously contained the germs of doubt that distorted the narrative of progress and questioned the very techniques and approaches of the Protestant interest and the SSPCK.⁵²⁴

Living Amidst the Shadows: John Brainerd, Bethel and the Legacy of David Brainerd

John Brainerd was accustomed to playing second fiddle. His two older brothers, David and Nehemiah, were corresponding and preaching with the most influential revivalists in New England by the early 1740s. During his first year at Yale, his brother, David, was expelled for his radical religious views. John quietly completed his studies with a Master of Arts in 1746 at the age of twenty-six.⁵²⁵ No doubt

⁵²³ Hugh Blair, *The Importance of Religious Knowledge to the Happiness of Mankind, A Sermon Preached Before The Society for propagating Christian Knowledge: At their Anniversary Meeting in The High Church of Edinburgh on Monday, January 1, 1750, and published at their Desire* (Edinburgh: R. Fleming, for A Kincaid, 1750), 3.

⁵²⁴ Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004). As mentioned previously in the thesis, Kidd argued that this Protestant interest emerged due to three major reasons: the imperialism following the Revolutionary Settlement, a vigorous print culture and anti-Catholicism. He contended that ‘by 1727 the friends of the Protestant interest in New England had become thoroughly committed to a broad British Protestant identity, finding common cause with the Hanoverian monarchy and Whig Anglicanism’. See pp. 1, 27. Regarding the importance of Protestant interest to foreign policy during the first half of the eighteenth century, see Andrew C. Thompson, *Britain, Hanover and the Protestant Interest, 1688-1756* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 2 ff.

⁵²⁵ Nehemiah Brainerd, ‘To ye Revd Mr. Wheelock, of Lebanon’. Letter dated 17th or 18th July 1741, in *The Life of John Brainerd, the brother of David Brainerd, and his successor as Missionary to the Indians of New Jersey*, by Thomas Brainerd (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee; New York: A.D.F. Randolph, 1865), 32-33, 51. This source will be referred to hereafter as LJB.

inspired by David's achievements, John finished his degree and followed his brother's footsteps as a missionary to white evangelical and Delaware communities in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Once again, however, he was measured by those footsteps. In eleven months, David had baptized thirty-eight adults and thirty-seven infants. Following the model of his mentor, Jonathan Sergeant, Brainerd had also established a school for the Delaware Indians at Bethel. Indeed, even the local pastor, Charles McKnight, lauded the Bethel Indians living near Cranberry, New Jersey, as 'examples of piety and godliness to all the white people around them'.⁵²⁶

Fuelled by the Great Awakening, David Brainerd had gained more success than any other missionary both in number of conversions and in transatlantic notoriety. The charismatic missionary dashed onto the scene in a blaze of evangelistic zeal. This fire was short-lived, though, as he would die of tuberculosis just a few years after his work had begun. Once again, John Brainerd found himself in the shadows of his brother's now immortalized fame.

During David's prolonged illness, John assumed more of his brother's responsibilities in the Bethel community. Like 1749 (see above), in June of 1747 Ebenezer Pemberton reported to John's patrons that 160 persons were living in Bethel. Of these, thirty-seven had received baptism and were allowed to partake in the Lord's Supper. These Indians, according to the report, appeared "to have experienced a work of saving grace in their hearts." Furthermore, there are "several others" who also "are duly religious and proper candidates for these gospel ordinances." In addition to this growing community of the elect, there were "fifty three children who learn to read the Testament and repeat the Shorter Catechism."⁵²⁷ Pemberton's account depicted a stabilizing community making gradual progress even after the revivals had faded: these gains, of course, were according to white, evangelical standards. But the success John experienced initially would be overshadowed by the publication of his brother's journal. By May of 1748, the Edinburgh Directors had ordered one hundred copies of the abridged version, and they directed their counterparts in London to buy at least that many for London and the rest of England.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁶ LJB: 81.

⁵²⁷ CMM, 6: 450-451.

⁵²⁸ CMM, 6: 489-490.

There are a few significant reasons why the Edinburgh Directors wanted copies of David Brainerd's journal. First, this was a common method of fundraising that the SSPCK employed for their colonial missions. Showing positive results of their work gave them credibility and could likely increase their funding opportunities. Second, the memory of David Brainerd had the potential to unite disparate groups around the central themes of missions and evangelism. British Protestants were deeply divided during the 1740s due to the extreme enthusiasm that the Great Awakening had triggered. The directors in Edinburgh were just as divided over these issues. Although differing on doctrine, history and the nature of piety, these assorted groups could find comity in their shared belief in evangelism: this made David Brainerd a quintessential symbol for evangelical unity.⁵²⁹ Although the Brainerd brothers' successes helped to boost the SSPCK's financial opportunities, the Society did not sustain or even increase financial support to John Brainerd and the Bethel Indians even as the number of students, conversions and literacy rates grew.⁵³⁰

Despite John Brainerd and the Bethel community's lack of financial support, Brainerd reported that the Bethel Indians had nearly forty acres of 'English grain in the ground and near about so much Indian corn'. In a typical paternalism that seemed ubiquitous amongst white people, he continued that he thought the Indians were working and conducting their secular business as well as can be expected in light of their inferior conduct and way of life. He also maintained that religious commitment and education continued as an additional thirty Indians converted to Christianity and began to practice proper behaviour. In all, fifty-three people were

⁵²⁹ This tendency of 'moving past' irreconcilable conflicts (of doctrine or otherwise) by intense promotion of a person or movement is a pattern built into the internal dynamics of evangelicalism. See George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 30-32.

⁵³⁰ CMM, 6: 490-491, 576. Despite their lack of assistance for the school and its students (which they admitted in their minutes), the Directors do record that 'an additional allowance is made for the encouragement of one or two well qualified young Indians who assist in the instruction of the rest'. There is also mention of 'spinning wheels that Indian women may be trained up to industry and diligence' that was supplied by 'the charity of well disposed persons'. The Directors were pleased that, in their view, 'the Indians under the care of Mr. Brainerd are not only incorporated in a Church but dwell together in a regular civil Society'. See pp. 552-553. Incidentally, during the same meeting, the Directors heard about a new college, 'where so many of our countrymen of the Presbyterian persuasion are settled and whose children for the most part will be educated therein'. By June of 1749, they had decided that, in the 'interest of religion', they would supply £30 worth of books to the new College of New Jersey: they had in the past and would continue to support Harvard in similar ways; also see 'For the Rev'd Mr. Ebenezer Pemberton, of New York' in LJB: 116-118.

attending his school with several others were expressing interest: they were learning to read and also to recite the catechism.⁵³¹ In short, the turbulent 1740s seemed to be giving way to a prosperous and stabilizing community by 1750.

The perceived stability and growth at Bethel was short-lived. With little financial support, the community was already in a fragile state. But two major issues brought Bethel to a breaking point. The first was an outbreak of disease, which killed many Christian Indians in the community. Disease amongst these American Indians was tragically nothing new. Since initial European contact, epidemics plagued the Hudson and Delaware Valley Indians, causing what Amy Schutt recently called a ‘severe demographic impact’: entire tribes and communities perished.⁵³² However, according to Rachel Wheeler, the nearby Mohicans were considering the possibility of receiving a white missionary despite ‘Mohican communities from the Hudson to the Housatonic Valleys’ having undergone ‘repeated onslaughts of epidemic disease’ for a century. The reasons they would consider a white missionary, according to Wheeler, was not only for obvious socio-economic and political reasons. The reasons were also spiritual: the Mohicans saw white people’s greater health and wealth as a spiritual omen from God.⁵³³

But this omen cut both ways. Once the epidemic struck the Bethel Christian Indians in 1749, their neighbours were critical of them and their faith. Since the illness spread solely within the Christian community, non-Christian Indians said it was a curse from God, because they had left their traditional ways.⁵³⁴ A few years later Brainerd would report that the Bethel church had lost a third of its members to ‘the great mortality’.⁵³⁵

Brainerd also wrote frequently of the malady of alcoholism. In his estimation, this “great obstacle” sprang from two major sources. The first came as a result of his prejudice that a ‘great and almost universal propensity’ amongst ‘the whole Nation of Indians to strong drink’. The second source derived from ‘our

⁵³¹ ‘For the Rev’d Mr. Ebenezer Pemberton, of New York’ in LJB: 116-118.

⁵³² Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: the Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 40-41.

⁵³³ Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope*, 33-34, 153.

⁵³⁴ LJB: 119. It has been suggested that John’s brother, David, accidentally and unknowingly spread his fatal illness (i.e. the effects of his tuberculosis) throughout the Bethel community.

⁵³⁵ Brainerd, *A Genuine Letter from Mr. John Brainerd*, 6.

neighbours the white people'. 'There is scarce one of them', Brainerd remarked, 'that has strong liquor to dispose of, but what will sell to the Indians'. Although he had not witnessed it himself, Brainerd recorded that some white people would specifically target Christian Indians, feeling it a particular accomplishment to get them drunk.⁵³⁶ This, too, was a disease spreading throughout the community.

The second issue that devastated Bethel was the renewed threat of losing their lands. In New Jersey alone, it was reported that the Delawares typically had only two or three families living in most of their communities.⁵³⁷ During David Brainerd's lifetime, he and the Delaware Indians had fought to preserve the indigenous lands from white encroachments, and several scattered groups had joined Brainerd's Christian community of Bethel.⁵³⁸ But only a few years after they had moved to Bethel, they were once again under assault.⁵³⁹

In October of 1749, John Brainerd wrote in his journal that he was moving his 'household goods' from Bethel to a place nearby with his schoolmaster, Ebenezer Hayward, who with Brainerd had secured eighty acres adjacent to the Bethel community.⁵⁴⁰ According to Brainerd, it was now too 'dangerous to live on the Indians' land, by reason of the proprietors who lay claim to it'.⁵⁴¹ Throughout these few months, John mentioned several times that he was going to court on business related to the Indians, which was probably in regards to Bethel's land case but could also refer to the recent debt crisis in the community. In November, for example, John reported trying to raise money 'to help a poor Indian who was cast into prison for debt'. He also recorded having a 'discourse' with two Indians who had been drunk. In general, his journal entries lamented both the physical and moral erosion at Bethel.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁶ Brainerd, *A Genuine Letter from Mr. John Brainerd*, 8-9.

⁵³⁷ Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 94, 127. As Schutt pointed out, by the mid-eighteenth century, the New Jersey, Forks and Susquehanna Valley Delawares all had been living in 'small, dispersed locations' for a very long time.

⁵³⁸ The SSPCK assisted Brainerd in allocating funds to pay the Native Americans debts during this period. See Brainerd, *Mirabilia Dei inter Indico*, 111; Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 103.

⁵³⁹ For more on the conflict over land rights and the responses by SSPCK members and the Bethel community, see Brendan McConville, *These Daring Disturbers of the Public Peace: the Struggle for Property and Power in Early New Jersey* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), 85; Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 104, 122; LJB: 154; CMM, 6: 600-601.

⁵⁴⁰ Walling, *Bethel Indian Town of New Jersey*, 11; LJB: 211.

⁵⁴¹ LJB: 211.

⁵⁴² LJB: 222.

In these same journal entries, John Brainerd said that he himself was also 'low in spirits'. Brainerd experienced ecstatic moments, which he recorded with pathos in his journal; but he was also prone to equally profound bouts of depression. He described acutely his depression after acknowledging that the Indians would possibly lose their land. 'The ill circumstances and ill behaviour of some of my poor people', John wrote, were 'often very painful and depressing, and were so this evening'.⁵⁴³

By November of 1749, Brainerd felt he could take no more. In addition to his usual duties, he and the Bethel community were dealing with both the effects of an epidemic and the increasing threats of removal. The Bethel Indians, like John Brainerd himself, were demoralized, and some of them were turning to alcohol as an antidote. After noting that once again he had found some of the Bethel Christians drunk, he exclaimed, 'oh, may the Lord save his cause from reproach and them from finally falling away!' The disheartened missionary was witnessing the disintegration of Bethel and the ensuing loss of faith: 'It has been sometimes like death to me', he lamented, 'I know not how to bear up under the weight of it'. Besides these extreme cases of alcoholism, however, Brainerd did note that the behaviour of the Bethel Indians 'has been comfortable, although there have been some slips among some'. In a culminating moment of catharsis, Brainerd confessed that 'it has been life to me to see their good behaviour; and the contrary has sometimes seemed more bitter than death'.⁵⁴⁴

It was perhaps more than coincidence that John was reading his brother's published journal during this period of such instability and loss. 'In reading my brother's life', he commented three days later in his diary, I 'could not but be affected at my own extreme barrenness and nonconformity to God'. The demoralized younger brother confessed that, 'although he [David] was an imperfect man, I was very short of being what he was and doing what he did, which made me ashamed to look up...'⁵⁴⁵ John was not only seeing his neighbours suffering and dying, he was experiencing the heavy weight of disappointment. He was squirming

⁵⁴³ LJB: 222.

⁵⁴⁴ LJB: 222-223.

⁵⁴⁵ LJB: 226.

beneath the shadows of his faith, his name and the Bethel mission that seemed to be slipping from his grasp.

Out of the Shadows and Into the Material: Race, Religion and the Politics of the Spirit

Probably due to the precarious situation at Bethel, John Brainerd decided to visit Native American communities on and near the Susquehanna River. His brother's published journal also must have compelled him to travel there along with the deep interest in Susquehanna that SSPCK leaders on both sides of the Atlantic had shared for two decades.⁵⁴⁶ David Brainerd had written of visiting Juneata Island and Shaumoking, both in Susquehanna. He wrote of the Indians crying out in agony to God as well as describing what he perceived as exotic figures such as the 'zealous Reformer, or rather restorer, of what he supposed was the ancient religion of the Indians'. According to Brainerd, this man's body was covered head to foot in what to Brainerd seemed bizarre feathers and cloths. Nonetheless, this spiritual reformer, in Brainerd's account, showed him 'uncommon courtesy'. From this experience, David Brainerd made one of his most surprising statements: 'But I must say, there was something in his temper and disposition that looked more like true religion than anything I ever observed amongst other heathens'. But the missionary had also written of extreme rejection and hardness amongst various Susquehanna tribes.⁵⁴⁷ It was such experiences on both sides of the spectrum that Colin Calloway argued 'clearly moulded the young missionary's [David] character and influenced "everything from his evangelistic method to his psychological health"'.⁵⁴⁸ Sandra Gustafson went so far as to argue that David Brainerd 'came tentatively and partially

⁵⁴⁶ Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 76-77. For at least a decade, the SSPCK had been interested in evangelizing Susquehanna, and they had sent Jonathan Sergeant to assess the situation in 1741. His report was rather bleak. However, as early as 1730, Jonathan Dickinson and Professor William Hamilton were writing to one another with interest in "two tribes "adjacent"" to Dickinson that 'have princes who seem interested in "Christian Instruction"'. See CMM, 4: 303.

⁵⁴⁷ David Brainerd, *Mirabilia Dei inter Indicos*, 42-56. Richard Pointer highlights this particular story of the Native Reformer as an example of Brainerd having 'developed a more empathetic view of Indian religion as a result of contacts with Natives'. Pointer gives an excellent assessment of this encounter in, Richard Pointer, 'Native Freedom?' in *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America*, by Chris Beneke and Christopher Grenda, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 177-178.

⁵⁴⁸ Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 89.

to accommodate native spiritual forms' and that he and like-minded colleagues 'located parallels in the spiritual practices of their native proselytes'.⁵⁴⁹ John was now preparing for his own encounter with these Susquehanna tribes he had read about in his brother's journal from just a few years prior.

After three days of travel nearly solely upon foot,⁵⁵⁰ Brainerd arrived in Susquehanna territory only to find the Indians hastily preparing for a battle with the Catawbas. After a few days, he finally gained access to the Council and explained to them that he 'had something important and beneficial to tell them including the kids'. The Susquehanna leaders' response took Brainerd off guard, causing him to conjecture that they 'had imbibed some late prejudices against Christianity' due to 'false reports of some ill-minded persons who had been trading among them':⁵⁵¹ men he would later call 'emissaries of Satan'.⁵⁵² The Susquehanna leaders then articulated a cosmology of race and religion—represented most clearly in their creation story—that integrated both their local traditions and their lived experiences with white settlers.

John recorded the creation story in his personal diary.⁵⁵³ In it, the leaders began that, 'the great God first made three men and three women: the Indian, the negro, and the white man'. In Brainerd's account of this creation story, the leaders emphasized, 'that the white man was the youngest brother, and therefore the white people ought not to think themselves better than the Indians'. God gave white people a book, and white people must worship by that book. But God 'gave none either to

⁵⁴⁹ Sandra M. Gustafson, *Eloquence Is Power: Oratory & Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), xxiii, 77.

⁵⁵⁰ Brainerd, *A Genuine Letter from Mr. John Brainerd*, 10.

⁵⁵¹ LJB: 230-234.

⁵⁵² Brainerd, *A Genuine Letter from Mr. John Brainerd*, 10. Brainerd said that, although the Sachems disallowed him to preach, he remained 'near a fortnight' with the 'common sort of people' where he reportedly went house to house and talked to them in an effort to 'refute the malicious aspersions of the traders and bring them into a good opinion of Christianity'.

⁵⁵³ Many Native Americans tapped into their creation stories as a way to convey their views of polygenesis and other aspects of race, equality and myriad expressions of cultural identity. This has been recognized by many scholars over the last generation. For recognition and references in this regard, see David J. Silverman, 'The Curse of God: An Idea and Its Origins Among the Indians of New York's Revolutionary Frontier', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 66 (Jul. 2009), 497. Nonetheless, as Silverman pointed out, 'the natives in these studies, most of them militant resisters of white expansion in the Ohio River valley, Great Lakes, or lower South, should not drown out the voices of Indians farther east, including Christians, for whom race had also become salient'. Indeed, the seeds of this line of thinking emerged within 'the opening years of colonization' (501). In speaking to Silverman's assessment, the Susquehannas' creation myth holds promise in shedding light on the changing religious, racial and cultural landscape in the Pennsylvania borderlands during the 1740s and 1750s.

the Indian or Negro, and therefore it could not be right for them to have a book, or by any way concerned with that way of worship'. But the Susquehanna leaders continued that they saw something more sinister going on: politics was intermingled with religion for the white man.⁵⁵⁴ Of course, this was precisely the case. Religious leaders on both sides of the Atlantic promoted the 'civilizing' of Native Americans as a way to defend their perceived religious and political liberties against both 'Popery' and the French Empire: expanding and safeguarding the British Empire was a central tenet of the Protestant interest.⁵⁵⁵ As Andrew Thompson has recently argued, the 'link between confessional ideas and practical politics' was more profound than scholars have previously suspected.⁵⁵⁶

The Susquehanna Indians continued by arguing that, 'white people were contriving a method' to drive them off of 'their country in those parts' in the exact same way 'as they had done by the sea-side'. Even more, white people were conspiring 'to make slaves of them and their children as they did of the Negroes'. For this wary Susquehanna community, John Brainerd was 'sent on purpose to accomplish that design' of displacing and enslaving them under the guise of Christianity. If Brainerd was successful in the promotion and management of this design, it was he who would then be 'king of all their country'. Brainerd wrote that the Susquehanna leaders brought up many occasions where white people had treated 'their brethren' poorly. They became so enraged when discussing the injustices that they and their people had received that Brainerd feared a few of them would 'have slain me on the spot'.⁵⁵⁷

John Brainerd was very troubled at what he considered the prejudices of the Indians toward the Christian religion. But he failed to take seriously the reasons behind the Indians' protests or the symbolic importance of their creation story. He was particularly dismissive of their attempts to link him to the rapacious activities of white settlers and white governments alike. To him, it was only common sense to

⁵⁵⁴ LJB: 234-235.

⁵⁵⁵ Kidd, *Protestant Interest*, 1, 27.

⁵⁵⁶ Thompson, *Britain, Hanover and the Protestant Interest*, 2-3. Thompson's monograph emphasizes the importance of the Protestant interest to foreign policy more generally during the first half of the eighteenth century. Thompson called 'for a significant reappraisal of three related areas: the foreign policy of George I and George II and its roots in the legacy of William III and the Glorious Revolution; the role of foreign policy in public discussion in Britain; and the importance of Protestantism to Britain and Hanover'. Also see Kidd, *Protestant Interest*, 27, 30.

⁵⁵⁷ LJB: 234-235.

distinguish his missionary work from other whites that aggressively sought indigenous lands.⁵⁵⁸ Indeed, Brainerd had just spent months fighting for Native American rights in court. Just days before arriving in Susquehanna, New Jersey officials harassed the missionary so severely that even he himself was forced to the outskirts of Bethel. How could he be in collaboration with a government that was oppressing both him and what he called ‘my people’? John Brainerd could not comprehend how the Susquehannas could associate either him or the Christian faith with the injustices of both traders and a government that was demoralizing both him and authentic Christian faith. How could he be one of them?

The Indian leaders of Susquehanna may not have comprehended the particulars of John Brainerd’s response (at least that is what he recorded). Indeed, Brainerd defended himself and his cause against their allegations. But the Indians were not persuaded, even though they acknowledged his learned reasoning. He was not allowed to ‘preach to their people’ and should not return ‘upon such an errand’.⁵⁵⁹ For the Susquehanna, race, religion and politics were tied inextricably. And so they were for John Brainerd, as well, even if he did not recognize it fully. Central to Brainerd’s message to them was that all white people were *not* alike even as he worked off the premise that all Indians *were* alike. Brainerd was asking the Susquehanna Indians to recognize a nuance that he himself did not reciprocate for their own race.

After this confrontation, the community leaders asked to speak to Brainerd’s interpreter, Moses (also known as Tindi) Tattami.⁵⁶⁰ Tattami had been an interpreter for the SSPCK since at least 1744 when he worked alongside John’s brother, David.⁵⁶¹ As early as 1743, both David Brainerd and Jonathan Sergeant extolled him and the immense promise he held for the cause of Christian missions and education to Native American communities.⁵⁶² But the Susquehannas questioned Tattami’s religion in light of his race. Why, they asked, had Tattami ‘forsook the Indian ways’ to convert to the white man’s faith? This, of course, was the most pressing question

⁵⁵⁸ LJB: 235-236.

⁵⁵⁹ LJB: 235-236.

⁵⁶⁰ Ledger, 236. From this record it appears that Moses (Tindi) Tattami was still employed by the SSPCK to be John Brainerd’s interpreter.

⁵⁶¹ CMM, 6: 210; Ledger, 236.

⁵⁶² *A Letter from the Reverend Mr. Sergeant of Stockbridge, to Dr. Colman of Boston*, 11.

based upon their cosmology of creation and their experiences with white people in the past.

There is no record of Tattami's response. After defending his reasons for converting, however, the Susquehanna invited him and the Christian Indians of Bethel to live with them. They could 'take their choice of all the uninhabited land' on the Susquehanna River with 'liberty to worship God as they thought right'. Tattami had not only defended his religion, he had secured land among the Susquehanna. He no doubt understood the imminent demise of Bethel, and wanted to preserve his nearly decade-long project of promoting Native Christianity. The Susquehanna recognized Bethel's peril, and offered them a way out of their misfortune.⁵⁶³

The Susquehanna Indians then made an astonishing offer to the Bethel community if they would move to Susquehanna lands. This proposal reflects the complex way that Native American communities viewed Christianity in relation to their own race and cultural identity: a nuance that gets overlooked quite often by historians.⁵⁶⁴ The leaders told Tattami that, not only could they worship God freely in their own way once they arrived, 'the young people' of the Susquehanna community could also 'have liberty...to join with them, if they desired it'.⁵⁶⁵ Even after articulating a creation story that saw Christianity as a white person's religion, the Susquehannas were not intimidated by Bethel's Christian faith, and had no problem with their own children adopting this faith and integrating it into their own cultural fabric.

⁵⁶³ LJB: 236.

⁵⁶⁴ For example, David Silverman demonstrates the nuanced view of race and Christianity within Native American communities during the eighteenth century, and he traces this intellectual development back to the seventeenth century. However, he argued that non-Christian Indians believed 'that Christianity was meant for whites, not for Indians, a message that Indians in the eighteenth century would repeat in more overtly racial terms'. While this was certainly true for some communities, the Susquehannas' acceptance of Christianity devoid of white influence (even after telling their creation story to Brainerd) suggests a different trajectory for others. See Silverman, 'Curse of God', 503-504; For an example of the Onondagas believing Christianity intended only for whites, see Silverman, 'To Become A Chosen People: the Missionary Work and Missionary Spirit of the Brotherton and Stockbridge Indians, 1775-1835', in *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, edited by Martin and Nicholas, 251. For a definitive and pathbreaking re-assessment of religion and race, see Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁵⁶⁵ LJB: 236. It is important to note that this account came from the private journal of John Brainerd. This journal was never intended to be published, yet no doubt contains the prejudices of the missionary.

What they would not tolerate, however, was the existence of a white person in their community. Tattami responded to the Susquehanna's generous offer by stating that the Indians of Bethel could not live at Susquehanna unless they allowed John Brainerd to come with them. The community leaders of Susquehanna said this was not an option, 'because he was a white man' and that 'if one white man come, another would desire it' until they eventually would 'lose their country'. They were happy to tolerate and even integrate a new faith, but they would not allow white people to manipulate this faith as a tool for dispossession and enslavement. The Susquehanna Indians conceded that Brainerd could live on adjacent land that was owned by whites, and that he could visit the Bethel people as often as he wanted.⁵⁶⁶

Contrary to Brainerd's assessment, the Susquehanna leaders were more than capable of recognizing nuance. They would not heed John Brainerd's view of race that asked Indians to see whites individually even though white people did not see the Indians in the same light. On the contrary, the Susquehanna were articulating their own paradigm between race and religion. Indeed, they were even willing for their children to receive this new religion. But the Christian faith must be understood on the terms of their own race, not another's.

Even though Moses Tattami refused the Susquehanna's offer, he did agree to tell the Christian Indians of Bethel that the 'king and the principal Indians on Susquehanna desired to see them...as soon as they could conveniently'. John Brainerd recorded this interaction, and added that he 'encouraged the matter' and further 'propose[d] to send a number of the most judicious of my people, so soon as their circumstance will permit'. Brainerd's explicit reason for promoting this design was that it might 'be a means of removing some of their unjust prejudices against the Christian religion'.⁵⁶⁷ Brainerd was entrusting to the Bethel Indians what he himself could not do: to explain to the Susquehanna Indians why any indigenous person or community would embrace a religious system that had been used as a tool by white people to oppress so many of their own race.

John Brainerd wrote the above story of himself and the Native Americans at Bethel and Susquehanna in a letter to Ebenezer Pemberton in 1751. It was found in

⁵⁶⁶ LJB: 236.

⁵⁶⁷ LJB: 236-237.

Edinburgh; presumably, Pemberton sent the letter to the SSPCK Directors, a common procedure at the time.⁵⁶⁸ Brainerd no doubt knew that his letter would be read by the leaders of the SSPCK on both sides of the Atlantic. This could account for his apparent duality regarding religion and politics. Based on his private journal, letters and correspondences, however, it appears that this duality was part of his lived experience of faith in relation to evangelism and Empire. In the next few years, John Brainerd would support the British Empire as a chaplain during the French and Indian War. He would view this war, and the later American War for Independence, as a battle not only for political and imperial control but also a battle for true religion. The two were entwined.

Still, it would be a mistake to understand John Brainerd as a shock trooper for the British Empire. It would also be naïve to equate Brainerd to the white merchants who displayed unparalleled savagery in their thirst for wealth and their sadistic dismantling of the moral fabric of local communities. John Brainerd justifiably needed to make a distinction between his interest and that of the merchants' and proprietors'. Still, the Susquehanna leaders were able to perceive even more than John that his interests ultimately served to displace their culture and dispel them from their lands. From this angle, the racial nuance John insisted upon simply did not exist. The Susquehanna leaders distinguished between Native and white Christians. By rejecting all white people, they were free to embrace the Christian faith of their Native brothers and sisters at Bethel. For the Susquehanna Indians, to be Christian did not mean accepting views of white supremacy; but to be white did, regardless of whether that white man identified himself as a missionary or a merchant.

Spiritual Freedom but Material Poverty? John Brainerd's Critique of the SSPCK and Call for Improvement

John Brainerd continued to express how concerned and troubled he was over the situation at Susquehanna. His paternalism was evident once again when he asserted that 'the Indians are universally involved in darkness'. But based on his encounter with the Susquehanna and his life with the Bethel Indians, he was also protesting the material squalor of the community. He declared that the Bethel Indians were, 'under

⁵⁶⁸ LJB: 230.

the most wretched and deplorable circumstances' imaginable and that 'no one...who has seriously thought upon it, and especially been an eye-witness to their sad and perishing condition' would neglect to be 'earnestly desirous to afford them some relief, and be ready to use any lawful means to that end'. This narrative was part of Brainerd's passionate plea that the Bethel community receive financial support. While appeasing the SSPCK by acknowledging their graciousness, he stated that he was working with his hands tied: he must receive more funding in order for his mission to be a success.⁵⁶⁹

The SSPCK's ostensible mission was to disseminate the message of true religious liberty to those in greatest need. John Brainerd had accepted that mission statement when he joined the Society; but he was now questioning the assumptions built into that statement. If he was going to tell Native Americans that Christianity brought true freedom (a clarion call of the Great Awakening), then how was he going to explain their material poverty? Most of the British Empire's allocation of funds for religious purposes went to what John described as the 'wealthy, opulent people'.⁵⁷⁰ He could not sincerely offer an esoteric faith to Indians who demanded evidence based not on an emotional experience but rather on material improvement. Even further, it seems clear that John Brainerd's critique of his own race and empire's approach to Christianity was a result of the Bethel community's demise and the Susquehanna Indians' influence on him during his recent trip. Only after experiencing Bethel's impoverishment; and only after hearing the Susquehanna's critique of why he could not preach in their community, and only after he saw their anguish over the injustices done to them to the point of threatening his life: only then did he push most fervently for material improvement as a means of evangelism.

It was at this point that John proposed an experiment at Bethel. He continued to plead for financial assistance, and explicitly emphasized gender. The first reason for funding was so that 'especially the younger sort of women and girls' at Bethel might 'be instructed in the several sorts of businesses that the white women are employed in'. He explained that the women in the village 'are much better inclined in all respects than the men'. They possess better 'morals' and they are 'much more industrious' even though they do not have half of the advantages that the men have.

⁵⁶⁹ LJB: 242-247.

⁵⁷⁰ LJB: 242-247.

Brainerd then pleaded again for money to buy some spinning wheels and provide training for women to be able ‘to soon make their own clothes which they now buy with their money from broom and basket making’. If the women could achieve this level of autonomy and industry, they could then send their children to school. Currently, they take their children with them to find proper materials for making baskets; recently, though, they could not even find materials for baskets and brooms, because the forests had been ‘pillaged’. Learning a trade would give Indian women more money to buy materials for clothes at a very cheap rate. They could then buy materials for making baskets and brooms. Along with the material advantages of funding this experiment for women, education and spirituality would also flourish. Providing new industry would give these children the freedom to attend school; it would also give the women enough leisure time to attend ‘public’ and ‘Divine services’, which they were currently not able to do.⁵⁷¹

Brainerd’s emphatic shift towards the material conditions of the Indians in connection with their spiritual state came as a direct result of his interaction with the Susquehanna Indians. The missionary explained to the SSPCK correspondents that they had finally opened up to the possibility of sending their children to school, a suggestion ‘heretofore they have shown great aversion to’. ‘The remote Indians’, Brainerd said no doubt in reference to the Susquehanna, ‘are now...waiting to see how it fare with their brethren who are become Christians, and whether they are in a better condition than themselves who remain heathen’. Brainerd was proposing that civilizing the Susquehanna Indians depended upon the success at Bethel, because the material situation of Bethel would determine whether or not others such as the Susquehanna would embrace the Christian faith.⁵⁷² For the SSPCK’s mission to Bethel and Susquehannah, it marked a noteworthy intellectual turn.

For example, contrast John Brainerd’s material-spiritual perspective even with that of his older brother, David, who worked with the same communities during and just after the Awakening. Regarding David Brainerd’s approach, John Grigg

⁵⁷¹ LJB: 247-249.

⁵⁷² LJB: 249. This ‘better way of living’ expressed with sympathy and pathos by John was enmeshed within the British imperial mandate that included racial superiority. In many ways, John continued, ‘they have manifested a disposition to conform to the English’, and he believed that a little more funding would help the Indians ‘be brought into a better way of living’, which continued to be, it seemed, distinctly English.

challenged Brendan McConville's contention that Brainerd 'accepted the idea of the Native Americans as New Jersey's original owners, and he had very close ties to Newark's Presbyterian clergy', which implies a politically-oriented Brainerd who was fighting for social justice.⁵⁷³ To be sure, Brainerd fought tooth and nail for the land rights of 'his people', which served the interests of himself, the Native communities and the SSPCK leaders in New York, Newark and Edinburgh. But to imply that David Brainerd was overtly political would be to misunderstand the thrust of his life and work, as Grigg so forcefully pointed out:

It is not that he accepted or denied this premise [stated by McConville], but rather that it was not something he really considered. What was important to Brainerd was that God was at work among the Indians, and the proprietary party, by opposing Indians' possession of the land, was opposing the work of God. Furthermore, his own desire to create a distinctive spiritual place was largely dependent on the perpetuation of the work in New Jersey. If that were to collapse, he would be drawn back into the normal currents of society.⁵⁷⁴

While David Brainerd worked harder than any other white person to save the Delawares' lands, he only indirectly confronted the New Jersey officials and when challenged he quickly backed away.⁵⁷⁵ As Grigg pointed out, Brainerd made a clear distinction between the spiritual and the political, between the body and the soul: Gustafson's narrative of Brainerd's comparison of Christian and Native spirituality also conveys this material-spiritual dichotomy quite clearly.⁵⁷⁶

Even further, though, David Brainerd was a product of the Great Awakening. His views of personal salvation and spiritual renewal were forged out of the teaching and preaching of revivalism. His very decision to become a missionary stemmed from this spiritual movement. Within this context, then, John Grigg's interpretation of David Brainerd's spiritualist approach appears more likely. He was simply following a vibrant cultural thread of evangelicalism that had gained coherency and momentum with the Awakening.

⁵⁷³ McConville, *These Daring Disturbers of the Public Peace*, 146.

⁵⁷⁴ Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 106.

⁵⁷⁵ One should not downplay, however, the force with which David Brainerd argued for Delaware land rights as well as the SSPCK's role in temporarily securing those lands (this included paying over £82 of the Delaware's debts). See Brainerd, *Mirabilia Dei inter Indico*, 111; Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 103.

⁵⁷⁶ Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power*, 77-90.

Although remaining true to evangelical orthodoxy, John Brainerd was reassessing the Awakening's approach to missions that dichotomized the material and the spiritual. Thus, he was challenging the impulse found in his brother's ministry that was part of a larger evangelical trend. Peter Onuf has recognized this as a second phase of the separatism that began with the Awakening even though this phase transpired after the Awakening itself. As Onuf put it, 'these later separations were not intended to sustain revival fervour and confront the unregenerate establishment. Instead, rural separatists turned inward to establish "pure churches", beyond early contamination'. Brainerd's Bethel Indian settlement was just this sort of attempted 'pure' establishment. This 'second phase', as Onuf demonstrated, 'brought separations' en masse⁵⁷⁷ throughout all of the colonies: it was the acme of social fragmentation that simultaneously created space for critique. As Chris Beneke has noticed, from one angle this process of fragmentation looked a lot like choice and tolerance: 'colonial Americans had never before confronted the range of spiritual alternatives that the Awakening presented'.⁵⁷⁸

It was precisely this post-Awakening impulse identified by Onuf that sustained the logic of David Brainerd. John Brainerd was challenging this logic. Within an evangelical framework, Brainerd identified an early thread of what Nicole Eustace has recently called 'the sentimental paradox'.⁵⁷⁹ That is, he recognized that the rhetoric of spiritual sentimentalism could not justify the material impoverishment: prosperity in both the material and spiritual spheres worked in tandem.

But even as he stated that the material conditions did much to shape 'one way or the other' whether Native Indians would 'reject or embrace the Christian religion', John Brainerd quickly sought to balance this material reality with the evangelical Calvinist message of the spirit. 'I mean', he continued, 'as to the outward and external part of it'. 'I am sensible', he noted, that for a person or community to 'embrace this religion and become truly Christian' that 'the power of Almighty God

⁵⁷⁷ Peter Onuf, 'New Lights in New London: A Group Portrait of the Separatists', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 37 (Oct., 1980), 629.

⁵⁷⁸ Chris Beneke, *Beyond Toleration: the Religious Origins of American Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 54.

⁵⁷⁹ Nicole Eustace, 'The Sentimental Paradox: Humanity and Violence on the Pennsylvania Frontier' *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 65 (Jan., 2008): 29-64.

be exerted, and that nothing short of the irresistible operations of his Holy Spirit will produce such an effect'.⁵⁸⁰ John continued to maintain the orthodox evangelical Calvinist perspective of the effectual calling of the Spirit; but as a result of his experiences at Bethel and Susquehanna, he was emphasizing the role of the material that signalled the shifting identity of and tension within post-Awakening evangelicalism.

Conclusion

A new Protestant landscape was emerging from the wake of the Great Awakening, and could be recognized distinctly in the borderlands of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. David Brainerd had emphasized the separatist approach to personal and experiential conversion. His successes shaped the SSPCK's policies, and perhaps even moulded Protestant missions in the Highlands and Islands at the turn of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, this model would serve as the precedent for future Scottish evangelical missionary expeditions during the nineteenth century.⁵⁸¹ But, John Brainerd was questioning the sustainability of this model after his experiences with the Bethel and Susquehanna communities.

This post-Awakening evangelicalism was a distinct thread that would continue to function in tension alongside the revivalist-inspired emphasis on both the Spirit and separation from the world. Native Christian leaders in the region, for example, would appropriate this material and racial framework seen within the dialogue between John Brainerd, Bethel and Susquehanna as a way to critique the evangelicalism in which they shared (even though they were still pushed to the religious and geo-political periphery). However, examples such as Brothertown in upstate New York (where some in the Bethel community eventually migrated)

⁵⁸⁰ LJB: 249-250.

⁵⁸¹ Donald E. Meek, 'Protestant Missions and the Evangelization of the Scottish Highlands, 1700-1850' *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21 (April 1997), 68. Meek pointed out that the Great Awakening in colonial America and the Evangelical Revival in Britain were significant 'in moving the emphasis of missionary activity' in the Highlands and Islands 'from civilization (in "English" terms) to salvation' and that revivalism also promoted 'another wave of interest in the spiritual needs of the region'. Although members of the SSPCK were vital in the efforts at Cambuslang, it was with David Brainerd that the SSPCK fully appropriated the logic of revivalism as the avenue by which they would attain success in the colonies. The SSPCK's influence was substantial for Scottish missions in India, and the Society's colonial American endeavours influenced the Scottish homeland and re-framed their more expansive missionary projects to India and Africa during the nineteenth century.

demonstrate the way Native Christians used a synthesis of the materialist critique and the logic of separatism from a tainted world as a way to carve their own identity: an identity at once Native and Christian.⁵⁸²

At the SSPCK's fiftieth anniversary in 1750, the Society stated that its goal was to enlighten pupils' minds so that these students would be able to perceive true religion. By 1751, John Brainerd was arguing to them that the mind could not be separated from the body, nor could the spiritual be separated from the material. The American Indians were suffering; Bethel was being displaced and Susquehanna had undergone much abuse. White people must give evidence to their words about the Christian religion; as Brainerd noted, Indians such as the Susquehanna were watching the Bethel experiment to see whether or not they would convert. Brainerd's emphasis on the material in conjunction with the spiritual was a result of both his interaction with the Susquehanna Indians and the attempted displacement of the Bethel Indians.

In very important ways, Brainerd's perspective in 1751 continued to be inseparable from the British imperial project.⁵⁸³ Race, religion and the politics of property were key ingredients to the perpetuation and expansion of the British Empire.⁵⁸⁴ The Susquehanna Indians recognized this more clearly than Brainerd

⁵⁸² Brad D.E. Jarvis, *The Brothertown Nation of Indians: Land Ownership and Nationalism in Early America, 1740-1840* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2010).

⁵⁸³ For the SSPCK's relation to the British Empire, see Laura M. Stevens, 'The Souls of Highlanders, the Salvation of Indians: Scottish Mission and Eighteenth-Century British Empire' in *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, eds. Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 179-200. Stevens's emphasis upon Scottish imperialism should be understood in tension with what Alexander Du Toit highlighted as 'a line in Scottish thought going back at least to the Renaissance, rooted in Scottish historical experience and showing an anti-imperial bias'. See Alexander Du Toit, 'Who are the Barbarians? Scottish Views of Conquest and Indians, and Robertson's *History of America*' *Scottish Literary Journal* 26 (May 1999): 29-47. For more on Scottish imperialism and anti-imperialism, see David Allan *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993); Tom Devine, *Scotland's Empire, 1600-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2003). For a very solid rebuttal to the Anglicization narrative, see James Livesey, *Civil Society and Empire: Ireland and Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁵⁸⁴ Kathleen Brown, 'Native Americans and early modern concepts of race' in *Empire and Others: British Encounters With Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850*, eds. M.J. Daunton and Rick Halpern (London: University College London Press, 1999), 98. Brown takes the issue of race even further by arguing for a reassessment of our understanding of the 'colour of Indians', suggesting that 'there may be an interesting history of early modern racial formations yet to be written about the Englishman and the Indian'. The questions from this article regarding the spiritual in relation to colour and race are important variables in Brown's recommended reconstruction.

himself did. Still, the Susquehannas were open to the Christian religion, and they would even allow their own children to adopt this faith as their own. Importantly, though, race was inextricably bound to religion and politics: by rejecting white people entirely, the Susquehannas were creating space in their community for religious tolerance and even conversion. Still, they recognized that white religion equalled white control. As their creation story implied, and as their lived experiences had manifested, the ‘great God’ that created the first humans never had such a plan in mind.

Chapter Six

Evangelism and Native Christian Identity

Introduction

This chapter continues to look at the way SSPCK missionaries shaped the discourse of evangelism: a dynamic with transatlantic implications. The chapter establishes first the logistics of the SSPCK's missionary efforts in colonial America during The Seven Years War (French and Indian War). It then demonstrates how the SSPCK's missionaries themselves suffered deeply under the burden of their patron institution's unstable and awkward position within the British Empire. The development of the Scottish Society's institutional policies during the 1750s as well as their ambivalent role within the Empire will lead to a discussion of two missionaries, John Brainerd and Samson Occom. Both missionaries were marginalized in their own ways by both their culture and the Scottish Society, yet both men simultaneously made an abiding impact on the policies, practices and ideas of the Society. This chapter looks first at Brainerd's pivotal contribution to an overhaul of policy that echoed to the centre of the British Empire in London. But it concentrates most heavily upon Samson Occom's influence in fundraising and missionary expeditions as well as his extremely important though often overlooked intellectual contribution to eighteenth-century religion and culture.

Michael McNally announced recently the arrival of a new approach towards understanding Christian missions and Native Americans. This new interpretive paradigm, according to McNally, will rescue the study of Native American Christianity and missionary work more generally from what he called, on the one hand, narratives of 'valorization' and 'hagiography' and, on the other, narratives of 'vilification'.⁵⁸⁵ Of course, scholars have been dismantling this binary now for decades. Although McNally is overstating his historiographical significance, his core argument is still relevant and important for scholars studying missionary-Native encounters as well as Native Christianity. Indeed, scholars have recently made solid

⁵⁸⁵ Michael D. McNally, 'Coda: Naming the Legacy of Native Christian Missionary Encounters' in Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas, *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 289.

strides towards balancing their interpretations, giving important nuance to questions of agency, contingency and imperial domination.⁵⁸⁶ The first section on John Brainerd provides a clear example of the contingency of local communities. As Brainerd demonstrates, missionaries existed in a liminal world of neither white nor fully Indian culture. Issues surrounding faith and race, culture and doctrine, were all contested areas, and missionaries had to effectively appeal to both sides. In the case of Brainerd, the personal costs were high, but his influence on both cultures (if not multiple cultures) was also more profound than previously imagined. John Brainerd helps to put flesh onto this recent historiographical trend mentioned by McNally.

The focus of this chapter will be on the intellectual contribution that Native Americans made to a variety of frameworks and traditions. The academy has projected a host of interpretations on Native American actions, but they have not spent enough time understanding their ideas. In response, this chapter establishes one particular Native Christian legacy by looking at the important intellectual contribution of Samson Occom to both the history of religion as well as the ongoing dialogue (then and now) of what it means to be both Christian and Native. Drawing from Occom's correspondences and culminating with his sermon to Moses Paul that is representative of Occom's cosmology, the chapter argues that central to his identity was both his race and his religion. The previous chapter illustrated the conflict between the Susquehanna Indians and John Brainerd over race and religion. It is extremely significant to understand Occom within continuity of this dialogue. Occom embodied a synthesis emerging from the Brainerd/Susquehanna conflict. He drew from the racial critique of the Susquehanna's but used the theological framework shared by John Brainerd. This chapter suggests that Occom created a synthesis from these two intellectual cosmologies.

The tension between being a Native American and a Calvinist Christian caused Samson Occom to re-imagine both in ways that ostensibly offered to transcend race by placing faith at the centre of social relations. Threads of his attempt to reconcile being a Mohegan and a Calvinist—juxtaposed with the exigencies of his and other Native Americans' situations—led to a formation of theology that remained committed to being orthodox yet reinterpreted that orthodoxy

⁵⁸⁶ On this topic, see Douglas L. Winiarski, 'Native American Popular Religion in New England's Old Colony', 148-149.

in important ways: indeed, this dynamic within non-Anglican British Atlantic Protestantism had been ongoing at least since the Restoration. Therefore, Occom's conclusions should be recognized as an important intellectual development both within British religious history and within the never-ending conversation of race, religion and identity.

Even further, Occom's theological innovations speak to the influence of changing evangelical ideas that were fertile for relating to Occom's current situation. According to David Bebbington, the 'fulcrum of change' within evangelicalism during this period 'was the doctrine of assurance'. Bebbington continued that 'those who knew their sins forgiven were freed from debilitating anxieties for Christian mission'.⁵⁸⁷ As his sermon to Moses Paul made clear, Occom was using the new understanding of assurance as a way of penetrating the hearts and minds of his native people. He was also using it as an emotive tool to comfort a man on his way to the gallows. Occom drew from the theological innovation of post-Awakening evangelical Calvinism as a way to speak to the present concerns of a troubled Native American community and to the anxieties of a man just before his execution.

Evangelism and Empire: the SSPCK during The Seven Years War

In the mid 1750s, the SSPCK's colonial endeavours hobbled along in an extremely fragile state. Azariah Horton had willingly agreed to be dismissed by January of 1753, his mission on Long Island no longer 'being found so extensively useful as had at first been expected'.⁵⁸⁸ Since the Great Awakening on Long Island in the early 1740s, Horton had worked for the Scottish Society. James Robe had featured the young missionary minister in *The Christian Monthly History* as a representation both of the revivals' successes and of their legitimacy, confirming Horton's financial and institutional support by the prestigious SSPCK. For the Edinburgh Directors, Horton was their first real taste of colonial success. This same mission by Horton, however, was deemed to be of little use by 1753.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁷ David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 74.

⁵⁸⁸ CMM, 7: 193-194.

⁵⁸⁹ CMM, 7: 105. After a recent increase in salary, John Brainerd was now receiving £50 due to the difficult circumstances at Bethel: this pay raise was a result of a recommendation from London in 1752.

Just one year before Horton's dismissal, the Society received another major setback to their colonial project. By February of 1747, they had agreed to pay £12 for Peter Tatami to attend the College of New Jersey in order to train for the ministry. Peter was the son of Moses (Tindi) Tatami who worked as an interpreter for the SSPCK From 1743 until 1749. Moses was paid £20, which was half the salary of their lowest paid missionary even though, as seen in the last chapter, Tatami was a central figure in the development of the SSPCK's work in the colonies. This pay discrepancy reflected another way that race trumped religion for the Scottish Society.⁵⁹⁰

In exchange for the Society's funding, Peter committed to return to his Native people along the borders of New York where he would instruct the Indians in 'the knowledge of Christianity'.⁵⁹¹ But by November of 1753, the Reverend Aaron Burr, Sr., president of the College of New Jersey, had drawn Peter's funding for the last time: the young student had died at approximately twenty-two years of age.⁵⁹² For the SSPCK, Peter Tatami represented an unrealized ideal. Since the 1730s, they had sought to become more integrated into American Indian communities; training Christian Indians to go to their own people was the culmination of their hopes. With Peter now dead, that hope seemed dashed.

The loss of their most valuable resource, missionary-ministers, frustrated the Scottish Society's efforts. But the land controversies in New Jersey brought their colonial activities to a grinding halt. As the imperial war between Britain and France continued unabated, the battle for Indian lands intensified; New Jersey was no exception.⁵⁹³ Furthermore, this expansion of British property in North America could occur only with the dispossession of the American Indians from their lands. Ironically, it was this colonial expansion and the subsequent dispossession of Native American lands and communities that also made the SSPCK's educational project impossible. Of course, Presbyterian ministers, missionaries and their funding bodies

⁵⁹⁰ CMM, 6: 127, 356.

⁵⁹¹ CMM, 6: 356, 389, 394-395, 533, 599. The New York Correspondents first raised the possibility of funding Peter for an education in October of 1746. Here, they listed him as 'about fifteen years old' and 'the son of Mr. Brainerd's interpreter'. They described him as 'pious' and having 'a good capacity and is willing to be educated' for missionary work. See CMM, 6: 364-365.

⁵⁹² CMM, 7: 159-160. For Peter's funding in 1751, see pp. 45, 69. For his funding in 1752, see pp. 124-125 and through 1753 see pp. 153-154.

⁵⁹³ Schutt, *People of the River Valleys*, 103-123; CMM, 7: 165-166.

wanted to impose their own ideas of Christian culture onto the Indians, but their evangelistic quests were being thwarted by other colonizing interests within the Empire.

In 1753, Aaron Burr, Sr., president of the College of New Jersey, wrote the SSPCK explaining the ‘discouragements’ their missionaries had experienced due to local merchants in the area. Burr lamented that ‘Indian traders’ were ‘infusing’ lies ‘into the minds of the poor ignorant people’ in the region. This was causing ‘very wicked and ill grounded prejudices’ against both the missionaries’ and correspondents’ efforts.⁵⁹⁴ Burr’s redresses to the Society spurred the London correspondents to action; their secretary, Adam Anderson,⁵⁹⁵ petitioned the Board of Trade and Plantations at Whitehall in London.⁵⁹⁶ As early as 1750, Anderson had recommended to the Edinburgh Directors that they petition powerful political figures such as the Duke of Argyle and plead with them for the protection of the Indians at Bethel against the claim of the New Jersey Chief Justice.⁵⁹⁷ In May of 1754, the SSPCK was back at the drawing board as they asked Samuel Davies, the visiting moderate revivalist from the colonies, ‘about the best method of conducting the mission among the Indians’.⁵⁹⁸ The Society seemed unable to implement a strategy that produced sustainable results in the American colonies. The conflict of interests on many sides was apparently too much to overcome.

Although having little traction in the colonies, the SSPCK did receive a response from the Board of Trade and Plantations regarding Anderson’s redress on their behalf. The Lords Commissioners recognized that the SSPCK’s missionaries ‘upon the frontier of New York have been molested and disturbed in the execution of their mission by some of his Majesty’s subjects in the said province’. Consequently, the Lords Commissioners promised to direct the Governors of New Jersey and New

⁵⁹⁴ CMM, 7: 123-124.

⁵⁹⁵ Paid annually by the society and residing in London, Adam Anderson was an important figure in the SSPCK’s decision-making process.

⁵⁹⁶ CMM, 7: 135.

⁵⁹⁷ CMM, 6: 644-645. The Directors had already prepared a petition to the London Correspondents and the Marquis of Lothian along with the Earl of Marchmont, Lords Advocate and other influential people and requested that these prominent people ‘interpose’ in securing a ‘recommendation from his Majesty’s Secretary of State to the Governor of New Jersey’ in support of the Indians having the right to keep their lands.

⁵⁹⁸ George William Pilcher, *The Reverend Samuel Davies Abroad: the Diary of a Journey to England and Scotland, 1753-55* (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 97.

York⁵⁹⁹ ‘to prevent any obstruction or molestation whatever being given to any of the missionaries sent thither by the Society’. Importantly, the Commissioners used a letter from John Brainerd to prove to the colonial governors that ‘obstruction’ and ‘molestation’ of missionaries was taking place on their borders.⁶⁰⁰

Meanwhile in the colonies, the Bethel Indians were in the process of moving away from their lands. The Praeses of the New York correspondents, Aaron Burr, explained to the Directors that the Bethel Indians ‘were easily cheated out of their property’.⁶⁰¹ Consequently, the New York correspondents dismissed John Brainerd from his work amongst the Bethel Indians. Instead of a permanent missionary-minister and educator, they were paying William Tennent £25 per year for three major tasks that indicated the ephemeral nature of the new strategy. Tennent was hired ‘for visiting that congregation once a week, catechising their children, and sometimes on Lords Days to administrate the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to them’.⁶⁰² In moving forward, the New York Correspondents suggested two alternative strategies based on what they considered ‘the most likely method of propagating the gospel there to good purpose’. First, the Directors could purchase property ‘where it would be most convenient for the Indians to settle’. The second option was to apply to the government for a ‘tract of unappropriated lands’ whereby the Indians might be able to go. Both of these options given by the New York correspondents involved an appropriation of land.⁶⁰³

While the Edinburgh Directors agreed to dismiss Brainerd and to support Tennent as an itinerant minister to the Bethel Indians, they opposed both of New York’s recommendations about how to proceed. Instead, they ‘delayed further consideration’ about buying land for the Bethel Indians ‘until the disputes twixt the

⁵⁹⁹ In the minutes, the Lords Commissioners simply state that ‘they will give immediate directions to the Governors of those two provinces’; it appears from the context that they are referring to New Jersey and New York.

⁶⁰⁰ CMM, 7: 135.

⁶⁰¹ CMM, 7: 321. Burr broke this news of the Bethel displacement to the Edinburgh Directors in a letter to them. Along with being the Praeses of the SSPCK’s New York correspondents, Burr was also the principal of the College of New Jersey.

⁶⁰² CMM, 7: 321.

⁶⁰³ CMM, 7: 321.

French and us in that country are settled'.⁶⁰⁴ The Society's colonial project essentially shut down: it could not withstand the dual pressures of an imperial war coupled with the New Jersey government's displacement of the Bethel Indians. By the end of 1755, the SSPCK was not capable of using empire as a framework for propagating true religion. Instead, the evangelizing mission of the SSPCK was being crushed under the dual weight of colonial expansion and imperial warfare.

The Struggle for Survival: John Brainerd and the Bethel Indians During War and Displacement

The SSPCK's failed efforts in New Jersey may have disheartened the SSPCK membership on both sides of the Atlantic. But the Society's lack of further assistance pulverized the people they initially supported and then abandoned: namely the Christian Indians of Bethel and John Brainerd along with the Long Island Indians associated first with Azariah Horton and now with the Mohegan minister, Samson Occom.⁶⁰⁵ In a letter, Brainerd described the consequences of the current situation on Bethel. He stated that when the New Jersey proprietors 'laid claim to the land and sued the Indians for trespass', this decision 'put an end to our schemes and threw all into confusion'. As shown in the previous chapter, Moses Tatami's negotiations with the Susquehanna Indians led to their agreement that the Bethel Indians could move to Susquehanna lands, form a community and practice their Christian faith freely. The Indians would all live as a community free from white interference. Tatami's prudent negotiations were prescient as the Bethel community was soon forced from their ancestral lands in New Jersey. But the chaos that accompanied the French and Indian War disallowed Bethel's re-location to Susquehanna: as Brainerd put it, the 'heinous crimes on the frontier made that idea impossible'.⁶⁰⁶

The dislocation of the Bethel Indians and John Brainerd was followed by acute alienation. The Society's decisions cut Brainerd to the core, and no doubt caused further instability and angst amongst the Bethel community. As seen above,

⁶⁰⁴ CMM, 7: 325. This was the same meeting that they proposed Dr. Erskine to preach the Anniversary Sermon. Also, Erskine and John Balfour were proposed by Correspondents to enter the Society at the same time in January of 1756 (p. 336).

⁶⁰⁵This section explores the New Jersey context. For more on the Long Island context and Samson Occom's growing influence there, see John A. Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 70-71.

⁶⁰⁶ LJB: 286.

the Edinburgh Directors noted that Burr and the New York correspondents had fired Brainerd since the land was now taken from the Indians. But it is uncertain why the New York board decided to do so. It is very possible that they forsook Brainerd and the Bethel Indians (at least temporarily) out of self-interest. If they could portray the Bethel project as hopeless, they could more easily persuade the SSPCK to fund their acquisition of new property ostensibly for the Indians. This New York board had anticipated funding from Edinburgh since their first employment of a missionary to Long Island, so it would seem likely that that was taking place again.

There are other complementary possibilities. John Brainerd's nineteenth-century biographer and distant relative believed that this 'abrupt and premature' decision by the Society came as a result of a 'temporary disagreement' amongst the members, presumably in New York. He supported this argument by explaining that Jonathan Edwards 'was so hurt' by the dismissal of Brainerd 'that he interfered in the matter' despite his 'accustomed calm and kind judgment'. Edwards wrote the Scottish minister William McCulloch⁶⁰⁷ and expressed his being grieved and confounded by the ordeal. Edwards even attended an SSPCK meeting on behalf of Brainerd, but he said 'I soon found it would be fruitless to urge the matter'. According to the correspondents, the 'unsurmountable obstacle' was that Brainerd's wife was sick. But even Edwards was suspicious of the legitimacy of this claim as the core reason for Brainerd's termination, and he questioned whether this was a 'sufficient objection to such a removal at that time'. But, as Edwards also pointed out, it was very likely that the decisions by the SSPCK stemmed in large part from

⁶⁰⁷ C. W. Mitchell, 'McCulloch, William (1691–1771)' *ODNB* (2004): accessed 27 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64375>. This was more than likely William McCulloch, the minister of Cambuslang. Within the context of Jonathan Edwards, McCulloch was known for helping to spark revivalism in Scotland with his efforts at Cambuslang. He was known as 'learned, unostentatious scholar, a slow, cautious and prudent parish minister'. He was known as an exceptional scholar, particularly in languages and mathematics, and he showed deep interest in piety, foreign missions and prayer societies. He was the editor and publisher for the first religious magazine in Scotland, the *Glasgow Weekly History Relating to the Late Progress of the Gospel at Home and Abroad* (1742) and compiled the first Scottish oral history in relation to conversion accounts of local Scottish people. For more on McCulloch, see, for example, Ned Landsman, 'Evangelists and Their Hearers: Popular Interpretation of Revivalist Preaching in Eighteenth-Century Scotland' *The Journal of British Studies* 28 no. 2 (April/1989), 120-149; Arthur Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival: the Scottish evangelical revival of the eighteenth century* (London, 1971); T.C. Smout, 'Born Again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland' *Past & Present* 97 (Nov., 1982), 114-127.

the exigencies and uncertainties of the period alongside the utter chaos amidst borderland regions.⁶⁰⁸

Regardless of the exact motivations for the New York correspondents' termination of Brainerd's tenure at Bethel, the decision inflicted much pain on an already-suffering missionary family and broader community. The Bethel Christian Indians expressed deep affection for Brainerd, and viewed him as a quintessential component of their community. Indeed, Moses defended him adamantly during his negotiations with the Susquehanna. Brainerd himself had been in New England when, upon his return, he was told he no longer had a job. He took his wife and family to Newark, New Jersey where he became a 'probationer', filling in at Aaron Burr's former church due to Burr's assumption of the presidency at the College of New Jersey.⁶⁰⁹ Brainerd remained in Newark until the summer of 1756 when the New York correspondents announced to him that they had secured land for the Indians and wanted to re-hire him.⁶¹⁰

Brainerd moved his family to Brunswick after having lived in Newark only a few months. Brunswick, he wrote, was 'the best place I could now fix to accommodate the Indians in their present situation, till the land for their settlement could be procured'.⁶¹¹ In August of 1756, just two months after resuming his tenure near the Bethel Indians, Brainerd appealed to George Whitefield on behalf of the Bethel Indians. This letter was approved by Aaron Burr, and was sent at some point to the Marquis of Lothian. Brainerd stated that 'nothing would have so good an effect at this time to all appearances as the purchase of that land'. He said that 'some of our Christian Indians' were 'employed this summer in the service of the government', and that they had kept back the enemy 'with hostile designs, towards the English settlement and turned them back' from harming the British. Brainerd lauded 'our Indians' as having 'behaved so as to obtain the Character of Men and Christians'. They are currently sent 'to treat with the Delaware tribe'.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁸ Letter, 'President Edwards' letter to Rev. Mr. McCulloch, Scotland', in LJB: 287-289.

⁶⁰⁹ Letter, 'President Edwards' letter to Rev. Mr. McCulloch, Scotland', in LJB: 288.

⁶¹⁰ LJB: 292.

⁶¹¹ LJB: 292.

⁶¹² Letter, 'Reverend J. Brainerd to Reverend Whitefield about a school and buying land for the Red Indians from New Ark, August 24, 1756'.

Brainerd passionately defended the need to assist the Indians during this time: ‘they took their lives in their hands and ventured all that was dear for the good of their country, and indeed were very much exposed, but the good Lord preserved their lives and returned them safe’. With this in mind, purchasing land for them would ‘be a stiff and standing evidence of our friendship to the Indians and would likewise recommend our religion to their acceptance’. They needed ‘help from home’, because both colonial taxes and affairs were burdensome and also because ‘the Indian name is become so odious’ that it was ‘impracticable’ in these circumstances to raise enough funds. In this letter, John Brainerd displayed clearly and profoundly what he had learned a few years earlier from the Susquehannah Indians: the material and spiritual were never far apart.⁶¹³

As the last chapter demonstrated, the Delaware Indians taught John Brainerd that the spiritual and the material could not be separated. If Christianity was a viable religion, then why were white Christians the only ones prospering? Brainerd seemed to learn this lesson even if only in part. His letter to Whitefield that reached the Marquis of Lothian was an example of him emphasizing the spiritual as material: the physical acts of friendship and support that the Indians showed white British allies could not be taken for granted. Brainerd explained that white colonists could not get past their own prejudices so, for the sake of the Indians, for the sake of true religion, those in the British Isles must help to compensate the Indians for their sacrifices and losses. Brainerd walked a tightrope between loyalty to his white patrons and fidelity to the Bethel Indians. In the process of this negotiation, however, Brainerd’s personal life was falling apart.

Brainerd and his family would live in Brunswick for just over a year before the New York correspondents fired him a *second time* in September of 1757 due to frustrated attempts to purchase a tract of land for the Indians.⁶¹⁴ The correspondents told the Edinburgh Directors that they had purchased nearly three thousand acres about twenty five miles outside of Philadelphia, and it appears that they anticipated the Edinburgh Directors’ financial support. The New York leaders appealed to what they perceived as the Scottish Society’s interests, which they described as both

⁶¹³Reverend J. Brainerd to Reverend Whitefield about a school and buying land for the Red Indians’ from New Ark, August 24, 1756.

⁶¹⁴LJB: 292.

political and religious. By August of 1756, however, the Edinburgh Directors had resolved not to give funding for the new tract of land; they did agree, in accordance with Dr. Williams' initial bequest, to resume John Brainerd's salary. But the Directors' lack of confidence in the situation was clear: they even qualified their promise of paying Brainerd, saying they would pay only 'providing the Correspondents be of opinion that the giving of such salary will be a proper application of the fund'.⁶¹⁵

By the early months of 1758, a letter from John Brainerd revealed the trauma he had experienced during the last two years. He had uprooted his family twice, and a job he had held faithfully for nearly ten years was perpetually unstable. Even more tragically during this period, John's wife died along with two of his children. In a letter, Brainerd described the day he lost his wife as 'the greatest loss I ever sustained, the most sorrowful day I ever saw'.⁶¹⁶ It appears that he had served in the war by this time as a chaplain, which forced him no doubt to see atrocities on a scale never witnessed before. 'How often, and how many ways, are our expectations dashed and disappointed!' John bemoaned in the early months of 1759. 'Of late, I had very great and sorrowful experience of this'. In despair, he mourned that 'Death has made the world to me, what it really is in itself and ever was, *an empty nothing* [his italics].'⁶¹⁷

Brainerd discussed the possibility of re-joining the army, but this would be difficult; in addition to the above calamities, he was not in good health. 'I hope duty will be made plain to me one way or another', he said, 'I think I desire to be absolutely at the disposal of Heaven'. John did shortly join the war effort as a chaplain in Canada. In 1759, he lamented once again that all but one child and his wife, his 'flesh and blood', had died. 'The world can never be to me what it has been; and doubtless 'tis best it should not'. His melancholy spirit during this time came no doubt from the losses of his family, job, and community over the past few years. It must have also stemmed from his experiences in Canada as a chaplain where he felt he was completely ineffective. He wrote that 'profanity and wickedness greatly prevail, and at times my heart almost sinks within me'. For most

⁶¹⁵ CMM, 7: 398-399.

⁶¹⁶ LJB: 300.

⁶¹⁷ LJB: 305-306.

of the previous decade, Brainerd's neighbours had been the Bethel Indians. He now wrote, however, that a great number of them—'far beyond the proportion' of people within their community—had enlisted in the war and many had died.⁶¹⁸ Not only had he witnessed his displacement and theirs, he saw those same people dying for the country that had displaced them.

By 1760, John Brainerd was dependent for financial support upon the now-united New York and Philadelphia Synods.⁶¹⁹ His life during employment with the SSPCK was defined by instability, abandonment and alienation. Nonetheless, Brainerd's correspondences and lobbying efforts appears to have done more than any one person to secure a land deal for the Bethel Indians with the New Jersey government. John Brainerd's effective redress to SSPCK leaders on both sides of the Atlantic directly influenced the decision of the SSPCK, which in turn would have influenced New Jersey's decision to allot some land for the Indians. Furthermore, the Board of Trade and Plantations, as shown above, depended on Brainerd's letter as the effective means by which they redressed the Society's grievances to the New Jersey and New York governors. The initial letter from Burr to Anderson in London came as a result of Brainerd's complaints to Burr in the first place.

As depicted in the last chapter, the SSPCK's colonial endeavours were in flux after both the Great Awakening and with the death of their core leaders and much-celebrated figures such as Jonathan Dickinson, Benjamin Colman, Jonathan Sergeant and David Brainerd. John Brainerd's career as a missionary with the SSPCK reflected both the instability within the SSPCK as well as the institution's inability to sustain its own project of evangelism. The Bethel Christian Indians also demonstrate the way colonial powers overwhelmed Native communities during this period regardless of their political and religious affiliation and despite the efforts of both Indians and certain white Christians to defend them. The Delawares of this region had fought colonial encroachment for generations, but could not withstand this systematic and relentless pursuit of property, particularly amidst an imperial war fought on their ancestral lands that wreaked havoc on their communities.

⁶¹⁸ LJB: 306-314.

⁶¹⁹ LJB: 303-304.

During the period that John Brainerd was being fired twice and the Bethel Indians were being dispossessed, the SSPCK was trying new strategies in the South. They agreed to a joint venture with the London-based NEC, and they endorsed the foremost Presbyterian revivalist in Virginia, Samuel Davies, as the leader of this project.⁶²⁰ Believing to be on a divine mission, Davies brought revivalism to Virginia like no one else had before. As a leading dissenter in the region, he was an extremely vocal and influential advocate for religious toleration.⁶²¹ He is recognized as ‘the animating spirit of Presbyterianism in the region’.⁶²²

Davies convinced the Presbytery of Hanover to send Reverend Richard Richardson to the Cherokee Indians as the missionary on behalf of the SSPCK. Richardson was a native of England who had come to live with Davies in order to eventually work with the Native Americans as a minister. The Presbytery of Hanover ordained him in July of 1758.⁶²³ No doubt due to the NEC and SSPCK’s incursions in the area, the Hanover Presbytery founded the Society for Managing the Mission and School among the Indians. This was probably the ‘Society in Virginia’ that the SSPCK mentioned in their minutes.⁶²⁴

By the winter of 1759, the Edinburgh Directors had heard about the developments of their joint expedition in South Carolina. Davies wrote Edinburgh Director Alexander Webster with details about the mission: both of these men were major players in transatlantic revivalism. According to Davies, a Mr. Martin ‘undertook the mission among the Cherokees’ in the winter of 1757. By the spring of 1758, Martin set off for ‘the Cherokees’ Country’ equipped with a letter from South Carolina Governor William H. Lyttleton and also from the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Southern district, Edmund Atkins. He first went to Fort Loudoun where he preached to a large group comprised of Indians, British troops and other officials. Martin reported ‘promising’ potential as he discussed ‘the leading doctrines of natural religion’ with the Cherokee after presenting his sermon to them at the garrison. Evidently, the Cherokee were pleased or at least curious

⁶²⁰ Mills, ‘The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge’, 23-24.

⁶²¹ Pilcher, *Samuel Davies*, vii-viii.

⁶²² Mills, ‘Society in Scotland’, 23.

⁶²³ Pilcher, *Samuel Davies*, 117-118.

⁶²⁴ For the SSPCK’s mention of the ‘Society in Virginia’, see CMM, 8: 5.

enough with his religious views: the Grand Council allowed him to continue his work amongst them.⁶²⁵

It was then that Richardson was sent to the Cherokees. The minister saw little success early on, but reported by May of 1761 that he had ‘received upwards of an hundred into full communion with our church in less than two years and we are strict in our admission’. As Frederick Mills has noted, Richardson reported this activity during the same period as the major African American revivals in Virginia. Mills speculated that, in the latter half of Richardson’s above statement, he was referring possibly to these revivals. The sheer number of communicants certainly suggested revivalist activity. But Martin quickly found that he could not live amongst the Cherokees due to his ever-growing young family. Therefore, the Society in Virginia wrote to Long Island by 1758 requesting to employ Samson Occom, whom Davies described as ‘an Indian minister, of a very good character who would be much more acceptable to his countrymen, then one of European extract’.⁶²⁶ Davies’s request for the SSPCK to fund a Christian Indian minister would have resonated deeply with the Edinburgh Directors who were always looking for just this type of opportunity.

‘An Indian minister, of a very good character’: Samson Occom and the SSPCK

As a child, Samson Occom lived a life deeply rooted in what he described as ‘the heathenish ways’. His family ‘led a wandring life up and down in the wilderness’ until he was sixteen years old.⁶²⁷ At this point, Occom said he was told that ‘extraordinary ministers’ were preaching around the area, and that there was ‘a strange concern among the white people’ and that even ‘the Common People...exhorted us to the things of god’. Occom attended these meetings and also worked with white people to learn the English language. In his autobiography, he marked his conversion at seventeen: ‘I had as I trust a discovery of the way of salvation through Jesus, and was enabled to put my trust in him alone for life and

⁶²⁵ CMM, 8: 4-5; Mills, ‘Society in Scotland’, 25.

⁶²⁶ CMM, 8: 4-5; Mills, ‘Society in Scotland’, 25.

⁶²⁷ Samson Occom, ‘Autobiographical Narrative, First Draft (November 28, 1765)’ in *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Native America*, ed. Joanna Brooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 51-52.

salvation'.⁶²⁸ Occom was swept away during the revivals of the Great Awakening 'that stirred the Connecticut countryside and reached into the wigwams around Norwich'.⁶²⁹

Twenty-one Mohegans, including Samson Occom and his mother, joined the local congregation of Rev. David Jewett at some point in or after 1739. Occom himself was converted under the preaching of the radical revivalist itinerant, James Davenport.⁶³⁰ During the 1740s, Occom embraced the New Light theology he extracted from the Great Awakening but, as will be seen in both his actions and his sermon to Moses Paul, he went on to form a distinct Christian Indian identity. Occom worked with other Mohegans to introduce their own style of worship services involving preaching, singing and testifying. In this setting, lay people participated much more freely and in a variety of ways. Laura Murray has recognized that a defining characteristic of Mohegan Christianity in the latter half of the eighteenth century was its 'intertribal nature'. In this way, Christianity ironically was bringing Native peoples together.⁶³¹ By 1743, Occom had begun his college preparatory courses with Eleazar Wheelock in Lebanon Crank, Connecticut. He studied under Wheelock for four years while simultaneously leading worship services for nearby Native Christian communities. He was Wheelock's first Indian student, and his remarkable success encouraged the staunchly revivalist minister to establish a school for Native Americans.⁶³² Occom taught briefly after his four years with Wheelock while preparing for entry into Yale. By 1748, however, he was forced to terminate his college career due to an eye disease. So, in a decision that changed his life in 1749, Occom went fishing.⁶³³

The young Mohegan's fishing trip on Long Island proved to be a vital networking opportunity. While others fished, Occom made friends and shared his faith to the

⁶²⁸ Occom, 'Autobiographical Narrative, Second Draft (September 17, 1768)' in *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Native America* ed. Joanna Brooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 53.

⁶²⁹ Stone, *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 55.

⁶³⁰ Brooks, *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, 13, 159. Davenport was the brother-in-law of Eleazar Wheelock. See Brooks, 180.

⁶³¹ Laura J. Murray, *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren: the Writings of Joseph Johnson, 1751-1776* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 43.

⁶³² Stone, *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 55.

⁶³³ Brooks, *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, xxi.

Montaukett Indians. These interactions secured him a job there as a teacher by November of 1749.⁶³⁴ Despite his lack of wages (the tribe would or could not give him anything more than supplies), Occom taught the Montaukett children daily; he also had some neighbouring Shinnecock students attend. Occom's father-in-law was a Shinnecock, and the young Mohegan would visit and preach to their community on many occasions. Occom taught his students the English alphabet and helped them learn to spell. But he also instructed them in the Shorter Catechism three or four times a week. During these sessions, his questions to them about the reformed Christian faith were asked in their native tongue.⁶³⁵

Occom had approximately thirty students in the first year, and held an evening school for those who could not attend during the daytime. He is recognized for his extremely creative teaching methods that adapted to the cultural needs of the students. In addition to this, he held three Sabbath services along with a wigwam service on Wednesday evenings. He would also conduct the music: Occom wrote the first Presbyterian hymnal in colonial America.⁶³⁶ The Montaukett gained such respect for Occom that they made him a leader and judge of their community. Despite his faithful service and grinding schedule as a teacher, preacher and judge, Occom reported that during his entire tenure on Long Island he received only £180. He would survive this impoverished state by fishing, hunting, farming and making certain crafts that he could then sell.⁶³⁷ His family lived in a wigwam, and would move twice a year 'since the summer residence by the corn field was two miles away from the wood for winter fuel'.⁶³⁸

Occom began teaching on Long Island when he was twenty-seven years old. He would work amongst the Montauketts as a schoolmaster, minister and judge for nearly twelve years. As mentioned above, from the very beginning it was difficult for Occom to secure financial stability. During his first two years on Long Island, he was under the impression that he would receive funding from the NEC. He did

⁶³⁴ Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, xxi.

⁶³⁵ Stone, *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 55.

⁶³⁶ Stone, *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 57.

⁶³⁷ Love, *Samson Occom*, 43-47.

⁶³⁸ Stone, *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 56.

not.⁶³⁹ Only after Buell and Horton's 'solicitation' on behalf of Occom did the young Mohegan receive funding. Even then, it was two years later when Horton had already left the island for a charge amongst white parishioners.⁶⁴⁰ By 1751, the NEC gave Occom a meagre £15 for his services even while they applauded his ministerial ordination. Although many people took note and lauded Occom's work, poverty and debt due to insufficient funding plagued him his entire life. Like Brainerd, he would get tossed and battered by the unpredictable policies of various funding and administrative bodies that saw their missionaries as commodities even as they knew they could not function without them. Unlike Brainerd, Occom was a Native American, and would get treated repeatedly with deep suspicion and hesitation.⁶⁴¹ During instances throughout his life, Occom received explicit and implicit discrimination based upon his race. Time and time again, he responded in ways that demonstrated his profound acceptance of his faith as the lens by which to understand the world around him.

During Occom's work at Montaukett in the late 1750s, another revival spread amongst the Indians across Long Island. It was this revivalism that caught Samuel Davies's eye, and caused him to urge for Occom's official ordination so that he could work for the SSPCK amongst the Cherokee in Carolina.⁶⁴² But the façade of the revival spirit masked deep fissures below the evangelical surface. Separatists fought vehemently against Azariah Horton as he became increasingly more moderate. Occom also was in 'constant friction' with this same group. Known as the Strict Congregationalists, this community sought 'to return to "independency" and to complete separation between church and state'. It was in this spirit that the first Separatist church of Bridgehampton in Long Island was established by none other than James Davenport, who erected its first building in 1748.⁶⁴³

Occom was keen to receive ordination by either Presbyterians or Congregationalists, though he felt a particular loyalty to Congregationalists who had assisted him the most in the past. Incidentally, the Presbyterian churches on Long

⁶³⁹ W. DeLoss Love, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 43-44.

⁶⁴⁰ Stone, *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 178.

⁶⁴¹ Kellaway, *New England Company*, 190; Love, *Samson Occom*, 44-47.

⁶⁴² CMM, 8: 4.

⁶⁴³ Earnest Edward Eells, 'Indian Missions on Long Island', *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 178, 182-183.

Island had been Congregational until the 1720s. It may speak to the Long Island Congregationalists being disgruntled by the Presbyterians' decision to ordain Occom that they did not attend the Mohegan's ordination. Eleazar Wheelock, though asked to preach the ordination service, refused to even attend. Despite this, Occom was ordained for the Presbyterian ministry on 29 August 1759. Even before his ordination, though, Occom had been pastoring the churches Azariah Horton had organized in Montauketts, Shinnecock and Poosepatuck.⁶⁴⁴

Occom was the first American Indian to receive ordination.⁶⁴⁵ This happy occasion for him was accompanied with disheartening news. Just before the event, the imperial conflict plaguing the continent became too fierce amongst the Cherokee for him to travel there: as a result, the only collaborative effort on North American soil between the NEC, SSPCK and a local missionary society had been aborted. Nonetheless, a new strategy was in motion as Occom began preparing for an SSPCK-sponsored trip to Oneida: his first official SSPCK expedition.⁶⁴⁶

Wild Indians, English Heathens and Dutch Barbarians: Samson Occom's View of Race, Religion and Barbarism

Samson Occom received his religious and formal educational training from white Protestants in the reformed, Calvinist tradition. By the time he left to go to Oneida country, he was convinced fully that Indians were filled with backward and savage ways that were not conducive to civilized, Christian living. The SSPCK sponsored both Occom and David Fowler, a Montaukett who was Occom's colleague, friend and brother-in-law.⁶⁴⁷ As he set off for Oneida country in upstate New York, Occom's journal exuded a sense of hope at the opportunity both to receive extra funding and to take part in this Christian civilizing project. So determined was he to go that he refused the SSPCK's recommendation not to travel due to the precarious circumstances of war and violence unfolding on Oneida lands.⁶⁴⁸ It is true that

⁶⁴⁴ Stone, ed. *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 178.

⁶⁴⁵ Stone, ed. *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 177. Presumably, this fact includes Anglican missions, but it is not clear about Catholic missions.

⁶⁴⁶ Love, *Samson Occom*, 50-52.

⁶⁴⁷ Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, 258-259.

⁶⁴⁸ Love, *Samson Occom*, 90.

optimism was part of the emotion involved in the trip,⁶⁴⁹ but there was also a lot of sadness and trepidation. The day that Occom and Fowler departed, Occom wrote that, ‘after repeated invitations’ from New York minister David Bostwick to ‘make a visit to the Oneida Indians’, he was now going. But he saw the sacrifices clearly: ‘this day took leave of my poor family, and friends with tender affection’. This was not the only time he would feel this emotion.⁶⁵⁰

During Occom’s journey to the Oneida, his views of race, religion and civilized culture are revealed quite clearly. From the outset, he recorded meeting with very cordial and ‘truly religious’ people. In a short time, though, he would come across a darker side of human nature. Just five miles outside of New York City, he observed that ‘I never saw a Sabbath spent so by any Christian people in my life as some spent it here’. Occom painted a vivid picture for his reader, conveying his disappointment that turned quickly into sharp criticism. ‘Some were riding in chairs’,⁶⁵¹ he says, while others rode horseback; still others walked by his door on foot. As he looked out from his window or doorway, he was horrified to hear ‘all sorts of evil noises’ as people passed by ‘reeling and staggering’ in the streets while others were ‘tumbling off their horses’. All were in a drunken stupor. Also he noted that people worked on their farms as if they had no obligation to God on the Sabbath. In disbelief, Occom responded that if ‘ever any people under the heavens spoke hells language, these people did, for their mouths were full of cursings, prophaning God’s Holy Holy name’. At that point, he knew these people were ‘the sons and daughters of Belial’.⁶⁵²

Occom’s depiction of what he considered white savagery was consistent with the Brainerd brothers who criticized fiercely the antics of white people who acted as if they did not even have a religion. But Occom followed these observations with a prayer that reflected his view of race and its relation to religion and civilized social

⁶⁴⁹ Part of this optimism sprang from a grossly overstated letter he received from William Kirkpatrick. The Six Nations region was highly sought terrain for missionaries and their supporters, and Kirkpatrick in his haste and lack of judgment gave Occom false information about their desire for Christianity. See Love, *Samson Occom*, 82-86.

⁶⁵⁰ Samson Occom, Journal 4 (May 30, 1761-July 7, 1761), in *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, ed. Brooks, 259.

⁶⁵¹ Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, 260. Brooks described ‘riding in chairs’ as follows: ‘riding chairs were two-wheeled, horse-drawn carriages popular in the eighteenth century’.

⁶⁵² Love, *Samson Occom*, 87. Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, 260. Brooks explained that, ‘In Old Testament usage, Belial is a noun signifying destruction or wickedness, and the children of Belial are the ungodly’.

ways. 'O thou God of heaven, thou yet hast all the hearts of the children of men in thine hands', he remarked in a statement of racial equality before God. 'Leave me not to practice the works of these people', but rather may I remember to 'take warning and to take heed' in light of 'thy Holy Word'. He ended his prayer by asking God both to grant mercy on these wicked people, and to convert them 'for thine own glory'. This prayer clearly demonstrated Occom's belief that true religion trumped race: for him, both good and evil came in many different forms and colours.⁶⁵³

Occom's prayer led to him musing over the idea of barbarism. 'I have thought there was no heathen but the wild Indians', he said. 'But I think now there is some English heathen'. These savages 'enjoy the gospel of Jesus Christ too', and yet they are 'worse than ye savage heathens of the wilderness'. In direct connection to this statement, Occom said that he, 'had rather go with the meanest and most despised creature on earth to heaven' than to experience 'a short enjoyment of sinful pleasures' here on earth with even 'the greatest monarch' if it meant he would follow that monarch to hell. Occom's sharp conclusion, in light of the evidence and statements above, was clear. Civilized Christian behaviour was not about race; if they were practicing their faith, even Indians, whom many whites deeply despised as savage, were superior to white people who were not living as Christians should. Indeed, he believed that white people were even worse off than the 'savage heathens of the wilderness', because they had heard and rejected 'the gospel of Jesus Christ'. If Occom's critique was piercing all along, his final statement on the Sabbath of June 14th was provocative and telling. 'I am glad there is one defect in the Indian language, and I believe in all their languages', he remarked wryly, 'they can't curse or swear or take god's name in vain in their own tongue'.⁶⁵⁴ This was an implicitly damning assessment of the state of white culture even as he was on his way to attempt to 'civilize' his own brethren at Oneida.

For Occom, the state of being 'barbarian' appeared to be fluid and contingent. At least at this point in his life, it was not racial: he had noted repeatedly how 'uncommonly kind' white people were to him, but he also noted their savagery. In

⁶⁵³ Samson Occom, Journal #4, Sabbath, June 14, 1761, found in Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, 260. Love, *Samson Occom*, 87-88.

⁶⁵⁴ Occom, 'Journal #4, Sabbath, June 14, 1761', in Brooks, *Collected Writings*, 260.

Kinderhook, for example, Occom and Fowler encountered Dutch people: ‘the people [the Dutch] were barbarians to us and we to them’.⁶⁵⁵ This statement provides a provocative hint at the nuance of Occom’s construction of race and religion. Without hesitation or elaboration about the comment, Occom referred to himself, Fowler and the European colonials as acting in a barbaric fashion. Since Occom himself was on a civilizing mission to the Oneida, his view of barbarism could not have meant any type of inherent nature. Rather, it was performative, a type of behaviour that even the most civilized of individuals or cultures were capable of performing. As an official SSPCK missionary-minister, Occom’s journal would have reached the Edinburgh Directors and Society members as well as the New York commissioners. His nuanced view of race was significant, especially in the context of the French and Indian War where many whites shared a hostile antipathy towards American Indians. Indeed, about the same time as Occom’s travels to Oneida, a local congregation took a collection for their Indian fund. When the collection plate returned, the only items in it were a bullet and flint.⁶⁵⁶ This context of racism is crucial to understanding the importance of Occom’s arguments about race, religion and barbarism, because it allows one to see how Occom’s attempt to transcend race was so radical for his period. To be sure, the intellectual and social currents of the day were against this theory of universal albeit performative barbarity.

Occom and Fowler’s Oneida expedition was very successful by their definitions of success. After a letter of endorsement from General Jeffrey Amherst, they met Sir William Johnson, who introduced them to the Tuscaroras and the Oneidas. They converted a few Oneidas, and they baptized five or six. Three students returned with Occom and Fowler in order to attend Wheelock’s Academy in Connecticut. The most famous of these students (then and now) was Joseph Brant, the brother-in-law of Sir William Johnson who was already a skilled diplomat.⁶⁵⁷ The spiritual venture perhaps exceeded expectations as the Tuscarora and Oneida built a church to accommodate the missionaries and their work. Both Occom and Fowler also made

⁶⁵⁵ Occom, ‘Journal #4, Sabbath, June 28, 1761’, in Brooks, *Collected Writings*, 261.

⁶⁵⁶ James Axtell, ‘Dr. Wheelock’s Little Red School’ in *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 102-103.

⁶⁵⁷ Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans*, 147.

very important contacts for the future. Historically, the Mohegan had a special relationship with the Six Nations, but Occom's visit renewed this relationship in a special way.⁶⁵⁸

The warm exchange was evident when the Tuscarora chiefs and others gave Occom a Belt of Wampum. Led by the venerated Old Connoquies, former king of the Oneidas, the Belt of Wampum was a gesture of gratitude to Occom for coming to them. These leaders stated that they desired to repent from old ways and embrace Christianity. They wanted to establish a school and asked for assistance from the English to do so. They strongly desired to abolish the use of alcohol 'for we find it kills our bodies and souls'. In return for these compromises to English ways, they asked for protection of their lands. They hoped that 'this Belt of Wampum shall bind us fast together in perpetual love and friendship'. Occom estimated that the Belt must have cost no less than £15 even though the Indians were in dire poverty and did not have enough bread for their communities. While it appears that Occom led the way in the spiritual and social negotiations, it is important to note the significant social and political role of David Fowler. In conversations with an Oneida sachem, Fowler broached first the idea of a large community of Montauketts re-locating to Oneida lands. This idea was rejected at first, but the negotiations forged a relationship that allowed Occom, Fowler and many other displaced New England families of Native American descent to move to Oneida lands by 1782.⁶⁵⁹ Fowler was an integral part both of the trip and of future relations with the Oneida.

Occom and Fowler returned from their trip in the autumn of 1761, and Occom reached his Montaukett home on 22nd October.⁶⁶⁰ Occom's second mission to the Oneida was without Fowler in June of 1762 where he found the Indians in desperate conditions due to both recent warfare and an early frost. In 1763, Occom set out for Oneida country once again, this time with his fellow minister and Mohegan, Samuel Ashpo. The Iroquois had requested a schoolmaster and Ashpo

⁶⁵⁸ Brooks, *Collected Writings*, xxii, 259.

⁶⁵⁹ Brad D.E. Jarvis, *The Brothertown Nation of Indians: Land Ownership and Nationalism in Early America, 1740-1840* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 91, 113-115. Jarvis explained that 'fewer than fifty New England Indians lived at Stockbridge at the end of the Revolution'. See page 278.

⁶⁶⁰ Love, *Samson Occom*, 92-93; Occom, Journals 4 & 5, in Brooks, *Collected Writings*, 262-263.

was sent in response.⁶⁶¹ But they were forced to return home within a few months due to the outbreak of Pontiac's War.⁶⁶² As Brad Jarvis has recently pointed out, the successful strides by Occom and Fowler should not be overdrawn. Particularly with the Oneida, they became wary that Occom was part of what Jarvis called 'a British plan against them'. Furthermore, they resented Occom's instruction to become more English and forcing the language upon them.⁶⁶³ But Jarvis's criticism also should not downplay the friendly reception and long-time relations between these Native American groups. The relationship was certainly not black and white, but the various sides found favour and established important connections with one another both for the current moment and for years to come.

In 1761, the same year that Occom and Fowler returned from the first and most successful trip to the Oneida, the Scottish evangelical John Erskine received a letter from the president of the SSPCK's New York correspondents, David Bostwick. Bostwick told Erskine that Occom had much success in Oneida, and that five or six were baptized during the summer and a place of worship was erected. He highly lauded Occom as a man whose 'piety is unquestionable' and who 'would gladly dwell in that wilderness, if he could be supported as a missionary, and very easily might his children be educated in that language'.⁶⁶⁴ But Bostwick continued that they had sent John Brainerd's journal to the Directors over the past year expecting that he would continue to receive a salary from Edinburgh. He had not been paid, and they would have to abandon the mission if Brainerd did not receive compensation. This letter from Bostwick reached London first, and was forwarded to the Marquis of Lothian. The Edinburgh Directors had received no response. But they did recommend by September that Occom receive £20 as a missionary even though their white missionaries received typically a minimum of £40. John Brainerd

⁶⁶¹ Jarvis, *Brothertown Nation of Indians*, 69.

⁶⁶² Brooks, *Collected Writings*, xxii; Love, *Samson Occom*, 95-98.

⁶⁶³ Jarvis, *Brothertown Nation of Indians*, 72.

⁶⁶⁴ _____, 'Part of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. David Bostwick minister at New York, to the Praeses of the Committee of Directors of the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge, dated 23d September 1761', in *An Account of Some Late Attempts by the Correspondents of the SOCIETY for propagating Christian Knowledge, To Christianize the North American Indians*, by various authors (Edinburgh, 1763), 4.

at this point was receiving nothing for his labours except what the Synods of New York and Philadelphia agreed to give him.⁶⁶⁵

By the winter of 1762, Edinburgh received word that the New Jersey government had purchased the same tract of land for the Indians that the SSPCK had intended to buy for them. Since the New Jersey government got there first, they were able to stipulate to the Indians that they could not acquire any other lands in the colony. As a result of this land deal, the New York correspondents requested that the Edinburgh Directors would allow for commissioners to oversee the evangelism in that area.⁶⁶⁶ Although the Scottish Society was forced initially to retreat due to colonial governance, they were now looking to capitalize on the opportunities that were emerging. Furthermore, they were making contacts with educators and ministers on colonial soil that would direct their policies and governance for the rest of their tenure in the American colonies and what would become the United States of America.

Eleazer Wheelock and the SSPCK

With newly procured Native American lands and the imperial war going in Britain's favour, Indian missions seemed to resuscitate. For the SSPCK, as well as Native American education more generally, Eleazer Wheelock was now at the centre of activity. Wheelock was a radical revivalist who rankled many moderates during the Great Awakening, and caused outrage amongst Boston ministers who continued to view him with suspicion even into the 1760s.⁶⁶⁷ As an itinerant, Wheelock defied the institutional boundaries of his Congregational Church who in 1743 had 'deprived' the minister of his salary but not his position. To them, Wheelock was practicing, "a meer passionate Religion" to the detriment of the faith and the 'neglect of his own parish'. By 1754, Wheelock had turned his attention to Native American education. His took in two Delaware students, which prompted a donation of land and buildings from Colonel Joshua More. From this transaction came the

⁶⁶⁵ CMM, 8: 102-103, 113-114; LJB: 326-329.

⁶⁶⁶ CMM, 8: 112-113. New Jersey purchased lands on condition of Indians 'quitting all right to any other lands in the province had purchased for them and settled on them and their successors by a legislative act that whole tract of land which the Correspondents were endeavoring to procure for them'. It is worth noting that some of the active commissioners include William Smith and John Brainerd.

⁶⁶⁷ Kellaway, *New England Company*, 189.

founding of Moor's Charity School, which by 1761 had ten students in attendance who came from the tribes of the northeastern seaboard. Wheelock transferred his aspirations and energies as a revivalist into his work in Indian education. His ambitions grew large and overreaching, particularly after James Wolfe's victory on the Plains of Abraham.⁶⁶⁸ Wheelock made transatlantic ties through avenues such as the ministers and correspondents of the SSPCK and NEC as well as missionaries such as John Brainerd. His funding came primarily from the Boston Board of the Scottish Society,⁶⁶⁹ and he also received substantive funding from the NEC.⁶⁷⁰

By 1764, Samson Occom no longer received funds from the SSPCK, but it was in this year that the Mohegan minister received his most lucrative offer from the NEC in Boston. This deal had the potential to get him out of the debt incurred from the minimal salaries he received from both the SSPCK and the NEC in previous years. The NEC now offered him £30 to work with the Niantic Nation in southern Connecticut. This was still a third less than white missionaries typically received, but at least it was a third more than his previous salary received from the SSPCK.⁶⁷¹ Occom accepted this offer and moved his family to his ancestral Mohegan lands where he was currently building a house.

It was at this point, however, that Wheelock capitalized on his connections in the British Isles. Having obtained his own Board of Correspondents in Connecticut, Wheelock now used this influence within the SSPCK to convince the Boston Board to let him use Occom. Because of Wheelock's appropriation of Occom, the young Mohegan lost the stable job with the Niantic near his ancestral lands. Wheelock sent Occom on frustrating, dead-end ventures; all along, he was looking for new ways to raise money for Moor's Indian School. Regarding fundraising, there was one particular strategy that colonists had whispered about for years. The advice of Charles Jeffrey Smith, which was representative of this strategy, was that they could send Samson Occom 'home a begging' to Britain. George Whitefield, the most savvy transatlantic evangelical marketer of his age,⁶⁷² understood that Occom was

⁶⁶⁸ Axtell, 'Dr. Wheelock's Little Red School', 91-92.

⁶⁶⁹ Axtell, 'Dr. Wheelock's Little Red School', 106.

⁶⁷⁰ Kellaway, *The New England Company*, 189-190.

⁶⁷¹ CMM, 8: 103.

⁶⁷² Frank Lambert, *"Pedlar in Divinity": George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737-1770* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 8. As Lambert made clear, Whitefield, 'exhibited

the epitome of a Christian Indian, and had recommended the same thing as Charles Jeffrey Smith. Whitefield had already led the way in this regard, taking the Mohegan minister with him on his New England preaching tour in 1764.⁶⁷³

Wheelock did indeed capitalize on this proposition. He convinced Occom to participate in the fundraising tour alongside another minister and SSPCK Connecticut correspondent, Samuel Whitaker. The two men embarked from Boston to London on 23 December 1765. Their purpose was clear and straightforward: to raise money for Indian education. Occom had experience in educating Native Americans, and was passionate about reform and improvement. For such a lofty goal, the time away from family and home was worth it. Incidentally, they had trouble getting clearance to leave due to the malaise caused by the Stamp Act. When finally able to leave, their passage fare was covered by none other than John Hancock, a Boston political radical and nephew of the SSPCK Boston correspondent, Thomas Hancock. One of the wealthiest merchants in Boston, Thomas had raised his nephew from the time he was eight years old.⁶⁷⁴

From his first days in the British Isles, Occom stole the show. Referred to as the ‘Indian minister’ in England, the Mohegan preached before delighted audiences and met the most important religious, political and monarchical figures of the day, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Countess of Huntingdon and the King in his ‘royal robing room’. Occom won their hearts through what Margaret Szasz called ‘his singular style of preaching—he spoke simply and from the heart—and his distinctly Native appearance, plus his warmth of manner’. Although Occom was an overwhelming success in England and Wales (much better received than his counterpart), he and Whitaker were able to make much more money in Scotland in

ambivalence toward the spreading consumer market’: on the one hand, he believed ‘the market of his day represented the “world” and should be viewed with suspicion. He preferred the past and its cries against the world for inspiration...’. On the other hand, he believed that ‘the rationalization of the countinghouse should extend to the meetinghouse’ and that ‘devotion’ and ‘business’ must ‘go hand in hand’. Lambert called Whitefield ‘a pioneer in the commercialization of religion, discovering within the market the very strategies and language to attack its excesses’.

⁶⁷³ Brooks, *Collected Writings*, xxii.

⁶⁷⁴ Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans*, 152, 197-199; William M. Fowler, Jr. ‘John Hancock’ in John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds. *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 968; for information on Thomas Hancock as an SSPCK correspondent in Boston, see CMM, 8: 60.

proportion to time and per capita.⁶⁷⁵ The reason was two-fold: the celebrity of Occom and the energies of the Edinburgh Directors.

Occom and the SSPCK: the Edinburgh Encounter

On 23 May 1767, Occom and Whitaker met with the Edinburgh Directors. For the Directors, this must have felt like the culmination of nearly forty years: they were seeing their evangelism project face to face. For Occom and Whitaker, they must have known that a lot was riding on this encounter. The details of the meeting were not recorded, but the Directors decided by the end of the meeting to throw themselves fully behind the fundraising project of these two men. They appointed several Directors to meet with sub-committee members of the General Assembly ‘to converse with them as the expediency of presenting a petition to the Assembly for a collection and to report the result of this conference to the Committee’.⁶⁷⁶

The Directors failed to garner support from the Church of Scotland.⁶⁷⁷ The Church of Scotland had given its support in the past, but would not raise funds for the Society’s colonial ventures at this time.⁶⁷⁸ The SSPCK’s response to the General Assembly’s decision was one of determination. The Assembly’s representatives rejected the Directors’ proposal on the morning of the 27th of May. By that afternoon, the Directors resolved that Wheelock’s *Narrative* be printed and circulated throughout the parishes ‘in name of the Society recommending a collection for said school to be under the management of the Society and their Board of Correspondents at Connecticut’. They asked Occom and Whitaker to assist Alexander Webster in preparing this work for the press.⁶⁷⁹ The operational means by which Occom and Whitaker would accrue any funds in Scotland now lay solely and squarely upon the shoulders of the Edinburgh Directors. Of course, without assistance from the Church of Scotland, Occom and Whitaker had even more pressure to present their message clearly and persuasively. With this resolution, though, the SSPCK coordinated a fund-raising tour that included Occom and Whitaker preaching at various Presbyterian churches (both Seceder and Established) throughout the nation. As a

⁶⁷⁵ Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans*, 199, 201.

⁶⁷⁶ CMM, 8: 398-399.

⁶⁷⁷ CMM, 8: 400.

⁶⁷⁸ CMM, 9: 126.

⁶⁷⁹ CMM, 8: 400-401.

result, the SSPCK helped Occom and Whitaker raise £2,529 in two months: this was particularly remarkable in contrast to England and Wales who raised £9,497 in more than two years.⁶⁸⁰

Occom left for Connecticut in 1768 after further travel in Ireland, London and other parts of England. As Szasz pointed out about his trip, the Mohegan minister arrived in the colonies ‘with a far more sophisticated understanding of the British Empire and the structured society that lay behind it’. Occom had remained focused all along on his mission to raise funds for Indian education. His nearly three years on the British Isles brought much fame and success along with extraordinary hardship and separation from family and friends. When he arrived back in Connecticut, though, he learned of the ultimate betrayal:⁶⁸¹ Wheelock was appropriating the funds raised in the British Isles for Indian education and applying them to the founding of a school in New Hampshire that centred on white education. It was at this point that Occom’s already turbulent relationship with Wheelock ripped apart irreparably.⁶⁸² ‘I cheerfully ventured my body and soul, left my country, my poor young family, all my friends and relations’ by travelling to the British Isles, ‘hoping that it may be lasting benefit to my poor tawnee brethren’, Occom mourned to Wheelock. The Mohegan minister then scolded that, ‘I was quite willing to become a gazing stock, yea even a laughing stock, in strange countries to promote your cause’.⁶⁸³ Occom no doubt felt this travesty of betrayal more in his homeland than he ever did in the British Isles. He thought the new school was specifically for Native Americans, which explained him going to the British Isles ‘to help forward your school’ in the first place.⁶⁸⁴ Initially Occom had recommended that the new school be founded on Long Island, west of Southold. Both geographically and racially, he now discovered that the school would be far away from the vision he had been sold.

At Wheelock’s new school in New Hampshire, named Dartmouth College, there were thirty students: out of those, only two were Native Americans. Furthermore, only one student served the Native American community for more than

⁶⁸⁰ Szasz, *Highlanders and Native Americans*, 199, 201-208.

⁶⁸¹ Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 63.

⁶⁸² Szasz, *Highlanders and Native Americans*, 213; Axtell, ‘Dr. Wheelock’s Little Red School’, 107.

⁶⁸³ Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 63.

⁶⁸⁴ Stone, ed. *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 57.

a year, and this student ‘lapsed to pursue a secular calling’.⁶⁸⁵ ‘Your having so many white scholars and so few or no Indian scholars, give me great discouragement’, Occom told Wheelock. ‘Your present plan is not calculated to benefit the poor Indians’. In an acerbic and satirical swipe at Wheelock that conveyed his anger and despair, Occom continued that he was ‘jealous’ that Wheelock’s seminary would be not only an ‘alma Mater’ (mother of the soul) but also an ‘alba mater (white mother) to suckle the Tawnees, for she is already adorned up too much like the Popish Virgin Mary’.⁶⁸⁶ In addition to the obvious parts of this scathing critique, one must remember that for Occom to compare Dartmouth to Catholicism was the ultimate insult: to be Catholic was to be complicit in and part of antichrist. Accusations of Catholicism also hinted at political duplicity. Occom was conveying a sense of betrayal that is hard to comprehend in modern times.

The SSPCK had exerted all of their political and social energies into helping Occom and Whitaker in Scotland. They did more than any institution in the British Isles to ensure the trip’s success. It is deeply ironic, then, that Eleazer Wheelock used the money for this trip as a way to sever connections with missionary societies in the homeland. According to James Axtell, Wheelock planned to establish a white college to go along with his Indian school as early as 1761; throughout the 1760s he grew disillusioned towards Native Americans and garnered an ‘innate distrust’ of them. The successful fundraising tour was a solution to his ‘serious search for a way to subordinate his involvement in the unrewarding “Indian business” to a project that gave more scope to his energy, political acumen, and need to dominate’.⁶⁸⁷ Wheelock, followed by his son, petitioned the SSPCK throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They kept a separate albeit marginalized school for Native Americans in an attempt to keep funds coming in for their predominantly white college of Dartmouth even though the money was ostensibly for Native American education.⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁵ Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 62.

⁶⁸⁶ Axtell, ‘Dr. Wheelock’s Little Red School’, 108-109; Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, 98.

⁶⁸⁷ Axtell, ‘Dr. Wheelock’s Little Red School’, 105-107.

⁶⁸⁸ Axtell, ‘Dr. Wheelock’s Little Red School’, 107-108. Throughout the SSPCK’s minutes and correspondence, one can see the Wheelocks attempting to maintain and increase their funding opportunities with the SSPCK. It is also clear that the SSPCK was becoming suspicious and frustrated with them.

But Occom was not the only one or even the first to display suspicion and resistance against Wheelock's educational ambitions. Occom and Whitaker's initial departure from Boston was also the NEC's departure from Wheelock. They withdrew all funding from him, and cut off communication permanently. They also wrote their London commissioners, and warned them of Occom and Whitaker's trip to raise funds for Wheelock's work. As Kellaway succinctly explained, the NEC 'were, in any case, distrustful of Wheelock for the part he had played in the Great Awakening, and resentful of his sending out missionaries on his own authority without first consulting them'. But it was not only the NEC that deeply distrusted Wheelock. Crucially, Daniel Williams's Trustees in London, who oversaw important funding to both the NEC and the SSPCK, fiercely disapproved of Wheelock establishing another English school. Kellaway confirmed that, 'in 1771 resolutions of disapproval were passed by Dr. Williams's Trustees and by the Company [NEC] but they were of no avail in preventing the foundation of Dartmouth College'.⁶⁸⁹

By 1768, Samson Occom was crossing the Atlantic waters on his way home from the British Isles. In the same year, John Witherspoon was crossing those same waters in order to assume the presidency at the College of New Jersey. Witherspoon would come to be one of the central figures in the SSPCK's American policies during the early 1770s. In this same year, John Erskine reported to the Edinburgh Directors that a Samuel Kirkland 'has been labouring with considerable success among the Indians'. The Directors agreed to pay Kirkland from the funds that were raised during Occom and Whitaker's fundraising tour.⁶⁹⁰ Kirkland would receive consistent and significant funding from the SSPCK for decades to come.⁶⁹¹ Again, however, the promise to Occom of an academy for Native Americans was slipping further and further away.

John Brainerd in 1768 was receiving very little encouragement from the SSPCK.⁶⁹² He moved to Brothertown with Indians from Bethel, and it was around

⁶⁸⁹ Kellaway, *New England Company*, 190-192.

⁶⁹⁰ CMM, 8: 433-434.

⁶⁹¹ David J. Norton, *Rebellious Younger Brother: Oneida Leadership and Diplomacy, 1750-1800* (Dekalb, Ill: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 67, 120.

⁶⁹² CMM, 8: 427-428.

this period that he became a pastor at Bridgetown, New Jersey (now Mt. Holly). He wrote from Bridgetown in 1768 that he feared yet again the ‘melancholy prospect of an Indian War’, which had become more likely in recent days due to the fact that ‘ten of the Indians have been murdered by a white man’: this was a ‘barbarous outrage’, according to Brainerd.⁶⁹³ Brainerd continued to receive funding from the SSPCK through at least 1775.⁶⁹⁴ It appears that he kept a Presbyterian charge while also working with the Native Americans (presumably part-time) in communities nearby. It is very interesting that John Brainerd remained devoted to radical revivalists and controversial religious figures even while he seemed committed to mainstream Presbyterianism. His references to one of the most radical revivalists, James Davenport, reflected this reality.⁶⁹⁵ In his biography, there are many letters from Brainerd that still exist, in full or at least partial length. Most of these letters are written to Eleazar Wheelock, of whom he seemed to have had a close relationship. He was sending Delaware students to Wheelock as early as 1754.⁶⁹⁶ Like his brother, David, John never fully departed from the radicalism that shaped his formative years even as he shifted his allegiances and perspective on the nature and parameters of evangelicalism.

Occom and the Case of Alcohol

Wheelock’s multiple betrayals overwhelmed Occom shortly after his return to colonial America. Not only had Wheelock used the monies raised in the British Isles for a different reason than he had promised, he also went back on his word to Occom to take care of his family while he was away raising money for his educational project. Occom had reached a state of despair by early 1769 as he suffered under the burden of even more debt and no doubt a feeling that his life-goals had failed miserably in the end. His response, at least once, was to turn to the bottle. In February of 1769, Occom was seen drunk in public. It is riddled with irony that

⁶⁹³ LJB: 377.

⁶⁹⁴ Ledger, 8-9.

⁶⁹⁵ LJB: 179.

⁶⁹⁶ 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* by Eleazar Wheelock (pastor of a church in Lebanon) (Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper in Newbury-street, 1763), 29-30.

Eleazar Wheelock wrote Occom the next month (9th March) and castigated him for his drunken episode.⁶⁹⁷

Occom shot back a reply: after questioning the charge, he then stated that ‘white people make no bones of it to call me a drunkard, and I expected it, as I have many enemies round here, yea they call me a liar and a rogue and what not, and they curse and damn me to the lowest hell’. Occom then resounded a critique that he had seen all too clearly while travelling to Oneida country in the early 1760s: ‘them pretended Christians are seven times worse tha[n] the Savage Indians’. He continued in this letter to Wheelock that he was planning another mission trip but was in very bad financial condition. He also spoke of a revival in ‘Montauk’ and other issues, but his post-script conveyed the general tone of Occom’s letter and his overall emotional breakdown during this period: ‘I never was so discouraged as I am now’.⁶⁹⁸

In a vicious cycle of degradation, Wheelock used Occom’s one night of imbibing as a way to justify to his patrons why he was shifting his resources from Native to white education. He said that Occom’s ‘bad conduct and behaviour’, along with other students of his who were going down the wrong path, had demonstrated that Native Americans were not fit to be in leadership positions. Instances like Occom’s drunkenness gave him ‘the fullest evidence that a greater proportion of English youths must be fitted for missionaries’.⁶⁹⁹ Wheelock used his perspective of racial discrimination along with his educational ambitions as a tool to justify his neglect of Occom even as his actions were what drove Occom to poverty and despair. More generally, Wheelock’s treatment of his Native American students displayed clearly the cycle of racism that his view of race and culture promoted and perpetuated.

Within a short amount of time, Occom wrote a confession to the Presbytery of Long Island. Although he had initially contested his drunkenness, in this letter Occom confessed, ‘I have been shamefully over taken with strong drink, by which I have greatly wounded the cause of God and blemished the pure religion of Jesus

⁶⁹⁷ Joanna Brooks, ‘Hard Feelings: Samson Occom Contemplates His Christian Mentors’, in *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, Martin and Nicholas, eds., 25-26.

⁶⁹⁸ Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, 89.

⁶⁹⁹ Brooks, ‘Hard Feelings’, 28.

Christ'. Occom continued that this action deeply scarred his character, his reputation and his soul: 'in the sight of God, I am ashamed, I am sorry, I sincerely repent and humbly beg your forgiveness'. Occom directed the Presbytery to his close friend, Samuel Buell, if they needed further information, and he appealed to them 'in the fellowship of the gospel'. The Long Island Presbytery reviewed Occom's confession at Easthampton in April of 1769. They found him not guilty, resolving the issue completely by November of the same year. They declared he was not 'intemperate' but rather had 'drank a small quantity of spirituous liquor after having been all day without food'. Occom was present for this verdict.⁷⁰⁰

By the next year, Wheelock had re-located to Hanover, New Hampshire. In 1771, he accused Occom of repeated drunkenness, and Occom accused Wheelock of abandoning his promised mission of Indian education. By July, Occom severed all ties with Wheelock. By the following year, the Mohegan minister refused other missionary expeditions and concentrated instead on restoring his health, his family and his finances to good stead. It was in September of that year, 1772, that Occom preached his sermon to Moses Paul, a sermon that was published first in October with three other editions appearing by the end of the year.⁷⁰¹ With this sermon, Occom's publishing career had begun.

Samson Occom, like John Brainerd, was dependent upon his superiors for financial assistance. But Occom sharply critiqued and eventually separated from people such as Eleazar Wheelock upon whom he had previously relied. Nonetheless, Occom's theology must come into account, as well. As a Calvinist in the reformed tradition, he realized the importance of the ministerial elite to the souls and state of the Christian community. But as a Mohegan Christian Indian, he recognized that faith, not race, should guide all Christians in their policies and actions. Furthermore, Occom's sermons that were distinctly Indian and Christian set the stage for his further theological contribution that can be seen most clearly in his sermon to Moses Paul. Samson Occom was using his faith simultaneously as a bridge of deference and a tool of critique.⁷⁰²

⁷⁰⁰ Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, xxiii, 87-88.

⁷⁰¹ Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, xxiii, 87-88.

⁷⁰² Regarding Occom and enthusiasm, see Stone, ed. *History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 56: 'he was diplomatic in opposing the teaching of the "Enthusiastical Exhorters" who had ruined Azariah Horton. He took a mild way to reclaim them, never openly opposing such doctrines but whenever he

Occom's Paradox: Calvinism and Native America

Moses Paul was to be hanged within hours. At thirty years of age, he had been convicted of murder and now, on what was no doubt a crisp, bleak autumn day in September of 1772, he stood to face his destiny. Of Wampanoag descent,⁷⁰³ his only recorded request was that the Mohegan minister, Samson Occom, preach him one last sermon before he died. On that fateful day of Moses Paul's execution, Samson Occom stood before a mixed audience of whites and indigenes in what he called a great concourse of people. Occom began with seemingly very little sympathy for Moses: his execution, according to the Mohegan minister, was the 'due reward of his folly and madness and enormous wickedness'. Occom continued, however, that 'since it is the desire of the poor man himself, who is to die a shameful death this day, in conscience I cannot deny him; I must endeavor to do the great work the dying man requests'.⁷⁰⁴

But Occom's harsh tone quickly became sympathetic. Acknowledging that most in the audience were attending in order to witness the execution, Occom asked that they would feel 'commiseration towards this poor object... [and] pray for the salvation of Moses's soul.... for this is the last day we have to pray for him'. Occom made this plea to all of those in the audience who called themselves Christians. This theme of commonality through faith (even with an Indian criminal) was the framework by which Occom began his sermon on that autumn day in 1772. It was the overarching theme of the sermon and, indeed, had been a central theme of his life up to this point. He looked for common ground not only as a path towards conciliation but simultaneously as a way to level the playing field. And he invoked his faith as the vehicle for most effectively achieving this goal. He told his audience that 'the current is too strong' for Native Americans: 'nothing has prevented their being employed usefully, and reputably in various capacities till this day, but their

had the opportunity, he read scriptural passages such "as I thought could Confound their Notions, and I would come to them with all authority, saying 'thus Sith the Lord.'" By this means, he brought them around "to hear almost any of the Ministers"'.⁷⁰³

⁷⁰³ Brooks, *Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan*, xxiii.

⁷⁰⁴ Samson Occom, *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, An Indian Who Was Executed at New Haven on the 2d 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* (Boston: Printed and Sold by Richard Draper, 1773), 3, 32.

want of fortitude to resist the power of those fashionable vices which were rampant among all their tribes'.⁷⁰⁵

But Occom reminded his audience that Moses was a poignant example of every human being's frailty and mortality: 'Though this poor condemned criminal will in a few minutes know more than all of us, either in unutterable joy, or in inconceivable woe, yet we shall certainly know as much as he in a few days'. Whether we are concerned about our own death or not, he stated, death will concern itself with us. Occom argued that all human beings were not only mortal but also depraved, filled with utter wickedness and evil. We all, according to Occom, have a propensity towards evil, and are more like the devil than any other of God's creatures. Occom's acceptance of the Calvinist theological tenet of total depravity allowed him to make the following claim that would have resonated with both white and indigenous constituencies:

This must be the unavoidable portion of all impenitent sinners, let them be who they will, great or small, honorable or ignoble, rich or poor, bond or free. Negroes, Indians, English or of what nations soever, all that die in their sins, must go to hell together, for the wages of sin is death.

Sin, for Occom, was the grand unholy equalizer. God's judgment was both just and impartial. As evident through his life and writings, reformed theological doctrines such as total depravity were doctrines that Occom firmly believed. There is no evidence to suggest his perspectives were utilitarian. However, one appeal of Calvinism was its emphasis that all creatures were equally evil, and their chance for salvation had nothing to do with race: God was no respecter of persons.⁷⁰⁶

One of the most important themes of Occom's sermon was his address specifically to his fellow Native Americans whom he called his 'brethren and kindred according to the flesh'. During Occom's entire career, he was accustomed to preaching to mixed audiences and addressing his different 'constituents in complex and multilayered ways'.⁷⁰⁷ During this sermon, Occom told the Native American audience in dramatic fashion that Moses Paul murdered a man because he was drunk, and that the curse upon Paul was a common curse to all Native peoples: 'my poor

⁷⁰⁵ Occom, *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul*, 3.

⁷⁰⁶ Occom, *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul*, 3, 10, 16

⁷⁰⁷ Heather Bouwman, 'Samson Occom and the Sermonic Tradition', in *Early Native Literacies in New England: A Documentary and Critical Anthology*, Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss, eds. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 68.

kindred, do consider what a dreadful abominable sin drunkenness is'. Occom then spent a lengthy amount of time castigating what he called the sin of drunkenness: this sin, he said, was responsible for Native people's poverty, lack of housing, child neglect and starvation. Occom lamented in assertive language that young men and even women now were getting drunk and were not ashamed to do so. In a profound critique both of white treatment of American Indians and the Native response, Occom decried that 'Tho' you have been cheated over and over again, and you have lost your substance by drunkenness, yet you will venture to go on in this most destructive sin. O fools when will ye be wise? -- We all know the truth of what I have been saying'.⁷⁰⁸ Occom must have expressed this point with much pathos after his recent personal brush with alcohol. Him confronting the issue so directly and poignantly in this sermon could speak to his attempts to bolster both his reputation and save his fellow Native Indians from alcohol's debilitating effects.

Occom also spoke directly to Moses Paul. He mourned how horrible his crime was and described to Paul in graphic detail just how doomed he was for his actions. But Occom then offered Paul hope by promising him that angels would hover over the gallows to take him to heaven if he would only believe in Christ. Occom's evangelical reformed theology included not only total depravity but also free grace: he offered that to Moses Paul before he died. This is also interesting considering most white reformed ministers qualified the promise of grace as being only to the elect, and that no one could actually know whether or not they were elected. Occom made no such qualification to Moses Paul. Instead, he offered him an alternative to condemnation: 'here is a crucified Saviour at hand for your sins; his blessed hands are out-stretched, all in a gore of blood for you...Oh, poor Moses! hear the dying prayer of a gracious Saviour on the accursed tree, -- Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. This was a prayer for his enemies and murderers; and it is for you'. How could Moses obtain mercy and acquire this personal sacrifice for his own? Occom told him it depended upon one thing: 'if you would only repent and believe in him'. According to Occom, Moses could experience the bliss of heaven in just a few minutes or the utter condemnation of hell. The choice was his; and he had better act quickly:

⁷⁰⁸Occom, *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul*, 27-29.

come just as you are, with all your sins and abominations, with all your filthiness, with all your blood-guiltiness, with all your condemnation, and lay hold of the hope set before you this day. This is the last day of salvation with your soul; you will be beyond the bounds of mercy in a few minutes more.⁷⁰⁹

The Mohegan minister then converged his message to Paul and the American Indians in the audience. He warned the Native Americans about alcoholism by invoking and pointing out the horror of Moses Paul's situation: 'take warning by this doleful sight before us, and by all the dreadful judgment that have befallen poor drunkards. O let us all reform our lives, and live as becomes dying creatures, in time to come...you that have been careless all your days, now awake to righteousness, and be concerned for your poor and never dying souls'. In a clever rhetorical maneuver, Occom was using Paul as a physical representation to bring home his argument⁷¹⁰ against alcohol and for cultural improvement. In his own way, Occom was invoking piety as the proper path towards cultural improvement.

Samson Occom's sermon to Moses Paul reflected some of the most important intellectual themes of Occom's life. His intellectual contribution in this sermon is significant when taken on its own terms. It is clear that Occom believed deeply in Christianity. Even further, he promoted distinctly reformed, Calvinist doctrines as the lens by which to understand his and others' identities. But despite such stringent doctrinal boundaries, Occom molded them into a message that espoused Indian racial equality. His use of barbarism mentioned above is one example where he consistently placed all races within the reformed theological context of total depravity: that is, all are sinful creatures devoid of good before God. Within Calvinist thought—expressed for example, by the Brainerd brothers—such depravity and despair could lead to hope, because of one's need to completely rely on God for salvation. For Occom, he was offering the hope of a better physical life in addition to the spiritual. Occom's theological intertwining of the material and spiritual demonstrates his synthesis of the Brainerds' spirituality and Susquehannah's material realities. He was establishing a distinctly Native Christian theology.

⁷⁰⁹ Occom, *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul*, 24-25.

⁷¹⁰ Occom, *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul*, 24-25.

Occom's sincere articulation of reformed theology tickled the ears of the strict Presbyterian and Congregationalists in colonial America and Britain. But the lens whereby he understood this traditional theology allowed him to offer a new social dynamic between races. Occom was consistent to his reformed theological position, but his Mohegan tradition caused him to re-imagine what this theology meant in his particular context. The result was a synthesis, a shift in what it meant to be a traditional Mohegan and also a shift in what it meant to be a Calvinist. Occom's synthesis sheds light on anthropologists' Aparecida Vilaça and Robin M. Wright's contention that 'given its missionary and inclusive nature Christianity has always been redefined by the social groups in contact with it'.⁷¹¹

Occom was trawling the waters of two traditions at a pivotal juncture in Native-European relations. Phillip Round has argued that the publication in 1772 of Samson Occom's sermon to Moses Paul 'marks a crucial point at which the varied experiences of Native people in the Northeast coalesced with European print to produce the first "Indian" book'.⁷¹² Round's contention should be seen in light of Heather Bouwman's argument that we must recognize the distinct colonial strata that existed during this period of colonial society. As she persuasively explained, Occom's white audience may have felt 'colonized' themselves by their British leadership in London. Furthermore, Christian Indians 'would have viewed themselves as political, cultural, and religious entities different from those of traditional Indians' while 'traditional, pre-Christian Indians' (though uncertain whether they were in attendance for this sermon) would have constituted another layer of the complex mosaic of colonial society during the period when Occom presented his sermon.⁷¹³ Occom's observation of such a cultural tapestry of faith and life caused him to respond by utilizing Native revivalist themes within his own evangelical Calvinist convictions.

⁷¹¹ Aparecida Vilaça and Robin M. Wright, 'Introduction' in *Native Christians: Modes and Effects of Christianity among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas*, Vilaça and Wright, eds. (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009), 3.

⁷¹² Phillip H. Round, 'Samson Occom and Native Print Literacy' in *Early Native Literacies in New England*, eds. Bross and Wyss, 80.

⁷¹³ Bouwman, 'Samson Occom and the Sermonic Tradition', in *Early Native Literacies in New England*, 70.

Conclusion

The experiences of John Brainerd and the Bethel Indians during The Seven Years War demonstrate the precarious conditions of both missionaries and Native Americans during this period. The repeated failures and personal loss by Brainerd, along with the devastation of dispossession, disease and war in the Bethel community all contributed to their overwhelming sense of loss and suffering. The SSPCK did little to alleviate this suffering. But figures such as Brainerd simultaneously played an important role in at least semi-effective campaigns to the Society for various needs on the ground.

Occom's project for understanding race and religion ultimately failed due in large part to the racial bigotry and imperial dominance of his white counterparts. But his message, along with his actions that followed suit, reflected his commitment to understanding reformed theology as a way of purifying and enriching Native American culture. It is important to recognize Occom's ideas as significant in their own right for American intellectual and religious history. As laid out above, Occom's use of concepts such as Providence, hell, crime, sin and grace/pardon all created an intellectual framework for him to critique and, in his mind, promote Indian identity. His scathing diatribe against drunkenness is one primary example. Importantly, Occom used drunkenness and Sabbath breaking as ways to criticize white culture, as well. As seen above, he traveled widely on both sides of the Atlantic and commented without compunction about the savagery he was witnessing in European culture. Both Native American and white cultures were utterly depraved and in need of redemption. Therefore, for Occom, civilized Christian behaviour was not about race. Native Americans who were practicing their faith were superior to white people who were not living as Christians should.

Ultimately, Occom felt acute alienation from white leaders due to their manipulation and continued displacement of him and his Native community from their lands. Repeated acts of injustice and prejudice towards him and other Native Americans confirmed that race's relationship to religion looked differently even amongst his white Calvinist 'brethren'. As Heather Bouwman reminded us, Occom was undergoing some of the 'bleakest years' during the time of his sermon to Moses Paul, and he was simultaneously experiencing 'some of the best of his publishing

career'.⁷¹⁴ Interestingly, however, Occom's faith grew more vocal even as his relations with white people became more estranged. His actions as a leader on Long Island were very important. But his intellectual legacy provides a distinct and particular manifestation of David Silverman's recent contention that 'the Christian Indians' beliefs were at once colonial and anticolonial, Christian and Nativist, Indian and white, original and derivative'.⁷¹⁵ Occom's synthesis was representative of an important shift in Native Christianity that would reverberate for years to come.

⁷¹⁴ Bouwman, 'Samson Occom and the Sermonic Tradition', 63, 65-66.

⁷¹⁵ Silverman, 'To Become A Chosen People', 260.

Chapter Seven

‘Without Regard to...Sects or Parties’?⁷¹⁶: the Question of Unity Within Non-Anglican British Protestantism

Introduction

A wide spectrum of liberal and conservative Protestants converged around the SSPCK on both sides of the Atlantic as the vehicle for expanding ‘true religion’. But while previous scholarship on the SSPCK has focused on the way *evangelicals* shaped the Society,⁷¹⁷ scholars have readily dismissed or overlooked the overwhelming reality of Scottish *liberals* working within the SSPCK. Furthermore, the central leadership of liberal ministers in eighteenth-century Scotland and colonial America informed and sometimes implemented many of the SSPCK’s policies on both sides of the Atlantic. Earlier chapters recognized that members of the early British Enlightenment were central to the founding of the SSPCK as well as its colonial aspirations. This chapter suggests that a distinct continuity existed between these early Enlightenment figures and later Scottish Moderates who comprised a significant part of the SSPCK during the 1750s and 1760s.

Demonstrating this, however, leads to a very important question: how could these SSPCK members who disagreed so vehemently with one another over the nature of true religion support the same missionary society in the name of true religion? Put another way, how did these British Protestant leaders join hands over one evangelistic society, which promoted and expanded ‘true religion’ when they disagreed bitterly over what true religion actually was? This question is particularly poignant when considering the bizarre concoction of religious groups supporting the SSPCK: everything from extremely conservative Scottish covenanters to extremely liberal Presbyterians. And these alongside Independents, Congregationalists and

⁷¹⁶ ‘To the publisher of the Edinburgh Advertiser’, Tuesday June 16 to Friday June 19 1767, p. 6. *Commission to Correspondents in New England*, Smollet and Ross As clarification, I inserted the question mark as a way of accentuating the question consensus and division during this period.

⁷¹⁷ Yeager, *Enlightened Evangelicalism*, 9. Yeager called the SSPCK a ‘a bastion for evangelicals in the Kirk’. Andrew Porter argued recently that the SSPCK’s actions were fuelled by ‘the prominent eschatological concern of the Scottish evangelicals’. See Porter, *Religion versus empire? British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 36. Also see J.A. DeJong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions, 1640-1810* (Kampen, 1970).

English Presbyterians who simultaneously led the way in the eighteenth century British Enlightenment.

In answering the above question, this chapter argues that each of these religious communities that united around the SSPCK during the 1750s and 1760s had a common rhetoric of piety that was interwoven throughout their respective traditions. Michael Warner has recently argued that evangelicalism was, ‘the transformation of older strains of pietism by public-sphere forms’.⁷¹⁸ Historically, then, piety informed religious and social discourse and resonated deeply with all British Atlantic Protestants. Every leader of the SSPCK came from a rich tradition that included a particular understanding of piety, but by the middle of the eighteenth century those ‘strains of pietism’ were being reinvented and re-imagined by what we have come to define as evangelicalism. For religious leaders, this period of transformation was momentous.

How piety would be re-defined made all the difference in the world to the nature and temperament of true religion: it was crucial that they get this concept right. They had seen during the Great Awakening the dangers of getting it wrong.⁷¹⁹ Therefore, the perceived unity amidst non-Anglican British Protestants in regards to evangelism and piety was not disingenuous. They could point to the same traditional forms and many of the same people in history; they shared a common discourse. Ironically, though, it was this unity over both evangelism and the need for piety that led to such sharp divisions: for if piety and evangelism were essential to the advancement of true religion, the stakes for how to define those terms were extraordinarily high.

The first part of this chapter underscores the significant contribution of the Edinburgh literati to the policies and practices of the SSPCK. It examines the way that William Robertson’s sermon to the SSPCK articulated most clearly the role of evangelism within his larger promotion of a specifically Christian Enlightenment. However, Robertson’s sermon was an expression of a sermonic tradition within the

⁷¹⁸ Michael Warner, ‘The Preacher’s Footing’ in *This Is Enlightenment*, Clifford Siskin and William Warner, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 368.

⁷¹⁹ Remember that most of these ministers did in one way or another agree wholeheartedly that things went awry during the Great Awakening, even if they argued pragmatically that in the end true religion was improved. This was certainly true of even the staunchest of revivalists such as Gilbert Tennent from the colonies, George Whitefield from England and Jonathan Erskine from Scotland.

SSPCK that spanned around twenty-five years: therefore, he should be seen as a figure of continuity in line with other Scottish liberals and English non-conformists. Even further the SSPCK was an integral component of Robertson's larger vision for improvement and virtue. After establishing this framework from 1755, the chapter then looks at the way the SSPCK appropriated this theory of Christian Enlightenment, and how this understanding of religion, enlightenment and evangelism played out in the Society's colonial policies and practices leading up to the American Revolution: this will require an investigation into both the Edinburgh and American contexts. This chapter aims to showcase how most sub-traditions within British Atlantic Protestantism were continuing in the latter half of the century to congregate around the themes of reform and evangelism even though their doctrinal and ecclesiastical perspectives were drifting further and further apart.

'Even the Mystery...Now is Made Manifest to the Saints': William Robertson and the Christian Enlightenment

On 6th January 1755, William Robertson stepped up to the lectern at the High Church in Edinburgh to preach the SSPCK's Anniversary Sermon. He began rather dramatically: 'there is no employment more delightful to a devout mind than the contemplation of the divine wisdom in the government of this world'. But he immediately countered this statement about the joys of transcendent contemplation with an appeal to empiricism and rationality: by using 'the light of reason', 'careful observers' could 'form probable conjectures' about 'the plan of God's providence'. Furthermore, these observers would be able to 'discover a skilful hand, directing the revolutions of human affairs' and bringing about 'the best ends by the most effectual and surprising means'. However, he countered once again, it was 'sacred history' that unveils the mysteries of God and 'lays open his designs to the view of his creatures'.⁷²⁰

The dual threads of the sacred and the empirical ran throughout Robertson's sermon. While 'inspired writers' had conveyed doctrines about the faith, 'the facts which inspired writers related are no less instructive than the doctrine which they

⁷²⁰ William Robertson, *The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance, and its Connexion with the Success of his Religion, Considered* (Edinburgh: Printed by Hamilton, Balfour, and Neill, 1760), 3-4.

teach'. These doctrines 'inform us that God is powerful and wise and good', but it was the facts that 'discover these perfections brought forth into action, and confirm speculative opinions, by real and striking examples'.⁷²¹ In one stroke at the beginning of his sermon, Robertson had confirmed his belief in God's mysteries revealed through scripture and written by inspired men while also maintaining that reason and empirical research were equally important for understanding truth. In this way, the dialectic between inspiration and investigation—between faith and reason—produced a synthesis that revealed God's ways on the earth more clearly.

Nearly thirty years before Moses Mendelssohn and Immanuel Kant famously attempted to answer the question, 'what is Enlightenment?',⁷²² William Robertson was articulating a very particular response to that question by framing it in the negative. 'Unenlightened reason often errs', Robertson argued, 'undirected virtue always deviates from the right path'. Therefore, Enlightenment and virtue were intertwined; they relied upon one another. This statement, of course, resonated with his audience: as a society, the SSPCK stemmed directly from the quest to improve personal and national virtue and eliminate vice. They would have appreciated this nod to their own work.⁷²³

At this point in the sermon, Robertson appealed to antiquity as evidence for his argument. In reference to ancient times, he averred that 'we cannot expect to find pure and undefiled virtue among those people who were destitute of the instructions, the promises, and assistance of divine revelation'.⁷²⁴ Citing his text verse,⁷²⁵ he argued that God 'manifested the mystery of the gospel at a time when the world stood most in need of such a revelation, and was best prepared for receiving it'. But revelation and Providence unfold gradually through the natural causes of history: 'the Almighty seldom effects, by supernatural means, anything, which could have been accomplished by such as are natural'.⁷²⁶ Robertson displayed a keen ability to balance and hold in tension the things that he believed most significant: mystery and

⁷²¹ Robertson, *The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 3-4.

⁷²² Clifford Siskin and William Warner, 'This is Enlightenment: An Invitation in the Form of an Argument' in Warner and Siskin, eds. *This Is Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 2.

⁷²³ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 15-16.

⁷²⁴ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 15-16.

⁷²⁵ Philippians 1:26, 'Even the Mystery, which hath been hid from Ages, and Generations, but now is made manifest to his Saints'. See Robertson, *The Situation of the World*, 3.

⁷²⁶ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 6-7, 13.

reason, faith and empiricism, virtue and Enlightenment. By setting these things in simultaneous relief to one another, he extracted important threads of his theory of Christian Enlightenment.

This rhetorical strategy continued as Robertson cast one eye towards the events of antiquity and another on antiquity's relation to contemporary times. He observed, for example, how certain governments and peoples had struggled to obtain liberty, virtue and manners. He submitted that, 'ancient virtue rest[ed]' upon the 'foundation of public liberty' where a 'magistrate...inspect[ed]' the people's 'manners with severity' and where even 'the smallest crimes could not escape observation' and 'even dangerous virtues were exposed to censure'. This becomes particularly significant when remembering that he was speaking to the SSPCK, who traced their lineage to efforts towards the eradication of vice and the improvement of manners through magistrates and others patrolling the streets for vice and inspecting for virtue. Robertson lamented that politicians in 'modern times...are confined to inferior objects'. Even with superior politicians, however, the ancient struggle for liberty failed. The reason for this failure was clear: 'these wise institutions were the works of men, and mortal like their authors'. The Roman Empire, for him, was a classic example: 'by subduing the world, the Romans lost their own liberty'. Prosperity brought much vice and, most damning, 'the alliance betwixt morals and government was now broken' as the latter began to work as the enemy to the former.⁷²⁷

It was at his point that Robertson made an indubitable distinction between his Christian Enlightenment project and the objectives of the British Empire. Implicating Britain itself, he blamed the decline and dismantling of virtue in Rome on an Empire that had overreached itself and its legitimacy. But he saw redemption even amidst the corrosive effects of empire: this was where mystery became inseparable from empirical evidence. The 'universal corruption' caused by the Roman Empire was actually part of 'the wisdom of God', because such darkness allowed for appearance of 'the Christian revelation to the world'. But this Christian revelation, according to Robertson, would not 're-establish virtue upon the same insecure foundation of civil government'. Instead, it would 'erect' virtue 'upon the

⁷²⁷ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 16-18.

eternal and immovable basis of a religion, which teacheth righteousness by the authority of God'. According to Robertson, this religion was free from 'human laws and institutions', and was enforced not by overbearing strength but rather 'by the most persuasive arguments'. It was the force of good ideas and enlightened reason that would establish virtue securely in the world: true religion would be both the vehicle and the framework for this to transpire.⁷²⁸

Robertson pushed this idea of virtue even further. He continued that without the Christian religion the 'despotic unlimited empire' would have increased: 'tis hard to say how far they [the Roman Empire] might have gone toward extinguishing the name and exercise of virtue among men'. In the epic battle of enlightenment and virtue against darkness and vice, he argued that Christianity had vanquished a depraved foe. But this source of light was now under attack on several fronts. Speaking directly to David Hume's, 'Of Superstition and Enthusiasm', Robertson argued that both 'scepticism and superstition were two forces that could destroy religion'. He agreed firmly with Hume's assessment that superstition and enthusiasm were detrimental to social, political and no doubt religious stability.⁷²⁹ But scepticism was just as sinister for society as superstition and enthusiasm. True religion, according to Robertson, could both *enlighten* scepticism and *eradicate* superstition. He promoted the idea that true religion was progressing onward, bringing the 'knowledge of it' along with 'liberty, humanity, and domestic happiness' to all the earth.⁷³⁰

It is interesting at this point that Robertson anticipated a major objection to his narrative of Christian progress. 'Slavery in our *American* [his italics] colonies, he contended, 'is a specious, not a real objection' to the present argument. 'The genius and tendency of any religion' should be 'known by the operations of its vigorous, not of its *declining* age' [my italics]. Christianity had abolished the institution of slavery, he argued. If such 'avarice' had 'revived in a degenerate world', it was not due to Christianity but rather 'like many other vices which prevail among Christians, must be charged upon the corruption of the human heart, not upon that religion,

⁷²⁸ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 19.

⁷²⁹ Nicholas Phillipson, *David Hume: The Philosopher as Historian* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 65-68.

⁷³⁰ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 20-22, 26, 36-37.

which testifies against it'. Robertson wrote this portion about slavery in a long footnote, which means he probably did not explain this view during his sermon but rather sought to address an issue that no doubt would be raised after the sermon was published. But it is important to note that he saw slavery as evidence of his own argument that the British Empire, like the Roman Empire, was decadent and corrupt. For Robertson, slavery supported his overarching thesis that they lived in a declining civilization and that they desperately needed further Christian enlightenment.⁷³¹

But Robertson's tone became hopeful; despite such decadence, the 'benevolent spirit of the gospel' was now establishing unprecedented freedom throughout the world. He pointed out that modern 'political reasoners' praised the 'mildness and humanity of modern manners' and deemed their current era as superior to those in the past. But what caused 'this important revolution in the sentiments and dispositions of mankind?' One might be surprised to find that Robertson's response to his own question was not nearly as monolithic and progress-centred as recent scholarship has depicted. He argued that ancient legislative governments 'far excelled' Britain's current system of government; similarly, education amongst the ancients was far superior to their current efforts, which had been 'shamefully neglected' but for the ancients was 'an object of chief attention'. Even the current 'refinements in elegant and polite arts' only equalled the ancients but by no means exceeded them. The British had not progressed past antiquity in any of these areas. Rather, for Robertson, alluding again to his text verse, the spirit of the age was a direct result of 'the Christian religion, hid from ages, but now manifested to the world'. It was this religion, he contended, that was 'the only cause capable to produce so great an effect' of manners and virtue. Its 'wisdom' and the 'mildness of its spirit' could civilize the 'fiercest and most barbarous nations' as it not only 'sanctifies our souls but refines our manners: and while it gives the promises of the next life, it improves and adorns the present'.⁷³²

Robertson next gave his most direct statement on empire in relation to Christian enlightenment. Europe, that 'part of the world wherein Christianity is established, infinitely surpasses the rest of all the sciences and improvements which raise one nation above another in reputation or power'. A great part of the earth now

⁷³¹ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 37.

⁷³² Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 39-41.

depends either upon Europe's 'arts or arms'. Like the Roman Empire, however, self-interest and ambition had fuelled these European imperial conquests. Despite such evil imperial uses, according to Robertson, Europe's achievements in 'arts or arms' simultaneously had the potential to 'be employed to good purpose, on the side of religion'. Fully acknowledging their potential for suffering and evil, Robertson contended that they could also be used as 'instruments in the hand of God, for preparing the world to receive the gospel'. This was a 'distant' quest, but it was not 'imaginary'.⁷³³

Robertson depicted the SSPCK as evidence of progress 'even in a degenerate age' such as theirs: 'Societies have been formed' for the purpose of 'propagating the knowledge of Christ to nations far off'. Furthermore, 'what they have already done encourages the most sanguine hopes of farther success'. Importantly, Robertson viewed Societies such as the SSPCK as the primary means for causing 'the knowledge of the Lord' to 'fill the earth'. But it is remarkable how Robertson then concluded. He took a turn that one might not have expected him to take. This conclusion, therefore, lends even more credence to the idea that he envisioned a Christian Enlightenment founded not upon Empire but what he considered true religion. In a complementary argument to his interpretation of slavery, Robertson concluded with his hope that the 'spirit of Christianity, which languishes so visibly in those places where it hath long been planted' would 'shine with its first splendour...in unknown lands'. Implied was that Britain, like Rome and other empires before it, was suffocating under the weight of their collective global empire. It was his hope that the spirit of Christianity would invigorate regions of darkness and perhaps revive even those historic centres of true religion.⁷³⁴

An example of this decay and darkness was the Highlands and Islands. Robertson did not refer to them as inferior people in a way conjectural historians might have done. Instead, he interpreted this 'inferiority' as an example of how ignorance, superstition and barbarity could pervade even their own countrymen. Put another way, the Highlands and Islands were emblematic of the entire empire's decay. Still, British society at large—though less advanced than antiquity and seemingly just as corrupt—had acquired the means for obtaining virtue: a civilized

⁷³³ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 42-43.

⁷³⁴ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 43-44.

government, proper education, cultivated arts and scientific progress. These components of the empire, as he had argued previously, could assist the process of enlightening other cultures, but could simultaneously lead (as had happened in his own age) to opulent degeneracy. True religion was the determining factor and catalyst for cultural progress. Just as in the Roman Empire, true religion could appropriate the principles of civility that the Empire promoted and use it to move society towards true enlightenment and virtue.⁷³⁵

Robertson's sermon to the SSPCK articulated most clearly the vision of an enlightened Christianity. It only made sense that he would use the Society's Anniversary Sermon as the setting because, in Robertson's schema, without evangelism this Christian enlightenment project could not succeed. The spread of the Empire could establish a framework, but Robertson saw this framework as dubious: empires were built on violence, self-interest and greed. As no exception to the rule, the British Empire, like the Roman Empire of antiquity, had degenerated. Still, the vestiges of civility, virtue and manners allowed for the possibility of institutions such as the SSPCK to take enlightened Christianity throughout the world.

The careful distinction that Robertson made between evangelism and empire is crucial to the operations of the SSPCK. His argument helps to illuminate why the SSPCK members fought so vigorously against one another over the nature of what they considered true religion even as they worked together to spread Christianity throughout the world. They all recognized the British Empire as a tool for spreading what they perceived as true religion, which made their attempts to define that term all the more important.

But audience and historical context are also vital components to consider when assessing Robertson's sermon. It was no coincidence that he proposed his ideas to the SSPCK in Edinburgh, a Society that he saw enacting a crucial dimension of social reform and progress. This sermon should also be placed within the context of his work as a historian. As Robertson stepped forward to present his sermon to the SSPCK, he was writing his *History of Scotland*, a work that, as Stewart Brown demonstrated, helped to establish him as 'one of the leading intellectual figures of

⁷³⁵ Robertson, *Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, 44-47.

the eighteenth-century Enlightenment'.⁷³⁶ In this work, according to Colin Kidd, Robertson 'fashioned a new Whig-Presbyterian patriotism out of the remnants of the old to meet the needs of a North British province'.⁷³⁷

With this context in mind, Robertson's sermon to the SSPCK takes on even greater significance: he knew his sermon was going to enter the vibrant publishing sphere with his name attached to the SSPCK and that it would dovetail with his magisterial *History of Scotland*. It must be recognized, then, that his sermon was part of his larger construction of British identity. And contemporaries seemed to recognize this point very clearly. Indeed, two SSPCK Directors, Gavin Hamilton and John Balfour, published the third edition of Robertson's sermon to the SSPCK in 1759, the same year that London published Robertson's first volume of *History of Scotland*. In addition to these things, these works were being published in the midst of one of the most precarious times for the British Empire as the world war had already begun for imperial dominance in North America.

Having considered the intellectual and social context of evangelism and enlightenment for the SSPCK, this chapter will now assess some of the leaders of the SSPCK who would have attended Robertson's sermon in 1755 as a way of grasping more fully the varied constituency of the Society during the 1750s and 1760s.

Scottish Liberals and the SSPCK

No scholarship directly related to the SSPCK has hardly (if at all) mentioned the contribution of the liberal Scottish ministers in shaping the SSPCK's policies. And yet, since the inception of the Society and particularly in relation to their colonial project, this group contributed substantially to the Society's discourse. Since the turn of the eighteenth century, William Carstares imagined the SSPCK as a way to integrate Scotland into the larger British conversation of improvement.⁷³⁸ He worked intimately with the patron of the SSPCK's colonial project, Daniel Williams, and believed wholeheartedly in Williams's promotion of Protestant and political

⁷³⁶ Stewart J. Brown, 'Introduction' in *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

⁷³⁷ Colin Kidd, 'The Ideological Significance of Robertson's *History of Scotland*' in Brown, *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, 144.

⁷³⁸ Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 5.

union.⁷³⁹ The Scottish liberal William Hamilton—eminent Professor of Divinity and Principal at the University of Edinburgh—established the initial links between London, Edinburgh and the colonies that made the logistics of the SSPCK’s colonial project possible by 1730. As principal and professor, Hamilton insisted that his students revere their religious traditions and elders even as they utilized the ‘literature and liberality of sentiment so amply provided in the happy times’.⁷⁴⁰ He is credited with having ‘inspired a generation of liberal-minded divines’ even as he sought to reconcile scholastic Calvinism with a more enlightened age of British Society.⁷⁴¹ These are just two major examples of the ongoing SSPCK dialogue of evangelism within a liberal Scottish framework.

Like his father William, Gavin Hamilton strove tirelessly for the improvement and refinement of a virtuous British society. Warren McDougall has done much to resuscitate Hamilton’s legacy as a central figure of the Scottish Enlightenment. He explained that:

[Gavin] Hamilton was politically sympathetic to the whigs, his professional and political interests driven by the goal of improvement. In addition to his role on the town council he was a treasurer of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh; a manager of the Edinburgh Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture (he entered his own books and papers for prizes); a director of the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge; and a commissioner for the improvement of the town's streets, often paying from his own purse for old properties to be cleared. Other ventures included the revival of the town's assembly rooms as a site of the polite and modest sociability so easily practiced by Hamilton himself.⁷⁴²

Furthermore, Hamilton’s deep commitment to evangelism and the SSPCK as a way of promoting improvement and enlightenment was equal to that of his father. By the time of Robertson’s sermon in 1755, Hamilton had been a Director of the SSPCK for fifteen years.⁷⁴³ As a ‘central figure in the town’s publishing trade’, he is recognized as ‘a significant contributor to, and promoter of, the Edinburgh

⁷³⁹ See, for example, Daniel Williams, *The Protestant Deliverance from the Irish Rebellion*, 19, 26.

⁷⁴⁰ Sefton, “‘Neu-lights and Preachers Legall’”, 188.

⁷⁴¹ Richard B. Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors & Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, & America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 310.

⁷⁴² Warren McDougall, ‘Hamilton, Gavin (1704–1767)’, *ODNB* (2004): accessed 18 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65019>.

⁷⁴³ Gavin Hamilton was a Director of the SSPCK at least nine out of nineteen years between 1741 and 1759 (‘41, ‘44 ‘47 ‘50 ‘51 ‘53 ‘54 ‘56 ‘59). See CMM, vols. 6-8.

Enlightenment'.⁷⁴⁴ In 1739, he became a partner with his clerk and brother-in-law, John Balfour, who was also an SSPCK Director.⁷⁴⁵ Their firm published some of the most important and daring⁷⁴⁶ works of the Scottish Enlightenment.⁷⁴⁷ One of many examples was David Hume's *History of Great Britain*, vol. 1 in 1754, a book that would come to be extraordinarily controversial in England for Hume's interpretation of politics and religion.⁷⁴⁸

According to Richard Sher's magisterial work on the book trade in Britain, Ireland and America, the fracas surrounding Hume's *History* 'sent a clear message to Scottish authors and booksellers about the need for collaboration between London and Edinburgh publishers'. But it also indicated that London did indeed feel threatened, and that the Edinburgh literati were increasingly comfortable with their city as a centre of Enlightenment and progress. Gavin Hamilton's own letters, along with his and Balfour's efforts at the consolidation of their modes of production,⁷⁴⁹ demonstrates Sher's argument that 'a strong sense of Scottish national sentiment and self-sufficiency' existed during this period. Hamilton and Balfour's partnership also reflected the intimate and familial relations between the Scottish Enlightenment, Scottish book trade and, for that matter, the SSPCK.⁷⁵⁰ As Sher substantiated, Gavin Hamilton was committed to the Scottish Enlightenment with strong personal and family ties to the University, the city's societies and its Town Council. He was part

⁷⁴⁴ McDougall, 'Hamilton, Gavin,' *ODNB* (2004): accessed 18 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65019>.

⁷⁴⁵ Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book*, 307. John Balfour entered the SSPCK in 1756, the same year as John Erskine. He was a Director of the Society in both 1757 and 1758. See *CMM*, 7: 336, 420, 489.

⁷⁴⁶ Balfour was described as an 'adventurous publisher' and Hamilton demonstrated his adventurous spirit during this period, as well. See Sher, *Enlightenment and the Book*, 307.

⁷⁴⁷ Warren McDougall, 'A catalogue of Hamilton, Balfour and Neill publications, 1750-1762' in *Spreading the Word: The distribution networks of print, 1550-1850* (Winchester, U.K.: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1990), 187-232. The partnership of Gavin Hamilton and John Balfour was called Hamilton, Balfour and Neill. This company began in 1750 and lasted until 1762, the same year that Hamilton and Balfour's bookselling partnership also ceased. They added Patrick Neill as a printing partner in 1750. For more on this partnership and relationship, See Sher, *Enlightenment and the Book*, 307.

⁷⁴⁸ John Robertson, 'Hume, David (1711-1776)', *ODNB* (2009): accessed 18 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14141>.

⁷⁴⁹ Sher, *Enlightenment and the Book*, 308. Sher categorized this consolidation principle as 'vertical integration' (a 'modern principle') and defined it as 'the coordinated control of all the key components in the production and distribution process'.

⁷⁵⁰ Sher, *Enlightenment and the Book*, 308-309.

of that ‘powerful network of Presbyterian academic and landed society that formed the principal seedbed of the Scottish Enlightenment’.⁷⁵¹

A sampling of the SSPCK’s Edinburgh Directors in 1758 and 1759 reflects not only the diversity of the Society but also the deep interest in evangelism that the leaders of the Scottish Enlightenment had.⁷⁵² For example, a luminary figure in the Enlightenment, Hugh Blair, was one of the Directors in 1758. Blair preached the Anniversary Sermon in 1750, which was published by the Society as an advertisement along with their ‘State of the Society’. Another Director was Professor Alexander Stevenson, a central member of the literati who participated in the prestigious Select Society. He was also a part of Edinburgh’s Philosophical Society and Glasgow’s Literary Society and Hodge-Podge Club. By this time, Blair and William Robertson were also members of the Select Society. Other Directors of the SSPCK in 1758 and 1759 who were also members of the Select Society were William Tod, the Reverend Robert Walker, and Writer to the Signet Alexander Tait. Another Select Society member, Robert Arbuthnot of Haddo, became a SSPCK Director just shortly thereafter.⁷⁵³

Also by 1758, James Robertson, professor at the University of Edinburgh and renowned Hebraist and Orientalist, joined the SSPCK. By 1760 he was nominated and sat as a Director.⁷⁵⁴ Robertson, like so many Edinburgh academics during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, received much of his education at Leiden, Holland. He also trained at Oxford, and was offered a position at Philip Doddridge’s famous dissenting academy at Northampton. His renowned *Grammatica linguae Hebraeae* was published the same year he joined the SSPCK in 1758. Robertson

⁷⁵¹ Sher, *Enlightenment and the Book*, 310-311. Hamilton served as a Bailie, or senior magistrate on the Edinburgh Town Council, a function that the earliest founders of the Edinburgh Society #2 (from which the SSPCK emerged) also saw as important and participated in. See my Ph. D. thesis, ch. 1; Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), 220-221

⁷⁵² I make this assumption, because these members could be one of the over 100 SSPCK members who paid a small fee to join and showed up once a year at best. On the contrary, however, these men were Directors, meaning they invested large amounts of time into the Society (at least once a month and often they met several times a month. Sometimes they met weekly). Not only were they determining the SSPCK’s policies directly, they were also making a significant time commitment as Directors.

⁷⁵³ Roger L. Emerson, ‘Select Society (act. 1754–1764)’, *ODNB* (2006): accessed 28 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/73614>; CMM, 7: 489.

⁷⁵⁴ CMM, 7: 550. Matthew Stewart, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Edinburgh, also joined the Society in 1758. See p. 494.

was one of the most active Directors, and worked extensively towards the SSPCK's project in the colonies.⁷⁵⁵

From this sampling, it is apparent that the SSPCK was part of the circuit of clubs and societies that formed a mosaic of activity during the period of the Scottish Enlightenment. Furthermore, many of the leading SSPCK policymakers during this period were central to the philosophical, historiographical and literary gains of the Scottish Enlightenment. These Directors were determining simultaneously the direction of evangelism within the British Empire. Nonetheless, just as previous leaders of the SSPCK had done for decades, the current membership was collaborating closely with colleagues in England and the American colonies.

Gavin Hamilton, Hugh Blair and William Robertson's engagement with the SSPCK reflects the way evangelism served as a key thread within religious enlighteners ideas of progress.⁷⁵⁶ With a broad consensus regarding evangelism, the tension within the SSPCK was not structural or ideological but theological. All sides agreed on using evangelism as a way of educating, civilizing and enlightening by way of true religion. The question with which they were left, and fought so vociferously with one another to defend, was the nature and manifestation of true religion both in history and in current events.

This theological discourse was not unique to Scotland. David Sorkin has demonstrated recently that throughout Europe much enlightenment thought 'emerged out of theological controversies and was in the first instance a reinterpretation, and in many cases an entirely orthodox reinterpretation, of revealed religion'.⁷⁵⁷ William Robertson's sermon to the SSPCK in 1755 provided the clearest Scottish equivalent to Sorkin's religious Enlightenment in mainland Europe. But would this model of Christian Enlightenment be capable of overcoming the divisive partisanship within the SSPCK? Was it something that evangelicals or other factions could support?

⁷⁵⁵ Charlotte Fell-Smith, 'Robertson, James (1714–1795)', rev. Philip Carter, *ODNB* (2004): accessed 28 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23797>.

⁷⁵⁶ James Livesey, *Civil Society and Empire: Ireland and Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 156.

⁷⁵⁷ David Sorkin, 'Reclaiming Theology for the Enlightenment: The Case of Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten (1706-1757)', *Central European History* vol. 36, no. 4 2003, 503-504. Sorkin expanded this argument both theoretically and geographically (throughout Europe) in his book, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

A United Front? The Evangelizing Consensus, part 1: the Edinburgh Context

By the late 1750s, with the Pitt government established and with the fall of Montreal and Britain's increasing dominance in North America, the SSPCK seemed more poised than ever to try new strategies of expansion and effectiveness. The triumph of the British Empire ushered in an unprecedented spirit of unity in support of the SSPCK. By 1760, a united front centred on colonial evangelism emerged amongst Scottish Presbyterians. The Directors were considering further expansion amongst the 'Eastern Indians' along the 'Banks of the Ganges' in order to improve both body and soul: a missionary would simultaneously 'practice Physick for a livelihood'. The Directors agreed that a 'scheme of this kind deserves the Society's attention and encouragement' and decided to promote this new mission for five years until the support could be found to annually sustain it. Within the year they were also looking to expand into Canada, noting that 'the late signal mercies' in the 'total reduction of Canada has opened a greater and more effectual door than ever was before'.⁷⁵⁸

The SSPCK was also pressing to garner formal support from the Church of Scotland. In the spring of 1762, an Act of the General Assembly responded to a petition sent to them directly from the Scottish Society. A subcommittee reported to the General Assembly that in March of 1760 'a number of gentlemen in New England, as a Board of Correspondents', agreed 'to plan and execute proper schemes for spreading the knowledge of the gospel among the North American Indians'. According to the Assembly, everyone involved on both sides of the Atlantic understood that the major obstacle to achieving this goal was their 'ignorance of the Indian language'. Therefore, a new plan was underway:

that a certain number of Indian youths, of promising dispositions, be procured to come and live among them, in order to their learning the English language, and being well instructed in the principles of religion, and in needful literature: that, at the same time, a like number of English young men, of a hopeful genius, be sent to live among the Indians, in some of the best of their families, till they become acquainted with their language and customs; after which they shall be recalled, and have their education completed under the same roof and masters with the young Indians, and that, when both are sufficiently fitted for this important service, they shall be sent out in pairs by

⁷⁵⁸ CMM, 8: 78-79, 94-95.

two and two, an Indian and a New Englander, to propagate Christian Knowledge among some other of the Indian Tribes.⁷⁵⁹

The Edinburgh SSPCK had granted them a commission to evangelize and educate both white and Indian people.⁷⁶⁰ Because of the expense of this new project, the Boston correspondents had erected two subscriptions. The Bostonian's first subscription was an 'annual sum' that would 'enable them to begin their work'. The other subscription was 'for a capital stock, payable on condition that the commissioners shall be erected into a body corporate'. Both of these strategies for fundraising already had 'uncommon success' due to local people's 'forward disposition' in supporting 'so good a design'. It is significant to note that the Boston correspondents believed that the local assembly or General Court of Massachusetts would aid their efforts either by ordering a collection to be taken by all of the churches in the province or by other means. Just as the Massachusetts project in the 1730s, the leaders in Boston were looking to attach the missionary work once again to formal political structures in the colonies. Nonetheless, the Bostonians emphasized that this 'extensive' and elaborate scheme still would not be able to operate 'without the assistance of their Mother-Country'. For this reason, they appealed to the SSPCK, 'though in the most modest terms...to apply in their behalf to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland'.⁷⁶¹

The SSPCK laid out a case to the General Assembly for why they should support the Bostonians' mission. This 'undertaking', they argued, 'so much concerns the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, in the dark places of the earth, that are full of the habitations of cruelty'. This spoke to the crux of Robertson's message and their agenda of bringing 'light' to 'darkness'. The Society continued that the 'amazing success with which God has been pleased to bless the British Arms in those remote parts strongly pleads for our warmest return to gratitude'. Robertson's theory of the empire as a potential facilitator to true religion is seen most clearly in the Society's next statement:

⁷⁵⁹ _____, 'Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Concerning A General Collection for the propagating of the Gospel among the North American Indians. At Edinburgh, the 31st Day of May 1762', in *An Account of Some Late Attempts*, 11.

⁷⁶⁰ Belsches, *An Account of the Society*, 16.

⁷⁶¹ _____, 'Act of the General Assembly', 11-12.

no testimony of our thankfulness can be more peculiarly suitable, than improving the signal advantage we had gained by these conquests, for spreading the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, and promoting the best, the eternal interests of mankind. If Britain and her colonies shall exert sufficient vigour in this generous design, it may be hoped that Providence will preserve in our possession for the good of the conquered as well as for our own benefit, a considerable part of these important acquisitions: certain it is, that nothing can tend more to secure to us the affection of the Indian tribes, and to lessen the influence of the French over them, than the spreading among them our holy Christian reformed religion.

The SSPCK asked for a collection throughout the churches for the cause of colonial evangelism: an endeavour ‘of such importance to the interests of religion and of mankind, and to the peace and prosperity of Britain and her colonies’. The Church of Scotland’s General Assembly unanimously voted to enact this collection throughout all of Scotland: the collection would begin in Edinburgh in February of 1763 and in the other parishes at some point after that date.⁷⁶² This new arrangement in Massachusetts could not transpire overnight so, during the interim, the General Assembly confirmed that the SSPCK would ‘pay a few suitable qualified missionaries, together with interpreters’ to find Native Americans on their ‘Western borders as seem best disposed to receive religious instruction’.

By March of 1763, the SSPCK had already received £200 from local churches throughout the Church of Scotland parishes in support of their colonial work. This was in response to the commission by the General Assembly to raise funds for the SSPCK by way of parish collections.⁷⁶³ Even Presbyterians within Scotland but outside of the Church of Scotland made gestures of consensus towards colonial evangelism. By the spring of 1763, Adam Gib, an Antiburgher minister in Edinburgh, sent the SSPCK £50 on behalf of the Associate Synod of Antiburghers.⁷⁶⁴ The Antiburghers evolved from the Associate Presbytery that split from the Church of Scotland in 1733. This was the same Adam Gib who called George Whitefield ‘Satan’s Ape’ in 1742 in part because Whitefield announced that he would preach for

⁷⁶² ‘Act of the General Assembly’, 12.

⁷⁶³ CMM, 8: 158-159. In February of 1762, the re-founded Boston Board of Correspondents made several very important recommendations about the direction of the Society as well as the possibilities related to the Corporation. See p. 115.

⁷⁶⁴ CMM, 8: 170.

members of the Church of Scotland rather than preach only to Seceders.⁷⁶⁵ By 1747, Gib led a faction out of the Associate Presbytery due to a split over the Burgess Oath. Despite such rancorous controversy, the Antiburghers funded the SSPCK for the purposes of what they described as ‘Gospelizing the North American Indians’.⁷⁶⁶ At the Directors’ next meeting in May of 1763, the Associate Burgher Synod, which were Gib’s and the Antiburgher’s former colleagues in the Associate Presbytery before their acrimonious split, also contributed to the SSPCK. James Fisher, a founder of the Secession Church and leading member of the Associate Burgher Synod, announced that ‘with the greatest cheerfulness and unanimity agreed that collections should be made through their several Congregations by the next meeting of the Synod’ and that they would then decide whether the funds would go to Boston or New York.⁷⁶⁷ Thomas Gillespie, minister at Dunfermline and founder of the Relief Church, also submitted over £15 raised by his congregation to send to New York. Gillespie had come into sharp conflict with the Church of Scotland over the last few years, but he made a point to contribute to the SSPCK’s colonial cause.⁷⁶⁸

By the mid 1760s, the SSPCK seemed able to capture a distinct unity amongst Scottish Presbyterians that centred upon evangelism. This is particularly important to note when considering the vitriolic quarrels between Presbyterians that were currently being played out. Furthermore, within the Society during this period, the evidence points to a variegated cross-section of religious interests. The juxtapositions are striking. For example, John Erskine, the well-known evangelical, was perhaps the best-informed and most influential Director in regards to the Society’s colonial activities during this period. But Professor James Robertson, like Erskine, also supplied a wealth of intelligence to the Directors about the colonial project. As demonstrated above, the SSPCK had many Directors who were also members of the Edinburgh literati. But they also sent books to the colonies by way of evangelist George Whitefield during this period. While funding the more

⁷⁶⁵ William Law Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union: A History of Scotland from 1695 to 1747* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1905), 265; Kenneth B. E. Roxburgh, ‘Gib, Adam (1714–1788)’ *ODNB* (2006): accessed 28 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10579>.

⁷⁶⁶ Roxburgh, ‘Gib, Adam (1714–1788)’, *ODNB* (2006): accessed 28 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10579>.

⁷⁶⁷ *CMM*, 8: 172. In March, the SSPCK had petitioned both Synods asking for funds by way of Synod-wide collections. See page 157.

⁷⁶⁸ Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh, ‘Gillespie, Thomas (1708–1774)’, *ODNB* (2004): accessed 28 June 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10739>.

evangelical College of New Jersey in previous years, the Society provided books to the more liberal college of Harvard when its library burnt down in the mid 1760s.⁷⁶⁹

During these post-war years, the SSPCK was benefiting from the unity and expansion of the British Empire. It was also taking advantage of its dual legacy as part of the British Enlightenment's promotion of improvement and the evangelical revival's promotion of the New Birth. When acting as an institution, these variegated leaders of the SSPCK seemed ready to promote evangelism despite the deep discontent buried beneath their understandings of true religious liberty and enlightenment. As seen in previous decades, however, there were times when these differences did indeed surface.

Ripples of Opposition

In the midst of such perceived unity amongst Scottish Presbyterians, dissent arose. After the General Assembly's Act of 1762 that mandated a nationwide collection for the Society, many parishes purportedly were not participating. The Society worked to collect money from these churches all the way until the American Revolution.⁷⁷⁰ Failing to cooperate in giving funds to the SSPCK could easily have resulted from lay and clerical indifference or been attributable to difficult financial times amongst the people. But other forms of dissent against the SSPCK were clearly political. In May of 1763, for example, the Directors received word from Anderson reporting that the King 'had rejected the Charter Granted by the Great & General Court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay to the New Corporation at Boston for Propagating the Gospel'. The reason the King gave for rejecting the Charter was 'because it extends to all America'. Anderson continued, however, by suggesting the major variables involved. One reason the King had made this decision was due to the 'interposition of the Archbishop of Canterbury and others'. Another reason was 'that

⁷⁶⁹ CMM, 8: 168, 298. The major influence of Erskine (and of Robertson) is seen throughout the minutes during this period. The minutes in 1763 refer to Erskine as being being particularly versant in the Society's Affairs in America'. See CMM, 8: 137.

⁷⁷⁰ CMM, 8: for examples, see pages 196, 246-247, 249-250. The seriousness of the situation can be seen on pages 246-247 (April 1764) where the record stated that 'Mr. Erskine represented to the Committee that very few parishes through Scotland had made Collection for Christianizing the North American Indians in terms of the Act of Assembly 1762 and therefore moved that a list of these parishes which are deficient in this matter should be made out in order to be laid before the ensuing General Assembly'. The Directors appealed to the General Assembly as late as May of 1775 regarding parishes who were 'deficient in making their collections'. See CMM, 9: 180.

there is another Society at London called “The Company for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians of America” who have Commissioners and a Treasurer at Boston of 100 years standing who may possibly give much opposition to the Society in Scotland’.⁷⁷¹

This statement is odd, at best. This Company to which Anderson referred, the NEC, was the oldest English Protestant missionary society and no stranger to the SSPCK. Founded under the Long Parliament in 1649, its core function was to generate funds, ‘the interest from which was sent annually to commissioners and missionaries in America’. From its earliest days, they had worked closely and identified with Harvard College. Some of their Native Indian converts had attended the college and, like the SSPCK, the NEC sent money to Harvard after the fire of 1764 destroyed much of their library.⁷⁷²

The SSPCK and the NEC had the same objective: to educate and evangelize Native Americans. They also operated in very similar ways as colonial administrative and funding bodies. Importantly, both the SSPCK and the NEC were given a substantial bequest by Dr. Daniel Williams. Williams stipulated to the NEC that the monies must be used ‘for the good of what Pagan and Blacks lie neglected’ in America. Two ‘itinerant preachers’ were to be appointed, and any ‘residue’ of rents would go to Harvard for ‘converting the poor Indians there’.⁷⁷³ The NEC was identified as a non-conformist Company with strands of Puritans, Independents and Presbyterians, which were the three major groups comprising English dissent. Like the SSPCK, the NEC relied on a variety of Protestants in the colonies such as Benjamin Colman and Joseph Sewall.⁷⁷⁴ In the 1750s, the SSPCK and NEC were attempting a collaborative effort to evangelize the Cherokees in the Carolinas.⁷⁷⁵ This effort centred on Samuel Davies, the staunch Presbyterian revivalist who played a major role in the burgeoning of evangelicalism in the South.⁷⁷⁶ Jasper Mauduit, a

⁷⁷¹ CMM, 8: 172-173.

⁷⁷² Kellaway, *New England Company*, 1, 14-15, 18, 21, 111-112, 182 (see pages 111-112 and 182 regarding Native Americans at Harvard).

⁷⁷³ Kellaway, *New England Company*, 175.

⁷⁷⁴ Kellaway, *New England Company*, 242, 248, 273-274. For example, in 1734 Benjamin Colman and Joseph Sewall examined a missionary for the NEC (see p. 248).

⁷⁷⁵ CMM, 7: 407, 502; CMM, 8: 4. Kellaway, *New England Company*, 187; for a good albeit brief context to the Cherokee situation, see Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies*, 133-138.

⁷⁷⁶ CMM, 8: 4.

prominent member of the NEC and Chairman of the Protestant Dissenting Deputies from 1764 to 1771,⁷⁷⁷ assured Davies that ‘a mixture of all ye protestant denomination’ besides the Quakers were represented within the NEC. The Company’s intimate relationship with the Deputies of the Protestant Dissenters demonstrated their devotion to non-Anglican British Protestantism.⁷⁷⁸

Incidentally, the Deputies of the Protestant Dissenters served as an advisory board for redresses and concerns in the American colonies. Benjamin Colman and his New England colleagues, for example, had appealed to them in the 1740s. They also played a role in the selection of colonial governors during the 1750s. In 1762, the Deputies ‘appointed a sub-committee to assist in getting the Royal Assent to an Act of the General Court of Massachusetts for granting a charter to several persons there for evangelising the Indians of North America’. Again, the response was shrouded in mystery: the committee simply reported that they were not successful in their petition to the Crown on behalf of Boston.⁷⁷⁹

The conflict between the SSPCK and the NEC was natural during previous decades when the NEC courted the Anglican establishment quite heavily. So intimate was their relationship with Anglicans that even the Protestant Dissenting Deputies became estranged from the Company.⁷⁸⁰ In 1759, however, the NEC elected James Lambe as governor, which was a distinct departure from their traditional affinity with the Anglicanism. As William Kellaway explained in his institutional biography of the NEC, ‘Lambe was not merely a sympathizer with nonconformity but was himself a dissenter’. This was an important shift for the NEC: the Company would ‘make no further attempts to conceal its strong dissenting character’ that had emerged in recent times. In the future ‘the Company’s Governors were to be prominent nonconformists’. Lambe’s administration as the governor of the NEC pointed to the natural overlap of the two missionary societies. Since 1751, Lambe had been one of Dr. Daniel Williams’s Trustees, and he had also served on the Presbyterian Board: these were the same administrative boards that controlled

⁷⁷⁷ Bernard Lord Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies*, Ormerod Greenwood, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 481.

⁷⁷⁸ Kellaway, *New England Company*, 172.

⁷⁷⁹ Lord Manning, *Protestant Dissenting Deputies*, 407-408.

⁷⁸⁰ Lord Manning, *Protestant Dissenting Deputies*, 164-165.

Williams's allocation of funds to the SSPCK.⁷⁸¹ All of these factors would suggest that the NEC and the SSPCK were closer than ever before rather than the reality of them fighting one another before the King.

There are several plausible explanations for the antagonism between these two evangelistic societies. First, as Kellaway pointed out, 'unveiled antipathy' existed between the SPG and the NEC due to conflicting interests and sharp theological and ideological divides. Furthermore, the Archbishop of Canterbury would typically look out for the interest not of the dissenting NEC but rather the Anglican SPG.⁷⁸² But the current Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Secker, was charting new waters: he was seeking conciliation with non-Anglican British Protestants overseas. Although recognized as one of the greatest bishops of the eighteenth-century, Secker was also a controversial figure amongst dissenters and Churchmen alike, and deep theological division over the Thirty-nine Articles and Church authority had tainted Secker's reputation in some people's eyes.⁷⁸³ Secker, in turn, was attempting to forge bonds of friendship with Protestants who were abroad.⁷⁸⁴ It is worth suggesting, then, that Secker's intervention to the King on behalf of the NEC would be a gesture towards improved relations with non-Anglican Protestants abroad, but it would also pacify relations with the NEC members in London.

In reaching out to non-Anglican British Protestants, the Archbishop of Canterbury would be very interested in healing the wounds of fellow-Englishmen within the NEC who had historical ties to the Church of England. But Secker's appeal does not answer a central question surrounding this affair: why would the NEC oppose the SSPCK's Boston corporation for educating Native Americans in the first place? Both societies had helped Harvard in replacing its library and educating Native Americans. They had worked together in the South, and relied on many of the same people for advice and administration in the colonies. Particularly in a period where Scotland and many colonies seemed unified in evangelistic endeavours,

⁷⁸¹ Kellaway, *New England Company*, 169.

⁷⁸² Kellaway, *New England Company*, 192.

⁷⁸³ John S. Macauley and R.W. Greaves, eds. *The Autobiography of Thomas Secker Archbishop of Canterbury* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1988), ix-xii.

⁷⁸⁴ Jeremy Gregory, 'Secker, Thomas (1693–1768)' *ODNB* (Oct. 2009): accessed 3 July 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24998>.

the friction between the NEC and SSPCK raises important questions about the religious climate.

This episode reflected several important rivalries transpiring during this period. During the two societies' joint venture in 1756 with Samuel Davies in Virginia,⁷⁸⁵ the NEC thought that the SSPCK was paying its share of the funds to them; the NEC would then distribute the funds in the colonies. They did not know that the SSPCK had decided to go at the venture independently until 1760, at which time the Company demanded payment from the SSPCK.⁷⁸⁶ This tension no doubt created distrust amongst the two societies. More generally, the Scottish Society was eager to distinguish itself from other Societies. In 1764, for example, when Kenneth McCaulay wrote his history of St. Kilda, the SSPCK complained that the author's current title page described the Scottish Society 'in such ambiguous terms that strangers into those hands the history may come cannot distinguish whether the designation belongs to the Society in Scotland or the Society in England'. Therefore, they demanded without equivocation that his title page be cancelled and replaced with a new one, 'describing the Society here more particularly'. The Society then recorded that 'in case he refuses to comply with the Society's demand they will be under a necessity in Justice to themselves to cause insert in the English News papers an advertisement explaining the above mistake'.⁷⁸⁷ The SSPCK was making a clear statement of contradistinction between themselves and other missionary Societies. The reasons for this might have more to do with fundraising than anything else, but could also include Scottish loyalties or the desire to be the standard bearers for true religion.

In Edinburgh during the late 1750s and early 1760s, a tolerance emerged in regards to evangelism. All across the wide spectrum of Presbyterianism in Scotland, people congregated around evangelism as a way to bolster and develop 'true religion' throughout the world. They all shared the common belief that piety stood central to true religion, and that evangelism could help breathe life into decaying or uncivilized cultures. This was all part of the reform efforts centred upon

⁷⁸⁵ Kellaway said that the NEC had paid the salaries of Azariah Horton and John Brainerd along with William Tennet who was visiting the Indians when the Society had fired Brainerd. See Kellaway, 188.

⁷⁸⁶ Kellaway, *New England Company*, 188.

⁷⁸⁷ CMM, 8: 255.

improvement and virtue. Simultaneously, however, sharp division persisted between missionary societies who competed for the 'right' to deem themselves part of 'true religion': this reflected ecclesiastical and doctrinal controversies transpiring simultaneously. In colonial America, a very similar process was taking place in relation to evangelism and missionary societies. The SSPCK's colonial undertaking demonstrates clearly this process.

A United Front? The Evangelizing Consensus, part 2: the Boston Context

As seen above, in 1760 the Edinburgh Directors commissioned a new Board of Correspondents in Boston. In the Directors' words, they agreed to re-establish a Boston Board due to the 'signal successes with which it has pleased God to bless the British Arms in North America'.⁷⁸⁸ But the Commission for a new Board in Boston was not only a response to the war. It was also due to concerted efforts of 'many well disposed persons in New England' that were represented by William Hyslop, a merchant in Boston. These prominent members of the Boston community confirmed that they 'would gladly contribute their endeavours to farther this important design' of 'promoting the Kingdom of Christ in that part of the world'. The first name listed was Lieutenant Governour Thomas Hutchison, the fierce Loyalist who began receiving the ire of Boston patriots by 1760 for his endorsement of writs of assistance. The second name was Andrew Oliver, the proposed Secretary of the SSPCK's new Boston Board. It is very interesting that these two names were listed first. Known as the Hutchison-Oliver faction, these men would dominate Boston Loyalist politics until the Revolution. While Secretary of the SSPCK, Andrew Oliver would staunchly defend the Stamp Act and receive much abuse for his Loyalist convictions. Both of these men had strong connections to commerce and trade throughout the empire. Perhaps the wealthiest man in New England was Thomas Hancock, who made his fortune through trade between North America and Europe, many times during imperial wars. As mentioned previously, he was also a member of the new board.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁸ *Commission to Correspondents in New England*. This document stated that it came from the Committee of Directors of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. But it was signed at the bottom by James Smollett and William Ross, 1760; CMM, 8: 59-60.

⁷⁸⁹ CMM, 8: 57-58.

The SSPCK's commission to Boston showed a distinct level of autonomy for the new Board. The Directors authorized them to:

receive donations from well disposed persons, and to employ them for promoting Christian knowledge *in such manner as shall be directed by the Donors* [my italics], and failing such direction, to devise schemes for propagating our Holy Religion among the Indians, and to carry them into execution, they always from time to time acquainting this Society with their proceedings; and the Committee declare that they will so far as circumstance permit give all due encouragement towards forwarding and promoting the endeavours of their Correspondents.⁷⁹⁰

The re-establishment of a Boston board represented a large faction of New England liberals entering the Society's decision-making process. This stood in contrast to New York, New Jersey and Connecticut boards, which were filled with evangelicals who at times participated in revivalism. But during this process of formal collaboration and transition, individual leaders of the SSPCK corresponded with each other, as well. For example, one of Boston's newly established SSPCK correspondents, Samuel Mather, wrote Dr. George Wishart in the summer of 1761.⁷⁹¹ Mather laid out the perceived geo-political realities of the situation in Native American territories. Approximately 'three hundred souls' live about 200 miles outside of Philadelphia in a place called Ohonoquagie, he explained. Also, the Tuscarora have two townships, and about one hundred miles from them is 'the principal place of the Oneida, which is considerable, and has a meeting house in it'. Mather explained to Wishart that the Native Americans in those parts 'are very desirous of missionaries among them' and that Peter, an Ohonoquagie chief, had already 'taken a deal of pains to instruct them in Christian knowledge'. He continued in very precise and descriptive language to describe the American Indians who seemed 'well prepared for an English missionary' and wanted to acquire 'Christian knowledge'.⁷⁹²

Mather's advice on the local logistics of successful evangelism is revealing. He promoted systematic *evangelism* even as he loathed *evangelicalism*. Since the

⁷⁹⁰ CMM, 8: 60.

⁷⁹¹ George Wishart lobbied for the widows fund in 1743. This was the same fund that Alexander Webster played such a large role in this, as well. Also, this appears to be the same Mather that was the Praeses of the Boston SSPCK in 1775.

⁷⁹² 'From the Rev. Mr. Samuel Mather's Letter to Dr. Wishart, dated Boston, 23d August 1761', in *An Account of Some Late Attempts*, 5.

Great Awakening, Mather abhorred particularly the theology of the New Birth as well as the allowance of lay or untrained ministers. For this reason, scholars have depicted Mather as an ‘Old Light’ minister who was against change and emotions. As early as 1742, however, Mather would not have used this category to describe himself, choosing instead to refer to himself as a ‘Regular Light’. As mentioned above, this term implies that there was not a binary between New and Old Light. Rather, Mather was appealing to the perceived continuity of ‘true religion’.⁷⁹³ The son of Cotton Mather, one of the best-known Puritan ministers in New England history, Samuel Mather was known as ‘a scholarly minister and avid book collector’ with one of the greatest libraries in New England.⁷⁹⁴ His interest in preserving and expanding what he considered true religion was in continuity with his Puritan and family traditions. Mather was looking for ways to synthesize the new learning with the theological and social traditions he believed upheld New England society.

Samuel Mather’s Scottish correspondent was George Wishart, the son of William Wishart and the minister who preached forcefully to the SSPCK about the dangers of enthusiasm. Wishart took over his father’s charge at the Tron Church in Edinburgh in 1730. He received his Doctor in Divinity in 1759 (just two years before his correspondence with Mather), and served as the Dean of the Chapel Royal by 1765. Wishart played a vital role in criticizing all revivalistic tendencies, and remained a leading liberal member of the Church of Scotland.⁷⁹⁵ Like both of their fathers, however, Mather and Wishart illustrate how their perspectives embraced evangelism even as they scorned evangelicalism. Although both men were vocally and vehemently opposed to many evangelical perspectives surrounding revivalism, they worked with these same evangelicals to expand Christianity to what they all considered ‘heathen’ cultures.

⁷⁹³ Harlan, ‘The Travail of Religious Moderation’, 423.

⁷⁹⁴ Garraty and Carnes, *American National Biography*, vol. 14, 693. Mason Lowance has marked him as representative of the end of the ‘Mather dynasty’ in a socio-theological context but contended that ‘later generations of the family entered a changing America to become almost as successful in the arena of business and commerce’.

⁷⁹⁵ Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: the Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, vol. 1, new edition (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1915), 136-137.

Another important SSPCK correspondent in Boston during this period was Thomas Foxcroft.⁷⁹⁶ Foxcroft was a devoted friend of Jonathan Dickinson who was, as explained earlier in the thesis, one of the most important SSPCK correspondents in colonial American history. Foxcroft went to Harvard at the same time as Benjamin Colman. Alongside Dickinson and perhaps Ebenezer Pemberton, Colman was the most significant SSPCK correspondent in colonial America. Colman and Foxcroft's Harvard was experiencing what Rick Kennedy has described as 'a period when modern ideas and disciplines were being merged with the values of the Puritan founders'. Kennedy continued that Foxcroft wrestled his entire life with 'the tension of standing for traditional Puritanism while at the same time endeavouring to be more "broad and catholic"'.⁷⁹⁷ Foxcroft was attempting to enlighten all cultures including his own with what he believed was true religion. His method, however, was evangelism, and he promoted SSPCK figures such as the revivalist David Brainerd in the process. It is deeply significant that David Brainerd gave Thomas Foxcroft the annotated copy of his own journal as a gift before his premature death.⁷⁹⁸ This type of intimacy suggests close collaboration between ministers who simultaneously grappled with one another over central issues of religious liberty and freedom of conscience.

Foxcroft, like Dickinson, experienced a 'dialectical passage through the revivals' that went from 'initial hostility to joyous participation to moderate and qualified support'. It is crucial to note that Foxcroft was in that large swath of ministers that David Harlan argued were 'defending both the Great Awakening and the Half-Way Covenant'.⁷⁹⁹ While sometimes critical of the revivals, ministers such as Foxcroft saw that piety, alongside orthodoxy, were dual threads that must maintain proper equilibrium. His attempt to balance the ideas of piety and orthodoxy, the new learning and the revivalist piety and venerated traditions with novel experiences is consistent with many Protestants on both sides of the Atlantic.

⁷⁹⁶ Garraty and Carnes, *American National Biography*, vol. 14, 753.

⁷⁹⁷ Garraty and Carnes, *American National Biography*, vol. 8, 347.

⁷⁹⁸ David Brainerd, *Mr. Brainerd's Journal among the Indians*, Elkin's Collection, #221. The book was given to Foxcroft on 24 April 1747. The Journal is Brainerd's manuscript revisions of his book, *Mirabilia Dei inter Indicos, ? 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 presented in a Journal Kept by Order of the Honourable Society (in Scotland) for propagating Christian Knowledge. With some general Remarks* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1746).

⁷⁹⁹ Harlan, 'The Travail of Religious Moderation,' 423.

Like Benjamin Colman, Foxcroft ‘advocated a merger of old Puritanism with the new cosmopolitanism, Calvinist theology with more modern philosophy, and veneration of the early church with an understanding of the need for toleration’. Indeed, Kennedy argued that Foxcroft’s ‘close, forty-year partnership’ with Charles Chauncy ‘is a tribute to the “catholick” values held by that generation’.⁸⁰⁰

An important albeit many times overlooked dimension of this catholick spirit was perhaps seen most clearly through the SSPCK correspondent, Charles Chauncy. Chauncy had no time for revivalism. He was the loudest and fiercest opponent of evangelical movements, and sought to quash such disorder on both sides of the Atlantic. His correspondence with George Wishart formed an important part of the Scottish-American coalition against the revivals. By the 1750s, Chauncy went a radical step further and abandoned Calvinism for Universalism.⁸⁰¹

It might strike one as odd, then, that by 1760 Chauncy was a Boston correspondent for the SSPCK and that by 1762 he was corresponding with John Erskine, a foremost leader of the evangelical party of the Church of Scotland. By October of 1762, Chauncy was describing to Erskine the details of the situation amongst the Ohonoquagie along the Susquehannah River.⁸⁰² Presumably, Chauncy’s reference to missionaries in that region was part of the Boston correspondents’ plan once they received their Commission from the Edinburgh Directors. This was the first step towards the grander design of educating whites and Indians together in preparation for the ministry.⁸⁰³

In a description of one of the missionaries, Chauncy said to Erskine that he thought the young minister was ‘particularly filled with Christian compassion towards the poor Indians’: he has, I believe, *a truly pious soul*’ [my italics]. Chauncy continued by describing Peter who a Mr. Forbes deemed ‘as eminent a Christian as almost any he knows of among the English’. Chauncy explained that Peter could read and write, ‘and has his heart much set upon the propagating Christian

⁸⁰⁰ Garraty and Carnes, *American National Biography*, vol. 8, 348.

⁸⁰¹ Harlan, ‘The Travail of Religious Moderation’, 423-424.

⁸⁰² Chauncy described to Erskine that this settlement was more than 400 miles from Boston. See citation of this letter below.

⁸⁰³ According to Chauncy, a Mr. Forbes had taken a ‘temporary mission’ and Mr. Bowman, whose ordination sermon Chauncy preached, was also prepared to minister amongst the Ohonoquagie who had a church of ‘five males and five females, and three have been added to the since’. Chauncy mentioned communion and other parts of their work as well as a Mr. Rice who it appears was also a minister there. See citation of this letter below.

knowledge among the Indians'. Forbes recommended to Chauncy that they employ Peter to teach Ohonoquagie children, which Forbes contended 'would be an encouragement to him, and a service to the cause in general'. Chauncy told Erskine 'Tis probable we shall fall in with this motion'.⁸⁰⁴ In June of 1763, John Erskine recommended paying Peter of Ohonoquagie approximately fifty shillings, Sterling: this motion, according to Erskine, was a result of one of Chauncy's letters to him.⁸⁰⁵ While these two men battled over the nature of true religion, they collaborated on evangelism as a tool to expand a 'true religion' upon which they did not actually agree.

Foxcroft and Colman's generation of New England ministers were definitively 'committed to searching for logical harmonies between old and new religion'.⁸⁰⁶ The Universalist and committed anti-revivalist Charles Chauncy's participation in the SSPCK along with his correspondence with leading evangelical and revivalist, John Erskine, points to important dynamics occurring within British Protestantism during this period. Importantly, though, it would be one-dimensional to explain it solely as a response to or as a part of Empire. To be sure, the promotion of the Empire stood central to every dimension of the British Atlantic world. As Robertson articulated in his sermon to the SSPCK, and as the Scottish Society itself demonstrated through its colonial work during the eighteenth century, more profound themes undergirded the motivations, intentions and actions of many British Protestants. These were members who sought to spread their shared faith through evangelism, even if that meant collaborating with those whom they deeply disagreed.

But while scholars have repeatedly highlighted Chauncy's shift in theology from Calvinism to Universalism, they prefer to see Erskine as static and unchanging in his orthodoxy. Jonathan Yeager has recently attempted to depict Erskine as an example of a group of evangelicals 'who continued to hold fast to conservative beliefs while being open to new ways of expressing their faith'.⁸⁰⁷ However,

⁸⁰⁴ 'From the Reverend Dr. Chauncy's Letter to Mr. Erskine, dated Boston, 29th October 1762' and 'From Dr. Chauncy's Letter to Mr. Erskine, Nov. 2. 1762', in *An Account of Some Late Attempts*, 10.

⁸⁰⁵ CMM, 8: 176.

⁸⁰⁶ Garraty and Carnes, *American National Biography*, vol. 8, 348

⁸⁰⁷ Yeager, *Enlightened Evangelicalism*, 20. On page five, Yeager called evangelicals like Erskine 'gospel-minded', and pervading Yeager's interpretation of Erskine is a sense that Erskine was holding onto something old and that liberals were forsaking their traditions. This chapter tries to question this

evangelical revivalists understood salvation, the church and tradition in a way that was innovative: Seceders were correct to point out that evangelicals had drifted quite a long ways from their traditional Scottish Presbyterian faith. Furthermore, the clergy accommodated their own theology to the experiences of their parishioners and colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic. As Yeager readily pointed out, Erskine's primary intentions were to 'contribute to the evangelical revival' and the revivals' legacy. But evangelical revivalism altered 'orthodoxy' at least as much as Wishart, Robertson and Foxcroft. Both evangelicals and liberals were seeking to reconcile their traditions to their current social and historical conditions. Chauncy's universalism was a step past the realm of orthodox Calvinism. But on several important issues Erskine also diverged quite radically from the Scottish and English non-conformist heritage of the last two centuries.

Both Erskine and Chauncy were changing their respective traditions even as they sought to preserve the elements they found important. Chauncy's acceptance of piety stood alongside his universalism and other progressive philosophical viewpoints that forced a re-thinking of orthodoxy. It is important to note that, like his colleague Thomas Foxcroft, Chauncy was what Charles Lippy described as 'one who sought to preserve what he thought integral to New England's distinctive religious life and adapt Puritan thought to changing times'.⁸⁰⁸ But it is of central importance to realize that Erskine was also adapting and transforming his own theology of evangelicalism even as he appealed to orthodoxy. One must remember that, in relation to perceived orthodoxy and true religion, revivalism was just as theologically precarious as liberalism.

Of course, both New England Puritanism and Scottish Presbyterianism had repeatedly changed their theologies through the centuries even as they claimed to be

binary, recognizing that the evangelical interpretation of 'orthodoxy' should not define the historical conversation of the historical evolution of 'orthodoxy' within this religious tradition.

⁸⁰⁸ Garraty and Carnes, *American National Biography*, vol. 14, 754. It should be noted that Lippy did not take the above position on Chauncy. Rather, he offered it as one of the two major ways that scholars have interpreted him. The other major interpretation of Chauncy is 'as a liberal who jettisoned much Puritan ideology'. While I certainly agree that Chauncy relieved himself of major portions of Puritan theology, I believe that his role as a correspondent with the SSPCK demonstrates the former interpretation that I have described in the main text is more accurate. On Chauncy, see Corrigan, *Hidden Balance*.

preserving true religion.⁸⁰⁹ In this way, Scottish liberals such as William Wishart and William Robertson were engaging in the same process as the evangelicals John Erskine and Alexander Webster: they were all trying to define the parameters of true religion within a contested rhetorical tradition. This was a process that had been ongoing for centuries.

In the same way, Puritanism was not a static, universally codified system to which all Congregationalists and Independents adhered. As David Hall recently confirmed, much historiography has demonstrated in the last half century that Puritanism ‘was hybrid and multivocal’. Furthermore, ‘as a culture or tradition, it varied according to the local setting, the social field, in which it played itself out’. New England’s Puritan theology certainly fit into what Hall called a ‘mixture of motifs’ or the ‘ambidextrous’ nature of Puritanism’s sacramental theology. In New England, family and religious practices adjusted themselves on a community basis.⁸¹⁰ Similarly, as shown in previous chapters, English Independents and Presbyterians were evolving perhaps more than any other strand of non-Anglican British Atlantic Protestantism.

Therefore it is clear that a variety of competing visions within a single tradition were adapting to the changing realities of the eighteenth century Atlantic world. Such changes included a flourishing public sphere and the new economic and social circumstances related to an expanding Empire. Within an Enlightenment milieu, these religious leaders were responding to these new realities within an ever-evolving landscape of British Atlantic Protestantism.

Conclusion

As seen above, the SSPCK members who corresponded with one another—Mather to Wishart and Erskine to Chauncy—all in their own way invoked piety as a means of promoting true religion. Furthermore, following the path of their forbearers, Edinburgh literati members such as William Robertson, George Wishart, Hugh Blair and Gavin Hamilton appealed to evangelism and piety as an integral part of true

⁸⁰⁹ Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625-1760* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 17.

⁸¹⁰ David D. Hall, ‘From “Religion and Society” to Practices: The New Religious History’ in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 148, 154, 157.

religion. So, too, did the Popular party, the Seceding churches and Relief Church in Scotland as well as the budding evangelicals in Scotland and America. None of their actions or statements should be seen as disingenuous or merely utilitarian. Piety was the fuel of evangelism, and all of these ministers could congregate their dissenting views around the SSPCK as an important portal of theological and social progress. All of these ministers were pursuing reform *within* particular gradations of their respective traditions even as they were *all* changing those traditions significantly. This was the result not only of human agency and religious traditions but also of larger social forces that were re-defining the public sphere as well as the private place of worship.

Just as Thomas Foxcroft ‘participated in a team effort by Boston ministers to try to lead New England into an urbane and tolerant Congregationalism that retained its pietistic fervour’,⁸¹¹ so too were the SSPCK leaders on both sides of the Atlantic attempting to forge a similar synthesis of true religion. The variety of dialectics—between piety and orthodoxy, between the new learning and the affections and between venerated traditions and novel experiences—produced syntheses that varied in degrees based upon one’s theological and social context. The SSPCK housed both poles of this British Protestant spectrum. The fact that both extremes participated heavily in the SSPCK’s colonial endeavours sheds light on the way that evangelism was an accepted facet of perceived true religion even as all sides fought vehemently over what that actually meant.

If we can accept Michael Warner’s recent contention that evangelicalism transformed a myriad of traditional forms of piety, then the SSPCK’s transatlantic discourse of evangelism sheds light on the larger struggle to define, understand and reconcile the integral components of what all non-Anglican British Atlantic Protestants called true religion. Evangelicals such as John Erskine were endorsing the SSPCK as a way to promote their novel understanding of orthodoxy in relation to evangelical revivalism. Simultaneously, Enlightenment figures such as William Robertson were endorsing the SSPCK as a way to expand and develop their own new understanding of orthodoxy in relation to reasonableness and the new learning. Individuals within the SSPCK bounced all over this theological, social and

⁸¹¹ Garraty and Carnes, *American National Biography*, vol. 8, 348.

intellectual spectrum. But all were seeking to understand the gradations of their respective traditions in light of these new experiences stemming from a radical transformation of piety within a burgeoning public sphere.

Conclusion

Evangelism and Enlightenment: the Legacy of the SSPCK

By the 1770s, the SSPCK was implementing its colonial policies by way of two boards of correspondents: one in New Jersey at the College of New Jersey and the other in Boston. By January of 1771 the Directors were reiterating that their purpose in the colonies was to extend ‘religious instruction’ to ‘Indians or British otherwise destitute’.⁸¹² At least by the end of that year, John Witherspoon was taking an active role in the SSPCK’s work: as president of the College of New Jersey, Witherspoon also appeared to be the leader of the board of correspondents in New Jersey. The Scottish Society also seemed eager to work with the NEC, and was meeting the Company’s leaders in London to promote further collaboration. Outside of evangelistic and educational circles, others were noting the ‘usefulness’ of these projects. Benjamin Franklin, for example, wrote a letter to the Society in London where he instructed that the ‘missionaries should have some knowledge of Agriculture, Surgery and house carpentry, etc...’.⁸¹³

As mentioned in chapter seven, the collaboration between the NEC and the SSPCK was made easier in the latter half of the century as the NEC gradually moved closer to non-conformity and further away from Anglicanism. But it also appears true that the SSPCK was trying as much as ever to, in the words of its announcement in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* in the late 1760s, both ‘civilize’ and convert the Native Americans to Christianity ‘without regard to any particular name, sects or parties, so, to their honour be it spoken’ that the colonial project ‘hath been countenanced and encouraged by persons of various denominations in Britain and America...’.⁸¹⁴ Such ecumenism can be found, for example, in September of 1774 when the Correspondents reported that the Archbishop of York had sent a donation.⁸¹⁵

During these years just before the Revolution, the SSPCK was most interested in three major projects in the colonies. The first was education. The

⁸¹² CMM, 9: 44-45.

⁸¹³ CMM, 9: 59.

⁸¹⁴ ‘To the publisher of the *Edinburgh Advertiser*’, 6.

⁸¹⁵ CMM, 9: 148.

Society was continuing to fund the College of New Jersey in helping them to obtain books.⁸¹⁶ They had collaborated with the college for some time in attempting to educate Native American students there. The SSPCK also worked with Harvard to help fund the Society's second major project, about which it seemed especially optimistic. Harvard and the SSPCK were funding Samuel Kirkland, a missionary who knew several Indian languages and had a reputation for much success amongst the Iroquois. The Scottish Society began funding Kirkland by the late sixties, and it is likely that the Boston correspondents urged him to sever his already strained relationship with his mentor and former teacher, Eleazer Wheelock.⁸¹⁷

As mentioned previously, the SSPCK and Wheelock were on shaky terms and, though the Society was bound contractually to him, the Directors were uncertain of his sincerity and his objectives. This was seen clearly by September of 1774 when a letter to Wheelock from the Directors refused his bill for payment and seemed disturbed by his management of missionaries who were commissioned to the Delawares in recent years.⁸¹⁸ The Society was particularly dismissive of his work once he received a charter for Dartmouth College, and they rejected his request for a board of correspondents in New Hampshire.⁸¹⁹ Wheelock grew bitter over the SSPCK's increasing allocation of funds (which the Society kept in bonds in Scotland⁸²⁰) to Kirkland's mission rather than to his newly established college.⁸²¹ The Society repeatedly denied Wheelock even though they did give him funds on occasion. The SSPCK seemed excited about Kirkland's work, and they funded him throughout the 1770s and 1780s.⁸²² Regarding Wheelock, though, by 1773 the

⁸¹⁶ CMM, 9: 90. Page 139 also provides an example of how important John Witherspoon and the New Jersey board was becoming to the SSPCK in Edinburgh.

⁸¹⁷ Christine Sternberg Patrick, *The Life and Times of Samuel Kirkland, 1741-1808: Missionary to the Oneida Indians, American Patriot, and Founder of Hamilton College* (Ph. D. diss: State University of New York at Buffalo; Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services, 1993), 1-2; 209.

⁸¹⁸ CMM, 9: 138-139; *Excerpt from Report of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. 1774*, chapter 2, 'Proceedings of the Society, in America, under the first patent', frame 45. For more on the Director's increasingly strained relationship with Wheelock, see, for example, CMM, 9: 101, 130, 134 and 138.

⁸¹⁹ CMM, 9: 77. For an example of Kirkland being funded into the 1780s, see CMM, 10: 47.

⁸²⁰ CMM, 9: 164.

⁸²¹ Patrick, *Life and Times of Samuel Kirkland*, 232.

⁸²² For the most thorough treatment of Samuel Kirkland and Eleazer Wheelock, see Alan Taylor, *Divided Ground*.

Directors were letting him know that his project was ‘but little conducive to the great purpose of “evangelizing the Heathen”’.⁸²³

Along with funding Kirkland and the College of New Jersey, the SSPCK continued to support John Brainerd and the Bethel and Brotherton Indians who had moved onto the 4,000-acre tract supplied by the New Jersey government. A report by the Society stated that between 150 and 160 Native Americans lived on this tract of land, and that the number ‘of the white people is very considerable’. One reason the SSPCK promoted this project was due to the peaceful relations it was causing between Indians and whites.⁸²⁴ In 1783, it was reported to the Directors that John Brainerd had deceased. Although he was dismissed at times and worked in various capacities (including as a correspondent at the College of New Jersey), Brainerd had worked with the SSPCK for over thirty years. Daniel Simon, a Native American at Brotherton, replaced Brainerd as the SSPCK’s missionary.⁸²⁵ The SSPCK was continuing to fund Ocom in the early 1770s, as well, but the Society was only paying him £20 while simultaneously paying £50 to its less experienced missionary, Samuel Kirkland.⁸²⁶

Along with these three major projects in colonial America during the 1770s before the Revolution, the SSPCK was also looking to expand to other parts of the world. The Society supplied four missionaries to ‘Indian tribes in Canada’ by 1774, and it was working with Ezra Stiles and Samuel Hopkins in Rhode Island to support ‘two negro men’—Bristol Yamma and John Quamine—to return to their native African country in Guinea as missionaries.⁸²⁷ With all of these projects underway, it appeared that the SSPCK was finally achieving its goal of enlightened reform by way of evangelism and education through broad support from all Protestants in an effort of unity and peace.

⁸²³ CMM, 9: 140.

⁸²⁴ ‘Proceedings of the Society, in America, under the first patent’, in *Excerpt from Report of the Society*, frame 44.

⁸²⁵ CMM, 10: 29, 62.

⁸²⁶ CMM, 9: 44. The Directors read letters from Ocom who was at Brotherton in February of 1775. On this topic, see CMM, 9: 225.

⁸²⁷ ‘Proceedings of the Society, in America, under the first patent’, in *Excerpt from Report of the Society*, frames 45-46. Also see CMM, 9: 119, 192.

Two major events—one internal and one external—brought the SSPCK’s efforts to a grinding halt. The external reason was the American Revolution. By early winter of 1777, the Edinburgh Directors reported that John Witherspoon had presented a bill for payment. The Directors responded that they ‘unanimously agree neither to accept nor pay this bill in consideration that the colony of New Jersey is at present in a state of rebellion against the Crown of Great Britain’. They also refused payment to Witherspoon, because they recognized that ‘this bill is a remittance by the way of France’. Therefore, the colonial rebellion, and more than a few of the SSPCK correspondents’ support of the rebellion, caused a disruption in the Society’s evangelistic and educational endeavours.⁸²⁸

But the ‘present disturbances’ of the Revolution were linked to the internal reason that the Society’s efforts in the 1770s were undermined.⁸²⁹ Despite the ostensible unity within British Protestantism, abiding divisions persisted. One of the most important examples was the friction between the SSPCK’s celebrated missionary, Samuel Kirkland, and William Johnson, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs and member of the Church of England. Johnson was also a leading member of the SPG, which was the Anglican missionary society in the colonies. In the late 1760s, as Christine Patrick has explained, Johnson had ‘actively solicited the SPG to send men from England to fill existing vacancies’. While this thesis has explained many reasons for the leadership’s refusal of certain types of Protestantism (be it revivalism or Anglicanism), Johnson’s reasons for rejecting Presbyterianism amongst Native Americans provides an insightful clue for reasons of religious dissension on the ground. Johnson argued that, ‘the differences in the Christian religions only resulted in confusion among the Indians and impeded the progress of Christianity’. He continued, therefore, that ‘it was better to allow only one church’s missionaries among them’.⁸³⁰

As chapter one of this thesis explains, a Jesuit priest in Massachusetts during the 1730s had raised a similar issue to Benjamin Colman, stating that Protestants’ approaches to evangelism only caused confusion. Colman’s response then was

⁸²⁸ CMM, 9: 244.

⁸²⁹ CMM, 9: 317.

⁸³⁰ Patrick, *Life and Times of Samuel Kirkland*, 236-237.

similar no doubt to Kirkland's over thirty years later: it was better to spread true religion than to accept a corrupted form of the faith. According to Patrick, Kirkland was very suspicious and annoyed at 'denominational rivalry encouraged by Johnson' and fought passionately with him over doctrinal issues such as re-baptism and 'the vigorous attempts by Johnson to recruit Anglican missionaries after the Fort Stanwix Treaty'.⁸³¹

This personal controversy between Johnson and Kirkland must be considered in light of one of the most vigorous cultural debates of the entire eighteenth century: the battle over the establishment of a colonial bishop. As Ned Landsman has demonstrated, this issue many times helped unify British Protestants who were otherwise fiercely opposed to one another: 'Anglican claims to primacy brought religious liberals, conservatives, and evangelicals together in opposition'.⁸³² One must also keep in mind the other bitter personal rivalries within the colonial SSPCK that are highlighted in previous chapters.

The reasons given above are all significant for explaining how the SSPCK's colonial project began to falter during the 1770s. But these explanations point to an overarching explanation related to increasingly divergent interests between Edinburgh and the colonial leaders. Throughout the eighteenth century, the SSPCK had struggled to overcome the myriad obstacles towards evangelism and education in the colonies. The Revolution, the Seven Years War and the Great Awakening were changing the landscape of the colonies, and the Society was attempting to respond in a way that promoted its goals of reforming what it considered uncivilized cultures through religion and education. The Society's ideals of enlightened evangelism might well have continued in the colonies (and did in some capacity) despite the setbacks mentioned above. But two events hint at the reason for the Society's shift away from the new United States even though it continued to send some funds.

The first hint comes in an exchange between the Edinburgh Directors and Eleazar Wheelock. By August of 1773, the Directors told Wheelock

that as they pledged their faith to the Publick to oversee the proper application of this Fund [raised in Scotland by Occom and Whitaker], he would not draw again upon them without either having the leave of the

⁸³¹ Patrick, *Life and Times of Samuel Kirkland*, 252.

⁸³² Landsman, 'The Episcopate, the British Union, and the Failure of Religious Settlement in Colonial British America', in *First Prejudice*, 93.

Society, or previously advising or obtaining the consent of their Boston or New Jersey Board of Correspondents and that they are of opinion that these two Boards are fully sufficient for managing this Fund and that the presently appointing of any new Board of Correspondents is unnecessary.⁸³³

The Directors rejected another bill of Wheelock's in July of 1774: a bill for the services of two students from Dartmouth whom we had sent out as missionaries.⁸³⁴ In a letter to Wheelock, the Directors insisted that the Society 'pledged their faith to the contribution that the money should be under their own direction'. The Directors continued that they were taking 'the most effectual methods' to apply the funds towards the reason the money was first raised: to support evangelism to and education for Native Americans. If Wheelock had any ideas to this end, he could propose it to either of the two boards they had commissioned. Otherwise, he would not be receiving the funds he requested.⁸³⁵ Furthermore, they asked repeatedly 'for satisfaction' as to whether or not 'the money transmitted' to him 'was not applied to the original purposes of the institution'.⁸³⁶

In July of 1788, the Edinburgh Directors convened for a meeting particularly to discuss 'the State of the American business so far as relates to the Indian School carried on by Dr. Wheelock, and the Funds in the Society's hands for the support of that institution'. By March of 1787, the Society commissioned a sub-committee in New Hampshire 'to examine Dr. Wheelock's Accounts, and see so that money had been received for and actually expended on, Moor's Indian, as distinct from Dartmouth College'. With Wheelock already in Boston, the Boston Board formed a committee to meet with him instead. It is clear from this record that the Directors believed that Wheelock was no longer promoting Indian education but had instead appropriated the funds to Dartmouth College. By means of 'a private letter from a respectable Correspondent in New England', the Directors were 'confirmed in their suspicions that the money received for Moor's Indian School has been applied to Dartmouth College'. Two correspondents had also visited the college and reported

⁸³³ CMM, 9: 101.

⁸³⁴ CMM, 9: 130-134.

⁸³⁵ CMM, 9: 138-139.

⁸³⁶ *An Account of the Funds, Expenditure, and General Management of the Affairs, of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, Contained in a Report, drawn up by a Committee of their Number, appointed for that Purpose, Published by Order of the Society.*(Edinburgh: Printed by J. Paterson, 1796), 60.

that no one was attending Moor's Indian school, not even white students.⁸³⁷ In response, they unanimously agreed to take the investigation even further:

it is now proposed to instruct the Boston Board to empower such persons as they shall judge proper to examine Dr. Wheelock's Accounts of money laid out on Moor's Indian School from the 1767, when the large Collection in England and Scotland was made for it, and see how far the money has been laid out for that purpose as distinct from Dartmouth College, -- also to take a schedule of all the real Estate belonging to the said School with a particular description of each parcel, its local situation, the name of the donor, whether a corporate body or a private person, and the limitations under which it is holden, that if any Lands have been purchased with the money collected in England they be discriminated in the paid schedule from those given by the Americans, -- and that their business be so transacted, that the Estate belonging to the Indian School shall be kept separated and distinct from the Estate of Dartmouth College'.⁸³⁸

Legally, the Directors discovered that they could not use the funds for any other purpose. But they could and did demand evidence of legitimacy from Wheelock before releasing any of the funds.⁸³⁹ The Society continued to focus its attention on promoting its version of evangelism and education through their two boards of correspondents rather than the evangelical leader of charity schools in the colonies, Eleazer Wheelock. But Edinburgh's confidence in its boards of correspondents was, too, about to change.

In June of 1788, Dr. John Witherspoon conveyed a strikingly similar perspective as Wheelock on the subject of Indian education and evangelism. Witherspoon told the Directors that Daniel Simon, the Brotherton Indian who replaced John Brainerd, was dismissed 'on account of bad behaviour'. At this point, Witherspoon asserted that the board at Princeton declared that it knew of 'little benefit arising from missions among the wild Indians', and therefore they 'had resolved to employ no other missionary in his stead'. Rather, the board would use the money from the SSPCK in order for 'the purpose of educating pious youth, who might be employed as ministers in the growing congregations of Irish and English Inhabitants on the frontiers'. The Directors responded immediately that this decision by the New Jersey board was a 'departure from the objects on account of which the Society received the money and therefore in future no bills for that purpose will be

⁸³⁷ *An Account of the Funds*, 61.

⁸³⁸ CMM, 10: 202-205.

⁸³⁹ *An Account of the Funds*, 61-62.

paid'.⁸⁴⁰ Implied in this exchange were issues not only of Indian education but also ones of power. The SSPCK repeatedly felt the need to remind its colonial correspondents that Edinburgh held the purse strings and ultimately made the decisions. But Wheelock and Witherspoon's correspondence with the Directors illustrates an ever-widening gulf between ideas of evangelism on the two sides of the Atlantic.

In 1796, the SSPCK mused upon its colonial work during a detailed account of its operations. The Society explained it had two American missionaries in 1796, the 'eminently qualified' Samuel Kirkland and Jonathan Sergeant (son of the famous mid-century missionary by the same name). Both of these missionaries operated through the Boston Board and were paid £50. In turning to a more general assessment of the Society's colonial operations during the eighteenth century, the authors stated that 'the success of the missionaries among the North American tribes has been various'. While the Directors had done all and 'more than all' they could, the authors commented that 'the Committee are sorry to be under the necessity of reporting to their constituents, that the fruit upon the whole has not corresponded to the labour bestowed'. Throughout the century, the SSPCK had appropriated all of its missionary funds to the American colonies, and 'the Society long indulged the hopes of doing essential service to religion, by the conversion and civilization of numbers among the savage tribes'. Moreover, 'for many years' the Society was 'encouraged by flattering accounts of the progress and success of their missionaries in that country; which they believe to have been well founded'. In recent years, however, the SSPCK had 'begun to entertain doubts upon that head'.⁸⁴¹

The Society requested again that a 'deputation' from the Boston Board travel to Oneida country and assess the situation of its two missionaries. There were three specific areas to which Edinburgh was most interested. The first was 'to examine into the state of religion in these missions'. The second area of greatest concern to Edinburgh was 'the manner in which their missionaries conduct their ministerial work' and the final concern was 'the effects of which it has been productive'. The SSPCK continued that it had 'furnished the deputies to be sent with a set of most

⁸⁴⁰ CMM, 10: 194.

⁸⁴¹ *An Account of the Funds*, 59-64.

particular queries, to which they have desired specific answers to be returned', and the Society was waiting for a response 'with much anxiety'. After hearing about the situation in Oneida, the Society would make a decision about whether it would allocate its missionary funds to America or whether it would simply send a minimal amount there and focus its attention elsewhere. The Society in Edinburgh emphasised that the issue would 'be laid before the public; from which they wish to conceal no part of their proceedings, and to which they shall always hold themselves accountable'.⁸⁴²

By 1800, the Directors reported to the public that they were 'sorry to be obliged to state' bad news, but that they continued to receive 'repeated demands for money' from 'Dr. Wheelock' [Eleazer's son] at Dartmouth. Nonetheless, the Directors continued to reject Wheelock, because they 'have had no evidence that any alteration for the better has taken place, in the circumstances of the school, or that the original purposes of its institution are in any respect carried on'. The Society did continue to fund Sergeant and Kirkland, and simply held onto the money raised for the purpose of missions to Native Americans. They expressed a strong desire to see the funds used, and again hoped to hear from Boston as soon as possible.⁸⁴³

Although the SSPCK continued to provide some funding to missionary work in the United States during the nineteenth century, they remained apprehensive. By the 1830s, they even sent inspectors from Scotland to assess the situation. The Society also began pursuing more opportunities in Canada, believing the Canadian aboriginal people were treated with much more dignity than those in the United States and therefore had more potential to be evangelised.⁸⁴⁴ The SSPCK continued to fund Moor's Indian school (though only on occasion), because the funds were raised specifically for that purpose. By the early twentieth century, however, the Scottish Society 'presented petition to the Court of Session that they were satisfied

⁸⁴² *An Account of the Funds*, 64.

⁸⁴³ 'Appendix, Society-Hall, February 1800', in *The Excellence of Christian Morality: a Sermon, preached before the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, at their Anniversary Meeting, Thursday, 6th June 1799* (Edinburgh: Printed by J. Ritchie, 1800), 4-5.

⁸⁴⁴ John Tawse and George Lyon, *Report to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge of a Visit to America, by their Appointment in Reference to the Fund Under their Charge for the Education of Native Indians*, with an introduction by the Directors (Edinburgh: printed for the Society and sold by William Whyte & Co., Booksellers to the Queen Dowager, Edinburgh Printing Co., 1839). This is an excellent resource for information about the SSPCK nineteenth century activities in the United States.

that the purposes for which the Fund was subscribed had entirely failed and suggesting that it could now be appropriately and more profitably employed by extending the areas of operations'.⁸⁴⁵

On 11 January 1924, the Court of Sessions decreed that 'the purposes for which Moore's Indian Mission Fund was subscribed had failed'. The Society was now 'authorised and empowered...to apply the income of the capital sums forming the said Fund, and the accumulated interest thereon' to other endeavours. The SSPCK had permission to apply the fund in three major ways: first, 'for training and educating of Native Christians in any selected mission field in the British Dominions beyond the seas for the work of missionaries among their own non-Christian people'. Second, the Society was authorised to use the funds 'for training of British youths as missionaries, interpreters and schoolmasters among non-Christian peoples'. Finally, the SSPCK could appropriate the funds 'by way of subscription in, and initiation of, missionary enterprise among the non-Christian people'. In March of 1924, the Directors in Edinburgh recommended to the rest of the Society that '£40 be given to Nyasaland, Kikuyu, Punjab, Kalimpong, Serampore, Bangalore and £30 to Madras--£270 in all'.⁸⁴⁶ While the SSPCK's missionary work in America had failed, it was these seeds that planted a much larger missionary movement. The expansive British Protestant missionary activities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries drew from the tactics, strategies and philosophical assumptions that the SSPCK had formulated during its first missionary endeavours to colonial America.

In one sense, the SSPCK's missionary work in the colonies failed to produce major change or lasting legacies. In another way, though, the Society's legacy still reverberates through several of its missionaries such as the Brainerds, Samson Occom and Samuel Kirkland. In various capacities, some of the SSPCK's founding or collaborative communities exist and practise reformed Christianity. But Henry Sefton provides a larger context in which the SSPCK's missionary work in the eighteenth century should be placed:

In the eighteenth century the Church of Scotland did no missionary work other than that performed by its members through this Society. It was this

⁸⁴⁵ Andrew and Cairns, *Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge*, 22-23.

⁸⁴⁶ Andrew and Cairns, *Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge*, 22-23.

Society which turned the Church's attention for the first time to the problem of evangelism overseas, a problem which had not occurred to the Reformers. By providing the challenge which awakened the Church of Scotland (and in America) to its Missionary responsibilities the Indian mission in some measure prepared the way for the great missionary enterprises of the nineteenth century.⁸⁴⁷

But this institutional narrative of early missions should not diminish the SSPCK's activities and ambitions during the eighteenth century. Many of the foremost leaders of the early British (also inclusive of particularly Scottish) Enlightenment played a central role in the establishment, development and articulation of the SSPCK's work in the colonies. These leaders of the Enlightenment were simultaneously leaders of British Atlantic Protestantism. They saw a new age of progress and reform coming into its own, and believed that a better and more refined world was at hand. Furthermore, they believed that evangelism was an important component of the establishment of this new world order.

Unequivocally, though, this new world order was believed to be—in some way, shape or form—the coming of the kingdom of God. This was what made these leaders distinct members of the religious Enlightenment. They shared with their non-Christian (or non-Protestant) colleagues many of the same goals for civil and personal improvement. But the religious enlighteners believed these goals were part of a larger story of enlightenment and progress towards the kingdom of God. This eschatological meta-narrative was built into their religious tradition, and it complemented the Enlightenment milieu of the age. But a new evangelical tradition was emerging within (though not exclusive to) British Atlantic Protestantism that also emphasised the coming kingdom of God. With evangelism as its framework, and revivalism as its catalyst, evangelicalism appropriated the discourse of the religious Enlightenment and created a new vision for ushering in the kingdom of God.

This thesis has attempted to cast light on these nuances within and between evangelism and Enlightenment in the British Atlantic world during the eighteenth century. Using the SSPCK as its vehicle, this thesis argued that evangelism was a quintessential tool of the religious Enlightenment. For religious enlighteners,

⁸⁴⁷ Sefton, 'The Scotch Society in the American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century', 184.

missions were a productive means by which civil and religious reform could transpire. Evangelism was also used as a point of convergence for many competing interests. British leaders less interested in the promotion and expansion of true religion and more interested in the promotion and expansion of Empire could accept the SSPCK's ostensible motives. According to Sefton, this was why a leading SSPCK member and evangelical leader, John Erskine, could advocate 'arguments from expediency only to convince the sceptical' about the Society's colonial missions even though Erskine was 'quite convinced in his own mind that the main justification for the Society's work [was] a desire "to rescue mankind from the bondage of sin and Satan"'.⁸⁴⁸ But even though members of the Enlightenment differed with Erskine over the nature of conversion, they could collaborate with him over evangelism as a tool of civil and moral progress, regardless of what they believed about the nature of Empire. William Robertson could critique harshly the degeneracy of the British Empire as well as the antinomian disorder springing from evangelicalism while simultaneously promoting evangelism as an integral ingredient for spiritual and social progress. It was this collaboration that led to the Society's initiatives for education (they provided funding to some of the major institutes for higher education) and evangelism (they funded and corresponded with most leaders of British Protestantism).

But the colonial projects of evangelism played out in ways none of the leaders could have anticipated. In striving for stability and success, the Society ironically contributed significantly towards legitimising both revivalism and the Presbyterian schism of the 1740s along with loosening mandates for ministerial ordination. The SSPCK also fuelled one of the most significant implications of eighteenth-century revivalism: a distinct Native Christianity that found its identity within both its Christian and Native traditions. By studying both the formal policies as well as the human interactions between all facets of the SSPCK, this thesis has intended to provide one accurate representation of the nuanced way in which evangelism and Enlightenment interacted and responded to one another in the eighteenth century.

⁸⁴⁸ Sefton, 'The Scotch Society in the American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century', 184.

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