LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

THEY CAME UP OUT OF THE WATER:
EVANGELICALISM AND ETHIOPIAN BAPTISTS IN THE SOUTHERN LOWCOUNTRY AND JAMAICA, 1737-1806

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, George Liele, an African American former slave, stood in front of his colored congregation inside their two-story Baptist Church in Kingston, Jamaica. Liele and his followers had struggled to raise funds for the building for nearly a decade, before completing the chapel in 1793. As he spoke to deacons, converts, and curious followers about their need for salvation in Jesus Christ, at least one heart churned toward conversion.[1] After hearing Liele speak, Mrs. Brooks, an African born slave, felt "someting so gentle come through" her heart, which had been "too full an too hard." In a sudden rush, Mrs. Brooks understood that she was a great sinner, and after receiving the salvation in Jesus Christ that Liele had told her about, she told a Baptist missionary's wife, "God make me feel dat him so good to notice poor me, dat me throw meself down, and weep quite a flood."[2]

George Liele led the first Baptist missionary movement to Jamaica that would later spur Mrs. Brooks' along with thousands of other slaves and free coloreds' conversions in the island from 1784-1806. Born a slave in Virginia around 1751, Liele's master, Henry Sharp, brought him to the Georgia lowcountry during Liele's early childhood. When he was about nineteen, Liele attended Sharp's church in Burke County, Georgia, where he converted and began proselytizing blacks and whites in the lowcountry. After becoming the first licensed slave preacher in America in 1774, Liele established an itinerant ministry in South Carolina and Georgia until the American Revolution. After the Revolution, Liele, whose master was a loyalist, obtained his freedom and evacuated with the British for Jamaica, taking four of his fellow

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[1] Liele had been trying to build the Kingston chapel, since he began his ministry in 1784. They did not finish the large chapel until 1793. George Liele, letter to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, in *The Baptist Annual Register: Including Sketches of the State of Religion Among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad, 1790-1793* (London: Dilly, Button, and Thomas, 1798), 1:335.

[2] F.A. Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society, From 1792-1842. By the Reverend F.A. Cox. To Which is Added a Sketch of the General Baptist Mission* (London: T. Ward & Co., and G & J. Dyer, 1842), 37.

African American ministers with him. Liele's missionary work in Jamaica marked the first successful slave Christianization effort in Britain's most economically viable Atlantic colony. His arrival also signified the presence of the first colored evangelist in Jamaica, where he would later receive government sanction to preach in Kingston, Spanish Town and plantations throughout the island.

While Liele and the colored Baptists secured the greatest slave following during the eighteenth century, they were not the first Protestant ministers in Jamaica. The Anglican Church had made some headway among the captive populations on the island, but their inability to convince planters that Christianity would not disrupt the social order and ineffectual attempts to draw colored people into a church that so clearly reflected the Jamaican social hierarchy hindered the Church's attempts to evangelize slaves. The Moravians also experienced some success after entering the country in 1754, and they established five stations around Jamaica within a few years of their arrival.[3] However, a failure to adopt itinerant missions, and the fact that many Moravian pastors owned slaves, prevented the widespread success of these missionaries until the nineteenth century.[4] Dr. Thomas Coke, a close associate of the Wesley's, founded the Methodist movement to Jamaica in 1784.[5] Though these ministers gained a moderate response in slave communities, their inability to appease the planter class often banned them from preaching on plantations until the early nineteenth century.[6] Liele and the colored

[3] Silvia Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 64.

[4] Shirley C. Gordon, *God Almighty Make Me Free: Christianity in Preemancipation Jamaica* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1996), 30-33.

[5] Winston Arthur Lawson, Religion and Race: African and European Roots in Conflict, A Jamaican Testament (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1996), 5-6.

[6] Stephen Cooke, letter to John C. Rippon, 26 November 1791, in *The Baptist Annual Register: Including Sketches of the State of Religion Among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad, 1790-1793* (London: Dilly, Button, and Thomas, 1798), 1:338.

Baptist missionary movement he inspired, therefore, was the first effective slave Christianization attempt in more than a century of Jamaica's colonial existence.

This study focuses on one key question, among a number of other complicating inquiries- how did Liele and the evangelists under his mentorship transmit evangelical Christianity into Jamaican slave societies? Simply, George Liele and the colored Baptist missionary movement he motivated, transmitted evangelicalism to Jamaica by adopting and adapting inherited practices from the first Great Awakening and the African American Baptist movement in the southern lowcountry during the Revolutionary era. The development of this black Baptist movement in the South and its spread to Jamaica occurred in three stages. First, white evangelicals, like George Whitefield, carried Christianity to African American populations in South Carolina during the Great Awakening. Second, African American leaders, such as George Liele, rose up as slave and free black Baptist preachers to evangelize colored communities in the Georgia and South Carolina lowcountry prior to and during the American Revolution.[7] Third, George Liele and other African American Baptist ministers left the lowcountry for Jamaica, where they replicated proselytization methods and religious practices from both white evangelicals and southern African American Baptists. In each stage, appeasing whites, preaching methods, Baptist rituals, education, and creating a community of believers all proved integral in evangelicalism's transatlantic development in colored communities. As both a slave preacher in the lowcountry and a free black evangelist in Jamaica, Liele espoused the practices of southern evangelicalism and encouraged the development of the colored Baptist movement in his Atlantic spheres of influence.

[7] Frey and Wood, 83-85. This study will use the term "black Baptists" to identify slaves and free coloreds of varying African heritage, who converted and participated in Baptist ideologies.

This project intersects with studies on plantation life, southern evangelicalism, Atlantic religious developments and cultural transmissions, to create a better understanding of evangelicalism among eighteenth century Afro-Atlantic peoples. The terms "evangelicalism" and "southern evangelicalism" require further clarification. Evangelicalism, as it will be used in this study, assumes David Bebbington's quadrilateral, explained in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*.[8] C*onversionism, activism, biblicism,* and *crucicentrism*, comprise the four pillars of Bebbington's definition. An evangelical, according to Bebbington, believes that Christianity changes lives, the Gospel must be spread, the Bible holds inherent spiritual truths, and Christ died a sacrificial death on the cross.[9] While the degree to which an individual may have held or stood apart from these beliefs waxed and waned based on a personal response to the Gospel's message and external variables, all evangelical figures in this study adhered to these basic precepts.

The "southern" modifier to "evangelicalism" that will be applied throughout this project further complicates the term and goes beyond Bebbington's definition, because it unearths questions of geographic range and cultural influence. For the purpose of this study, "southern evangelicalism" could also be termed *lowcountry* evangelicalism in terms of geographic range, as the American focus will be limited to the lowcountry areas surrounding Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia. The cultural ties of this evangelicalism, however, extended

[8] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3.

[9] Ibid. For other studies on the development of evangelicalism, see also: Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001); Michael A.G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart, eds. *Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities* (Nashville: InterVarsity Press, 2008); Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Nashville: InterVarsity Press, 2010).

beyond these areas and had similarities with other Baptist and evangelical revivals in eighteenth century North Carolina and Virginia as well.[10]

One major social and cultural influence on southern evangelicalism that tied lowcountry developments to the greater South was the plantation system. Peter A. Conclanis' *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1620-1920* (1989) and Max Edelson's *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (2006) argue that the lowcountry was a society filled with dreams of plantation progress.[11] Conclanis and Edelson's works provide an integral understanding of the complex plantation system that influenced both evangelists' preaching methods and slaves' responses. Though similar in their arguments, the two differ on their considerations of agency and influence. Edelson raises people to the stage as the key agents of change, while Conclanis promotes abstract forces as the instrumental dynamisms in southern economies and societies.[12] This study will largely agree with Edelson's arguments. Though abstract forces influenced large and small events, important figures, like George Whitefield, George Liele, and their converts had the greatest impact on the spread of Christianity in the Atlantic.

Other scholarship looks more specifically into the plantation system's impact on slave communities in the colonial American South. Phillip D. Morgan's *Slave Counterpoint* (1998) offers, arguably, the most comprehensive study of slave life. Giving accounts of slaves'

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[10] David Bebbington, *Baptists Through the Centuries: A History of a Global People* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 78-81. This study presents a fascinating picture of the continuities and developments within the Baptist denomination in the Western hemisphere over four centuries. In this section, Bebbington delineates the theological and cultural similarities among southern Baptists compared to northern Baptists during the eighteenth century.

[11] Peter A. Conclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1620-1920* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989); S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[12] In *An Anxious Pursuit*, Joyce E. Chaplin also presents the lowcountry as an evolving society. Incorporating an intellectualist perspective, she contends that planters who considered themselves enlightened individuals pursued modernity and agricultural innovations on their plantations actually reaped the highest successes, see: Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

experiences throughout the lowcountry, Morgan unearths captives' previously unseen perspectives, which give important insight into the slave psyche and their attitudes towards Christianity.[13] In *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1740-1790* (1998), Robert Olwell examines how masters and slaves operated as subjects of the English crown in the South. Olwell offers a unique interpretation of the master-slave relationship, arguing that proprietors recreated microcosmic visions of their personal relationships to the king on their plantations. Thus, southern slaves not only adopted their own agency as active subjects of a working micro-empire, but masters also inherited a responsibility for slaves' mortality, as they became integral members of a collective imperial entity.[14] This work becomes particularly important when discussing masters' and slaves' sense of duty to Christianity. White and black evangelists stressed obedience from slaves and kindness from masters. Thus, just as slaves had a duty to the crown to remain loyal participants in a greater system, they also had a duty to God to remain loyal to their masters.

Silvia Frey and Betty Wood also discuss agency in their work, Wood's *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830.* Serving as the original inspiration for studying George Liele and Afro-Protestantism's development in the Atlantic, this monograph examines African Atlantics' conversion to Protestantism, or the development of Afro-Protestantism.[15] Focusing on African and female religious agency, Frey and Wood contend "the passage from traditional religious to Christianity was arguably the single most significant event in African American history." Christianity

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[13] Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

[14] Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[15] Frey and Wood,12.

"created a community of faith" and gave slaves control in determining their spiritual destinies.[16] This project draws on many of Frey and Wood's arguments and also recognizes agency as a major influence on Afro-Atlantic Christian faith. However, this study narrates through the leaders of black evangelical Christianity, who were predominantly male, rather than female.[17]

Frey and Wood also afford George Liele much attention in their study, but present him as one small part of a greater movement. Other historians have given George Liele ample focus in their studies of Afro-Protestantism in the Atlantic. There are three key works in which this minister receives the most recognition. First, Christopher Brent Ballew's *The Impact of African-American Antecedents on the Foreign Missionary Movement, 1782-1825* seeks to replace a gap between the Moravian missions movements and William Carey's work with the Baptist Missionary Society**.** Focusing primarily on Liele, Moses Baker, and David George, Ballew explicates these missionaries' work in Jamaica and Sierra Leone. While Ballew's research on Liele is exceptional, his analysis rarely goes beyond a surface-level biography of his life and interactions as a black evangelical figure in the Atlantic.[18] Second, in *George Liele: Pioneer Missionary to Jamaica*, Clement Gayle offers a biography of Liele's life in the Atlantic world. Though this work is a helpful narrative of Liele's life, it contains little analysis and few references for its information. Consequently, little is known about where Gayle acquired some of his information concerning Liele that no other historian has mentioned, including Gayle's unconfirmed claim that Liele served in the loyalist army during the Revolution.[19] Finally, Alfred Lane Pugh examines the lives of Liele, Prince Williams, and Thomas Paul as African Atlantic missionaries to Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Haiti. Pugh argues that these men and their

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[16] Ibid. 1-2.
[17] Ibid. 212.
[18] Christopher Brent Ballew, *The Impact of African-American Antecedents on the Foreign Missionary Movement, 1782-1825* (Queenstown: The Edwin Mellen University Press, 2004).
[19] Clement Gayle, *George Liele: Pioneer Missionary to Jamaica* (Kingston: Jamaica Baptist Union, 1982).

movements were not reactions to religious vacuums in slave societies. Instead, Pugh contends that Christianity flooded into slave societies in spite of the presence of native religions, and missionaries managed to establish free education for blacks and engender a sense of black religious autonomy in the Atlantic.[20] For this project, Ballew, Gayle, and Pugh's works all provide supporting information and arguments concerning Liele's life, but still leave room for further analysis concerning his role as a transatlantic evangelical figure.

How Christianity entered slaves societies in Jamaica also influenced the Baptists' spread in the country. This occurred through a process called Creolization. Three key studies offer an overview of the Creolization process and provide integral context for understanding religious development in the colony. Richard Burton attempts to reexamine and rework the definition of Afro-Caribbean culture in *Afro-Creole: Power Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (1997) by studying how power struggles affected recreation. Analyzing the material possessions and traditional customs of Afro-Creole culture, Burton breaks down the process and product of creolization, calling it a "…mosaic of themes, images, and ideas."[21] This historical and anthropological explanation of Jamaica before 1831 elucidates cultural aspects of colonial development that Michael Craton expands on in his encompassing work, *Searching for the Invisible Man* (1971). Craton's impressive scholarship on the slave experience in Jamaica parallels with Morgan's *Slave Counterpoint* in that it serves as the foundational text for grasping slaves' vantage point in Jamaica.[22] Edward Kamau Brathwaite's *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (1971) also examines how power and culture development in the

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[20] Alfred Lane Pugh, *Pioneer Preachers in Paradise: The Legacies of George Liele, Prince Williams, and Thomas Paul in Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Haiti* (East Peoria, Illinois: Paradise Publishing, 2003).

[21] Richard D.E. Burton. *Afro-Creole: Power Opposition and Play in the Caribbean (*Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[22] Michael Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man: Slaves and Plantation Life in Jamaica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

class determinant, ethnic blending Jamaican society. Widely considered one of the fundamental works in understanding social evolution in the colony, Brathwaite's valuable scholarship portrays the complexity of the Creolization phenomena in Jamaica.[23]

Part of the Creolization process involved assimilations between European and African religions in the Jamaica. Many Atlantic studies of slaves' religious development also consider this complex historical process. In *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (1998) John Thornton considers Africans' influence on the Atlantic both in their residence in Africa as well as their voluntary and involuntary transmissions throughout the Atlantic world. This revisionist history argues that despite the jarring physical, emotional, and psychological effects of slavery, Africans retained their cultural heritage. Acknowledging that slaves did not meet European cultures for the first time in the New World, Thornton contends that Atlantic patterns of cultural engagement suggest a process of mutual assimilation.[24]

Shirley C. Gordon's *God Almighty Make Me Free: Christianity in Preemancipation Jamaica* (1996) and Diane M. Stewart's *Three Eyes for the Journey: African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience* (2005) also explain the syncretic Christianization of Creolized African slaves and free coloreds, which the colored Baptists participated in and influenced.[25] Gordon's study examines the relationship between spiritual freedom and physical oppression among converting slaves, while Stewart focuses on understanding how Africans conceptualized their religious experiences in Jamaica. Gordon and Stewart also chronicle the evolution of spiritual freedom's progression toward emancipative ideas and actions among slave converts.

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[23] Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

[24] John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[25] Gordon, 1996; Diane M. Stewart, Three Eyes for the Journey: African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience (London: Oxford University Press, 2005).

While a theme throughout this project, spiritual versus physical freedom will only be considered when evaluating the extent of evangelists' progressions toward such ideas and how the ministers' beliefs impacted Africans within their spheres of influence.

Two works also serve as beneficial studies on the transmission of culture, which is a constant discussion throughout this project. In *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (1976), Sidney Wilfred Mintz and Richard Price analyze the acculturation of Africans in the New World, saying that European culture served as the baseline for the slave's cultural experience in the Americas. According to Mintz and Price, Africans lost much of their cultural heritages during their violent enslavement, and they, thereby, had to create a new culture in the Americas.[26] Many modern historians like John Thornton in *Africa and Africans* and James H. Sweet in *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (2003), have countered Mintz and Price's arguments. *Recreating Africa*, as the title suggests, explains Africans' experiences in Portugal's colonies in Africa and Brazil as efforts to preserve pure forms of their Congo, Angola, Upper Guinea, and Mina Coast religious and spiritual practices. By holding onto their African cosmologies, these peoples negotiated everyday persecutions and retained their Africanness in worlds controlled by Europeans.[27]

Colored people in Jamaica and the American lowcountry also retained their Africanness when converting to Christianity. Whitefield, Liele, and Liele's converts in the lowcountry and Jamaica all referred to colored evangelical converts as "Ethiopians." This brought the Afro-Baptist movement together in a collective Christian and African heritage. This shared Afro-

[26] Sidney Wilfred Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

[27] James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Christian identity bound converts in the British Atlantic together as evangelicalism spread throughout their societies.

Each chapter analyzes a stage in black Baptists' development in the lowcountry and Jamaica. Chapter One examines the initial dissemination of Christianity into southern slave communities during the early eighteenth century. Though the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an Anglican missionary group, had attempted to Christianize South Carolina slaves since the colony's foundation, their inability to convince the planter-class of Christianity's compatibility with the social order blockaded significant slave Christianization attempts. As a progressive plantation society, South Carolina proprietors had little interest in investments that did not produce observable benefits. To many, slave Christianization seemed just such an investment. Operating on rumors that conversion made slaves indolent and insurgent, planters saw few advantages and much potential harm from bringing the true Gospel to their slaves. George Whitefield's evangelization in the colony attempted to sway such thinking by arguing that Christianity would encourage reciprocal obedience from slaves and masters on the plantation. By appeasing whites, the transatlantic evangelist gained converts and transmitted the Gospel to southern whites and blacks. Whitefield's efforts to impress slave Christianization extended the SPG's longstanding ministries and helped spread evangelicalism's practices and rituals to lowcountry communities.

Chapter Two follows the development of evangelicalism in the lowcountry through the rise of African American slave preachers. Narrating through George Liele's life in America as a slave and the first ordained African American minister, this examination focuses on the how black agency and mobility influenced the progress and spread of black Christianity throughout the lowcountry. Movement becomes a key theme in this chapter, as Liele adopts a "hub-and-

spoke" evangelism method that became unique to the colored Baptist movement in the South and Jamaica. This practice combined the itinerant preaching methods of early eighteenth century evangelists and with the stable Baptist ministries occurring in mid-century Georgia and South Carolina. Colored ministers founded a central architectural structure as the hub of their missions and then began an itinerant circuit in the areas surrounding that establishment to reach local communities. Liele and other colored Baptists produced a system of geographic mobility that would appear from an aerial vantage point like the hub-and-spoke of a wheel. This evangelization method provided the African church with the architectural stability of a local meeting place and continued to reach isolated slave communities on plantations beyond walking distance of urban chapels. Ultimately, the dynamic between geographic mobility and stability would characterize the colored Baptist movement in the Atlantic and represent a modified practice from early eighteenth century evangelicalism.

Chapter Three traces Liele's emigration and work in Jamaica as the leader of the Baptist missionary movement that catalyzed slave Christianization on the island. Establishing his ministry in Kingston after he paid off a debt as an indentured servant, Liele rented a private room for church services and began construction on his Kingston chapel. Other colored evangelists rose up under Liele's mentorship and established hub-and-spoke ministries on the island, indicating Liele's influence as a leader in the colored Baptist movement.

In Jamaica, as in the lowcountry, Liele and his followers attempted to maintain amicable relationships with planters. Embracing Whitefield's practice of convincing planters that Christianity would not disrupt the social order, Liele and his disciples gained sanction from colonial authorities, established cordial relationships with whites, and reinforced the concept of dutiful obedience among their enslaved converts. Still, Jamaica's tumultuous society often lived

in fear of converted slaves, and Liele and his followers often incurred hateful opposition from whites. At times, these ministers also battled the powerful presence of Obeah beliefs among slaves on various plantations as well. However, by espousing and modifying inherited practices from eighteenth century southern evangelicalism, Liele and the colored evangelicals overcame intermittent opposition and from 1784-1806 and led the first successful effort to Christianize slaves in Jamaica.

CHAPTER ONE

"Prepare to Meet Thy God, O Israel": White Proselytization and Slave Christianization in the American South, 1737-1769

In 1768, John Marrant, a thirteen-year-old African American slave, heard the transatlantic evangelist George Whitefield speak in a Charleston church. When Marrant walked into the service, Whitefield, who was already preaching, looked directly at him and said, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."[1] According to Marrant, "The Lord accompanied the word with such power" that he was "struck to the ground, and lay both speechless and senseless near half an hour."[2] The crowd carried Marrant to the vestry, and Whitefield came to meet him after the service, saying, "JESUS CHRIST has got thee at last."[3] Taking a concern for the boy's spiritual state, the evangelist visited Marrant in his sister's home four days later. There, Whitefield prayed with Marrant, who was experiencing physical pains of sin and guilt. When Whitefield closed his prayers for the third time, the "perfect liberty" of Christ's salvation swept through Marrant's troubled soul.[4] Responding to both the pull of the Gospel's message on his heart and Whitefield's illuminative evangelism, Marrant became a believer in Jesus Christ.

Marrant's story represents one of numerous slave conversions during the eighteenth century, in response to white evangelism. By proselytizing Marrant, Whitefield exhibited the white-to-black evangelization that characterized the first stage of Afro-Protestantism and black

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[1] John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black* (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785), 11.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid. 12-13. Marrant explains in his narrative that he became the first African American missionary to Native Americans. He evangelized to Indian communities in the South until the American Revolution, and then left for Nova Scotia with the British evacuation. While in Nova Scotia he ministered to slave communities and brought hundreds to salvation in Jesus Christ as a vessel for God's evangelism.

Baptists' development in the lowcountry.[5] The transatlantic evangelist often visited the lowcountry during his American itinerant preaching circuit, spreading God's Word and seeking to evangelize both black and white converts throughout the region.[6] Though the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), an Anglican missionary group, had sent missionaries to the colony to for decades, their evangelization remained mostly ineffectual among African Americans before Whitefield arrived in the 1730s.[7] The SPG's failure to evangelize many South Carolina slaves owed a great deal to planters' fears that slave Christianization would disrupt the complex social order.[8] By forming relationships with southern planters, reiterating his own views toward slavery in frequent publications, purchasing slaves for his personal use, and supporting a school for slaves, Whitefield extended the SPG's attempts to establish a stable, compatible relationship between Christianity and slavery in South Carolina.

Early eighteenth century evangelicals also planted seeds of southern evangelicalism among many first-generation African American converts and set precedents for George Liele's later ministry as a black evangelical.[9] Whitefield's campaign to convince whites of slave Christianization's benefits would prove vital for the initial dissemination of evangelicalism to lowcountry African American communities. When black religious leaders, like George Liele,

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[5] For discussion of white-to-black evangelization, see: Silvia Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South And British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 63-74.

[6] Eric Leigh Schmidt, "'The Grand Prophet,' Hugh Bryan: Early Evangelicalism's Challenge to the Establishment and Slavery in the Colonial South" 87:4 *the South Carolina Historical Magazine* (October 1986), 238.

[7] For a complete collection of the SPG's work in colonial South Carolina, see: George W. Williams, ed. "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in South Carolina" in *Letters From the Clergy of the Anglican Church in South Carolina, 1696-1775*. Special Collections: College of Charleston. http://speccoll.cofc.edu/pdf/SPGSeriesABC.pdf?referrer=webcluster&.

[8] For information on efforts to Christianize slaves and planter's disallowance of those activities, see: Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House Inc., 1976); Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004); Lawrence W. Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Curtis J. Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[9] Frey and Wood, 85-87.

emerged in later decades, they reproduced Whitefield's efforts to prove slavery and Christianity's compatibility. During the early eighteenth century, many masters and white ministers responded to Whitefield's appeals by proselytizing their slaves, which spread evangelicalism and also set a religious example for itinerant preaching, regenerative conversion, and education in southern slave communities. Liele and other black ministers would employ these three ideological practices in the lowcountry and Jamaica, linking them to Whitefield's ministry. Liele's personal interactions with several of Whitefield's white converts also connected him to Whitefield, whose evangelism methods and relationships with whites helped initiate Christianity's development among lowcountry African Americans.

A spirit of complexity characterized South Carolina's religious climate at Whitefield's arrival in the early eighteenth century, and few historians have analyzed how the advent of evangelicalism affected the colony's religious development during the Great Awakening. In his comprehensive study of evangelicalism in the Great Awakening, Thomas Kidd argues that a lack of scholarship on the first Great Awakening in the South results from a common view that it was numerically small and geographically limited, when compared with the widespread southern revivals during the Second Great Awakening.[10] Silvia Frey and Betty Wood argue, however, that the first Great Awakening holds much importance for introducing evangelicalism into the lowcountry.[11] Especially vital to the development of Afro-Protestantism in slave communities,

[10] For some scholarship on evangelicalism in the South during the First Great Awakening, see: Thomas J. Little, "The Rise of Evangelicals Religion in South Carolina during the Eighteenth Century" (PhD. Diss., Rice University, 1995), and his "Adding to the Church Such as Shall Be Saved": The Growth in Influence of Evangelicalism in Colonial South Carolina, 1740-1774, in *Money, Trade and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina Plantation Society,* ed. Jack P. Greene (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001, 363-382); Thomas J. Little, "The Origins of Southern Evangelicalism: Revivals in South Carolina, 1700-1740," *Church History* 75 (December 2006).

[11] Frey and Wood, 8, 12, 23.

southern evangelicalism attained unprecedented conversion rates and augmented the strength of dissenting denominations in the lowcountry.[12]

Historians also divert from broad examinations of evangelicalism and southern society to consider the relationship between slave evangelization and hegemony in South Carolina in several journal articles.[13] These works generally focus on the Bryan brothers and their attempts to Christianize slaves, develop land in Georgia, and establish themselves among the elite in South Carolina. Harvey Jackson argues that George Whitefield along with Hugh and Jonathan Bryan attempted to challenge the institution of slavery with their evangelization attempts. While this contention holds some validity, these men did not challenge slavery itself; they disputed the relationship between the master and the slave, arguing for increased benevolence and respectful obedience to duty from every person in the plantocratic system.[14] Consequently, there is a need for more research on the integrated relationship between slavery and Christianity in the lowcountry to fully understand how evangelicalism was disseminated into African American communities.

The Peculiar Institution and Christianity

At the outset of the eighteenth century, colonial South Carolina underwent a dramatic transformation. With the development of new irrigation methods, farming techniques, and the importation of planting agents who brought an understanding of rice culture from West Africa,

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[12] Ibid. Kidd, 73-81.

[13] For articles on these subjects see Harvey H. Jackson, "The Carolina Connection: Jonathan Bryan, His Brothers, and the Founding of Georgia" *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 68:2 (Summer 1984), 147-172; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina" *William and Mary Quarterly* 43:4 (October 1986); Allan Gallay, "The Origins of Slaveholder's Paternalism: George Whitefield, the Bryan Family, and the Great Awakening in the South" *The Journal of Southern History* 53:3 (August 1987) 369-394.

[14] George Whitefield, "Three Letters From The Reverend George Whitefield: Letter III: To the Inhabitants of Maryland Virginia, North and South Carolina, concerning their Negroes" (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1740) in *The Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800*.

the white grain soon dominated the environmental and economic landscape.[15] Indigo also emerged as an advantageous crop in some regions of the colony, but it did not have the profits or widespread success of rice.[16] By 1740, South Carolina exported approximately forty-three million pounds of rice per annum, and planters continued to import slaves to match their cultivation needs.[17]

Acquiring slaves in South Carolina was rather easy. Charleston and Sullivan's Island, termed the "Ellis Island for Black Americans," imported more than 40% of all blacks, who came to North America from 1700 to the American Revolution.[18] This allowed for the simple acquisition of slaves in the colony, but it also created a problem. Slaves waiting to be bought, shipped, or traded had to remain in South Carolina in a sort of limbo. While the majority of these slaves stayed in their port-town purgatories only temporarily, others, who were too sickly to work or undesirable because of their bad reputation, had longer delays. This excess number of unwanted slaves made South Carolinians wary of both catching foreign diseases and the possibility of insurrection.[19]

The possibility of slave rebellions plagued South Carolinians' imaginations and realities until the Civil War. Specifically, fear of insurrection permeated the white populous in pre-

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[15] On the role of European and African agents in the transmission of rice culture to South Carolina, see: Peter A. Conclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1620-1920* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989); Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in South Carolina* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 53-91.

[16] Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: South Carolina University Press, 1997), 147.

[17] Ibid. 145.

[18] Ibid. 172.

[19] Ibid. 173; For excellent accounts of slave resistance and rebellions, see: Silvia Frey, *Water From the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2007); John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

revolutionary South Carolina for three key reasons. First, the ratio of whites to blacks remained disproportionate in South Carolina throughout the colonial period. By 1708 the slave population comprised some 4,000 individuals, making up half of the populous. When the slave population rose above 39,000 in 1740, they still outnumbered whites two to one. Slave imports, however, continued to amplify, increasing from 4,504 slaves between 1706-1723, to at least 32,233 slaves between 1724-1739.[20] Though only temporary residents, the increasing influx of slaves into the colony augmented the population imbalance in South Carolina and, as Robert Weir explains, made white colonists more anxious at the thought of rebellion.[21]

Table 1. Slave Embarkations and Disembarkations, 1726-1800. Calculated in *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database Voyages* at Emory University, 2009.

Year	Chesapeake		Carolinas / Georgia		Jamaica	
	Embarked	Disembarked	Embarked	Disembarked	Embarked	Disembarked
1726-1750	65,839	53,915	42,697	35,674	228,310	187,941
1751-1775	37,980	31,048	91,660	75,527	287,449	232,235
1776-1800	537	474	31,515	26,726	334,403	301,769
Totals	106,634	87,270	167,633	139,338	857,313	727,778

Second, South Carolina was the only British North American colony to have such a disproportionate population. While in the years after independence other southern states would acquire more slaves, Virginia ranked as the only continental colony whose demographics came close to South Carolina's, and Virginia slaves never comprised more than 40% of the total colony's population.[22] As Peter Wood contends, in this respect South Carolina held more similarities with colonies in the British Caribbean, where slaves had outnumbered whites for

[20] Frey and Wood, 42; Frey, *Water From the Rock*, 151-152.
[21] Weir, 134, 172-179.
[22] Isaac,12.

decades.[23] This rendered South Carolina dissimilar from the other American colonies, which made its social imbalance more threatening. In both its participation in the slave trade and the population imbalance, South Carolina's actions represented the extremities of the pre-Revolutionary America's involvement with slavery.[24] As the wealthy white minority exploited the manpower of the majority, trading them like goods throughout the South, peace in the colony balanced on the tensions between different players in the developing plantocracy.[25]

Finally, South Carolinians feared slave insurrection, due to the colony's geographical position. By the late 1730s the Spanish settlement in St. Augustine, Florida had already prompted one large revolt. St. Augustine had unofficially offered refuge for runaway slaves since the seventeenth century, but in 1738 a report reached Beaufort of "a Proclamation made at St. Augustine that all Negroes who did, or should hereafter, run away from the English, should be made free."[26] This attempt to disrupt the fragile nature of South Carolina's power instigated a full-on slave revolt in the 1739 Stono Rebellion, which occurred as the Great Awakening was trickling into South Carolina. Though colonial authorities smothered the rebellion with little difficulty, the uprising reaffirmed whites' perception of their society as volatile.[27] Population imbalance, South Carolina's uniqueness among American colonies, and the Spanish St.

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[23] Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974), 144-166; For information on Caribbean populations, see: Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class Inn the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1972) 7-12; Michael Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man: Slaves and Plantation Life in Jamaica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) 23-41; B.W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2008), 5-11.

[24] Ibid. 176; Weir, 175; Philip Morgan, *American Slavery American Freedom* (New York: W. W. North & Company, Inc., 1975), 325, 381; Abigail Bakan, Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica: The Politics of Rebellion (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 20.

[25] Wood, 36-38.

[26] Jackson, "The Carolina Connection," 159.

[27] Spanish Florida continued to represent a threat to South Carolina throughout the colonial period. Many of the colonies' slaves fled there and established the independent African settlement of "Moosa," which produced constant anxiety among white inhabitants of the southern periphery. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 207.

Augustine settlement, made white colonists sensitive to anything that might threaten the social order and engender slaves with power; and many slave owners saw slave Christianizing Africans as just such a threat.

Planters claimed that slaves' conversion to Christianity posed one of the greatest hazards to the social order, because it made them indolent, took them away from their work, and gave them a sense of equality with whites.[28] Such beliefs were, arguably, the greatest barrier for the SPG, George Whitefield, and George Liele to combat in their efforts to Christianize slaves. The colonists' first two claims were largely unsubstantiated. Prior to Whitefield's arrival, the SPG chronicled their interactions with slaves in the colony, and indicated that slaves who converted worked just as hard, if not harder than those around them.[29] Furthermore, slaves almost always had Sunday off to maintain their own land and households. Attending church would only detract them from their personal chores, not their masters'.[30]

Owners' final claim that Christianity would provide slaves with a dangerous degree of autonomy, however, did retain a certain amount of truth. According to both the SPG's records and the *South Carolina Gazette*, slaves' rarely used Christianity to bolster rebellious ideas or excite slaves' imaginations, but the SPG ministers did cite at least one account. In the early winter months of 1709, one of the first Anglican missionaries to the growing British colony experienced a challenge to his authority. Reverend Francis Le Jau, possibly the most famous and

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[28] Whitefield and many of the SPG ministers make these two claims about planters. Whitefield states these three reasons specifically in: George Whitefield, "Three Letters From The Reverend George Whitefield: Letter III". Many of the SPG's records affirm this as well. Alexander Garden affirmed this in a response to Whitefield's *Letter to the Inhabitants*. For more information on these sources see pages 31-32. Henry Laurens also explains this fear among planters in a letter to a German minister in South Carolina. See page 23 for Laurens reference.

[29] John M. Bolzius, "John Martin Bolzius Answers a Questionaire on South Carolina and Georgia" ed. Klaus G. Loewald *William and Mary Quarterly* 3:14 (Apr. 1957): 218-216, and 3:15 (Apr. 1958): 228-252, Question 10.

[30] Bolzius, Question 15; Francis Le Jau to The Society 22 March 1709 in "SPG Manuscripts" *Library of Congress Transcripts*, Series A4:390-395. This actually discouraged slaves from attending church, because many did not want to give up their only free day to learn about Christianity. However, this changed when Whitefield arrived, because he could give a sermon on any day of the week. Many slaves tried to finish their chores early in order to hear Whitefield speak.

influential of the early eighteenth century SPG missionaries in South Carolina, explained that "the best scholar of all the negroes" in his parish began "to create some confusion among all the negroes in the country."[31] The slave had come into possession of a book, which prophesied the apocryphal judgment for all sinners, both black and white. This man "told his master abruptly there would be a dismal time [quickly approaching] and the moon would be turned into blood, and there would be dearth of darkness."[32] The slave then left his owner, saying no more of the prophecy.

Though he did not prophesy emancipation for slaves, the slave scholar did cast judgment upon whites, overstepping his boundary as a Christian bondservant. Furthermore, his radical prophesies riled up local slaves and made whites nervous that the doomsday prophecies would encourage their slaves to rebel. Jau said, "It was publicly blazed abroad that an angel came and spoke to the man. He had seen a hand that gave him a book; he had heard voices, seen fires, etc." Over the course of the next few weeks, Reverend Le Jau struggled to calm not only slaves but also whites in the colony, who lived in constant fear of slave insurrection.[33]

Colonists' fears became so strong that less than two years after this incident, South Carolina authorities passed an act stating that a slave's conversion to Christianity would not set them free.[34] Reverend Thomas Secker said that despite this proclamation, many planters

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[31] Francis Le Jau to The SPG Secretary 1 February 1710 in "SPG Manuscripts" *Library of Congress Transcripts,* A5:220-233.

[32] In his next letter to the SPG, Francis Le Jau would reference the book as "some Words of the Holy Prophet's." Francis Le Jau to The Society 19 February 1710 in "SPG Manuscripts" *Library of Congress Transcripts*, A5:189-196. This reference implies that the book was likely the Bible. The slave may have been referring to Acts 2:19-21 (King James Version): And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Or Joel 2: 28b-31 (KJV): "Your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. The Day of the Lord. I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth. Blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness. And the moon into blood. Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes."

[33] Ibid.

[34] Weir, 184.

continued to believe at least as late as 1740 that after slaves converted "no Pretense [would] remain for not treating them like Men."[35] Even in 1763, prominent southern planter Henry Laurens told John Ettwein, a German Moravian minister in South Carolina, that "if it was to happen that every body or even a considerable majority of people were to change their sentiments with respect to slavery & that they should seriously think the saving of Souls a more profitable event than the adding House to House & laying Field to Field...[then] those laws which now authorize the custom would be instantly abrogated or die of themselves."[36] Laurens' statement suggests that at best many planters considered Christianizing slaves a hindrance to the progression of their plantation society and the institution of slavery, itself. Consequently, South Carolina ministers could not evangelize slaves until they convinced masters that slave Christianization would not disrupt their economic ventures or encourage emancipation.[37]

Anglican ministers in South Carolina attempted to convince slave owners that Christianity would not compromise financial or social security in the colony.[38] Despite South Carolina's reputation as a colony filled with dissenters, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel maintained a presence in the colony since South Carolina's establishment.[39] Founded to

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[35] Thomas Secker to Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1740 or 1741 [quoted in] Raboteau, 100.

[36] Henry Laurens to John Ettwein 19 March 1763, in *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, ed. Philip M. Hamer et al. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 4:319, hereafter: *PHL*.

[37] In 1779 Alexander Hewatt, the first historian of South Carolina and Georgia, explained that "the fruits of their [Anglicans] labours [among African Americans] has been very small and inconsiderable." Hewatt attributes this to the fact that many masters throughout the colony "affirm, that [slaves] could become more expert in vice by being taught, and greater knaves by being made Christians." See: Alexander Hewatt, *A Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Collection, Universitor of North Carolina Chapel Hill, 1779), 99-101.

[38] This project agrees with Max Edelson's arguments in *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* that the South Carolina plantation was a progressive, evolving institution, and that colonists were consciously engaged with the colony's betterment. Consequently, planters were not concerned with how Christianity would necessarily disrupt what existed, but what was *existing*- progress; Edelson, 42,166.

[39] For additional sources on dissenters in the lowcountry, see: G.G. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina, from the Earliest Period of the Colonization of the Dutch, German and Swiss Settlers to the Close of the First Half of the Present Century* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Book Store, 1872); George Fenwick Jones, *The Salzburger Saga: Religious Exiles and Other Germans Along the Savannah* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984); Daniel Thorp, *The Moravian Community in Colonial North Carolina: Pluralism on the Southern Frontier* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

bolster religious zeal among converts and reach the unconverted, the SPG in South Carolina desired to minister to whites while Christianizing and educating slaves. In an attempt to mollify planters' concerns, the SPG missionaries refused to educate or baptize blacks without permission from their owner. Even when ministers managed to successfully convince planters, Anglican leaders would still withhold church membership and baptism until they received proof of slaves' good behavior and changed life directly from their master.[40] Some ministers even went further to appease plantation patriarchs. Reverend Le Jau forced newly converted slaves to make a declaration "that they [would not] pretend to any freedom from their Masters Service" after baptism.[41]

Despite these efforts, in 1724, Alexander Garden, the commissary for the Bishop of London in South Carolina, explained to the Secretary of the SPG that out of the eight key parishes under his authority, masters disallowed evangelization and education for their slaves in seven of those localities, despite his efforts to convince them otherwise.[42] Such explicit attempts to comply with and preserve the South Carolina social order, even if they were mostly ineffectual, indicate that the early eighteenth century Anglican Church considered slave evangelization a crucial part of their purpose in the colony and believed that slavery and social hegemony could be compatible.

Compatible Christianity: Whitefield and White Planters

Thus, when Whitefield first traveled through South Carolina on his way to Georgia in 1738, a general wariness toward potentially transformative social doctrines still characterized the

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[40] Francis Le Jau to the Society, 15 November 1708, "SPG Series" in the *Special Collections at the College of Charleston,* http://speccoll.cofc.edu/pdf/SPGSeriesABC.pdf?referrer=webcluster& (accessed 28 September 2013), 85, hereafter: "SPG Series".

[41] Francis Le Jau to The Society, 18 February 1710, "SPG Series," 90-91.

[42] Alexander Garden to The Secretary of the Society, 15 April 1724, "SPG Series," 364-365.

expanding colony.[43] During one of his evangelical tours of America, Whitefield decided to visit the South at the request of John Wesley, who thought that Whitefield should survey an area near Savannah, Georgia as a possible location to establish a school and home for orphaned children. The famous British Anglican minister and evangelical agreed that Georgia's abandoned youth needed a religious home. That same year Whitefield and his co-founder, James Habersham, founded Bethesda Orphanage in the Savannah lowcountry.[44]

Due to his itinerant ministry, Whitefield could not permanently remain at Bethesda, but he visited often. While traveling to Bethesda, Whitefield began stopping in various South Carolina localities. In a practical sense, these visits afforded him a place to rejuvenate on the long journey, but South Carolina also proved a ripe field for the harvest of converts during his tours of America in the 1740s. During the Great Awakening, Whitefield became particularly interested in evangelizing the people of Charleston, who he thought were "wholly devoted to Pleasure."[45] Whitefield also hoped to use his time in South Carolina to evangelize slaves and convince his congregations to do the same.[46] George Liele adopted a similar practice during his lowcountry ministry, when he encouraged his proselytes to preach to other blacks, while continuing to cultivate amicable relationships with whites.[47] By sharing the Gospel and fostering

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[43] Jackson, "Carolina Connection," 164; Schmidt, 84.

[44] Erwin C. Surrency, "Whitefield Habersham, and the Bethesda Orphanage," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34:2 (June, 1950), 88-89; Gallay, *The Formation of the Planter Elite*, 47-64. Once Bethesda was established, it worked in conjunction with the orphan home the Salzburgers had established, bringing Christianity to the despondent children of Georgia.

[45] George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 444, hereafter: Whitefield, *Journals*. The Great Awakening's existence, as a historical event, has been a matter of debate among historians for decades. See: Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield* (Boston: Charles Tappan, 1845); Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[46] Whitefield, *Journals*, 444.

[47] Ballew, 18; Frey and Wood, 115-120; Gayle, 6-11.

relationships with South Carolinians, utilizing literature to propagate his opinions, buying slaves, and constructing a school for slaves, Whitefield aspired to prove Christianity and slavery's compatibility.

Despite Whitefield's transatlantic success as an evangelist during the Great Awakening, he did not gain immediate popularity in South Carolina. Whitefield's *Journals* reveal the gradual escalation of his respectability and influence in South Carolina. In one of his first stays in Charleston, he explained that "most of the Town [was] very eager to hear me, in the Afternoon I preached in one of the dissenting meeting-houses: But was grieved to find so little concern in the congregation after the sermon was over."[48] Just two days later, he rejoiced in the "glorious Alteration in the Audience; which was so great that many stood without the Door…many were melted into Tears."[49] Though Whitefield would only stay in South Carolina for a couple of weeks at a time, he would often preach more than twenty sermons during each visit. Consequently, his efforts in South Carolina gradually produced a number of converts and followers, many of whom were prominent southern planters. His sermons along with visiting South Carolinians in their homes allowed Whitefield to cultivate relationships with planters and slaves. [50]

In these relationships and his proselytization efforts, Whitefield and other southern evangelicals emphasized a new birth ideology that would prove integral to the harvest of white and black converts.[51] This implied a four-part process of conversion to Christianity. When pressed under the Holy Spirit's conviction, an individual confessed his sin and repented for it.

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[48] Whitefield, *Journals*, 382.

[49] Ibid. 384.

[50] *South Carolina Gazette,* 8-15 January 1741. This issue of the South Carolina Gazette devotes several pages to discussing how South Carolina residents responded positively to Whitefield.

[51] Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Maldwell: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 13-15; David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3; David Bebbington, *Baptists Through the Centuries: A History of a Global People* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 78-81.

After admittance and repentance, the confessor accepted Jesus Christ's death on the cross as the only worthy atoning sacrifice for his sin. In his conversion, the redeemed died to sin and was spiritually reborn. Whitefield phrased this new birth as "a union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us."[52] New Christians entered into a spiritual community of believers as equally undeserving and equally forgiven members of God's earthly kingdom.[53] Though the actual process of spiritual regeneration occurred in varying degrees of complexity in each individual convert, evangelicals believed that all legitimate conversions actualized the four stages of admittance, repentance, acceptance, and rebirth. Therefore, the process and product of conversion united believers in a common regenerative experience.

When Hugh Bryan, a prominent southern planter, first heard Whitefield preach in the summer of 1739, he underwent a radical conversion experience. Like many others in the colony, the Bryan brothers and Hugh's wife all considered themselves Christians prior to Whitefield's arrival.[54] But after hearing Whitefield preach at Bethesda in Georgia in June of 1739, Hugh realized that he was "in [his] sins, unconverted."[55] His conversion narrative exemplifies the emotionalism that embodied other conversions throughout America during the Great Awakening.[56] In a letter to his sister, Bryan related his agonizing struggle with understanding his sin and the salvation he could have in Jesus Christ. He then explained that his "heart [was] enlarged with a ray of light, that darted into [his] very soul...[he] prayed…and received further

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[52] George Whitefield, "All Men's Place" in *Sermons on Important Subjects* (London: Baynes, 1825), 702.

[53] Almost every major secondary source on George Whitefield and other Great Awakening evangelicals asserts similar accounts for spiritual regeneration. For a few references on the subject see: Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: God's Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1990); Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 38-40; Nancy Ruttenburg, "George Whitefield, Spectacular Conversion, and the Rise of Democratic Personality," *American Literary History*, 5:3 (Autumn, 1993).

[54] Gallay*, The Formation of a Planter Elite,* 33.

[55] Hugh Bryan eds. John Conder and Thomas Gibbons, *Living Christianity Delineated: In the Diaries and Letters of Two Eminently Pious Persons Lately Deceased* (Boston: Hastings, Ethridge, and Bliss, 1809), 9.

[56] For examples of these transformative conversion experiences, see Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 10-11, 32-33, 112-114.

illuminations and assurance of God's favour to [his] soul."[57] Catherine Brekus explores the emotionalism behind evangelical conversion in her recent work on Sarah Osborn, an eighteenth century American evangelical in Rhode Island. Osborn experienced a similar response to the Gospel's message and explains the "emotional peaks and valleys" of her conversion in her memoirs.[58] John Marrant, one of Whitefield's African American converts in Charleston, said that the realization of his sin "was like the parcel of swords thrust into [him]." Before experiencing the overwhelming "peace and joy, and love" of salvation, Marrant asked Whitefield if he aimed to kill Marrant with his prayers.[59] Additionally, Jonathan Bryan, Hugh's wife Charlotte, several of their neighbors, and many others depicted their acceptance of salvation as both a spiritual and physical event to show the Gospel's transformative properties on their hearts.[60]

Whitefield's awakening sermons were not the only way he connected with South Carolinians. Whitefield also established and intensified relationships through fellowship, prayer, and visiting with his congregations. After almost every oration, Whitefield would remain in the meetinghouse, church, or open area to speak with people from the audience. Listeners came to Whitefield to express their struggles with sin and salvation, joyful conversions, and general thoughts on him, his teachings, and Christianity.[61] Whitefield also prayed with his followers frequently and often stayed in colonists' homes during his visits to the colony. These times of fellowship and prayer both in church and in family settings established Whitefield's role as a

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[57] Ibid. 12.

[58] On conversion and evangelicals, see; Catherine A. Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

[59] Marrant, 11.

[60] Ibid. 18, 29-33

[61] Both black and white listeners came to Whitefield to discuss matters of spirituality. He mentions occurrences like these hundreds of time in his letters and journals. See, Whitefield, *Journals*, 384; George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Letters* (Pennsylvania: Banner Truth and Trust, 1976), 95-97, 186-206, 272-273.

mentor for many in South Carolina and bound him and with his congregations in an intimate connection.[62]

Even during Whitefield's absences from the lowcountry, he maintained correspondences with key ministers, planters, and potential converts. Published along with his *Journals*, these letters to lowcountry people indicate that many whites had already converted at his teachings between 1740 and 1742. They also explain how Whitefield preserved his valuable relationships with southern whites, while he continued preaching on an itinerant circuit throughout other American colonies and England. Finally, this correspondence also suggests a continuity of conversions in South Carolina and Georgia even during Whitefield's absence, demonstrating that his followers continued to evangelize even in his absence.[63] George Liele would later reproduce this practice while in Jamaica, by keeping correspondence with other white and colored Baptist leaders in the lowcountry and England. These Baptist ministers also shared the progress of their evangelism and created a transatlantic network of believers in the Atlantic, similar to Whitefield.

Whitefield and Slavery in Print Media

Once Whitefield established relationships with the colonists, he encouraged listeners to actively extend the Gospel's message into their lives.[64] One such extension fixated on the relationship between masters and slaves in South Carolina, where he stressed the importance of evangelization and mutual benevolence.[65] Whitefield fully believed that God was "no respecter of persons- but that any believer believeth in him shall be saved."[66] To this famous evangelist a

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[62] Jerome Dean Mahaffey, *The Accidental Revolutionary: George Whitefield & the Creation of America*. (Waco: Baylor University press, 2011), 37.

[63] George Whitefield, *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield Containing All his Sermons and Tracts Which Have Been Already Published, With a Select Collection of Letters* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly), 1:227-242.

[64] Whitefield, *Journals,* 384-385.

[65] Ibid. 422 .

[66] Ibid. 420.

person's place in society and his or her skin color had no correlation to their need for salvation. All mankind shared inherent sin and guilt, and thus a universal need for salvation.[67]

Whitefield carried out his own teachings, when he began evangelizing slaves shortly after arriving in the colony. Though it is difficult to determine many African Americans' exact responses to the Gospel's message in South Carolina and Georgia during the early eighteenth century, it is apparent that evangelicals made some headway in slave populations. In the summer of 1740, just one year after the Stono Rebellion, Whitefield wrote that slaves in Charleston were finishing their work early to come and hear him preach. He also noted "many of their owners who have been awakened, resolve to teach them Christianity."[68] This indicates that Whitefield's efforts to impress slave evangelization's importance among the planter community had at least some success. Whitefield also suggests that while slaves' position required them to finish their work before hearing the evangelist, they still actively sought out evangelical preaching. Preaching on plantations, in meetinghouses, and various churches set a precedent for itinerant ministry and brought the Gospel to slave communities.[69] George Liele would later incorporate itinerant evangelism into his lowcountry ministry as a practical way to reach slaves, who could not attend his church in Burke County Georgia.[70]

Whitefield also utilized print-media to expose his personal convictions on the need for ministry among slaves and his adherence to the colonial social order. In *A Letter to the Inhabitants of Maryland Virginia, North and South Carolina Concerning Their Negroes* Whitefield addresses the treatment of slaves, saying, "southern dogs enjoyed better handling."

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[67] To Whitefield and most of his white evangelical followers, slavery was not a sin.

[68] Whitefield, *Journals*, 444.

[69] This active agency often became evident in slaves' conversions. In Philadelphia, Whitefield saw an African American woman cry out and fall down in front of an entire congregation of white and black hearers. Though the Baptist preacher leading the meeting, along with several other members, asked her to hold her peace, Whitefield said that "the Lord shone so brightly round about her, that she could not help blessing a praising God." Whitefield, *Journals,* 452.

[70] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, *BAR*, 1:332-334.

Longing for owners to treat slaves like they would their white servants or even their children, Whitefield argued that bondservants would reciprocate their masters' respect with a dutiful diligence toward their work.[71] Thus, Whitefield contended that benevolence would engender slaves with a sense of duty to their social role. In Jamaica, George Liele would use his church's covenant, which he read aloud to his congregation monthly and showed to white slave owners and colonial officials upon request, to impress obedience among slaves and placate fears of slave Christianization among whites.[72]

A Letter to the Inhabitants also condemned southerners for keeping their slaves purposefully ignorant of salvation, deeming it a "dreadful reflection on their holy religion." He addressed key concerns about Christianizing slaves. Understanding planters' assumption that Christianity would "make them proud and consequently unwilling to submit to slavery," Whitfield called this notion "blasphemous" against the inherent "precepts of Christianity." By explaining to slave owners that "there is a vast difference between civilizing and Christianizing a negroe," Whitefield definitively separated the spiritual and physical dimensions of colonial reality.[73] He continued to deflect the fears associated with Christianizing slaves when he challenged "the whole World to produce a single Instance of a Negroe's being made a thorough Christian, and thereby made a worse Servant." He simply responded to his own challenge, "it cannot be."[74] Thus, *A Letter to the Inhabitants* reveals that Whitefield was an ameliorationist, looking to the better slave conditions and placate slave owners' worries in order to evangelize their slaves. While Whitefield sought to moderate the maltreatment of slaves, he considered this

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[71] George Whitefield, *Letter III: To the Inhabitants of Maryland Virginia, North and South Carolina, Concerning their Negroes*, 1740.

[72] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 12 January 1793, *BAR*, 1:542.

[73] George Whitefield, *Letter III: To the Inhabitants of Maryland Virginia, North and South Carolina, Concerning their Negroes*, 1740.

[74] Ibid.

irrelevant and trivial when compared to planters' apathy concerning their bondservants' spiritual wellbeing. By affirming the predominance of slaves' salvation over their physical oppression, Whitefield and his followers hoped to stabilize South Carolina hegemony and bring more black and white converts to Christ.[75]

Though little is known about planters' reactions to this letter, Alexander Garden, the commissioner for the Anglican Church in the colony in 1740, published an audacious response to Whitefield. Garden claimed that Whitefield's accusations concerning South Carolina masters' cruelty to slaves were "false and injurous" lies. Contending that Whitefield had never witnessed such actions among South Carolina planters, Garden reduced Whitefield's attack on slavery conditions to "slander," which endangered the "Peace and Safety of the Community."[76] Though the two Anglican ministers disagreed on the extent of brutality or benevolence in the master-slave relationship, Garden agreed that planters' refusal to Christianize slaves was a problem. Garden affirmed that "the little or no proper Care taken by Owners of the Souls of their Slaves…is too sad a Truth."[77] In further agreement with Whitefield, Garden said that whites' "Objection to teaching them Christianity, viz. that it would tend to make them less governable, or worse Slaves" was "wild and extravagant."[78] Thus, even Alexander Garden, who radically opposed Whitefield's perception of slavery in South Carolina as well as the evangelist's ministry in the colony, acknowledged and disavowed planters' fear that Christianity would create rebellious slaves.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Alexander Garden, "Six Letters to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield: The Sixth, Containing Remarks on Mr. Whitefield's Second Letter, Concerning Archbishop Tillotson, and on His Letter Concerning the Negroes" (Boston: T. Fleet, 1740) in *Early American Imprints*, 51.

[77] Ibid. 53.

[78] Ibid.

To enhance his publications on slave Christianization in the South, Whitefield also encouraged his followers to write and circulate letters, which reaffirmed the assertions in *A Letter to the Inhabitants*. Though personal correspondence rather than formal petitions, George Liele and his fellow colored ministers also published their letters, which publicly affirmed their call for slaves' obedience to their masters. In 1743, English evangelical and Whitefield follower, Anne Dutton, wrote and anonymously published *A Letter to the Negroes Lately Converted to Christ in America. And Particularly to Those, lately Called out of Darkness, into God's marvelous Light, at Mr. Jonathan Bryan's in South Carolina* at Whitefield's request.[79] Dutton divided the letter into two parts, explaining the benefits of slaves' conversion to Christianity and believers' Christian duty. The rhetoric of the letter distinguishes slaves as equal "part[s] of the Israel of God," showing that their conversion brought them into a collective identity as Christ followers.[80] However, while Dutton acknowledged slaves spiritual equality as fellow "children and servants of God," she also affirmed slaves' spiritual responsibility as Christians to submissively comply with the role they had been given in life:

> And though God hath now called you into his own Family, to be his own Children and Servants; he doth not call you hereby from the Service of your Masters according to the Flesh; but to serve him in serving them, in obeying all their lawful Commands, and submitting to the Yoke his Providence has placed you under…the Love of CHRIST will make it so easy, that it will not hurt your Necks; and by your cheerful and constant Obedience, put Silence to the Ignorance of foolish Men, of your nominal Christian Masters; who having never felt the constraining Power of Christ's Love in their own Souls, have thought, and said, 'That if you, their poor Slaves, were brought to Christianity, you would be no more Servants to them.' Oh never let this Calumny be cast

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[79] Stephen J. Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery: Some New Evidence," *Church History* 42:2 (Jun., 1973), 252. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3163671; when Stein published his article in 1973, the author of *A Letter to the Negroes* was still unknown. Scholars have only in the last decade discovered that the English evangelist Anne Dutton wrote the letter at Whitefield's request. See: Lambert, 16; Ann Dutton ed. JoAnn Ford Watson, *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton: Eighteenth Century British Baptist, Woman Theologian* vol. 5 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2008), Miscellaneous Correspondence; Young Hwi Yoon, "The Spread of Antislavery Sentiment through Proslavery Tracts in the Transatlantic Evangelical Community, 1740s-1770s" *Church History* 81:2 (Jun., 2012), 366.

[80] Stein, 253.

> upon Christ's Holy Religion, by the disagreeable Behaviour of any of you believing Negroes![81]

Dutton articulated that slaves' obedience to their social role would reflect the love and transformative power of Christianity to their unconverted masters. This suggests that Whitefield and his followers considered evangelization a duty of all Christians. Whites in South Carolina were responsible for Christianizing slaves through education and teaching, while slaves evangelized whites by joyfully obeying their masters.[82] Thus, a reciprocal duty for evangelism bound the two poles of the South Carolina social order in an equivalent responsibility to the Lord. This idea of reciprocity often seeped into master-slave relationships. In 1773, Henry Laurens, who was heavily influenced by evangelicalism and Anglican mysticism, explained that he viewed his relationship with his slaves as one of "reciprocal obligation."[83] Laurens' congenial treatment of his slaves along with his unopposed feelings toward slave evangelization suggest that he, like other planters, adopted evangelicalism's views on ameliorating slave conditions.

Dutton's statement that conversion would alleviate the physical burden of slavery also reflected her agreement with Whitefield's teachings. To these evangelists, Christianity and slavery were compatible, because evangelicalisms' transformative power was limited to spirituality and amending personal relationships. The Bible stressed obedience to all authority, even malicious ones, and Christian obedience provided a spiritual freedom that would ease the pain of physical oppression.[84] In her letter, Dutton alludes to New Testament verses and the Old Testament's reverse-curse ideology to explain how the love of Christ would ease the physical

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[81] Dutton, "A Letter to the Negroes," 20-21.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Laurens to Lachlan McIntosh, 13 March 1773, *PHL*, 8:619.
[84] George Whitefield, *The Works of George Whitefield: Controversial Writings and Tracts* (Meadow View: Quinta Press, 2000), 4:48-50. See Ephesians 6:5-8, 19; Philippians 1:27-30; and 1 Peter 2:18-21 for New Testament affirmations of social obedience.

afflictions of slavery.[85] This refers to the curse God placed on Man after the Fall in Genesis, which made physical labor painful and tiring. Whitefield and his followers often stressed this reverse-curse ideology, which undoubtedly made Christianity more appealing to slaves. To Whitefield and many of his followers, therefore, Christianity would alleviate the physical pains and reform the relationships characterizing slavery, but it would not inherently destroy the institution.[86]

In addition these letters, Whitefield also published his *Journals* to reaffirm his support of slavery and bolster evangelization among African Americans. The rhetoric in his *Journals* explains how Whitefield genuinely considered slavery and Christianity compatible. Throughout these texts Whitefield uses diction to identify "freedom" as a spiritual expression of the Holy Spirit's power within him. Most often, he utilizes the phrase when discussing how he delivered his messages. For instance, on November 24, 1739 he spoke to a number of listeners in Philadelphia. Preaching "with much Freedom and Power," many in the congregation "began to be awakening out of their carnal security."[87] Similarly, on September 25, 1740 Whitefield spoke in New Port, Rhode Island where "a gracious meeting was discernable thro' the whole congregation, and I perceived much freedom and sweetness in my own Soul."[88] In Charleston, on March 16, 1740, he discussed his beliefs with a number of listeners in a merchants' house, where "he felt much freedom after the sermon."[89] This indicates that Whitefield considered the degree of his spiritual freedom directly correlative with the spiritual response of his

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[85] Dutton, 20-21. To evangelicals, the Bible did not necessarily affirm slavery, but it did affirm that freedom and salvation in Jesus Christ should be enough for anyone's contentment, despite social situations. This implied that obedience and reciprocal duty took precedence over physical liberation and equality.

[86] Samuel C. Smith, "'Through the Eye of a Needle': The Role of Pietistic and Mystical Thought Among the Anglican Elite in the Eighteenth Century Lowcountry South," (PhD diss., Columbia: University of South Carolina: 1999), 237-238.

[87] Whitefield, *Journals*, 355

[88] Ibid. 462.

[89] Ibid. 401-402.

congregation.[90] Whitefield employed this vocabulary of freedom over a hundred times throughout his journals to convey when he felt most filled with the Holy Spirit.[91]

If Whitefield bound his conception of freedom primarily to a spiritual definition, then it is likely that this ideology would extend into his understanding of society as well. To Whitefield, "freedom" first and foremost implied a spiritual liberty between the convert, God, and the Holy Spirit. When Whitefield obeyed God in his personal life and preaching methods, he felt the highest freedom in the spirit. The evangelist believed that all Christ followers would receive the same liberty through obedience. Masters who obeyed God in treating their slaves with kindness and slaves who obeyed God in respectful compliance to their masters' instructions would all experience spiritual freedom.

Thus, publicizing his thoughts on slavery did not make his opinions less genuine or even less biblically founded. Whitefield sincerely believed that while Christianity could change the hearts and spiritual destinies of mankind, it did not guarantee that those changes would be reflected in total social upheaval. As an ideological extension of a reasonable religion, southern evangelicalism only sought to reform slavery in order to ultimately enhance evangelization. It did not seek to eradicate the institution itself.[92] By sharing these opinions in print, Whitefield and his followers showed slave owners and slaves the benign nature of Christianity in the temporal realm. George Liele would reproduce this practice in Kingston during the 1790s by reading his church covenant to slave converts to remind them of their biblical duty as obedient servants and

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[90] Ibid. 274.

[91] George Whitefield, *The Journals of George Whitefield as Originally Published and Unedited* (Meadow View, England: Quinta Press, 2004).

[92] Frank Lambert, *'Pedlar in Divinity': George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 154; John Pollock, *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening* (New York: Doubleday Company & Inc, 1972), 135; Mahaffey, 37, 67.

showing the same covenant to planters and public official to placate their fears concerning Liele's evangelization. [93]

Planters and Christianize Slaves

While Whitefield's efforts reveal his genuine belief that slavery and Christianity could balance spiritual freedom and social hegemony, the results of slave Christianization were sometimes more complex than the stable goal he projected. In 1739, the Stono Rebellion revealed South Carolina's tumultuous balance, as almost a hundred slaves rose up against the planter class in an armed rebellion. In a measure to maintain colonial peace, the South Carolina legislature enacted a law in late 1740 that prohibited teaching slaves to write.[94] Despite this proclamation and the general wariness throughout the colony of endowing slaves with greater autonomy, Whitefield explains that slaves continued to come hear him preach and that "many of their owners who have been awakened, resolve to teach them Christianity."[95] That any slave owners decided to evangelize slaves after such a violent rebellion, suggests a response to Whitefield's arguments for a reciprocal duty in the master-slave relationship. Both Hugh and Jonathan Bryan represented this group of planters, who converted after hearing Whitefield preach and were eager to advance Christianity among their slaves.[96] These planters obeyed their Christian duty to teach slaves Christianity, and, according to Whitefield, did not emancipate their slaves but hoped for conversion and respect.

While Whitefield rejoiced at the slave owners' willingness to evangelize slaves, he also sought to provide formal education to slaves. On August 21, 1740 Jonathan Bryan and his brother-in-law Stephen Bull, traveled from their homes near St. Helena, South Carolina to hear

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[93] Whitefield, *Journals, 445.*

[94] Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South'* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 116-117; Jackson, 161-166; Blassingame, 207-210.

[95] Whitefield, *Journals, 445.*

[96] Mrs. Bryan to Her Sister, *Living Christianity Delineated*, 22-23.

Whitefield preach in Charleston. After speaking with their spiritual mentor, Bryan and Bull resolved to begin a school for their slaves.[97] The idea for a slave school was not new or even radical for religious persons in the colony. In fact, the SPG had established several unofficial schools for slaves before and after 1740, and some planters had educated their slaves prior to Whitefield's arrival.[98] Even in 1740, Alexander Garden, himself, largely believed that masters kept slaves ignorant of Christianity for "want of one certain uniform Method of teaching them," which he hoped would "soon be established."[99]

Just one month before Bryan and Bull decided to found the school, Whitefield had lamented in his journal that he did not have the time or workers to erect a school for slaves in South Carolina and Pennsylvania, though he thought "many would willingly contribute both money and land."[100] In this respect, the timing for Jonathan and Stephen's help with the school was perfect. Building a school would allow slaves to learn about Christianity in a regular community under the supervision of a qualified white pastor or instructor. This would ensure that slaves were uniformly instructed under the care of a white master and educator, achieving a balance between evangelization and the solidification of slaves' ultimate subservience to white authorities.[101]

Though Whitefield offered a young converted stage-player from New York as the first master of the school, articles in the *South Carolina Gazette* suggest that Hugh Bryan himself took on the task of educating the slaves.[102] At the time, Bryan was a deacon in his Anglican

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[97] Whitefield, *Journals*, 449

[98] Eliza Pinckney to Mrs. Bartlett, ed. Elise Pinckney, *The Letterbook of Eliza Pinckney* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), 34; Weir, 186.

[99] Garden, 53.

[100] Whitefield, *Journals*, 445.

[101] Thomas S. Kidd, "'A Faithful Watchman on the Walls of Charlestown': Josiah Smith and the Moderate Revivalism in Colonial South Carolina" *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 105:2 (April 2004), 91.

[102] *South Carolina Gazette* 1737-1743, (Alderman Library: University of Virginia at Charlottesville), 8-15 January 1741.

church outside of Charleston, which indicates that he still held some esteem in the Anglican religious community. His role as a slave educator, then, would not have been entirely foreign or radical to the colony, except that it trespassed on the South Carolina Act of 1740, which fined whites one hundred pounds for teaching slaves "any manner of writing whatsoever."[103]

Despite violating this South Carolina statute, Whitefield's connection to the school may have helped it survive for a short time. The school lasted two years on the Bryan estate until authorities promptly shut it down on March 27, 1742 and called all colonists connected to the venture to court.[104] Colonial officials charged Hugh Bryan, his brother Jonathan, William Gilbert, Robert Ogle, and others with evangelizing large numbers of slaves on their plantations.[105] Since the men were arrested for teaching slaves Christianity, which the SPG and individual planters did before and after this incident without noted opposition, and not for teaching them to write, which would have violated the 1740 statute, it seems that authorities suspected more insidious actions on the Bryan estate.[106]

Indeed, the Common House of Assembly had acquired, whether by Hugh Bryan's direct submission or by some other means, a book or journal that Hugh had signed, relating "enthusiastick prophecies of the destruction of Charles-Town, and Deliverance of the Negroes from their servitude."[107] The prophecies' radicalism disturbed "the Peace and Safety of the Inhabitants of this Province" and threatened to overturn the social order in the name of the Christian God.[108] Bryan's radicalism did not end with his attempts to disseminate ideas of social upheaval in his slave communities. After his summons, authorities released Hugh and the others

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[103] Raboteau, 116.
[104] *South Carolina Gazette*, 20-27 March 1742.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Just a few short months earlier, Eliza Pinckney wrote to her friend, Mrs. Bartlett, and told the woman that she taught and evangelized her slaves in a formal setting in her own home. Pinckney, March and April 1742, 37.
[107] *South Carolina Gazette,* 20-27 March 1742.
[108] Ibid.

for a short time as they awaited trial. Hugh retreated into the forest "…working miracles and lived…barefooted and alone with his pen and Ink to write down his prophecies."[109] He emerged from the wilderness after three days, convinced that a Spirit had told him to take a stick of a certain length and "smite the Waters of the River, which should thereby be divided, so as he might go over, on dry Ground."[110] But Bryan's similarities with the prophet Moses concluded at the river's edge, where he went "full tilt" vigorously smiting the water until he nearly drowned. Jonathan then pulled Hugh out of the river, saving his life.[111]

While the incident was strange in its entirety, it is most curious that Hugh Bryan attempted to part the river, by all accounts, with no one but his brother watching. Bryan had prophesied Carolina slaves' eventual freedom for weeks, and in his most radical moment when he channeled the Old Testament prophet identified with emancipation, Bryan failed both to part the river and to even bring his Israel to the location of their possible deliverance.[112] Therefore, the Bryan river-incident might suggest that even at their most radical point southern evangelical values in South Carolina did not give way to slave emancipation. However, even if Whitefield's reformative principles on the relationship between master and slave did serve as the foundation for later emancipation movements, neither he nor his South Carolina followers carried out such a possibility during the early 1740s.[113]

After surviving the river-incident, Bryan publicly recanted his prophecies and actions in the *South Carolina Gazette*, which triggered various reactions from whites in the lowcountry. By confessing that he had "fallen into the Delusion of Satan," Hugh reconciled himself with South

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[109] Pinckney, Memdam, 11 March 1741[2].
[110] Ibid.
[111] Kidd, 218.
[112] Pinckney, 11 March 1742; *Boston Post-Boy,* 3 May 1742; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement," 610; Lambert 240-241.
[113] Lawrence Sanders Rowland, *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina 1514-1861* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 136.

Carolina society as a peaceable, flawed human, who the Devil tricked into evil. To some whites, Hugh Bryan's actions confirmed evangelicalism's tendency toward radicalism, which temporarily hurt Whitefield's reputation, since he had openly supported Hugh and Jonathan in their attempts to evangelize slaves prior to 1742. Other successful plantation owners, like Eliza Pinckney and her father, found the event wild, but believed Hugh when he confessed satanic possession. Eliza even felt pity for him, saying "poor man! With what anguish must he reflect on making the spirit of God the author of his weaknesses." She continued, expressing hope that "he will be a warning to all pious minds not to reject reason and revelation and set up in their stead their own wild notions." These "wild notions," as Eliza called them, did not frighten the white populous except for what they might inspire in "the ears of the African Hosts."[114]

Overall, she expressed Hugh's repentance as a communal pleasure, indicating that other lowcountry whites also considered the incident just a pitiful mistake. As late as 1747, Henry Laurens cited that he and Hugh engaged in business transactions, which left Hugh in 180 pounds of debt to the Laurens estate. While Laurens' repeated request for Hugh to pay the debt over the course of several months shows that Hugh fell into some financial trouble, his business interactions with Laurens suggest that Hugh had been integrated back into South Carolina financial circles.[115] South Carolina authorities also removed all charges against Hugh, revealing that colonial officials accepted his formal apology in the *Gazette*.

After Hugh's reacceptance into colonial social, economic, and political spheres, Whitefield continued preaching in South Carolina and kept correspondence with lowcountry people, which indicate that Hugh's radicalism did not destroy Whitefield's efforts in the

[114] Pinckney, 11 March, 1742, 40.
[115] Henry Laurens to Hugh Bryan 29 December 1747, *PHL* 1: 210.

colony.[116] The Bryan brothers also moderated their slave Christianization, suggesting that their southern evangelicalism continued Whitefield's ameliorative vision for a reciprocal duty between masters and slaves that encouraged the spread of Christianity.[117] When the German evangelical, John Martin Bolzius, visited Jonathan Bryan's plantation near Pocatalico, South Carolina in late 1742, Bolzius said that Bryan's slaves had such affection for their master that they did not desire freedom. [118] Though the slaves' desire for freedom is debatable, they were never emancipated. Neither of the Bryan brothers ever freed their slaves, not even in their wills.[119] Thus, as the brothers regressed toward a more moderate evangelicalism, they proved that Christianity would not disrupt the South Carolina social order.

The Bryans also continued the white-to-black evangelization that characterized the first stage of evangelical Christianity's development in the lowcountry. In 1743, they broke from the Church of England and formed the Stoney Creek Independent Congregational Church in Stoney Creek, South Carolina.[120] They encouraged their slaves as well as others' bondservants to attend church at Stoney Creek, and by 1757, the church had baptized and admitted at least thirty-seven slaves, who all signed the church covenant.[121] When Jonathan Bryan moved to Georgia in 1751, he also hired a white minister, Reverend Cornelius Winter, to provide his slaves a formal Christian education. Winter said that when he arrived to teach Bryan's slaves, most of them "could with a degree of readiness repeat with me the Lord 's Prayer, the creed, and the

[116] The *South Carolina Gazette* continues to discuss Whitefield in a positive light after this incident, despite Alexander Garden's repeated accusations that this incident shows the radicalism of Whitefield's evangelism.

[117] Rowland, 136.

[118] Ibid; Jonathan Bryan would go onto become one of key founders of Georgia. He extended and promoted slavery there, but continued to promote slave Christianization.

[119] Gallay, *The Formation of a Planter Elite*, 52.

[120] Frey and Wood, 95.

[121] Ibid.

magnificat."[122] The formation of Stoney Creek Church, hiring Reverend Winter, and the Bryan's steadfast refusal to emancipate their slaves all emblemized the slave Christianization, formal education, and compatibility between Christianity and slavery that Whitefield espoused while in the lowcountry. These three ideologies would continue to be integral to the second and third stages of the Ethiopian Baptists' development in the lowcountry and Jamaica as well.

[122] Cornelius Winter, ed. Rev. William Jay, "Miscellanies: Memoirs of Cornelius Winter," in *The Works of Rev. William Jay, of Argyle Chapel, Bath* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1844), 3:30.

CHAPTER TWO

Black Ministers, Mobility, and the Maturation of Afro-Protestantism in the Georgia Lowcountry, 1772-1784

In the mid-eighteenth century, African American Christianity would see a distinct shift from the white-to-black evangelism of earlier decades. As active agents of their own religious destinies, blacks converted and began Christianizing others leading up to and during the Revolutionary Age.[1] George Liele and other black preachers replicated and modified George Whitefield's religious practices that first disseminated evangelicalism into lowcountry African American communities. As the first licensed African American preacher, Liele maintained amicable relationships with planters until he attained his freedom and parted for Jamaica in 1782. Like Whitefield, black Christian ministers also emphasized regenerative conversion, itinerant preaching, and baptism after conversion as they evangelized in South Carolina and Georgia.[2]

Though several Protestant denominations experienced success among African American populations during this era, lowcountry Baptists encouraged the rise of black evangelists more than any other. Feeling the call of God on their hearts, slave and free colored ministers adopted southern evangelicalism and created a religion rooted in geographic and spiritual mobility.[3] Most evident in their hub-and-spoke method of evangelism, black preachers established a permanent ministry in a central meetinghouse, while maintaining an itinerant circuit in surrounding plantations. This created a dynamic between religious stability in a formal church setting and the

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[1] Michal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 205-210; Silvia Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 118-124; Alfred J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 231-237.

[2] Jonathan Clarke, to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, in *The Baptist Annual Register: Including Sketches of the State of Religion Among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad* (London: Dilly, Button, and Thomas, 1798), 1:332-334, (hereafter, BAR).

[3] Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, "Mobility in Chains: Freedom of Movement in the Early Black Atlantic," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100:1 (Winter 2001), 2-5. See other sources concerning mobility and black Christianity no. 8, p. 47.

flexible mobility of reaching plantation slaves outside the church's geographic range. George Liele's migration to Georgia as a slave along with his Baptist conversion, formal ordination, and American ministry illuminates how evangelical Christianity spread among lowcountry African Americans during the second stage of the Ethiopian Baptists' development.

In the 1970s scholars began studying slavery from the perspective of the enslaved. This transformation in southern studies revealed slaves' voices and agency in creating their own world. This new scholarship moderated highly revered mid-twentieth century monographs by Kenneth Stampp and Stanley Elkins, which argued that slavery became so brutal in the New World that it crushed all semblances of African culture in African American bondservants.[4] Instead, works like *The Slave Community* by John W. Blassingame and Eugene Genovese's *Roll Jordan Roll* emphasize how blacks and whites engaged in a mutual development toward an assimilated American culture, showing both the retention of African cultural characteristics and the influence that culture had on the evolving white society.[5]

As historians began considering slaves' perspectives on slavery and their lives in the Americas, they also examined certain aspects of slave culture, like religion.[6] Studies of slaves'

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[4] Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New york: Random House, 1956); Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

[5] For studies of southern society and slavery, see: John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman eds. *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1983); Rucker, *The River Flows On;* Sobel, *The World they Made Together*; *Sanneh, Lamin.* "'A Plantation of Religion' and the Enterprise Culture in Africa: History, Ex-Slaves, and Religious Inevitability" *Journal of Religion in Africa* 27:1 (February, 1997), 15-49*;* Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998)*;* Philip D. Morgan, ed. *Africa American Life in the Georgia Lowcountry: The Atlantic World and the Gullah Geechee* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

[6] For general studies on black religion, see: Raboteau, *Slave Religion*; Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House Inc., 1976); Dwight N. Hopkins, *Down, Up, and Over: Slave Religion and Black Theology* (New York: Fortress Press, 2000); Lawrence W. Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Curtis J. Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

religiosity attempt to provide a voice for those who left little written documentation about their lives. Consequently, by examining rare slave narratives, newspapers, planters' correspondence, oral histories, and other key primary sources, historians reveal that slaves played active roles in shaping their religious experiences. While a white evangelical may have aided in a black person's conversion, converting to evangelical Christianity was a personal choice. For many slaves, Christian conversion became an empowering experience that gave them control over their spiritual destiny.

The ability to control their religious experiences also highly influenced the success and failures of African American preachers in the colony. In *Come Shouting To Zion*, Silvia Frey and Betty Wood argue that as Africans maintained control over their religious transformation, a reciprocity of assimilation existed between blacks and whites, and women acted as some of the key vessels for the transmission of African rituals to America. While women held most of the responsibility for transmitting African cosmological rituals, the responsibility for Christianizing fellow blacks was largely a responsibility of the male sex. Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodists groups in the South and Jamaica, inherited an evangelical belief that women's roles in the church should be restricted to teaching, instead of preaching. In this pattern, most African American women took on "lesser" roles in their churches, usually outside of the pulpit, but still retained important and influential positions among their fellow converts. [7]

[7] For more information concerning black agency and, particularly, women's role in the development of Afro-Protestantism in the Atlantic, see Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*. Frey and Wood explore how agency and gender helped define African American Protestantism, beginning with the seeds of Christianity planted in Africa and finishing with the establishment of black churches in the South. While understanding gender roles is certainly important for fully comprehending black religion in the Atlantic world, in a study of this size, one must restrict the themes and foci, in order to focus on anything well. For more information on agency in slave religion in the Atlantic world, see also: Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

In addition to religious agency, mobility also impacted how African America ministers evangelized. As Michael Sobel states in *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* the study of mobility is, perhaps, one of the most underdeveloped themes of slave religion, though it is a widely studied topic in Atlantic world history.[8] Sobel contends that movement characterized slaves' religious experiences, because it allowed them to escape their oppressive plantation homes to attend meetings and revivals. Furthermore, mobility also allowed African American preachers to visit slaves who could not leave their homes.[9] This established an intimate connection between these itinerant preachers and their informal congregations, while making movement a definitive characteristic of African American preachers' evangelism.[10] Jon Sensbach also examines religious mobility in *Rebecca's Revival*, which focuses on the work of a black female Moravian evangelist to slaves in St. Thomas. Most apparent in his chapter "The Road," Sensbach explicates mobility's potential impact on religious development, by examining how Rebecca and other evangelists utilized methods of itinerant evangelism in their ministry.

However, while many historians mention the concept of mobility and its impact on the development of Afro-Protestantism, few have made it a conscious theme of their work.[11] Thus, there is a need for more research on how mobility influenced the development of black evangelical Christianity in the South. Slaves and free coloreds lived in a world in motion. Movements brought slaves to their New World homes, affected their daily plantation tasks, and

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[8] While the Moravian effort on St. Thomas echoes other characteristics of eighteenth century evangelicalism, it was mobility that sparked the revivals and augmented their impacts on slave communities. See: Sensbach; For other studies that allude to the importance of movement in the development of the black faith in the Atlantic, see: Frank Lambert, "'I Saw the Book Talk': Slave Readings of the First Great Awakening," *Journal of Negro History* 87:1 (Winter 2002), 12-25; Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South*; Gerzina, "Mobility in Chains: Freedom of Movement in the Early Black Atlantic"; Lisa Vollendorf and Daniella J. Kostroun, *Women, Religion & the Atlantic World, 1600-1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

[9] Michal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), xviii.

[10] Ibid. 142-143.

[11] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, in *BAR* 1:332.

spurred conversion in their hearts. As black Baptist preachers emerged, mobility became integral to the second and third stages of colored Baptists' evolution in the eighteenth century.

Slavery, Christianity, and George Liele Move to the Georgia Lowcountry

One slave's rise to prominence as a black preacher emblemizes evangelical Christianity's second stage of progress among African Americans in the lowcountry. Originally born in Virginia around 1751, Liele traveled through "several parts of America when young," apparently with his master, Henry Sharp. It is not clear whether Liele's parents died at an early age or were sold onto another plantation, but Liele mentions in the account of his early years to Reverend John C. Rippon that he could not remember much of them. While Liele was still a child, Sharp brought him, his other slaves, and his plantation enterprise to the colony of New Georgia, which had only recently allowed slaves into the colony.[12] The advent of slavery into Georgia paralleled with evangelicalism's influx into the colony, and both were products of Whitefield and his followers' efforts to spread the two institutions in the South.

At its conception, Georgia was the only non-slaveholding colony in British America. Phillip Morgan called Georgia's innocent beginnings a "utopian experiment" that warded off all notions of incorporating such a vile practice into the American colonial periphery.[13] James Oglethorpe, one of the colony's Trustees and principal founder, hoped that the "abominable and destructive institution" would never reach his unpolluted colony. Though he certainly did not rejoice at the presence of prisoners, drifters, and runaway slaves, Oglethorpe considered the

[12] Ibid.

[13] Philip D. Morgan, "Lowcountry Georgia and the Early Modern Atlantic world, 1733-ca. 1820," in *Africa American Life in the Georgia Lowcountry: The Atlantic World and the Gullah Geechee* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 14.

purposeful enslavement of other human beings a permanent stain on the untarnished Georgia landscape.[14]

By 1750, Georgia remained mostly uninhabited and unprofitable, which concerned the Trustees. Complaining that many settlers "hudled up together on small bits of Land," because they could not suitably cultivate their property, the Board knew that the laws against slavery discouraged profitable plantation developments.[15] The Board also received repeated requests from Jonathan Bryan, the successful South Carolina planter and Whitefield convert, to allow his plantation enterprise into the colony. Around September 1750, Bryan petitioned for five hundred acres of marsh and swampland near Savannah, on the stipulation that he would bring his slaves with him. Boldly telling Oglethorpe and other colonial leaders that "he would by next Christmas put on a sufficient Number of Hands to cultivate and improve the same to the best advantage," Bryan made the extension of slavery a condition of settlement in the Georgia lowcountry.[16] The Board "readily granted Mr. Bryan's request," knowing that he would become "a useful and valuable Member of this Colony."[17] After steadily acquiescing other requests similar to Bryan's for several months, Georgia leaders legalized slavery on January 1, 1751. Soon, settlers leaked into the colonial buffer zone, extending their plantations, families, politics, social customs, religious beliefs, and, despite Oglethorpe's continuing hatred of the institution, their slaves into America's vast geographical periphery.[18]

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[14] Quoted in Morgan, "Lowcountry Georgia and the Early Modern Atlantic World," 17.

[15] Allen D. Candler, ed., *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia From October 12, 1741 to October 30, 1754* (Atlanta: The Franklin Printing and Publishing Company, 1904), 339.

[16] Quoted in Harvey H. Jackson, "The Carolina Connection: Jonathan Bryan, His Brothers, and the Founding of Georgia" *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 68:2 (Summer 1984), 168.

[17] Candler, 334.

[18] Gallay, *The Formation of a Planter Elite,* 64. Gallay says that "without a doubt, Bryan would not have moved to Georgia had slavery not been legalized and if land had not been granted in 'absolute inheritance'…Bryan believed that his political, social, and religious objectives could *only* be satisfied in the context of his ownership of large plantations worked by slave labor."

Perhaps more than any other colony, British Americans' expansion into Georgia adopted a distinctly imperialistic tone.[19] Migrant planters, who made headway into Georgia, usually did so as a reaction to one of two extremes. Either they had tangled themselves in too many losses in Carolina rice cultivation and needed an escape route to start their entrepreneurial dreams anew, or they had enjoyed such success in the northern lowcountry that they expanded their plantations south to gain even more profits. As these men sought to extend their economic empires deeper into the South, they took their small worlds with them.[20]

As slavery encouraged settlement, it, along with evangelical Christianity, became social unifiers in Georgia. Originally, humanitarian aid had been one of the principle reasons for founding Georgia, so it was not entirely unusual that George Whitefield decided to establish an orphanage in the colony after John Wesley invited him to visit in 1738.[21] Though not the first orphan home in the colony, Whitefield's orphanage would augment the Salzburger's work in Ebenezer, Georgia, where they had established a small orphan home in 1737 with Oglethorpe's assistance.[22] Whitefield considered both his orphan home and the extension of slavery crucial to

[19] As David Hackett Fischer argues in *Albion's Seed*, continuity characterized the transmissions of larger regional cultures through individuals. Therefore, as these men and women extended themselves into Georgia, they extended their personal as well as their inherited regional cultures with them. David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Pres, 1989), 207-265.

[20] Not all new settlers in Georgia were large plantation-holding imperialist entrepreneurs. Just like other colonial settlements, a great diversity of people and people groups migrated to Georgia. As a peripheral colony, Georgia conglomerated many of America's extremities, from the very poor, like prisoners and runaways, to the very rich, like Jonathan Bryan. See: Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia: 1730-1775* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1984), 1-17; Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Household, Gender Relations, & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Lowcountry* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1995), 5-17; S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in South Carolina* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 53-91; Allan Gallay, *The Formation of a Planter Elite: Jonathan Bryan and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 60-71.

[21] Erwin C. Surrency, "Whitefield Habersham, and the Bethesda Orphanage," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34:2 (June, 1950), 88.

[22] Ibid. 89. Once Bethesda was established, both homes would work in harmony with one another, bringing Christianity to the despondent children of Georgia.

the spread of evangelical Christianity in the lowcountry. Whitefield felt an intimate connection with Georgia and Bethesda, often referring to his followers there as "my family in Georgia."[23]

Whitefield's public advocacy of Jonathan Bryan's attempts to bring slavery into Georgia furthered Christianity's progress in the colony. Whitefield supported Bryan's work in using slaves to further colonize Georgia, but did not submit any personal requests to bring slaves into the colony until the Board of Trustees permitted it in 1751.[24] The evangelist felt that bringing slavery to Georgia would aid operations at Bethesda and augment the spiritual lives of Africans moving to the colony. Prior to the allowance of slavery, Whitefield claimed that Bethesda's lands were almost completely unproductive "entirely owing to the necessity I lay under making use of white hands." Whitefield complained, "Had a negroe been allowed" there would be "a sufficiency to support a great many orphans."[25]

Beyond producing necessities for his orphanage, Whitefield also believed that extending slavery into Georgia would further Christianization efforts among the African Americans, who he referred to as "Ethiopians". He told Johann Bolzius, "I think now is the season for us to exert our utmost for the good of the poor Ethiopians."[26] With confidence, Whitefield referenced Psalm 68:31, saying that "we are told, that even they [Ethiopians] are soon to stretch out their hands unto God." Whitefield went on using biblical instances of slavery to say that the institution "may not be so irksome." Whitefield's identification of African American believers as Ethiopians brought them into the collective identity of Christ followers and alluded to a biblical reference, which prophesied an African nation coming to Christ. Black Baptist congregations in the

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[23] George Whitefield, *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield Containing All his Sermons and Tracts Which Have Been Already Published, With a Select Collection of Letters* (London: Edward and Charles Dilly), 1:463.

[24] Ibid. 2:405.

[25] Ibid. 2:208.

[26] Ibid. 404; Kidd, *The Great Awakening,* 217; Samuel Smith, *A Cautious Enthusiasm: Mystical Piety and Evangelicalism in Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013), 116-118.

lowcountry would also begin identifying themselves as "Ethiopians" in the late eighteenth century.[27]

Whitefield also hoped that he "could purchase a good number of them [slaves], in order to make their lives comfortable, and lay a foundation for breeding up their posterity in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."[28] In 1746 Whitefield carried out this desire, when he bought and purchased slaves for his personal use and for Bethesda.[29] One year later, the Bryan family sold Whitefield 640 acres of land for the production of rice and corn, which Whitefield hoped would supply the provisions for Bethesda.[30] Whitefield rejoiced that Bethesda's plantation would produce more food at the hands of slaves, and told "Mr. B----," a resident of Georgia and fellow evangelical, that God would soon "bring the light out of darkness, and cause the barren wilderness to smile" in Georgia. Whitefield continued, saying, "By mixing with your people, I trust many of them will be brought to Jesus, and this consideration, as to us, swallows up all temporal inconveniences whatsoever."[31] Thus, the spread of slavery to Georgia presented an opportunity for slave Christianization, which, for Whitefield, trumped any other negativities associated with the system of slavery. As Whitefield continued his frequent ministerial visits to evangelize and support his orphan home, planters like Jonathan Bryan, Henry Laurens, and Henry Sharp extended their economic enterprises into Georgia. Consequently, Christianity's

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[27] Abraham Marshall, a highly successful black evangelist in the lowcountry, referred to African American converts in 1788 as "Ethiopians". He also called Andrew Bryan's church in Savannah, the "Ethiopian church of Jesus Christ in Savannah." See: Abraham Marshall V.D.M. to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR* 1:341; Acts 8:26-40 (New International Version) explains the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, which initiated the spread of Christianity into Ethiopia. The eunuch converted after Philip evangelized him, and then the eunuch asked that Philip baptize him. "Both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing".

[28] George Whitefield on slavery in Georgia: see Whitefield to Mr. Johann Martin Boltzius, 22 Mar.1751, *Whitefield Works*, 2: 404-405.

[29] Gallay, *The Formation of a Planter Elite*, 41.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Whitefield to Mr. Johann Martin Bolzius, 22 Mar.1751, *Whitefield Works*, 2: 404-405.

spread among whites, like Henry Sharp, and blacks, like George Liele, paralleled with the economic and social growth in lowcountry Georgia throughout the mid-eighteenth century.[32]

Through Whitefield's correspondence, it is evident that whites continued to proselytize slaves as Christianity and slavery broadened their boundaries in the lowcountry.[33] However, by the 1760s and 1770s a shift in the method of slave evangelization was occurring throughout the lowcountry. The first generation of Christian slaves, such as George Liele, who converted in response to white proselytization, rose to take responsibility for evangelizing their fellow blacks. But before Liele or any other black preacher could evangelize, they first had to hear the Gospel, convert, and experience the transformative power of salvation on their hearts.

The Rise of a Slave Baptist Preacher

According to Liele's contemporaries, both black and white, his "father was the only black person who knew the Lord in a spiritual way in that country."[34] If Henry Sharp, Liele's master, was against Christianizing slaves, then Liele's father might not have made his conversion public, for fear of upsetting his owner. Though Liele's father could have converted as an act of resistance, this is unlikely, since Sharp allowed his slaves to attend church with him and permitted Liele, the younger, to preach on his plantation.[35] So then, Liele was born into a family of respected faith on a plantation that likely facilitated slave conversion. This placed Liele in an environment that brought about in him "a natural fear of God from [his] youth…which barred [him] from many sins and bad company."[36] Despite this innate "fear of the Lord", Liele

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[32] Gallay, *The Formation of the Planter Elite*, 47-64.

[33] Barry Hankins, *The Second Great Awakening and the Transcendentalists* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 59-64; Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening and the Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 220-222.

[34] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:332.

[35] Ibid; Ballew, 15.

[36] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, London, England 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 332.

continued in ignorance of the true Gospel, hoping to attain salvation by performing good works.[37]

In 1774, Liele attended Matthew Moore's church in Burke County Georgia, where Henry Sharp served as a deacon. Though Liele visited his master's church out of a general curiosity, Moore's sermon awakened him to the light of the Gospel's message:

> He unfolded all my dark views, opened my best behavior and good works to me, which I thought I was to be saved by, and I was convinced that I was not in the way to heaven, but in the way to hell. This state I labored under for the space of five or six months. The more I heard or read, the I more saw that I was condemned as a sinner before God; till at length I was brought to perceive that my life hung by a slender thread, and if it was the will of God to cut me off at that time, I was should I should be found in hell, as sure as God was in heaven.[38]

After discussing his torment with Reverend Moore, Moore explained that salvation could only come through Jesus Christ. Liele told Rippon, "I saw my condemnation in my own heart, and I found no way wherein I could escape the damnation of hell, only through the merits of my dying Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Liele "felt such love and joy as [his] tongue was not able to express." At the climax of torment for his innumerable sins, Liele experienced the encompassing "relief" of salvation as he made "intercession with Christ." Days later, Liele made a profession of faith in front of Moore and his congregation, who accepted Liele as a member of their congregation and baptized him as a new believer in Christ.[39]

Liele's intense conversion, which overwhelmed him body and soul, corresponds with many black and white conversion experiences. David George, one of Henry Galphin's slaves in Stoney Creek, South Carolina, described the moments before he converted to Christianity as a sickness. Saying that he "felt [his] own plague," George knew that he "could not be saved by

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[37] Ibid.
[38] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:333.
[39] Ibid.

[his] own doings, but that it must be by God's mercy."[40] John Marrant, the famous black evangelist to southern backcountry Indians between 1770 and 1772, felt the conviction of his sin so deeply after he heard Whitefield preach the Gospel in 1768 that he would not eat for three days.[41] Hugh Bryan said that after his conversion, he delighted "no more in worldly goods, but in a life of faith in Jesus Christ, [his] sole joy and comfort."[42]

These narratives reveal the usual four-part pattern of conversion: conviction, repentance, salvation and regeneration that Whitefield stressed during his itinerant preaching. Especially for slaves in the lowcountry, the idea of a personal Savior and the hope for a better afterlife than the present made Christianity more appealing. These two concepts could help them cope with oppression by giving them a hope for eventual freedom in death and a glimpse of spiritual equality that could combat arguments for their continued oppression in life- sometimes more effectively than the common idea among African Americans that death would send their souls back to Africa.[43] For Liele, Christ's death on the cross and his own spiritual rebirth inspired him to retell his conversion experience. Almost immediately after Liele converted, he began proselytizing both blacks and whites through informal worship, preaching in Moore's church, and evangelizing slaves at nearby plantations.

Liele's initial ministry involved telling other slaves about his own spiritual experiences, singing hymns, and explicating the verses of spiritual songs to his listeners all on Sharp's

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[40] David George to John C. Rippon, "An Account of the Life of Mr. David George," *BAR* 1:475.

[41] John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black* (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785), 11.

[42] Hugh Bryan, eds. John Conder and Thomas Gibbons, *Living Christianity Delineated: In the Diaries and Letters of Two Eminently Pious Persons Lately Deceased* (Boston: Hastings, Ethridge, and Bliss, 1809), 12.

[43] Raboteau, 97-98. Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 15-17; Frey and Wood, 15-25.

plantation.[44] Liele connected with his congregation by leading them in musical worship and then explicating "the [songs'] most stirring parts."[45] This exegesis related the important parts of the hymn to the slave congregations, indicating the significance of these verses as spiritual texts among slave populations, as well as Liele's developing skills as a minister.[46] After spending some time singing and explaining the Christian hymns, Liele would often discuss how the Lord transformed his heart in a personal testimony to his hearers.[47]

While Liele does not give any numerical statistics relating the effectiveness of this ministry, the reaction of whites' in Burke County indicate that he gained quite a following. Reverend Moore and others in the congregation saw Liele making headway among his fellow slaves and did something quite uncharacteristic of white churches in the South- they offered him the pulpit. Around 1774, Burke County Baptist Church could see that Liele "possessed ministerial gifts" and, in a unanimous vote, asked him to take a quarterly preaching position at the church.[48] Moore formerly ordained Liele as a pastor shortly after this and obtained permission from colonial officials for Liele to preach in Georgia. This meant that four times a year, Liele preached to both whites and blacks in a formal, welcomed setting as the first and only licensed minister of African descent in America.[49]

Most religious groups in the lowcountry openly encouraged the evangelization of slaves. Some even supported the emergence of slave preachers, but the support of a slave teaching

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[44] Frey and Wood, 115. For more information on Liele, his conversion experience, and career as an evangelist in Georgia and Jamaica, see David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (Boston: Manning and Loring, 1813), 2:194-195.

[45] The *BAR* states "that he began to discover his love to other negroes, on the same plantation with himself, by reading hymns among them, encouraging them to sing, and some-times by explaining the most string parts of them." Quoted in, Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:333.

[46] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, London, England 15 September 1790, *BAR*, 1:333.

[47] Frey and Wood state that Liele could not read yet, though there is no information on the development of his literacy in early years. See: *Come Shouting to Zion*, 118-121.

[48] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, *BAR*, 1:333.

[49] Ibid; Ballew, 18.

whites often went beyond the boundaries of social pragmatism. Georgia and South Carolina could withstand and even bolster African American religion as long as it reaffirmed the social order. Most Baptist groups supported slaves preaching to other slaves and free blacks, but an African American authority figure, who presided over whites' spiritual lives, was still a rare occurrence. Thus, Liele's official sanction as the only ordained African American preacher and his continued enslavement, despite his master's offers of freedom, indicate his wishes to maintain amicable relationships with whites.[50]

That Liele and other slaves converted in Baptist churches warrants further explanation, since Baptists were among the last dissenting groups to fall under the evangelical wave of the first Great Awakening. As David Bebbington explains, even in 1740 most New England Baptists found the emotionalism associated with the awakening fanatical.[51] At times, Baptists throughout the Atlantic considered the Great Awakening at odds with their religious understanding, particularly concerning the sacred ritual of baptism, which few revivalists practiced in the awakening's early years. Despite their initial suppositions of the transatlantic revival as radical and oppositional to Baptist practices, by the 1750s many Baptists found commonalities between their beliefs and practices and evangelical revival. Baptists shared the belief in justification by faith, rebirth in salvation, and a distinction between "natural and moral inability to accept the gospel," which Jonathan Edwards proposed in *The Freedom of the Will* (1754).[52] During his visits in the lowcountry, Whitefield, among other evangelicals, began baptizing believers upon conversion and a profession of faith. As an Anglican, Whitefield still practiced infant Baptism,

[50] For more information on the debate of slave preachers' autonomy, see: Frey and Wood 130-132; Raboteau, 212-225, 238; Lamin, 22-23.

[51] David Bebbington, *Baptists Through the Centuries: A History of a Global People* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 72.

[52] Ibid. 75.

but when he and other major revivalists used adult baptism to symbolize spiritual rebirth, they further united Baptists with the awakening.

As Thomas Kidd contends, Oliver Hart was almost totally responsible for making southern Baptist churches in South Carolina respectable. Hart converted while still living in Pennsylvania in 1741, and learned to preach by listening to Whitefield and others evangelize, from which he "professed to have received much benefit, particularly from Mr. Whitefield's."[53] Eight years later he became an ordained minister and assumed the pastorate at Charleston's First Baptist Church in 1749. There, he led his church with an evangelical fervor similar to evangelists who inspired him, like George Whitefield. In 1754 Hart's church, along with others in the surrounding areas, experienced a series of revivals, and he often shared the pulpit with local and traveling ministers, such as Stoney Creek Church's William Hutson, who took over the pastorate after Hugh Bryan died in 1751.[54]

Additionally, Hart's efforts in South Carolina helped establish other churches in the lowcountry, including Ashley River and Welsh Neck Baptist Church, both of which allowed African Americans to become members. Hart described the conversions and baptisms among white and black believers as a "glorious display of ye Power & Goodness of God," that gave him hope in the wake of the American Revolution.[55] While much information on Hart and the churches he helped establish remains, few records are left of the Burke County Baptist church in

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[53] David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1813), 2:324.

[54] Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 257; Richard Furman, *Rewards of Grace Conferred on Christ's Faithful People* (Charleston, S.C., 1796), 21-23; Oliver Hart, "Extracts from the Diary of Rev. Oliver Hart," *Year Book* (Charleston, South Carolina, 1896), 378; Loulie L. Owens, *Oliver Hart, 1723-1795: A Biography* (Greenville: South Carolina Baptist Historical Society, 1966).

[55] Quoted in Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 258. The Welsh Neck Baptist Church encountered some problems when Edmund Botsford, a rigid high Calvinist, took over the pastorate. He excommunicated many white and black converts for not understanding the "true religion." It is unclear as to whether he meant Calvinism or Christianity itself, but his disruption of the church suggests that even lowcountry Baptists were not always in accord with one another.

Georgia, where Liele began his ministry. In Liele and other ministers' accounts of it in the *Baptist Annual Register*, the Burke County Baptist Church also appears to have supported evangelical revivals between both black and white believers, since its establishment.

Hub-and-Spoke Evangelism

Preaching in Moore's church initiated the final development in Liele's American ministry. His licensure entitled him to preach in almost any Baptist church and permitted him on many plantations as well. Similar to Whitefield and other southern evangelicals' practice of sharing pulpits with fellow ministers, for the next four years, Liele kept a regular attendance at Moore's church and even spoke in the chapel most Sunday nights, when there were no formal services for the regular congregation. While this license entitled Liele to evangelize local congregations, it also allowed him to travel and preach.[56] Still a slave at this time, it is likely that Henry Sharp, who had already offered to liberate Liele, provided approval of his local and itinerant missions in the lowcountry.[57] Thus, Liele's ordination as the first black minister in America became the principle-facilitating factor that motivated his adoption of the mobile preaching practice that would characterize his ministry throughout the rest of his life.

In the two years between his conversion, in 1774, and the outset of the American Revolution, in 1776, Liele visited various plantations, establishing intimate connections with slaves and masters in South Carolina and Georgia, linking him to Whitefield's practices in the 1740s. Liele ministered to blacks and whites throughout the lowcountry by engaging in a system of hub-and-spoke evangelism. After securing a stable footing in Reverend Moore's church in Burke County, Liele spread out to various localities within a couple hundred miles of the church. Using the church as the epicenter of his evangelism, Liele traveled to plantations all around

[56] Frey and Wood, 119; Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, *BAR*, 1:333.
[57] Ibid. 1:334.

Burke County.[58] Sources do not explain the exact geographical reach of Liele's itinerant evangelism. While the range of his travels during these few years did not match Whitefield's, Liele did travel between Georgia and South Carolina frequently, establishing amicable relationships with planters and evangelizing like Whitefield among slave communities.

As it still does today, the Savannah River defined much of the boundary between Georgia and South Carolina during Liele's time, and he often visited a treasured plantation resided on the opposite side of the river. George Galphin's plantation in Silver Bluff became a popular preaching place for Liele in South Carolina.[59] Though little is known about Galphin, besides his Irish ancestry, it is apparent that, like Sharp, Galphin permitted slave evangelization and Christianization on his land, allowing both black and white ministers to educate his slaves in Christian teachings.[60] One of Galphin's slaves, David George, wrote and published a religious narrative of his life as a missionary in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, which included stories on his beginnings at Galphin's plantation. While walking in the woods one day, a slave named Cyrus approached George and condemned him for impregnating a slave woman on the plantation and told George that he was going straight to hell. For the first time in his life, George began to contemplate his faith and his fate. Weighed down by a burden that he could not fully define, George stayed into the woods until "the Lord took away [his] distress." Soon after this incident, George heard Liele preach to the slaves at Silver Bluff, saying, "come unto me all ye that labour, are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[61] George told Liele that the Lord had indeed taken away his burden, and Liele led George in his first communal prayer as a new believer.[62]

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[58] For information on Liele's travels in America, see Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, *BAR*, 1:332-334; Ballew, 15-25; Frey and Wood, 115-120; Gayle, 6-11.

[59] The *BAR* and other records also cite "Galphin" "Gaulfin," "Golphin" and "Gaulphin".

[60] David George to John C. Rippon, "An Account of the Life of Mr. David George," *BAR* 1:474.

[61] Ibid. 475.

[62] Ibid.

There is also evidence to suggest that Liele may have crossed paths with two of Whitefield's most influential lowcountry converts, further linking Whitefield and Liele together through personal connections. While Liele was preaching at Silver Bluff, Henry Palmer, a white convert of Whitefield and evangelical minister, proselytized slaves on Galphin's plantation as well. Both Liele and Palmer encouraged David George along with seven of his fellow slaves to establish a church at Silver Bluff, where George assumed the head pastorate.[63] Jonathan Bryan's promotion of slave Christianization also connected Whitefield to Liele as well. Before Liele left for Jamaica in 1782, he evangelized some of Jonathan Bryan's slaves and baptized at least two of them, Andrew Bryan and a female slave named Hagar.[64] Though it is unconfirmed that Jonathan and Liele came into contact, it is likely that they intersected, given Liele's frequent itinerant evangelization in Savannah and Jonathan Bryan's political and economic dominance there. During the last two decades of the eighteenth century, Jonathan also helped Andrew Bryan establish a ministry in Savannah similar to Liele, who became Andrew's spiritual mentor.[65] Thus, as Whitefield's convert and Liele's convert united to evangelize African Americans in the lowcountry, Andrew and Jonathan linked the first and second stages of the Ethiopian Baptists' development together in a common religious experience.

Some of Liele's followers began to replicate his stable ministry in Burke County and itinerant circuit as they rose up as African American preachers.[66] While still the head minister at the Silver Bluff Baptist Church, David George began evangelizing to other localities surrounding him in 1776. Like Whitefield and other Great Awakening evangelists, David George frequently adopted an open-air itinerant preaching method during the American Revolution, when blacks

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[63] Ibid. 475-476.
[64] Abraham Marshall to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, BAR, 1: 340.
[65] Ibid. 340-342.
[66] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790 *BAR,* 1:333.

were often disallowed the right to preaching in their meetinghouses, for fear of African Americans using the pulpit to incur British loyalism among their congregations:

> Meeting style structure being transferred: I began to sing the first night in the woods at a camp, for there were no houses then built, they were just clearing and preparing to erect a town. The Black people came far and near, it was so new to them. I kept on so every night in the week, and appointed a meeting for the first Lords day, in a valley between two hills, close by the river and a great number of white and black people came, and I was so overjoyed with having an opportunity once more to preach the Word of God, that after I had given out the hymn, I could not speak for tears.[67]

Another black preacher, Abraham Marshall, also rose to prominence in the lowcountry after Liele left for Jamaica in 1782 and created an almost identical pattern of movement as a hub-and-spoke evangelist. Upon the death of his father in 1784, Abraham Marshall "closed his former travels with one tour of three thousand miles, through eleven States, preaching and baptizing," and took over his father's ministry at Kiokee Baptist Church outside of Savannah.[68] Abraham's father, Daniel Marshall, converted after hearing George Whitefield preach in Connecticut in 1744 and began ministering to Native Americans in Virginia by 1754.[69] Around 1770, Daniel moved to Georgia and established the Kiokee Baptist Church in 1772, which was the first black church in America, "from which the rest have principally sprung."[70]

As the head pastor at Kiokee, Abraham had numerous responsibilities, but still found time to visit and continue evangelizing slaves in neighboring plantations around the Savannah area.[71] Abraham even appeared as a guest at Stephen's Creek Baptist Church in Edgefield

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[67] David George to John C. Rippon, "An Account of the Life of Mr. David George," *BAR*, 1:478.

[68] Very little is known about this tour of three thousand miles, which supposedly reached 40-50,000 people. It is even unclear as to whether Abraham meant that he finished his father's travels (which is possible, since his father was a famous itinerant preacher) or if the three thousand mile journey represented an end to Abraham's large-scale itinerant career, see: Abraham Marshall to John C. Rippon, 1 May 1793, *BAR*, 1:544.

[69] Abraham Marshall to John C. Rippon, 1 May 1793, *BAR*, 1:544; Benedict, 154-155.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Kiokee is often called Kioka in the *BAR*. It is possible that this is how Kiokee was pronounced in the Gullah dialect in the lowcountry. Overall, almost all sources indicate that Marshall's church at Kiokee, founded in 1772, was actually the first black church established in America. For works affirming this, see: Robert G. Gardner, ed. "Rev. Daniel Marshall, Born in 1706, Died in 1784, Pioneer Baptist Minister, Established Kiokee, the First

County, South Carolina and at the Silver Bluff Baptist Church, where he communed with various pastors and their congregations. Liele and Marshall's evangelism produced a number of converts, some of whom would become major figures in the southern and transatlantic Afro-Protestant movement in the nineteenth century. Both men evangelized and aided in Andrew Bryan, David George, Jesse Galphin, Brother Amos, George Gibb, and George Lewis' conversion. Andrew Bryan established his own church in Savannah around 1793, and continued to minister in the lowcountry until his death in 1812.[72] David George evacuated along with 24,000 other British loyalists for Nova Scotia in 1784, where he established a black Baptist ministry.[73] Brother Amos also left America around 1794, but moved to New Providence in the Bahamas to evangelize slave societies there.[74] Gibb and Lewis evacuated Savannah with Liele in 1782 for Jamaica, and both men served as key itinerant preachers among the slaves on the island for almost forty

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Baptist Church in Georgia in 1772. Erected by the People of Georgia in 1903, in Recognition of His Devotion and Consecration to the Cause of Christ," in *Historical Markers Related to Baptists in Georgia* (Mercer Special Collections Baptist Archives, 2012) http://libraries.mercer.edu/tarver/archives/special-collections-baptist-university-archives/media/markers.pdf. Note that in this documentation the ed. denotes to see Harris and Mosteller, 268-291, because some of the information on the marker is false. He is referring to the location of the church, not the date; James Donovan Mosteller, *A History of the Kiokee Baptist Church in Georgia* (Anne Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1952), 10-15; Waldo P. Harris, *Georgia's First Continuing Baptist Church: A History of the Kiokee Baptist Church in Georgia* (Kiokee: Kiokee Baptist Church, 1997), 268-291.

While there are many sources that argue Silver Bluff as the first black church in America as well, none of these sources place the date of the church's founding prior to 1774. William Oathcart, The *Baptist Encyclopedia. A Dictionary of the Doctrines, Ordinances, Usages, Confessions of Faith, Suffering, Labors, and Successes, and of the General history of the Baptist Denomination in All Lands*, (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 155, has been one of the longstanding promoters of Silver Bluff's preexistence to Kiokee. However, this entry is explicitly wrong on two accounts concerning the church, besides its founding date. The *Baptist Encyclopedia* states that Abraham Marshall founded Kiokee in 1788. Seeing as Abraham claimed the pastorate in 1784 after his father's death, according to his personal letter to Rippon, it is apparent that the *Encyclopedia* was inconsistent in its facts concerning Kiokee. Though it is definitively certain that Silver Bluff served as an informal meeting place for several years prior to Kiokee's existence, Daniel Marshall founded the first official African America church in the colonies in 1772, while David George and seven other black ministers established the Silver Bluff Baptist Church less than two full years later, in 1774.

[72] George Liele to John C. Rippon,12 January 1793, *BAR*, 1:541

[73] Brooks, 173-176; David George to John C. Rippon, "An Account of the Life of Mr. David George," *BAR*, 1:473-484, 578-580.

[74] George Liele to John C. Rippon,12 January 1793, *BAR*, 1:541; Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 22 December 1792, *BAR*, 1:541.

years.[75] Thus, this method of evangelism produced a number of key evangelists, all of whom would participate in a network of correspondence after 1790 that helped spread the Afro-Baptist faith throughout the British Atlantic.[76]

When evangelizing slaves, both in the meetinghouse and in his itinerant missions, Liele emphasized baptism after a believer's conversion to Christianity like Hart and other Baptist evangelicals. In Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register*, all of these Baptist ministers in the South and Jamaica engaged in correspondence, which included habitual notifications on the progress of their conversions and baptisms. The ritual of baptism, which symbolized their spiritual regeneration as newborn believers in Christ, bound lowcountry Baptists together in a communal religious custom. While visiting Silver Bluff, Abraham Marshall said that he, personally, baptized forty-five converts in one day, who gave "repeated proofs by their sufferings, of their zeal for the cause of God and religion." Marshall also told Rippon that "in the year 1787, there was a glorious revival; thousands attended on the word." He baptized over a hundred slaves that year alone.[77] By 1791 the Silver Bluff Baptist church had over "two hundred members, in full fellowship and had certificates from [local slaves'] owners of one hundred more, who had given in their experiences were ready to be baptized."[78] Through their correspondence and shared

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[75] Shirley C. Gordon, *God Almighty, Make Me Free: Christianity in Preemancipation Jamaica* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996), 5-7 and 40-42. White evangelists continued to impact slave communities during this era. Particularly, Henry Palmer, a white evangelist and convert of Whitefield, evangelized often at Silver Bluff. He also helped George, Bryan, and Galphin raise both financial and social support for the church from white and black communities. For more information on Palmer, see: David George, *Baptist Annual Register 1790-1793*, 336, 473-477.

[76] Abraham Marshal and Liele would set the example for this practice in the South. Andrew Bryan, David George, Jesse Galphin, Daniel Marshall, Andrew C. Marshall, and Brother Amos (who would later move to New Providence, Bahamas to evangelize slave societies) all engaged in this practice of hub-and-spoke evangelism to some extent. To see more information on their various home churches and micro-itinerant evangelism, see *BAR*, 1:332-344, 540-547.

[77] Abraham Marshall, to John C. Rippon, 1 May 1793, *BAR*, 1:545.

[78] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 18 December 1793, *BAR,* 1:541; Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 22 December 1792, *BAR,* 1:547.

baptismal rituals, the black Baptist community strengthened as evangelical Christianity continued to spread.

The growth in these churches also indicates a direct response to black ministers' hub-and-spoke evangelism, which collected converts from peripheral plantations and provided slaves physical establishments for worship. Much like the simple meetinghouses of early Anglican churches, these rectangular structures rarely even had steeples to denote their uniqueness on the lowcountry landscape. The simplicity of the Silver Bluff Baptist Church and the Kiokee Baptist Churches' architecture suggests that these places served a more important purpose than aesthetic pleasure.[79] The inexpensive, yet, sturdy materials, such as brick and mortar, whispered messages of stability, poverty, and collective activism about the buildings' inhabitants. Though poor and enslaved, the African Americans who built these churches constructed them out of a need for collective worship and communal spiritual growth.[80] Hub-and-spoke evangelism allowed Liele and Marshall to spread Afro-Protestantism throughout the lowcountry and create a network of black ministers, while still giving the black Protestant movement visible security in the tangible architecture of African American churches.

George Liele and other black Baptist preachers' progress in the lowcountry also reflects a continuation of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and Whitefield's campaign to prove the compatibility between slavery and Christianity. Both Liele and Marshall established amicable relationships with planters throughout the area of their evangelism. George Galphin, Jonathan Bryan, Bryan's son, William, and Henry Sharp's willingness to allow Liele and Marshall's ministry on their plantations, suggests that the relationships between the evangelists

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[79] In a letter to Rippon, Jonathan Clarke said that a planter Edward Davis allowed Bryan to build a church on his land, which Clarke described as "a rough building…a Yamacraw," a suburb of Savannah. Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:340.

[80] For information on the architecture of these two buildings, see: Kiokee Baptist Church, "A Brief History of Kiokee Baptist Church," http://kiokee.org/history/.

and these prominent planters were friendly.[81] Sources also indicate that Marshall, Liele, and many of the other black preachers had reputations for amicability with the planters throughout the lowcountry. *The Baptist Encyclopedia* said that Andrew Bryan "stood exceedingly high in public estimation, and brought great numbers into his church." The author admitted that "when [Andrew] was young he was persecuted for preaching; but when he died the Sunbury Association adopted a complimentary resolution of regret concerning him, and the white Baptist and Presbyterian ministers of Savannah delivered addresses in his honor."[82] Similarly, neither Liele nor Marshall ever met much white opposition during their time in the lowcountry. This could, in part, be owed to Liele's ordination as a pastor, which gave Liele proof that other whites trusted him. As for Abraham Marshall, it is not entirely clear how he remained on good terms with planters, but by 1793 he boasted more black converts than any other minister in the South, indicating his popularity among blacks and whites.[83]

America and Black Evangelicals Struggle for Freedom

While the successes among various congregations and lowcountry residents indicates a general trend of amicability, Liele, along with every one of these ministers, had at least one negative experience with the white populous. For several black preachers, the instability of the American Revolution facilitated clashes with white society. After watching David George by the river every evening, "the white people, the justices, and all were in an uproar," and they told George that he could go into the woods, but he could not stay in Savannah. Deciding against this suggested plan of action, George built a hut for himself and his family on a quarter acre of

[81] Liele and Marshall frequented these plantations often, and they especially established good relationships with Jonathan Bryan, who always was always supportive of slave evangelization.

[82] Oathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia,*155.

[83] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 12 January 1793 *BAR*, 1:541; Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 22 December 1792, *BAR*, 1:545. He told Rippon that in twenty years the ministry at Kiokee "increased to upwards of three thousand three hundred" converts.

Governor Parr's land near Halifax. He began preaching in a nearby church, until the whites "beat [him] with sticks and drove [him] into the swamp."[84] Such incidents of maltreatment during the Revolution were not necessarily attacks against black Christianity, but against the idea that the British could provide slaves freedom. Many whites in the South feared that blacks would use the pulpit as a soapbox to argue for revolt, just as many southern dissenters used the white pulpit to engender patriotic fever in their congregations.[85] Once again, the enemy of black Christianity in the South emanated not from religious qualms concerning blacks' inferiority, but from socio-political events that threatened to use religion as a catalyst to emancipate slaves.[86]

Similar to the Spanish tactics of allowing slaves freedom when they entered the St. Augustine settlement, on November 7, 1775, Lord John Earl of Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, declared "all indented Servants, Negroes, or others, (appertaining to Rebels), free that are able and willing to bear Arms" in defense of the Crown.[87] For the southern metropolis of Charlestown, the proclamation served as a tangible manifestation of their long-standing suspicions that blacks in the lowcountry would forsake their social duties for a chance at liberation.[88] Indeed, only three months earlier, the people of Charlestown hanged and burned Thomas Jeremiah, a free black fireman, harbor pilot, and slaveholder, for supposedly planning a slave rebellion in the spring of 1775. As historian William R. Ryan suggests in his work on

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[84] David George to John C. Rippon, "An Account of the Life of Mr. David George," *BAR*, 1:578.

[85] Edward J. Cashin, *The King's Ranger: Thomas Brown and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 175; John W. Pulis, *Moving On: Black Loyalists in the Afro-Atlantic World* (New York: Routledge Press, 1999), 4:xiv-xxi, 4-5, 183-185; Walter B. Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats: The Southern Conflict That Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 22-25; Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), 1-12, 249-255.

[86] This reference alludes to the four reasons why southerners were generally wary of slaves gaining autonomy listed in Chapter One, see pgs. 17-19.

[87] Lord John Earl of Dunmore, "By His Excellency the Right Honorable JOHN Earl of DUNMORE, His Majesty's Lieutenant and Governor General of the Colony and Dominion of VIRGINIA, and Vice Admiral of the Same: A Proclamation," in *Black Loyalists: Canada's Digital Collections*, http://blackloyalist.com/canadiandigitalcollection/documents/official/dunmore.htm.

[88] William R. Ryan, *Thomas Jeremiah: Charlestown on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 111-113.

Jeremiah and Charlestown during the years percolating into the Revolution, this dramatic episode characterizes the intensity and the radical potential of lowcountry suspicions.[89]

Thus, it seems logical that George Liele's only accounted trouble with whites in the South came when he tried to assert his freedom after Henry Sharp, a loyalist, died while serving as a major for the King's army near Fort Henderson in Spirit Creek, Georgia.[90] According to the account given to Rippon in the *Baptist Annual Register*, Sharp had already offered Liele his freedom several years before the war, when Liele displayed his gifts as a minister. Apparently, Liele declined this opportunity for liberation until he got word that Sharp had died.[91] Neither Liele nor any other correspondent indicates why he chose to stay enslaved, but given the volatile socio-political context surrounding his ministry, it is likely that Liele thought he might be more effective with planters as a slave, rather than a free man. As a free man, Liele would represent an untamed and un-chaperoned threat to whites, while simultaneously acting as a transfigured embodiment of physical freedom to his slave congregations. As a licensed slave preacher, Liele could comfort whites with his social confinement, showing them that his autonomy had limitations. Liele might have also felt that he could identify with slaves on a more personal level, if he did not extend himself outside of their social standing.

Liele could have also chosen to remain a slave, as a symbol of loyalty to his beloved master and Sharp's family. This is less likely, however, since Sharp's wife would have needed Liele even more after her husband's death. It is also unlikely that Liele remained a slave as a means of social preservation. Though he never mentioned hearing about Jeremiah's brutal execution, as a prominent, black member of lowcountry society, Liele may have understood that

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[89] Ibid. 6-9, 56-63, 68, 160.

[90] Ballew, 22.

[91] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, *BAR*, 1:334. Clarke states that Sharp died after a cannon ball took off his hand. He also claims that he "handled the bloody glove" that Sharp wore when he received the fatal wound.

he could increase his personal security by remaining a slave, as southerners often had higher levels of distrust for blacks who gained freedom during the Revolution.[92] However, by almost immediately freeing himself upon Sharp's death, Liele would and did raise flags in the minds of fearful southerners, who considered his social standing and sudden assertion of freedom a threat.

There is one reason that could explain the complexity of Liele's decision to remain a slave, only to free himself less than a decade later: Liele felt that each choice would increase the effectiveness of his evangelization. Like Whitefield, this thought remained on the precipice of his mind throughout his ministry, and it is one rational explanation for a seemingly irrational and dangerous decision. As a bondservant Liele could identify with other slaves and produce amicable relationships with whites, but he must have felt that his continued enslavement bound the progress of his ministry and his life. For a time, Liele chose to be a slave; possibly so that he might gain more converts for the cause of Christ, but Sharp's death signaled Liele that this stage in his life had finished. As the Revolution came to an end, the faint haze of democracy blurred the horizon, and George Liele chose to be a slave no longer.[93]

Liele only enjoyed his freedom for a short time in the Savannah suburbs, before "some persons were at this time dissatisfied with George's liberation, and threw him into prison." Sources do not reveal how long he remained incarcerated, but since he had to acquire outside help to produce the proper papers that secured his release, it is evident that his confinement lasted more than a day or two. "His particular friend in this business was colonel Kirkland," an officer in the British army.[94] It is likely that Liele became acquainted with Kirkland through his deceased master, Henry Sharp, who was also an officer in the British army in Georgia. Kirkland

[92] Ryan, 9-11, 27-28, 157-160; Morgan, 485-490.
[93] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, *BAR*, 1:334; Gayle, 11.
[94] Ibid; Ballew, 25.

would come to play a vital role in the next stage of Liele's life as the economic vessel that provided Liele and his family transport to Jamaica.

Shortly after Liele's release, leaders declared July 11, 1782, Evacuation Day in Savannah, Georgia. This day, which varied in each colony, served as the starting date for the evacuation of British forces and authorities from the new state. Symbolically, Evacuation Day represented a purge of all British authority in the colony, and it literally meant a mass exodus of British soldiers, loyalists, free blacks, and slaves.[95] Around this time, Liele decided, partly out of a monetary obligation to colonel Kirkland, to relocate himself and his family to Jamaica, where he would serve Kirkland as an indentured servant. Liele's own admission that he was "partly obliged" to go to Jamaica also suggests that Liele also had a personal desire to leave Georgia for Jamaica. Though Liele did not reveal his motives for partaking in British evacuation, he brought "four other brethren" with him to this Atlantic colony, indicating that he intended to set up a ministry, after settling in the country.[96]

As he boarded the ship that would take him and his family to their new home in Jamaica, Liele extended his life's pattern of mobility into the Atlantic. Liele's relocation from Georgia, conversion, itinerant preaching, and establishment of amicable relationships with planters aided and exemplified the maturation of Afro-Protestantism in the South. By engaging in this transatlantic Diaspora, Liele and four other brethren, embarked on a journey of continuity. They carried with them the ideological seeds of southern Afro-Protestantism that they helped scatter throughout the lowcountry- ready and willing to sew black Christianity into Jamaica's good soil.

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[95] Betty Wood, "High Notions of Their Liberty," Philip D. Morgan ed. *Africa American Life in the Georgia Lowcountry: The Atlantic World and the Gullah Geechee* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 66-68.

[96] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, *BAR,* 1:334.

CHAPTER THREE

"Among the Poor Ethiopians in This Unenlightened Land": Colored Baptist Missionaries in Jamaica, 1782-1806

George Liele and his family sailed East out of Savannah for Port Royal, Jamaica on July 20, 1782. Still "partly obliged" to go to Jamaica as an indentured servant to Colonel Kirkland, Liele stepped on board the *Zebra* as neither a slave nor a free man and as neither a resident of Georgia or Jamaica.[1] He stood between the borders of his social identities and his Atlantic homes. Though Liele's work as a minister in Jamaica did not begin immediately, he brought four of his fellow African American evangelists with him to the island when he evacuated from Savannah. Liele, these ministers, and Liele's newest converts, Thomas Swigle and Moses Baker, established a network of evangelism that mirrored their work in the South.[2] Acting as religious mediators, Liele and his disciples transmitted Afro-Protestantism from the American South to Jamaica by creating amicable relationships with whites, employing hub-and-spoke evangelism, and practicing Baptist rituals and customs.

Jamaica's social, economic, and religious environments helped foster this colored Baptist movement that allowed Christianity to develop in Jamaica. Studies of socio-economic life in the colony generally focus on the manifestation of the plantation system, examining how and why it developed as a successful method of social and economic regulation.[3] Richard Dunn argues that

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[1] Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalist in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred Knope, 2011), 71-72.

[2] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 15 September 1790, in *The Baptist Annual Register: Including Sketches of the State of Religion Among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad* (London: Dilly, Button, and Thomas, 1798), 1:334, hereafter, BAR.

[3] For broad socioeconomic studies of colonial Jamaica, see: Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class In the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1972); Michael Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man: Slaves and Plantation Life in Jamaica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattles on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); B.W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2008); Matthew Parker, *The Sugar barons: Family, Corruption, Empire, and War in the West Indies* (New York: Walker Publishing, 2011).

Jamaica represented Britain's most successful attempt to implement the plantation system in the Atlantic. Economically, it remained the British Atlantic's leader in both sugar and coffee production during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Socially, Jamaican society became an example of how the Anglo few could successfully harness the power of slaves, while maintaining hegemony.[4] Trevor Burnard's study of Jamaican overseer, Thomas Thistlewood, and his role as a cog in the plantation system, contends that monetary income could determine power and create an unstable social climate in Jamaica.[5] Simultaneously, Burnard examines how slaves negotiated their agency through passive and active resistance, further complicating how Jamaica's economic enterprise could breed social turmoil.

Both early and modern histories of Jamaica analyze how increasing sugar production and plantation owners' absences stirred insurgence in the Caribbean. Edward Long, one of the first Jamaican historians, argues that slave rebellions in the Caribbean often resulted from "the absence of the proprietors from those estates where the flames of discontent broke out."[6] After a small revolt in the 1770s, Long said that "if the proprietors had been resident here [in Jamaica]" the disturbances "might have been reasonably checked."[7]As Michael Craton contends in *Searching for the Invisible Man*, absenteeism took wealthy whites away from the colony and back to England, augmenting this imbalance. Proprietors often established permanent residency in England and used their houses in Jamaica as temporal homes for their business visits to check

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[4] Douglas Hall, Jamaica; James A. Delle, "The Material and Cognitive Dimensions of Creolization in Nineteenth-Century Jamaica" *History Archeology;* Michael Craton, "Proto-peasant revolts? The late slave rebellions in the British West Indies 1816-1831" no. 85 (Nov. 1979) *Past and Present*. David Geggus, "The enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s: New Light on the Causes of Slave Rebellion," *The William and Mary Quarterly*. Third Series, 44:2 (Apr., 1987), pp. 274-299. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1939665; Persis Charles, "The Name of the Father: Women, Paternity, and British Rule in Nineteenth-Century Jamaica," *Labor and Working Class History* 41 (Spring, 1992), pp. 4-22. Richard D.E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[5] Thomas Thistlewood, *Mastery, Tyranny, & Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[6] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica or A General Survey of the Ancient and Modern State of That Island* vol. 1-3 (London: T Lowndes, 1774), 389.

[7] Ibid.

up on plantation operations.[8] Verene Shepherd argues that in addition to the hot climate and widespread disease, which often discouraged proprietors from making Jamaica their primary home, these men also stayed in England to preserve their Englishness.[9] Sugar plantations, though lucrative, represented new money, and English elites often considered Creolized English Jamaicans as less refined and less English than themselves. Even while in Jamaica, many English elites attempted to separate themselves from the majority population on the island, through dress and ceremony. This only further increased the disparity between the wealthy and poor in the already tumultuous Jamaican social order. Thus, Jamaica was an island of active production, visible oppression, and chaotic potential.[10]

Jamaica's socio-economic complexities heavily influenced the developments of slave religion in the colony. Generally, recent scholarship on slave religion in Jamaica focuses on two key themes: creolization and the interplay between spiritual freedom and physical oppression. Creolization is an extremely complex process, by which African and European cultural boundaries became blurred in Jamaica. Kamau Brathwaite, the foremost authority on Creolization in Jamaica, describes it as "the juxtaposition of master and slave, élite and labourer, in a culturally heterogeneous relationship."[11] Braithwaite explains the development of Creolized religion in Jamaica as the blending of European religions with West African cosmologies, customs, and religious language.[12] While Creolization was an organic product of social integration, scholars contend that Africans' incorporation of Christianity was less natural, because the presence of Christianity in Jamaica came from outward sources in the form of

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[8] Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man*, 72-84, 113, 291.

[9] Verene A. Shepherd, "Land, Labour, and Social Status: Non-Sugar Producers in Jamaica in Slavery and Freedom," in *Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001).

[10] Higman, 23-28.

[11] Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (New York: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005), xvi.

[12] Ibid. 213.

missionaries.[13] As the process of religious Creolization increased, Jamaican slaves exhibited more homogenous blends between their African cosmologies and Christianity.[14]

Studies of slave religion in Jamaica also examine the interplay between spiritual freedom and physical oppression. This dynamic arises in the study of Christianity in any locality, where slavery existed. Just as in the southern lowcountry, evangelicals in Jamaica wanted to produce amicable relationships with planters and the colonial government. However, Shirley Gordon argues that while many religious leaders operated within the system for the acquisition of souls, the tumultuous social climate in Jamaica and the rise of influential Creolized black leaders led to conflicts like the 1831 Jamaican slave rebellion.[15] By understanding the push and pull of socio-economic factors in slaves' religious maturation, historians acknowledge that the Christian converts in Jamaica did not uniformly respond to missionaries' call for finding freedom in Christ.[16]

Liele and Evangelical Christianity Settle in Jamaica

As a new immigrant in Jamaica, Liele served out his debt to Colonel Kirkland and used his first two years in the colony to acquaint himself with his environment before beginning his missionary work. British loyalists used Jamaica as a refuge after the American Revolution. Though it is not confirmed that Liele was a loyalist, he served a loyalist master in Georgia and a British officer in Jamaica. Colonel Kirkland's connections in the British colony immediately secured Liele a position as an assistant to Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell, the Governor

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[13] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Society, 1787-1834* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 52-59.

[14] For more information on Creolization, see: David Buisseret, Daniel H. Usner Jr., Mary L. Galvin, Richard Cullen Rath, and J.L. Dillard, *Creolization in the Americas* (Arlington: Texas A & M, 2000); Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man*, 225-245; Lawson, 23-45; Delle, 37-58; Burton, 12, 87-93.

[15] Silvia Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 118-127; Gordon, 59-72.

[16] Christopher Brent Ballew, *The Impact of African-American Antecedents on the Foreign Missionary Movement, 1782-1825* (Queenston: The Edwin Mellen University Press, 2004), 30.

of the island.[17] This work was, arguably, one of the best occupations a black indentured servant could hope to attain. It gained him favor from the highest colonial authority and also put him in contact with some of the wealthiest planters in Jamaica.[18] Liele worked for Governor Campbell for two years, and when Campbell left the island, "he gave [Liele] a written certificate from his own hand of [Liele's] good behavior."[19] This certificate suggests that he served the governor well, and it further endowed Liele's character to anyone who questioned it.[20] This letter also signified the second time a white authority gave Liele written verification of his good character.

As a free black, Liele existed between two worlds, slave and free, black and white. The son of two African born slaves, Liele's skin color would have placed him at the bottom of the free colored class system, which varied based on complexion and status at birth. Douglas Hall explains that this intricate gradation ranged from a Negro, the child of two Negroes, to an Octoroon, the child of a white and a Quintroon. This system classified free colored people based on their genetic heritage. Fortunately for Liele, the legal system in Jamaica often operated on less stringent classification methods, usually identifying persons as Negro or Mulatto based on their skin color.[21] Despite their freedom, free people of color in Jamaica did not gain legal rights that paralleled with whites' until the mid to late nineteenth century. This structure afforded whites a great deal of power over the free colored community.[22]

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[17] Ibid; Alfred Lane Pugh, *Pioneer Preachers in Paradise: The Legacies of George Liele, Prince Williams, and Thomas Paul in Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Haiti* (East Peoria, Illinois: Paradise Publishing, 2003), 12.

[18] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 December 1791, *BAR*, 1:332.

[19] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:334.

[20] This certificate was likely similar to a letter of recommendation, since Liele carried it with him and said that it validated his "good behavior.' Turner, 49; Ballew, 29; Frey and Wood, 114.

[21] Hall, 194-196.

[22] Hall, 196; Heuman, 4; Long 378; Edwards, *The History of the Civil and Commercial of the British West Indies,* 5:188, 210.

When Liele arrived in Jamaica, there were between 7,000 and 10,000 free coloreds in the colony, most of who resided in urban areas, like Kingston.[23] Founded shortly after an earthquake destroyed most of Port Royal in June of 1692, Kingston provided a highly accessible natural harbor and boasted thirty-five spacious streets by 1774. Edward Long, a Jamaican resident and historian, claimed that in its "propriety of design," Kingston was "not excelled by any town in the world."[24] Though the high numbers of slaves in rural Jamaican parishes, which were dominated by sugar cane and coffee plantations, made the overall white-to-slave ratio in Jamaica around ten to one by 1775, populations in Kingston remained one to one.[25] In 1774, the whites and slaves in Kingston made up 10,000 of the 216,000 Jamaican inhabitants, while Kingston free coloreds accounted for 1200 of the colonial population. As the city continued to grow, a number of easily accessible roads and rivers flowed to and from the Kingston Harbor, which facilitated its development as one of the major ports in the British Atlantic world during the sugar revolution in the 1730s and 1740s.[26]

British planters' expansionistic desires and dreams of economic prosperity birthed the first sugar estates in the British Atlantic. Work on the sugar plantation was exhausting, debilitating, and often deadly.[27] Between 1776 and 1800, 334,403 slaves embarked from West Africa for Jamaica.[28] Jamaica's size and its massive sugar exports made it England's most

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[23] Hall, 195.

[24] Long, 103.

[25] Ibid; Douglas Mann, "Becoming Creole: Material Life and Society in Eighteenth Century Kingston, Jamaica" (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2005), 39. http://athenaeum.libs.uga.edu/bitstream/handle/10724/8246/mann_douglas_f_200505_phd.pdf?sequence=1

[26] Mann, 39.

[27] See: Parker, 48-49; Richard Ligon, *True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (New York: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), 94.

[28] Sugar colonies outsourced to Africa because of supply, price, and the quality of Africans as laborers. The West Indies became a hub for the importation and exportation of slaves, and many of those exported to South Carolina and Georgia went through Jamaica first. Tuner, 1. Barry Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2001), 80-84; "Assessing the Slave Trade," in *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database Voyages* at (Emory University, 2009) http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces.

important asset in the Caribbean. In 1775, Jamaica was producing and exporting, 95,800,000 pounds of sugar per annum, more than all of the British colonies in the West Indies put together.[29] Vital to the empire's aggregated economic success, England continued to import large numbers of slaves to augment Jamaica's sugar output until the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.

In 1658, the number of white inhabitants in Jamaica outnumbered the blacks four to one, but by 1675 the increasing attention given to sugar production gave blacks a slight numerical advantage for the first time in colonial records. When George Liele arrived in 1782, the population consisted of around 18,000 whites, little less than 10,000 free coloreds, and close to 250,000 slaves. The high number of slave imports and a growing plantation economy produced a viable system of economic success and a vulnerable social climate for rebellion.[30]

As in South Carolina, the fear of rebellion was ever-present in the mind of white Jamaicans, who clearly lived in a racially imbalanced colony. Thomas Thistlewood, an overseer for two plantations in Jamaica, often went months without seeing any other whites, especially during his first few years on the island. On January 8, 1751, he remarked that he "first saw a white person since December 19th that [he] was at Black River."[31] Though Thistlewood encountered more whites the longer he stayed in Jamaica, the rarity of these meetings indicates the isolation felt by a white man in a slave society. Though some towns like Kingston had more balanced population, the need for labor concentrated the majority of slaves on plantations. Some skilled slaves found work as craftsmen, artisans, blacksmiths, and other professional trades.

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[29] Ibid; Mann, 31.

[30] For referenced numerical statistics see: Douglas Hall, "Jamaica," table on page 194 in David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene, ed.s, *Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World* and "Assessing the Slave Trade," in *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database Voyages* at Emory University, 2009 http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces.

[31] Quoted in Burnard, 3.

These, however, represented less than ten percent of the slave population.[32] The majority labored on the sugar and coffee estates, where they worked in gangs and remained the demographic majority.[33]

Between these plantations and in urban areas, Anglican churches appeared on the colonial landscape. When Liele arrived in the colony, the Anglican Church had maintained a presence as the colony's religious authority since Britain's acquisition of Jamaica from Spain in 1655. Many historians, such as Peter Wood's *Black Majority*, Richard Dunn's *Sugar and Slaves*, and Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh's *No Peace Beyond the Line*, note that the Anglican Church in Jamaica was often inactive among both whites and blacks.[34] However, Nicholas M. Beasley suggests that the Church in the colony had a sizeable white following and played an important role in the dissemination of English cultural rituals into the colony.[35] Similarly, Travis Glasson argues that the Anglican Church in Barbados and Jamaica had significant impacts on both whites and slaves through the SPG missionaries, but formal church attendance was rarely consistent.[36]

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[32] Craton, "Proto-peasant revolts," 113.

[33] Gang labor classified slaves into certain demographic work groups based on age, sex, health, and overall ability to work. The strongest slaves, young to middle-aged adults, who possessed high amounts of vitality, comprised the first level of this labor hierarchy. Pregnant women and older slaves worked in the second tier. Elderly slaves, children, and the handicapped worked in the third tier of this system as menial laborers, who completed odd jobs or worked in the fields, but were not expected to have the same high levels of productivity as the first gang. Slaves outside of the gang system were generally house slaves. Overseers and plantation managers, who were technically slaves as well, though they often enjoyed privileges that house slaves did not receive, such as private cottages, more land, and even slaves of their own. See: Turner, 38-39; Heuman, 21; Stewart, 17; Dunn, 13; Barry Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed*, 171-172, 262.

[34] Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English Caribbean 1624-1690* (New York: Oxford University press, 1972); Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974), 36-38; Nicholas M. Beasley, *Christian Ritual and the Creation of British Slave Societies, 1650-1780* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2009).

[35] Other churches in Spanish Town, Jamaica's capital, and Port Royal all reported reasonable congregational attendance, and through connected networks of colonial ministers, clergymen, and their congregations, the white population in Jamaica remained loosely tied with England and its other Atlantic colonies. Nicholas M. Beasley, *Christian Ritual and the Creation of British Slave Societies, 1650- 1780* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 29; Abigail Bakan, *Ideology and Class conflict in Jamaica: The Politics of Rebellion* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 16.

[36] Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), 75-77.

William May, a long serving and wealthy minister in Kingston, said "the Church is generally pretty full, but very thin at other times."[37]

Anglican ministers' financial avarice and affirmations of the complex Jamaican social order also stifled zeal among white converts and prevented the Christianization of slaves.[38] This created a disparity between the Church and many of its adherents. Reverend Alfred Caldecott, a professor of religion and philosophy at Codrington College in Barbados during the 1850's, explains that the British colonial "…clergy were associated with the upper class in a way that was important, because it determined their ambitions and their social sympathies…few of the clergy were Creole, born in the colonies."[39] Social class, race, and gender could divide congregations during services or communal gatherings. This prevented different members of the community from actively engaging with one another without the theoretical inhibitions of social class. For instance, the Anglican Church supported class barriers with its practice of selling pews and seats for church services. Enforced as a way to raise funds for the Church, selling pews made the dichotomy between the rich and poor whites visible. Pews varied in price based on their comfort level and proximity to the pulpit, and buyers would retain their seats for at least a year, so that congregations would sit in a visible gradation of their economic and social stature during Anglican services.[40]

Like the SPG in South Carolina, Anglican missionaries in Jamaica did have some success among slave populations. However, the SPG's most successful slave Christianization effort in the British Caribbean was in Barbados, where they inherited the Codrington sugar plantation and

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[37] Quoted in, Beasley, 29.

[38] Bakan, 20; Richard D.E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 42, 46. Before these men could represent the Anglican Church in Jamaica, they had to undergo training in England. For a sum of forty to fifty pounds, these men would be examined an ordained, so that they could establish a Jamaican church.

[39] Alfred Caldecott, *The Church in the West Indies* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1898), 58.

[40] Beasley, 27.

all of its slaves. At Codrington, the SPG missionaries evangelized slaves and established a formal school to teach them Christianity.[41] The SPG in Jamaica did not establish such a successful base of operations, and though missionaries attempted to sway masters and overseers to Christianize their slaves, they were mostly ineffectual. As in South Carolina, planters viewed slaves' spiritual freedom as a threat, and most resisted slave Christianization.[42]

Liele's immigration to Jamaica came shortly after dissenting Moravian denominations leaked into the country in 1754 and just before the Methodists arrived in 1784.[43] However, Moravians and other dissenters differed from the influx of such groups to America, during the Great Awakening. While those religious movements primarily targeted the white plantocracy and working class, dissenting immigrants in Jamaica primarily served as missionaries to slave populations on the island.[44] This missionary work became Liele's major life enterprise, which he began after completing his work for Governor Campbell in 1784. When Campbell departed for England, Liele paid off his debt to Kirkland and began life as a free man. The two years he had already spent in Jamaica made Liele keenly aware of the "wretched state of his enslaved brethren, living in ignorance and vice, without God, and without hope in the world, his heart was filled with compassion for their souls."[45]

Modeling the open-air preaching style used during the Great Awakening, Liele took his place on a racecourse in Kingston, and "boldly proclaimed the truth as it is in Jesus."[46] Similar to his early proselytization in Savannah, where he adopted this preaching style to evangelize Henry

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[41] Glasson, 143.

[42] Ibid. 81, 98-99; Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 32-33.

[43] Frey and Wood, 64.

[44] Isaac, 146; Lawson, 72.

[45] John Clarke, W. Dendy, and J.M. Phillippo, *The Voice of Jubilee: A Narrative of the Baptist Mission, Jamaica, From Its Commencement; With Biographical Notices of Its Fathers and Founders* (London: John Snow, Patern Oster Row, 1865), 30.

[46] Ibid.

Sharp's slaves, Liele evangelized on the racecourse out of necessity, since he did not have a location to preach. Open-air preaching allowed him to initiate a following in Kingston, while linking Liele's nascent evangelism in Jamaica with his earlier work in the South and the practices of white evangelicals from the Great Awakening, like Whitefield.[47] Shortly after this, in September 1784, Liele said that he began "to preach in Kingston, in a small private house, to a good smart congregation," and "formed the church with four brethren from America" where "preaching took very good effect with the poorer sort, espe-cially the slaves."[48] Liele and his American brethren continued to worship in this meeting house for around seven years, until they began work on their own chapel in 1791.[49] This indicates that even though these ministers rented this private room, they still considered themselves an established body of believers, who represented the first colored church in Jamaica.

Compatible Christianity

During the church's early years, Liele's congregation encountered opposition from "the people," most likely referring to whites around Kingston. Enduring persecutions at their meetings and baptisms, Liele appealed to the colonial authority. His church "applied to the Honourable House of Assembly, with petition of our distresses, being poor people, desiring to worship Almighty God according to the tenets of the Bible…" The House granted their request, giving them "liberty to worship Him as [they] please in Kingston."[50] After this, Liele claimed that the persecutions diminished, but did not disappear entirely.[51]

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[47] Ibid; Ballew, 32.

[48] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 December 1791, *BAR*, 1:334.

[49] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 18 December 1791, *BAR*, 1:336; Stephen Cooke to John C. Rippon, 26 November 1791, *BAR*, 1:339.

[50] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 December 1791, in *BAR*, 1:334.

[51] Ibid.

Liele's efforts to cultivate amicable relationships with whites, replicated Whitefield's efforts in the American South. In 1792, Liele expanded his ministry in Jamaica, when authorities in Spanish Town, the capital, gave him "full liberty…to preach the Gospel throughout the island."[52] He also encouraged his followers to gain sanction from local Jamaican authorities. Before Thomas Swigle, one of Liele's Afro-Creole disciples, began preaching on the eastern side of Kingston around 1798, he gained "sanction from the Revered Dr. Thomas Rees." One of the principal white Anglican clergy in Jamaica, Rees served as "rector of this town and parish, who is one of the ministers appointed by his Majesty to hold ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the clergy in this island."[53]

Mirroring his earlier ministry in Georgia, Liele also created amicable relationships with whites by refusing to accept slaves into the church or baptize them without permission from their owners. Stephen Cooke, a white supporter of slave Christianization in Jamaica, told John Rippon, the editor of the *Baptist Annual Register* in London, that Methodists in Jamaica often admitted "slaves into their societies without the permission of their owners," which he called an "impropriety." Contrarily, Cooke explained that Liele had "admitted no slaves into the society but those who had obtained permission from their owners, by which he has made many friends."[54] As a result, Cooke believed that Spanish Town would soon acquire a new "church in the capital, where the Methodists could not gain any ground." Liele himself told Rippon that he and his deacons "receive none into the church without a few lines from their owners of good behaviour towards them and religion."[55] Refusing to baptize slaves without their owners' permission and indicative proof of their spiritual regeneration, linked the colored Baptists with

[52] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 18 May 1792, *BAR*, 1:344.
[53] Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, 1 May 1802, *BAR*, 2:974.
[54] Stephen Cooke to John C. Rippon, 26 November 1791, *BAR*, 1:338.
[55] Ibid. 1:335.

white southern evangelicals' efforts to appease planters in the early eighteenth century. His disciples, including George Gibb, George Lewis, Thomas Swigle, and Moses Baker all adopted this practice as they spread the Gospel throughout Jamaican slave societies, which allowed them to breech the planter-slave barrier and evangelize more slaves.

Liele also made an effort to cultivate amicable relationships with planters and white authorities in Jamaica through personal labor. Composed of slaves and free coloreds, the Baptist church in Jamaica was extremely poor and struggled to gain architectural security during its nascence. While Liele admitted that the free blacks in his congregations "do what they can," the majority of the responsibility for economic survival resided with Liele, himself. During the planting seasons, Liele ran a small farm of his own, but this did not generate the majority of his income. After acquiring a team of horses and wagons, white Jamaicans hired Liele and his sons to move their goods across the island, which paid for their living and the church's expenses.[56]

Through his shipping business, Liele "gained the good will of the public," who recommended him for other public jobs "and to some very principal work for the government."[57] Liele's personality and business enterprise enhanced the Baptists' Christianization of slaves throughout the country by allowing his church to maintain a permanent presence. Liele admitted that while this work often took him away from his evangelization, it "set a good example before the inhabitants of the land."[58] His contemporary minister and brother in Christ, Stephen Cooke clarified Liele's meaning, to Rippon:

> [Liele] has been for a considerable time past very zealous in the ministry; but his congregation being chiefly slaves, they had it not in their power to support him, therefore he has been obliged to do it from his own industry; this has taken a considerable part of his time and much of his attention from his labours in the ministry: however, I am led to

[56] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:335; Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 32; Ballew, 37-38.

[57] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:335

[58] Ibid.

> believe that it has been of essential service to the cause of GOD, for his industry has set a good example to his flock, and has put it out of the power of enemies o religion to say, that he has been eating the bread of idleness, or lived upon the poor slaves.[59]

In the American lowcountry, Jamaica and other regions of the Atlantic world, whites thought that Christianity brought out slaves' natural indolence. Edward Long, the wealthy Jamaican merchant and historian, said that Africans were inherently "idle...proud, lazy, deceitful, thievish, addicted to all kinds of lust, incestuous, savage, cruel, and vindictive, devourers of human flesh, and quaffers of human blood, inconstant, base and cowardly."[60] As an evangelist and a converted black Christian, Liele labored, not only to acquire funds for his church in Kingston, but also to disprove a transatlantic belief that Christianized blacks were, among other stereotyped character flaws, indolent workers.[61] This connected him with Whitefield, who used his publications to argue that Christian slaves would work harder than unconverted bondservants.[62]

Liele also hoped that his work ethic would impress the importance of dutiful obedience to slaves in Jamaica. Cooke told Rippon that the main reason why planters refused to Christianize slaves in Jamaica was that many thought, "that if their [slaves] minds are considerably enlightened by religion or otherwise, that it would be attended with the most dangerous consequences."[63] Cooke continued, saying that masters did not understand "the difference

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[59] Stephen Cooke to John C. Rippon, 26 November 1791, *BAR*, 1:338.

[60] Long, 2:353-354.

[61] Whitefield often discussed and attempted to refute whites' belief that Christianizing slaves would make them lazy. For discussions on that belief as a transatlantic idea during the eighteenth century, see: Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: God's Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1990); Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 38-40; Nancy Ruttenburg, "George Whitefield, Spectacular Conversion, and the Rise of Democratic Personality," *American Literary History*, 5:3 (Autumn, 1993).

[62] George Whitefield, *Three Letters From The Reverend George Whitefield: Letter III: To the Inhabitants of Maryland Virginia, North and South Carolina, concerning their Negroes* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1740) in The Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800.

[63] Stephen Cooke to John C. Rippon, 26 November 1791, *BAR*, 1:338.

between obedience inforced by the lash of the whip and that which flows from religious principles."[64] This integral point links Cooke and black Baptists in Jamaica with the SPG, Whitefield, and other white evangelicals in the American South, who professed that Christianity and slavery could be compatible, because religion would instruct slaves in obedience. Whether Liele adhered to this specific belief is unknown, but in most accounts he maintained peace with white authorities through gaining government sanction for his ministry, refusing slaves' baptism without their masters' permission, establishing mutually beneficial business relationships, and a diligent work ethic.

Hub-and-Spoke Evangelism

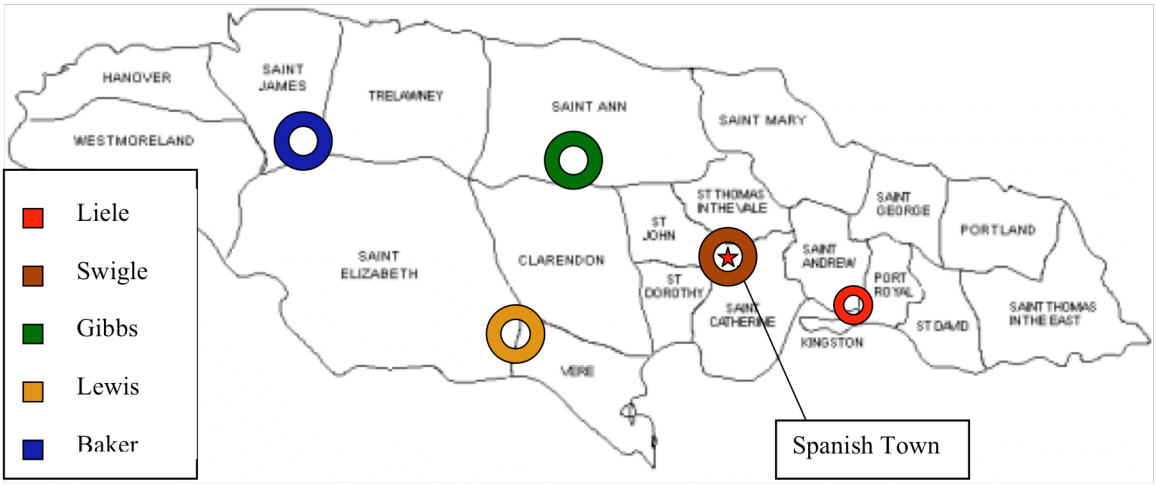

Figure 1. Hub-and-Spoke Evangelism Ranges in Jamaica. Adapted from Barry Higman, "Jamaica: Parishes and Towns, c. 1830," *Plantation Jamaica*, 2.

As Liele and his followers attempted to raise the funds for his congregation's permanent Kingston chapel, they used their private room in Kingston as a hub for their itinerant missions between 1784 and 1793. Following his previous methods of hub and spoke evangelism in the American South, the private room served as the central meetinghouse where Liele preached

[64] Ibid.

formally to his Kingston congregation. In 1790, six years after he began evangelizing in Jamaica, Liele told Rippon "I preach twice on the Lord's Day, in the forenoon and afternoon, and twice in the week, and have not been absent six Sabbath Days since I formed the church in this country."[65] While maintaining this core ministry in Kingston, Liele also began an itinerant ministry in plantations surrounding the city. He preached, baptized, and administered the Lord's Supper during his travels outside of Kingston.[66] By 1791, Liele told Rippon that he had "baptized four hundred in Jamaica," saying that he baptized "in the sea" at Kingston, "in the river" at Spanish Town, "and at other convenient places in the country." With at least 350 members in his church at Kingston, and then an estimated 1500 followers "in different parts of the country," Liele set the precedent for hub-and-spoke evangelism among his disciples in Jamaica.[67]

Other Baptist ministers employed this evangelism method in their ministries outside of Kingston as well. George Gibb(s) and George Lewis emigrated with Liele and worked as teachers in his Kingston congregation before they began their mobile evangelization. Shortly after arriving in Jamaica, Gibb and Lewis operated as itinerant preachers on the island. Gibb's area of influence extended from St. Mary to St. Thomas, on the north side of Jamaica. George Lewis acted as an itinerant preacher as well, but traveled more among the Moravian congregations in Jamaica and immersed himself in the populations near Vere, Manchester, and St. Elizabeth.[68]

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[65] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:335.
[66] Ibid. 1:336.
[67] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 19 December 1791, *BAR*, 1:334.
[68] The Moravians were the first dissenters in Jamaica, and they arrived in 1754. While they maintained a small following in the island throughout the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries other denominations overshadowed their impact, see: Gordon, 41-42. John W. Davis, "George Liele and Andrew Bryan, Pioneer Negro Baptist Preachers" *The Journal of Negro History*. 3:2 (April 1918), pp. 119-127. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2713485, 73-74.

George Gibb's ministry is particularly representative of hub-and-spoke evangelism. As Liele's church gained prominence and fame in Kingston, slaves in Jamaica received word that Liele was sending evangelists to other parishes that could not visit the Kingston chapel. Some slaves on the Goshen Estate, in St. Ann parish, had several American slaves, who had heard about Gibb's work in Kingston, and solicited him to come and preach at their plantation.[69] Gibb also held services at Russell Hall and areas near Spring Valley, the Bagnall and Guy's Hill districts, where he preached and baptized a great number of slaves throughout the northern part of the island.[70]

As Liele and his disciples evangelized throughout the countryside, they continued to build permanent foundations in urban areas. Despite efforts to raise building funds, his congregation could not afford a roof for the Kingston chapel. Liele solicited Cooke's help. In November of 1791, Cooke wrote to Rippon, detailing how Liele's ministry was transforming the slave populations in Jamaica. Cooke also explained that the Baptists would gain even more converts, if they had a permanent church. From a previous letter that Rippon received in December of 1790, the London minister knew Liele's plans to erect a meetinghouse outside of Kingston. Cooke's letter described the congregation's specific need for a roof, costing no less than 150 pounds. Raising the funds for Liele's church would surely bring "many hundred souls, who are now in a state of darkness, to the knowledge of our great Redeemer."[71]

Evidentially, Cooke's submissions worked to Liele's advantage- on May 18, 1792, they raised the chapel's roof. After waiting eight years without a permanent church home, the Kingston Baptists began the final stages of construction. At this time, the humanitarian effort to abolish slavery and the slave trade was underway in Britain, and the Haitian Revolution had

[69] Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 32.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid. 339.

begun in the nearby French Atlantic Island. Though neither Rippon nor any of the colored ministers mention these movements in their letters to one another, as residents in Britain's Atlantic empire, they were likely aware of these events. After the St. Dominique rebellion, a number of free coloreds and white Frenchman flooded into Kingston to escape the turmoil.[72] Though the exact number of emigrants is difficult to determine, the influx of free coloreds in Kingston may have increased Liele's ministry and necessitated his next request to Rippon. Gaining confidence in Cooke's answered appeal, Liele also petitioned Rippon to help him purchase "a bell that can be heard about two miles distance, with the price."[73]

Liele's church needed a bell, so that "the slaves may then be permitted to come and return in due time, for at present we meet very irregular, in respect to hours."[74] The gang labor system in the sugar estates meant that the Jamaican plantation system operated directly in response to set, allocated amounts of time. When compared to the task system employed in the South Carolina and Georgia lowcountry, gang labor decreased the slaves' autonomy during the workday, which lasted from sunup to sundown Monday thru Saturday. While slaves in the lowcountry could return back to their homes after completing their tasks for the day, Jamaican slaves continued working in their gang until the sun began to set. Consequently, this system operated less around action and more around time. From dawn until dusk, slaves worked in their gangs under the direct supervision of an overseer.[75]

Though Kingston was an urban community, having a bell resound throughout the city and in plantations within walking distance would provide a sense of security to slave owners. If the

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[72] Richard B. Sheridan, "From Jamaican Slavery to Haitian Freedom: The Case of the Black Crew of the Pilot Boat, Deep Nine," in *The Journal of Negro History* 67 (Winter, 1982), 330.

[73] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 18 May 1792, *BAR*, 1:344.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Lawson, 49; Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed*, 171-172; Higman, *Plantation Jamaica*, 4, 33, 109, 197-199, 239-243.

bell went off for slaves to attend church, overseers could expect slaves to be at church, if they were not in their private quarters. Similarly, when the bell rang for church's dismissal, owners knew how long it would take slaves to walk from the meetinghouse back to their homes or plantations. Consequently, the presence of a bell would help regulate slaves' church attendance, thus allowing both planters and slaves to compartmentalize this set unit of time into their larger understanding of measured plantation operations.[76]

Throughout his correspondence with Rippon, Liele kept him informed of their progress in the colony, linking Baptist societies in London with Baptists' developments in Jamaica."[77] In January 1793, Liele estimated that he had baptized around 500 converts at the permission of their masters, and had converted at least 1,000 colored people, total.[78] Around this time, James Jones, a Jamaican Magistrate and Secretary of the Island along with the Custos of Jamaica, William Mitchell, granted Liele license to preach the Gospel throughout Jamaica.[79] This authority protected Liele, his disciples, and his congregations from persecution by empowering them to "make mention of their names in any congregation where [they] are interrupted."[80] Furthermore, Jones, himself, gave Liele "permission for all his [Jones'] negroes to be taught the word of God."[81] Sources indicate that this appointment made Liele the first ordained colored preacher in Jamaica. Though as a free black, many whites would have considered him dangerous, Liele's ordination suggested to planters that the colonial authority supported and allowed his ministry.

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[76] Turner, 39; Heuman, 21; Stewart, 17; Dunn, 13.

[77] On January 12, Liele explained that they were five hundred pounds in debt for the meeting how, which was "now covered in, and the lower floor was completed the 24th of last month. George Liele to John C. Rippon, 12 January 1793, *BAR,* 1:542.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Custos is a Latin word, meaning "guard." The Governor of Jamaica appointed the Custos as his representative to maintain order and discipline in the island. As the Custos enforced the laws, his allowance of Liele's preaching is particularly significant. Mitchell would have been able to protect Liele and his congregation from harm, as well as give him the authority to evangelize anywhere on the island he desired. George Liele to John C. Rippon, 12 January 1793, *BAR*, 1:542.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

Thus, his official ordination likely strengthened Liele's reputation in Jamaica, similar to his preaching licensure in Georgia. Liele's ministerial sanctions in the lowcountry and Jamaica suggest his pioneering influence on the emergence colored preachers and the effectiveness of his evangelization throughout the Atlantic world.

Thomas Nicholas Swigle, the head schoolmaster at Liele's school in Kingston, also adopted hub-and-spoke evangelism when he planted a connected church on land that Liele had purchased in Spanish Town, twelve miles from Kingston. As the capital of the island, Spanish Town offered a rich intersection of cultures and people. Liele purchased the 150 feet long and 50 feet wide lot in cash, and received the title for it in 1793. The ministers immediately erected a house on the land that they originally hoped to use as burial ground. Always considering how to expand their ministries, the Baptists also began plans to build a forty-five by twenty-seven foot chapel on the land. They finished the construction of this new church building in Spanish Town between 1798 and 1802.[82]

By 1802, Swigle's ministry was progressing well in Spanish Town, "where in town and country" he counted 500 converts, who regularly attended church. By delineating operations at his church, Swigle reveals how he replicated Liele's efforts in Kingston. Like Liele, Swigle established a stable ministry in his church in Spanish Town, where Swigle also gained sanction to preach in his church and in neighboring plantations. Swigle also told Rippon "…our rule is to baptize once in three months; to receive the Lord's supper the first Lord's day in every month, after evening service is over; and we have meetings on Tuesday and Thursday evenings throughout the year."[83]

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[82] Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, *BAR*, 2:212.
[83] Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, 1 May 1802*, BAR,* 2:974; Gayle, 22-23.

Swigle expanded his stable church ministry by preaching, baptizing, and marrying slaves in nearby plantations, who could not regularly visit his church. By "many times traveling night and day over rivers and mountains to inculcate the ever-blessed gospel," Swigle employed the same method of hub-and-spoke evangelism as his mentor and achieved similar results. Swigle explained that "numbers and numbers of young people [were] flocking daily to join both our society and the Methodists, who have about four hundred."[84] The popularity of Swigle's ministry is indicative of the effectiveness of establishing a core church and itinerant missions emanating out from it.

Another of Liele's influential disciples also established an effective ministry as a hub-and-spoke evangelist. Moses Baker, a free colored emigrant from New York, and his wife evacuated with the British when they lost the war in 1781.[85] In Jamaica, he worked as a barber and was often given to drunkenness.[86] They converted and joined the Kingston church during the early years of Liele's ministry on the island. Liele connected Baker with Swigle, and the two served together near Spanish Town. Around 1788, Baker moved to Saint James parish, about 140 miles west of Kingston, where he established the most effective Baptist ministry in Jamaica prior to 1806.

Adopting Liele's formula, Baker began his ministry in Swigle's church, where he befriended local plantation owners. Isaac Lacelles Winn, Esquire, took a particular liking to Baker. Winn owned Adelphi Estate in Saint James parish.[87] When the proprietor bought some slaves who were members of Liele's church in Kingston, Liele recommended Baker to Winn.

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[84] Ibid. 975.

[85] Similar to David George's account of his early religious experiences, it is difficult to decipher when his conversion took place. Although the *Jubilee* says that he converted after a "pious old man" shared the Gospel with him, there is no account of this in the *BAR*. While it is likely that the oral history by which the *Jubilee* acquired the story of Baker's conversion is true, it cannot be verified. Nevertheless, it is definite that after his conversion he and his wife joined and began serving in Liele's church.

[86] Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 34.

[87] Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, *BAR*, 2:213; Gayle, 28.

Fearful that their religious privileges would be taken away, the slaves approached their new master and told him their apprehensions. Winn felt sympathy for them and hired Baker to Christianize his plantation. Similarly, another owner, Mr. Vaughan, who had a large estate near St. James, also requested Baker and financially compensated him for evangelizing his slaves. Though planters in Jamaica allowed black evangelists on their plantations, as evidenced by Liele, Swigle, Gibb, and Lewis' successes, Winn and Vaughan's solicitation was atypical.[88]

While ministering in Adelphi, Baker also preached at various plantations near St. James. He quickly gained a following, and around 1798, had about 1,000 supporters, more than 500 of whom were "converted souls."[89] By 1802, Baker's missions in St. James became so large that he asked Swigle for an assistant. Along with his itinerant missions, Baker managed to establish a church nearby, so that his followers could commune together in a stable environment. He reported that he had around "fourteen hundred justified believers, and about three thousand followers, many under conviction for sin."[90] In addition to this stable church ministry, Baker and his new assistant, George Vineyard, continued evangelizing more than twenty plantations near St. James. According to Rippon's calculations, there were around three hundred to four hundred slaves on each of these plantations, suggesting that Baker reached more than six thousand hearers.[91]

Hub-and-spoke evangelism allowed Liele, Swigle, Baker, and other colored Baptist ministers to create a dynamic between the stability of a meetinghouse and the pragmatism of itinerant ministry. Constructing permanent church homes on the Jamaican landscape provided

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[88] Ibid. Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, *BAR*, 9 October 1802, 2:1146.

[89] Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, *BAR*, 2:213.

[90] Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, *BAR*, 9 October 1802, 2:1146; Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 34; Gayle, 28-29; Ballew, 56-57.

[91] John C. Rippon explained that these sugar estates were very large and extensive, and he calculated three to four hundred slaves on each property. Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, *BAR*, 2:1146; Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 34.

colored Baptist congregations a formal place of worship. Circuit preaching around those meetinghouse hubs spread the true Gospel to otherwise unreachable slave communities. By continuing to develop the amicable relationships they created with planters at the outset of their ministries, colored Baptist evangelists spread the Gospel to Jamaican communities and engaged in a transatlantic exercise that bound them with African Americans in the lowcountry.

Rituals and Beliefs Transmitted

Besides representing a monumental achievement for the colored populations and Christianity in Jamaica, Liele's Kingston church also represented the first established Baptist institution in Jamaica. In addition to generating amicable relationships with white authorities and implementing lowcountry evangelization methods, Liele and his team transmitted Afro-Protestantism to Jamaica through baptism, spiritual regeneration, and education. These ministers employed the central practice of their denomination in Jamaica, baptism after conversion, which distinguished them from Anglicans, who baptized at birth.[92] Inherently, the ritual of dipping a regenerated convert into water and raising them back out, symbolized their spiritual rebirth. Baker said that Baptists in Jamaica "hold to be baptized in a river, or a place where there is much water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." As in Afro-Baptist congregations in the lowcountry, Liele only baptized slaves after acquiring proof of their conversion.[93] Before Liele left for Jamaica, he baptized Andrew Bryan, one of Jonathan Bryan's slaves. Liele only agreed to baptize Andrew near the mouth of the Savannah River at Tybee island, after he saw Andrew convert during one of his sermons explaining John 3:7- "Ye must be born again."[94] Similarly,

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[92] George Liele and his followers in both Jamaica and the South mention and explain baptism in the following BAR letters: Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:340; George Liele to John C. Rippon, 18 December 1791, *BAR*, 1:333-337; Stephen Cooke to John C. Rippon, 26 November, 1791, *BAR*, 1:338-339; George Liele to John C. Rippon, 18 May 1792, *BAR*, 1:343-344.

[93] Ibid. 334.

[94] George Liele to John C. Rippon,19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:340.

Abraham Marshall, the minister at Kiokee Baptist Church in Savannah, told Rippon in 1793 that he baptized African Americans only after "they have given repeated proofs, by their sufferings, of their zeal for the cause of God and religion."[95] As Baptists in the lowcountry and Jamaica practiced this ritual, it linked the Atlantic societies together in a shared religious tradition.

The colored Baptists in the Atlantic also forged connections with each other by their mutual identification as "Ethiopian Baptists."[96] Liele, Swigle, Baker, and their sister churches in the lowcountry, where Andrew Bryan and Abraham Marshall preached, all referred to themselves as "Ethiopian Baptists." George Whitefield also drew on this biblical allusion when he wrote to Johann Bolzius, claiming that the spread of slavery into Georgia would bring "the poor Ethiopians" to Christ. As Gad Heuman explains in *Between White and Black*, "the black Baptists saw themselves as loyal to orthodox Baptist preaching, but part of a black church, a church of Ethiopia."[97] These colored converts emphasized their southern Protestant heritage by denoting their Baptist faith and indicated the Africanization of their Christianity by identifying with the oldest Christian nation in Africa. Furthermore, this common identification allied Jamaican Baptists with white southern evangelicals and their colored Atlantic counterparts in the American lowcountry.

As colored Baptists came together in a communal Atlantic identity, they continued to emphasize spiritual regeneration. Exhibiting this spiritual transformation for orthodox colored Baptist ministers, especially in Jamaica, necessitated a visible discard of West African cosmologies. When he arrived at Winn's plantation in 1788, Baker found that Winn's slaves continued their West African religious practices, particularly obeah. "Bottles filled with sea

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[95] Abraham Marshall to John C. Rippon, 1 May 1793, BAR, 545; See Beasley on ritual in Jamaica, also.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Heuman, 43.

water, horns, old rags, and similar things were used for the purpose of witchcraft."[98] Putting objects into bottles or jars that represented the individual or thing obeah practitioners wanted to curse, symbolized putting that individual into the bowels or suffocating clutch of a python. Slaves often used these bottles to ward off evil spirits as well.[99]

Africans retained many of their religious beliefs and customs even after slave traders removed them from their natural environments. The practices of Obeah and Myalism seeped into Jamaica with the slaves. Obeah, or the act of casting a spell or a curse on someone, directly connected to African spiritualism. Contrarily, Myalism sought to cure Obeah enchantments. These spiritual concepts embodied the essence of evil and good in West African religious thought, and they remained ingrained in the lives of Jamaican slaves well into the nineteenth century.[100]

Planters understood that Obeah contained as much potential for disrupting the plantation order as Christianity. When a Jamaican slave named Tacky began assembling large numbers of slaves to revolt in 1760, he claimed that he had been a chief in Africa. In one battle for his people's land, an Obeah man endowed him with magical powers, which included the ability to catch any shots fired at him and subsequently fire those shots back at his opponents. Tacky drew supporters for the slave rebellion he organized in 1760, by emphasizing his powerful connections with Obeah, which caused many slaves to fear and respect him.[101] Drumming, dancing, and loud music often accompanied Obeah ceremonies, and after Tacky's revolt, colonel authorities passed

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[98] The use of bottles for Obeah magic is still used in African and Jamaica. The term Obeah, translates from Hebrew as Pythonicus spiritus, meaning the spirit of the python. Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 34

[99] Joseph J. Williams, *Voodoos and Obeahs: Phases of West India Witchcraft* (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 110-115; Ivor Morrish, *Obeah, Christ, and Rastaman: Jamaica and Its Religion* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1982). The term Obeah in Jamaica, actually derived from the Ashanti word Obayifo, which signifies a witch or wizard. "Obeah" translated as python occurred in Africa and influenced practices, rather than an actual modifying term.

[100] Delle, 59; Lawson, 37; Burton, 52.

[101] Gordon, 54.

acts against the rituals in 1781, 1784 and 1788, saying that slaves used Obeah "in order to affect the health of lives of others, or promote the purpose of rebellion."[102] Obeah also presented a danger in its emphasis on using poisons and witchcraft to attack harsh slave masters, overseers, or managers. In almost all the legislative acts against the West African practice, white Jamaicans delineated Obeah as the use of malicious poisons for the intent of killing whites. Jamaican planters considered the practice detrimental to the natural social order, and lived in constant fear of slaves' using their foreign practices to covertly attack their white authorities.[103]

It is possible, then, that Winn also allowed Baker on his plantation as a way to counteract the presence of malicious Obeah. At first, Winn's slaves resisted Baker's preaching. Many were "unruly" and defiant, especially when Baker explained that men and women living together outside the confines of marriage was a sin. But Baker remained faithful to his calling, and many of the slaves soon "became attentive to his preaching."[104] While Baker did not totally drive out Obeah from Winn's plantation or any of the other twenty estates that he visited, by presenting the Gospel to these slaves and emphasizing the transformative power of Christ through salvation and baptism, he converted thousands of slaves and decreased its power in the St. James parish.[105]

Even after baptism, colored evangelicals expected their converts to display awakened spirits. Swigle explained that after Baker baptized more than one hundred "brethren" in one day, "drunkards are become sober men, thieves become honest men, and those slaves who were runaways and bad servants, become now valuable slaves, and much esteemed by their owners."[106] To ensure Christian obedience, Liele read his church covenant once a month on sacrament meetings, "that our members may examine if they live according to all those laws

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[102] Proclamations set by the colonial government of Jamaica. Quoted in, Stewart, 76.
[103] Ibid. 78-79.
[104] Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 31-32.
[105] Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, *BAR*, 2:1145-1146.
[106] Thomas Nicholas Swigle, to John C. Rippon, *BAR*, 2:213.

which they professed, covenanted, and agreed to." Liele also showed the covenant to colonial authorities when he applied for sanction, and "it gave them general satisfaction." Furthermore, Liele said, "whenever a negro servant is to be admitted, their owners, after perusal of it are better satisfied." Thus, the colored ministers in Jamaica connected themselves to other Atlantic Baptists and white evangelicals by reaffirming the colonial social order through the transmissions of Baptist customs.[107]

Liele also formed a reading school for black and colored children to grow in the catechisms of the Baptist Church during the first years of his ministry in 1784, which extended evangelical emphasis on education to Jamaica. Still thriving in 1793, Liele expressed his ample gratitude to Rippon for sending a good number of books for the school's use.[108] The Jamaican school's survival after almost a decade suggests Liele and his disciples' commitment to fostering educational advancement among their younger converts. Whitefield, the Bryans, and Stephen Bull's previously established a formal Christian educational institution for blacks in the South, linked Liele's pioneering school in Jamaica with white evangelicals in his emphasis on formal education for black converts.[109]

Thomas Swigle, who served as Liele's headmaster in Kingston until they founded another church in Spanish Town, even implemented a specific teaching system in his church. Swigle told Rippon, "The whole body of our church is divided into several classes, which meet every Monday evening, to be examined by their Class-leaders, respecting their daily walk and

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[107] In addition to these rituals, Liele and his disciples practiced "the observance of the Sabbath… the observance of the Lord's Supper, the washing of feet, praying with the sick and anointing them, the members' own internal system of settling disputes, and the forbidding of swearing, eating of blood, and fornication, as all expected attributes of a reformed Christian convert." Baker discussing the rituals of his church and the other Baptist churches in Jamaica; quoted in Gordon, 43.

[108] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 12 January 1793, *BAR*, 1:542.

[109] *South Carolina Gazette* 1737-1743, (Alderman Library: University of Virginia at Charlottesville), 8-15 January 1741. Eliza Pinckney ed. Elise Pinckney, *The Letterbook of Eliza Pinckney* in a letter to Mrs. Bartlett, March or April 1742 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), 34; Weir, 186. George Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals* (Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 449-451.

conversation."[110] Indicating the blurring borders between Baptist and Methodist denominations in urban areas, Swigle's structured teaching system mirrored Methodist activities in Jamaica and would influence Baptist-teaching methods for years to come.

Throughout their ministries in Jamaica, colored evangelists kept correspondence with Baptists in London and with the African American Baptists in the lowcountry. This transatlantic network helped establish the black Baptist movement among slaves in Jamaica by funding building projects, sending more missionaries, and providing connections with white planters, who would allow Christianization on their plantations.[111] Ultimately, this network represented a final extension of southern evangelicals' practices into Jamaica. It created a multi-racial transatlantic web of connected Baptist ministers, who's goal remained evangelizing black and white societies throughout the nineteenth century. Like Whitefield's mass network of evangelical ministers, these Baptist preachers came together for the common goal of saving lost souls to Christ.[112]

Problems and Decline

Baker, Swigle, and Liele's efforts to maintain compatibility between Christianity, white authorities, and slaves had a tremendous impact on their effectiveness. Their willingness to, at least superficially, comply with the social order in Jamaica allowed them access to more plantations and greater numbers of slave converts than any denomination before them. However, despite their efforts to ameliorate white planters, Liele and his followers encountered opposition during the early years of their ministry in Jamaica.

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[110] Thomas Nicholas Swigle to John C. Rippon, 1 May 1802, *BAR,* 1:974.

[111] Frey and Wood, 132.

[112] See: Lambert, 16; Ann Dutton ed. JoAnn Ford Watson *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton: Eighteenth Century British Baptist, Woman Theologian* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2008), 5:Miscellaneous Correspondence; Mahaffey, Jerome Dean. *The Accidental Revolutionary: George Whitefield & the Creation of America* (Waco: Baylor University press, 2011), 37; Young Hwi Yoon, "The Spread of Antislavery Sentiment through Proslavery Tracts in the Transatlantic Evangelical Community, 1740s-1770s" *Church History* 81:2 (Jun., 2012), 366.

The Voice of Jubilee, the first contemporary history of the Baptist mission, cites two major incidents of opposition that Liele, himself, endured. After completing the chapel outside of Kingston in 1793, Liele attempted to administer the Lord's Supper. A man interrupted the celebration, by riding into the chapel on his horse, leading the animal through the rows of black hearers. When the irreverent rider reached the pulpit where Liele stood, he exclaimed "Come, old Liele, give my horse the Sacrament!" Liele calmly responded to the man, "No, sir, you are not fit yourself to receive it." After disrupting the service, the belligerent individual rode out of the chapel and left the congregation alone.[113]

On another ordinance Sabbath, three white men barged into Liele's church while the congregation was taking communion. As the men strode up to the table with the bread and wine, one of them picked up the bread, broke it and "gave it to his companion, who, with a horrid oath, swore that it was good shipbred." The third man refused to take anything from the sacred ceremony, and the men soon left the church, having successfully disrupted the service. According to *The Voice of Jubilee*, the two men that consumed the communion in a state of sacrilege and racial prejudice actually died soon after this incident. One fell into a state of madness after acquiring brain fever. The other sailed a ship out to sea, and it capsized. He was never heard from again.[114]

Besides these intermittent interruptions in his ministry, Liele also found himself in trouble with the colonial authority on two different occasions. After receiving charges of preaching sedition, prior to his ordination as a minister in 1793, authorities threw Liele into jail and fastened his feet to the stocks. "Not even his wife or children were permitted to see him. At length he was tried for his life; but no evil could be proved against him, and he was honourably

[113] Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 31-32.
[114] Ibid.

acquitted."[115] Shortly after this incident, authorities committed Liele to debtors prison for failing to pay sums to the builder of the Kingston chapel. Though the Insolvent Debtors Act would have allowed Liele to file bankruptcy and get out of prison, he did not act on his rights and remained in prison until he had fully paid the fine.[116]

Baker also ran into problems with the colonial authority. By the early nineteenth century, Baker had formed two churches in the St. James region, one at Montego Bay and another at Crooked Spring. While preaching at Crooked Spring one Sabbath, Baker presented Isaac Watt's hymn, "Shall We Go On to Sin":

> Shall we go on in sin,
> Because thy grace abounds,
> Or crucify the Lord again,
> And open all his wounds
>
> We will be slaves no more,
> Since Christ has made us free,
> Has nailed our tyrants to the cross,
> And bought our liberty.[117]

A bookkeeper heard the hymn and told authorities that Baker preached sedition at Crooked Spring and was trying to stir up rebellion. Authorities arrested Baker and imprisoned him in Montego Bay, until he made bail. Tried at Montego for sedition against colonial authority, no one could bring a charge against him. During this time, Baker's church also came under physical attack. While having an assembly, a group of whites fired into the meetinghouse, probably with a gun.[118] Though no one was hurt and the damage was minor, this attack further shows that there were still whites in Jamaica who did not appreciate the Baptist missionaries' work among the slave populations.

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[115] Ibid.
[116] Ballew, 47; Gayle, 15.
[117] Jubilee, 34-36
[118] Ibid.

However, these intermittent incidents should not be overshadowed by the fact that these colored Baptist missionaries in Jamaica had much greater success in convincing the planter class of Christianity's ability to comply with the plantation system. Even the Methodists, who had gained an admirable following during the first few years of Liele's ministry in Kingston, lost favor with whites after allowing slaves into the church without permission of their owners, which "not only prevent[ed] the increase of their church, but has raised them many enemies."[119] By refusing to allow slaves into the church without the permission of their owners, attaining permission from governing authorities to preach, and encouraging dutiful obedience in their formal classes and in general messages, Liele, Baker and Swigle affirmed the social order and gained more converts in Jamaica than any previous denomination.[120] Furthermore, by continuing white evangelists' practices of emphasizing obedience to masters, education, spiritual regeneration, and establishing a network of believers, these black evangelists transmitted southern evangelicalism to Jamaican slave societies.

In 1806, Jamaican authorities banned all teaching and preaching on plantations. This came shortly after the solidification of Haitian slaves' freedom, and was likely a response to white Jamaicans' fears that slave Christianization would bolster rebellious attitudes among colored people. For eight years, the evangelists had to suspend their work, and many of their churches disbanded and fell apart.[121] Baker told one of his friends that "From Christmas Day I have been prevented preaching or saying a word to any part of my congregation. From this we can expect nothing but a great falling away of the weaker Christians. The poor, destitute flock is left to go astray without a shepherd."[122] When Dr. Ryland, president of the London Missionary

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[119] Stephen Cooke to John C. Rippon, 26 November 1791, *BAR*, 1:338.
[120] Turner, 76-77; Jansoff, 72; Frey and Wood, 190-192; Ballew, 45.
[121] Turner, 88-90.
[122] Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo, 34.

Society, told William Wilberforce about the 1806 law in the West Indies, Wilberforce called it a "shocking violation of all religious liberty."[123] Wilberforce then began campaigns "to soften the prejudices of some leading men connected with that country," though he feared "that the prejudices of the resident colonists, and their irreligious habits, are such as to render all attempts to soften them unavailing." Wilberforce predicted that in the future "preachers in a white skin would be likely to be treated better and respected more than black ones."[124] To an extent, he was right. After 1814, the colored Baptist missionaries would begin rebuilding their work that had been torn apart by a hurricane of legislation just eight years earlier with the help of white British missionaries from the Baptist Missionary Society. Working in conjuncture with these white missionaries would help the colored ministers continue their efforts to maintain peace with the social order and bring more converts to Christ.[125]

By 1814, Baker, Swigle, and Liele were all too old to pioneer the rebuilding effort, but the impact these colored evangelists had on the Christianization of Jamaican slaves societies survived the 1806 proclamation. Though the Baptist denomination would struggle to regain its prominence on the island, colored Baptist missionaries served as the catalyst for the Christianization of Jamaican slaves. The colored Baptists' initiated the first successful missionary enterprise among blacks in Jamaica, by transmitting white evangelical and lowcountry Afro-Baptists' religious practices to the island. Their willingness to comply with the plantation system, dynamic evangelization methods, Baptist rituals, emphasis on spiritual rebirth through conversion, and establishment of a web of believers throughout Jamaica and the Atlantic secured their success. Powering through intermittent opposition, George Liele and other colored

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[123] William Wilberforce to Dr. John Ryland, 23 August 1807, in F.A. Cox *History of the English Baptist Missionary Society*, 1:184.

[124] William Wilberforce to Dr. John Ryland, 19 Noveber 1807, in F.A. Cox *History of the English Baptist Missionary Society*, 1:184.

[125] Cox, 182-183; Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries*, 88-90.

ministers modified inherited practices of eighteenth century southern evangelicalism to spread Christianity throughout the American lowcountry and Jamaica.

Conclusion

For eighteenth century Baptists, both white and colored, water submersion represented a figurative death to sin and rebirth as a sanctified believer. Coming up out of the water signified the start of a convert's new life and identity in Christ. For colored Baptists in the lowcountry and Jamaica, however, baptism meant even more. As George Liele transmitted this inherited southern evangelical ritual to Jamaica, he and other ministers created a collective identity for colored converts across the Atlantic. Though they went into the water as Africans, Americans, Creoles, slaves, and free blacks, they came up out of the water as Ethiopian Baptists.

However, the term "Ethiopian Baptists" did not always encompass the entirety of their converts. This brings up a central theme in the Atlantic Ethiopian Baptists' movement that influences this project's contribution to future works and its value as an independent study. While Liele and other Afro-Baptist ministers continued evangelical traditions, they often adapted them to suit their needs. Thus, an adaptable continuity characterized the three stages of Afro-Baptists' development in the eighteenth century Atlantic.

By adopting the rituals and beliefs of southern evangelicalism, Liele and other African American ministers maintained a level of continuity in their religious experiences. The transmission of Christianity to Jamaican societies through inherited evangelism methods and religious practices also indicates colored evangelicals' desire to maintain the imperialistic Christian tradition of proselytizing foreign peoples. Furthermore, the Atlantic Ethiopians' identification with this historically Christian African nation also suggests retention of the past.

Contrarily, Christianity is a religion hinged on change. Awakening, a term employed by early eighteenth century evangelicals and Liele, involves an immediate understanding and hatred of one's sinful nature. Conversion, a process that all believers must partake in, calls for an entire

rebirth of the soul. Similarly, baptism symbolizes a deep-seeded spiritual transformation in the believer.

Just as the Gospel called believers to change, individuals also modified the Gospel to fit their own needs. At times, this created strife among Ethiopian Baptists in Jamaica. In the mid eighteenth century, persons expelled from Liele's Baptist churches began referring to themselves as the "native Baptists." These individuals began new churches after Liele, Swigle, and other orthodox Baptist missionaries excommunicated them for living "according to their own confession, in a very immoral manner."[1] Native Baptists practiced more homogenized versions of Baptist and West African cosmological practices, incorporating spiritualist customs from Christianity, like speaking in tongues, and aspects of Obeah and Myalism from West African religious traditions. Native Baptists practiced their religion in Jamaica without sanction, and leaders from this movement would later instigate and encourage the 1831 Jamaican slave rebellion.[2] Liele, Baker, and other Baptist evangelists considered native Baptists' aberrant beliefs heterodox enough to remove the native Baptists from their orthodox churches.

This, along with their continuation of Baptist rituals and church hierarchy, further indicates the continuity of the Atlantic Ethiopian Baptist movement. Liele acknowledged to Rippon that he read their covenant once a month, to keep converted slaves "in mind of the commandments of God."[3] This covenant reaffirmed the leaders' orthodoxy to their congregations as well as the justices, magistrates, and slave owners throughout the country, who "after the

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[1] F.A. Cox, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society, From 1792-1842. By the Reverend F.A. Cox. To Which is Added a Sketch of the General Baptist Mission* (London: T. Ward & Co., and G & J. Dyer, 1842),17. Ibid. Mary Reckord, "The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831" No. 40 (July 1968) *Past and Present*, 108; Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, politics, and the free coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 50; Abigail Bakan, Ideology and class conflict in Jamaica: the politics of rebellion, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 20.

[3] George Liele to John C. Rippon, 18 May 1792, *BAR*, 1:343

perusal of it, are better satisfied."[4] Though it is unclear what the Ethiopian Baptists included in their church covenant, it is clear that like Whitefield, Liele and his disciples used their public religious texts to appease white authorities and remind slaves of biblical commandments, further indicating the continuance of southern evangelical traditions and their adaptability.[5]

Arguably, this adaptable continuity appeared most evident in the dynamic of mobile and fixed evangelism that Liele and his followers employed in the Atlantic. Hub-and-spoke evangelism united the southern evangelical practices of itinerant preaching and church planting. Fusing these two proselytization methods increased the effectiveness of the Ethiopian Baptist movement by providing colored people a meetinghouse and a practical connection to the church through mobile preachers. Though Liele, Abraham Marshall, Andrew Bryan, and others adopted this practice in the South, it became especially integral to the colored Baptist movement in Jamaica. The complex plantation system in Jamaica, along with intermittent urban areas necessitated a fixed and mobile approach to reaching slaves throughout the island. Liele and other colored evangelists, therefore, adopted hub-and-spoke evangelism to create a stable and a practical way to reach converts outside of the church's geographic range.

Future works on the Baptists in Jamaica may consider the Atlantic Ethiopian Baptist movement as the first part in a greater history of how Christianity contributed to emancipation in Jamaica. By 1814, Jamaican authorities lifted the ban on preaching in plantations, and the Baptists re-ignited their movements in the colony.[6] In response to Liele's request, the Baptist

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[4] Jonathan Clarke to John C. Rippon, 19 July 1790, *BAR*, 1:344.

[5] George Whitefield, *Three Letters From The Reverend George Whitefield: Letter III: To the Inhabitants of Maryland Virginia, North and South Carolina, concerning their Negroes* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1740) in The Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800. Stephen J. Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery: Some New Evidence," *Church history* 42:2 (Jun.,1973), 252. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3163671; See Young Hwi Yoon, "The Spread of Antislavery Sentiment through Proslavery Tracts in the Transatlantic Evangelical Community, 1740s-1770s" *Church History* 81:2 (Jun., 2012), 366; Lambert, 16.

[6] Silvia Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 112.

Missionary Society sent white missionaries from London to help rebuild the Baptist mission in Jamaica. These missionaries, along with Moses Baker and other colored Baptists, would incur the largest following in the denominations' history on the island.[7] However, native Baptists continued to emerge with more radical heterodox ideologies, often arguing that biblical doctrine asserted the freedom of all God's creation. Eventually, native Baptists under Samuel Sharp, a radical convert of Moses Baker, called for a countrywide passive resistance against white authority, which catalyzed the violent Jamaican slave rebellion in 1831.[8] Though colonial authorities suppressed the revolt within twenty-two days, the heterodox Baptist-fueled rebellion served to bolster Wilberforce and other British abolitionists' arguments that slavery created volatile, dangerous, and despicable societies.

However, this account of how southern evangelicalism and George Liele influenced the development of the colored Baptist movement in the South and its transmission to Jamaica also serves two independent purposes. First, the rise of slave and free colored preachers along with the mass conversions among colored people in both the lowcountry and Jamaica, reveal that active agency, along with an adaptable continuity, characterized the progress of this eighteenth century religious movement. Furthermore, the three stages of the Ethiopian Baptists' development in the Atlantic also show the importance of southern evangelicalism and Baptist's beliefs to the evolution of evangelical Christianity among colored people.

Second, this project answers how George Liele and the evangelists under his mentorship transmitted evangelical Christianity and Baptist ideologies to Jamaica. Their efforts to maintain amicable relationships with planters, hub-and-spoke evangelism, participation in Baptist

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[7] Ibid. 114-119; John Clarke, W. Dendy, and J.M. Phillippo, *The Voice of Jubilee: A Narrative of the Baptist Mission, Jamaica, From Its Commencement; With Biographical Notices of Its Fathers and Founders* (London: John Snow, Patern Oster Row, 1865), 49.

[8] Hope M. Waddell, *Twenty-nine years in the West Indies and Central Africa: A Review of Missionary Work and Adventure*, 1829-1858, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1863), 50.

sacraments, and the creation of network of transatlantic Baptist believers brought evangelicalism to black communities in Jamaica. Their habitual notifications of Christianity's progress along with their spiritual financial support of one another united Ethiopian Baptists in a transatlantic web of religious communication and experience. The Jamaican Baptists' correspondence with John Rippon in London, along with black evangelists in Nova Scotia, Sierra Leone, and the lowcountry further defined their purpose as mediators for evangelical Christianity in eighteenth century Afro-Atlantic societies.

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