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“Then God Brake My Head”:
Indian Saints in 17th Century Massachusetts 1646-1660

A Dissertation Presented

by

David M. Hollis

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Abstract of the Dissertation

"Then God Brake My Head":
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This dissertation is about the process of Algonquian conversion to Puritan Christianity in the mid-seventeenth century and the considerable difficulties that stood in the way of that process occurring. It seeks to take seriously the intentions of the missionaries without obscuring that their actions were embedded in a colonial context. At the same time, it is offered as a partial response to treatments of the praying towns in which Eliot and his missionary colleagues are portrayed largely as agents of English imperialism, intent on using the Gospel as a means of subjugation. In part the argument offered in this work is that, in some ways, the missionaries at times both embraced and thwarted English colonial goals. The image of the mission presented is neither that of the benevolent mission unencumbered by colonial interests nor the reduction of it to an instrument of economic exploitation. While the contributions of those looking to link the mission project to the larger context of English colonization should not be ignored – indeed at times those links are made by the missionaries themselves – it is also important to recognize the ways in which the mission stood at odds with such an enterprise.

Fundamentally this dissertation is an exploration of the various issues confronting Algonquians who underwent a process of conversion to Puritan Christianity in New England in the mid-seventeenth century. It focuses especially on the rather unique settlements – known as "praying towns" - created in Massachusetts largely through the efforts of John Eliot with financial support from overseas. The argument here is in part that the towns posed some additional hurdles to the conversion process, especially since

Eliot and his colleagues insisted on linking civil conversion to spiritual readiness. In essence, the praying Indians of Massachusetts were both asked to participate in English culture while at the same time being denied the full opportunity to do so. The dissertation also argues that those Indians who finally succeeded in achieving the validation of the Puritan referees in their bid to create an independent Indian church at Natick were successful not only in crossing barriers of language, worldview, health, and cultural hostility, but that they had acquired facility with the language of Scripture that made them recognizable as "visible saints."

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving wife, Gertha; to my two wonderful children, Malaika and Stephen; and to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior.

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Preface

This dissertation focuses on the issues that surrounded the process of Native American conversion in Massachusetts Bay Colony from the mid 1640's to the early 1670's. Much of what is covered entails an analysis of the praying towns created under the guidance of John Eliot and his missionary companions, towns designed to create an environment in which the process of true heart conversion would be most likely to take place. In doing so, I attempt to demonstrate that there were particular barriers to conversion facing Native Americans, but also that some of the circumstances in seventeenth century Massachusetts may have also caused them to consider the message of the Puritan missionaries. I argue that, ironically, at least one of the hurdles to heart conversion was unwittingly erected by Eliot himself, whose dedication to cultural conversion mixed the Gospel message with English material culture in a way that complicated the process.

In the course of applying for church estate, the praying Indians were required to make individual public confessions of faith, a practice consistent with joining any New England congregation. The attempt here will be to use the confessions of the Natick praying Indians and other evidence to help explore a number of themes relevant to the issue of Amerindian conversion in seventeenth century New England including the difficulties with the process of such transformations. To do that, it is necessary to situate the confessional narratives in their proper contexts, both temporal and spiritual. Strangely enough, in the analyses of the Native American praying towns of Massachusetts Bay, it sometimes seems as if not enough attention is devoted to the very

particular worldview of their primary creator, John Eliot. Because Eliot operated under many of the same assumptions as his fellow Puritans with respect to issues of Native American "civility" and his rather unyielding attitude towards culture, the temptation seems to be to paint both Eliot and his English brethren with the same broad brush. Unfortunately – Richard Cogley's excellent discussion of Eliot's millennial views notwithstanding – Eliot's peculiarities are often mentioned as a side issue, tangential to the mission but not of critical importance to the "real" discussion of the relationship between the English and the praying Indians. But Eliot's views on exactly what the mission to the Native Americans represented were surely relevant to how the praying towns were administered, and his commitment to a worldwide Mosaic form of government renders him in some ways a very poor candidate for a prototypical New England Puritan.

Additionally, it has often been asserted that the missionaries perceived the Native Americans as the descendents of the lost tribes of Israel, and that this understanding was a consistent feature of their project in the new world. I argue that the Jewish identity question was one that informed missionaries in their attempts to situate the mission in millennial discourse and was therefore a topic of no small import. However, I also attempt to trace Eliot's thinking on the subject in an effort to demonstrate that his commitment to Indian conversion and his devotion to the Exodus-style government could stand on their own without reference to the question of Indian identity. Chapter One, centering on millennial discourse in relation to the praying towns and on the apostle's rather unique perspective on the matter, is intended in part to flesh out the ways in which this question shaped, or didn't shape, the mission project.

The remaining chapters are built around themes present in the individual confessions, using the narration of particular Indians to help explore issues central to the transitions from Algonquian to praying Indian and from praying Indian to visible saint. Chapter Two is an analysis of some of the specific difficulties with the acculturation process necessary to achieve church membership, including the role that literacy and language played in the transition from indigenous Algonquian to Red Puritan.[1] In this chapter I attempt to show the difficulties in transitioning to a society ruled by a Puritan conception of law. The chapter also explores the ways in which English material culture was tied to spiritual conversion, both explicitly and implicitly, and how this could be a source of frustration for potential converts. I also examine the mistrust harbored by many English, reflected in the legal codes of the colonies, and the ways in which this served as a stumbling block to conversion. Literacy and education, so critical to participation in Puritan spiritual life, emerged as yet another hurdle, not only with regard to the significant issue of translation but also in terms of the availability of Algonquian reading materials.

Chapter Three is a discussion of the influence of sachems and also of the impact of family on the decision to become a praying Indian. Here I attempt to demonstrate that sachems were immediately recognized as targets for conversion because of the influence they exerted over their constituents. This influence could cut both ways, moving people either toward or away from the Gospel. Similarly, I argue that family was also a double-edged sword, the evidence revealing that some in praying towns were largely there as a

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[1] Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The Praying Indians" of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jan, 1974)

result of family considerations while others stayed away – or ran away – because of the influence of their relations.

Chapter Four is an exploration of the issues of health and disease in relation to conversion. Here I examine the impact of disease on conversion, arguing that in some ways the ravages of epidemics experienced by Native Americans in New England provided fertile ground for the message of the missionaries. The inability of their local healers, who claimed a connection to the world of spirits, to effectively deal with disease, rendered them receptive to an alternative message. In essence, the idea that all was lost without Christ may have seemed especially relevant in their situation. Here I attempt to demonstrate the ways in which missionaries, particularly Thomas Mayhew and Eliot, deliberately used the issue of health and medicine to facilitate the spread of the Gospel.

Chapter Five examines the place of Amerindian religion and worldview in relation to the conversion process. Here I show the common ground on which Eliot and his cohorts could build, how Native American beliefs in some ways provided a foundation on which the Gospel could be laid. The need to assert the universality of the Bible, especially in the face of Native American suspicions about English intentions, made it advisable to compare Algonquians with the pagan forebears of the Puritans. As with the issue of health, Puritan missionaries identified both Catholic priests and pawwaws as those who wished to replace the purity of the Word with their own message and to deprive the Indians of the Word that would restore them to their place in God's family. In much of this chapter, however, I try to highlight the difficulties that Algonquians had in processing the Gospel message.

Finally, the question of just who were the praying Indians and what attractions Eliot's praying towns may have held for them has been well treated by historians, who have consistently painted the picture of a straggling remnant, devastated by epidemics and disoriented by political upheaval, reaching out to the praying towns in search of stability.[2] This characterization has all too often led to the perception of Native American conversion as being born out of a utilitarian desire for survival, a cultural accommodation designed to carve out a place in an unsettled and changing world, a picture supported in fact by some of the testimony in the conversion narratives themselves. However, an essential distinction is worth preserving, for even if the social and political context of shattered Native American lives may go a long way to explaining the desire to live in a praying town, it may not be sufficient to explain the motivation for being certified as a visible saint. Traveling the arduous road to church membership was unnecessary if accommodation was all that was intended. The struggles of the praying Indians to present themselves as fit for church estate were connected to their ability to engage in the Scriptural discourse of New England Puritan life. It was not, I argue, so much that their theology changed dramatically between 1652 and 1659 but that their mode of expression had been rendered comprehensible to Puritan referees through the appropriate use of Scripture. These matters comprise the focus of the final chapter.

This dissertation is really about the process of Algonquian conversion to Puritan Christianity in the mid-seventeenth century and the considerable difficulties that stood in

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[2] Dane Morrison, A Praying People: Massachusett Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission, 1600-1690 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1995); Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The "Praying Indians" of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jan., 1974); Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The European and the Indian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)

the way of that process occurring. Much of the historiography of the Massachusetts praying towns has followed two streams. The institutional histories of Vaughan and Kellaway tended to validate the expressed intentions of the missionaries and their English brethren.   Later writers such as Francis Jennings, Neal Salisbury, and James Axtell attempted to place Indian concerns at the center of the story by utilizing an ethnohistorical approach. In these other treatments of the praying towns, most notably in the work of Jennings, Eliot and his missionary colleagues are portrayed largely as agents of English imperialism, intent on using the Gospel as a means of subjugation. Jennings went so far as to paint Eliot as a misleading self-promoter.[3] More recently, others such as Richard Cogley have taken issue with these characterizations. William Simmons and James Ronda have insisted that the Puritan message itself potentially held attraction for Native Americans questioning their worldview amidst the devastation wrought by disease and the destruction of the Pequot nation and that New England Native American conversion should not be seen in simple imperial and colonial terms.

James Axtell has argued that ethnohistory has been plagued by historians' tendency to borrow "a dash of the anthropologist's cultural relativism (which in practice means that they bend over backwards for the natives without extending the same gyration to the Europeans)."[4] This results, he contends, in a definition of Native American success that necessitates that Indians maintain their culture in the face of the political and cultural imperialism of Europeans. For Axtell, Eliot's praying towns represented a "colonial Marshall Plan" of "moral rearmament, social reconstruction, and religious

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[3] Francis Jennings, "Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer, 1971), 197-212

[4] James Axtell, "Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter, 1982) 36

revitalization," if only for a time. If the choices were annihilation or accommodation, he suggests, then the fact that accommodation provided some hope of "ethnic" survival must be read as some measure of success in native eyes:

> From an English or missionary perspective, the praying towns were somewhat successful, but not totally because the converts were still biologically Indians and never fully assimilated into English society. But from an Indian perspective, the towns were an equal if different kind of success because they ensured some future of native communities on home ground with native leaders.[5]

Yet for Axtell, Christianity remained the "bitter pill" that needed to be swallowed, even though he acknowledged that it might "truly satisfy some new intellectual or emotional hunger."[6] Jennings refers to "listening to the ministers" as "the price" of assimilation.[7] I contend that we need to hold out the possibility that while for some, swallowing that pill was most likely nothing more than accommodation, for others it was most probably a heartfelt act.

More recent work has attempted to complicate the picture of Puritan missionary enterprises. In his essay "Puritan Missionaries and the Colonization of the New World: A Reading of John Eliot's *Indian Dialogues* (1671)," Frank Kelleter argues that neither the image of the benevolent mission nor the reduction of it to an instrument of economic exploitation is helpful in trying to understand the complexities of English-Indian relations in early America.[8] I am inclined to agree with this position. While the contributions of those looking to link the mission project to the larger context of English colonization should not be ignored – indeed at times those links are made by the missionaries

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[5] James Axtell, "Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions…" 37
[6] James Axtell, "Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions…" 39
[7] Francis Jennings, "Goals and Functions…" 206
[8] Frank Kelleter, "Puritan Missionaries and the Colonization of the New World: A Reading of John Eliot's *Indian Dialogues* (1671)," in Schmidt, Kaus H. and Fleishmann, Fritz, Eds., *Early America Reexplored: New Readings in Colonial, Early National, and Antebellum Culture* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2000) 71-98

themselves – it is also important to recognize the ways in which the mission stood at odds with such an enterprise.

In any examination of missions it is important not to reduce the proselytes to an "undifferentiated mass" evangelized by missionaries who function as agents of hegemony.[9] It is also important to recognize the ways in which missionaries can subvert the colonial regime even as they work in concert with it.[10] Eliot and his close associate, Daniel Gookin, faced harsh criticism and even physical danger because of their association with the Indians. While the apostle and his colleagues certainly attempted to colonize the hearts and minds of their Algonquian audiences, they also validated Native American land claims at the expense of English neighbors. Their association and defense of the praying Indians garnered them both suspicion and disdain as King Philip's war solidified racial division in New England.[11] While it is undeniable that there were those who saw the praying towns as a buffer between English settlement and the Mohawks, in some ways the mission acted as a buffer between Native Americans and land-hungry colonists. Eliot's writings also evince a keen sense of the Algonquian concern that both the mission and the Word itself were just props in English imperial ambition.

I recognize that the praying towns served more than one purpose and that Indian conversion occurred in the context of land issues and substantial mistrust, and I attempt to demonstrate how these tensions served not only as a potential barrier to conversion but also to the acceptance of praying Indians by the English. Nevertheless, Eliot's lifelong

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[9] Wolfgang Gabbert, "Social and Cultural Conditions of Religious Conversion in Colonial Southwest Tanzania, 1891-1939, *Ethnology*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Autumn, 2001), 293

[10] Karen E. Fields discusses this issue, albeit in a more modern African context in "Christian Missionaries as Anticolonial Militants," *Theory and Society*, Vo. 11, No. 1 (Jan., 1982) 95-108

[11] For a discussion of the criticism leveled at Gookin, see Louise A. Breen's "Praying with the Enemy: Daniel Gookin, King Philip's War, and the Dangers of Intercultural Mediatorship," in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern, Eds., *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) 101-122

commitment to his Indian flock makes it hard to dismiss him as a conscious tool of English greed. Even in the wake of King Philip's War he continued to openly criticize the English for their "wicked actings" and their thirst for Indian land.[12] Furthermore, his understanding of millennial prophecy and his application of an Old Testament system of government to the praying towns make it clear that he saw his project in terms that transcended English concerns.

Although I believe that characterizing Eliot and the praying towns in stark imperialist terms is misguided, there is no question that he saw spiritual conversion as tied to cultural transformation. I argue that not only was conversion for praying Indians rendered difficult by significant social hurdles but that it was further complicated by Eliot's approach.[13] In this I agree with both Jennings and David Silverman, who have attributed the relative vitality of the Martha's Vineyard Indian churches in part to the fact that prospective converts bore the burden of far fewer cultural demands than did their counterparts in Eliot's praying towns. Where I depart from Jennings is that, in his eyes, Eliot's "political ends" were principally English and imperial. I think that his millennial views and his devotion to an Old Testament form of government were of more importance to him.

In any event, he unwittingly erected barriers to the conversion he sought. First, his extreme insistence on behavior modification and lifestyle modification inextricably bound Englishness to Christianity in a way that made rejection of one a rejection of the other. Second, his unusual views about government made the praying towns, while in other respects a replication of Englishness, distinct from those of their English neighbors.

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[12] See Eliot's October 1677 letter in Martin Moore, *Memoir of the Life and Character of John Rev. John Eliot, Apostle of the N.A. Indians* (Boston, MA: Timothy Beddington, 1822) 126-129

They were therefore both required to convert culturally and at the same time denied the opportunity to do so fully. Other aspects of Indian culture provided both avenues towards conversion and stumbling blocks as well. The failure of Indian healing practices in the face of epidemic served to draw some towards the new system proposed by the missionaries. Yet the Algonquian worldview allowed for spiritual power to manifest itself in many ways, and it was natural for some to see the God of the Bible as yet another possessor of Manitou, rather than the all-powerful force the Puritans insisted He was. Additionally, while there were some common understandings already present upon which Eliot could build, the worldview of the New England Native Americans rejected the strict dichotomies of God and Satan, good and evil, upon which the Christian position depended. Conversion therefore required not only a change of lifestyle and a regeneration of the heart, but a reconfiguring of the mind as well.

Another area of interest in the scholarship about the praying Indians has been to examine their motives for conversion. William Simmons, Harold Van Lonkhuyzen, and Elise Brenner have all unearthed a complicated set of social, cultural, and political reasons for Native American conversion which resist the impulse to characterize it as either simple or total. Others such as Jean O'brien, author of *Dispossession by Degrees*, and Daniel Richter have tried to place Native Americans at the center of the story, to reclaim an Amerindian perspective on English-Indian relations. Folded into these discussions of conversion is the sincerity question. Here the position originally advanced by Jennings leaves little room for Native American agency in conversion as it takes place exclusively in the context of colonial domination. Others who have followed him, Cogley and Van Lonkhuyzen in particular, have made the case that, at least in the pre-

war period, colonial power was not absolute and, in some ways, inapplicable to non-praying Indians. Viewing conversion strictly through the lens of colonial power is too simple an approach.

My own perspective is that conversion, while ultimately referring to a totalizing change of heart and worldview, had more than one meaning in daily experience, and both the missionary accounts and the confessions attest to this. Heart conversion, tied as it was to cultural conversion by Eliot, was the ultimate goal and subject of inquiry, but there were other conversions as well – to clothing, to agriculture, to government, and to schedule, among others. It was possible to participate in these conversions without either seeking or gaining full acceptance into the certified Body of Christ, that is, without undergoing a conversion that was subsequently validated by the English. The confessing Indians of Natick lived next to people who did not seek church membership as well as near those who steadfastly rejected even cultural conversion. Part of what I argue here is that the conversion process was a struggle of worldviews and lifestyles and that, at least in the early going, it was not a one-sided struggle. Secondly, the road to church estate was not only complicated by language, lifestyle, and worldview but by Eliot's insistence that heart conversion follow cultural conversion. This, when combined with the host of other obstacles faced by praying Indians, indicates that those seeking church membership, in some cases for the better part of a decade, were a rather persistent lot. I conclude that it is probable therefore that this group included those who were sincere believers.

And so, in the midst of a complicated identity imposed from the outside, individual praying Indians strove to demonstrate their faith in a way that would be

recognizable by the body of English Puritan saints. As both civil and ecclesiastical order were necessary to truly be living according to Scripture, some sought membership in the body of Christ, to be validated by the bonds of Church membership and the "seals" of communion and baptism. Their inclination to do so seems to have begun in the late 1640's, their first attempt at doing so in 1652, and their first success at admission in 1659. What happened in those seven years that solidified their identity, perhaps for themselves, but certainly for those English Puritans in charge of their admission? How did they succeed in convincing the assembled elders listening to their confessions that they were in fact "visibly" redeemed when their claims to that salvation in 1652 were deemed inadequate? How did the praying Indians, those who would identify themselves as believers in the reformed doctrine of the Puritans, those who – at least publicly - acknowledged their sinful nature and need for Christ's redemptive sacrifice, utilize the messages communicated by the missionaries in their own professions of faith? Finally, what were the markers that English Puritans employed in their acceptance of praying Indians into the "visible saints," the body of recognized believers? The answers to these questions lie not only in the messages conveyed in the confessions but also in the mode of the confessions. It is necessary therefore to have a general understanding of the New England Puritan confession at the outset.

Puritan Confession Narratives

When the Puritan reformers arrived in New England on their "errand" into the wilderness, intent on removing themselves from what the blasphemies of the English church and establishing a Godly polity in the New World, they brought with them the

idea of creating a pure church, whose membership was restricted to the elect, those possessing the saving grace given by the agape love of God. The church and the society, removed from the tepid spiritual malaise of England, would covenant with God, thus enjoining His favor and protection in this world in addition to the eternal life promised true believers in the next. But to create a church composed of only regenerated souls required the assertion of knowledge belonging ultimately only to an all-knowing Jehovah. The process of finding the visible saints, of identifying those who were truly in the Body and, through church membership, certifying them, was a daunting one.

Out of this need to separate the chaff from the wheat emerged the practice of the scrupulous examination of candidates for membership. The practice of public confession as a requirement for church membership was a subject of controversy within the ranks of Calvinist reformers, with debate raging between Congregationalists and Presbyterians in England regarding the common believer's ability to comprehend, judge, and express religious sentiment and therefore whether people should have to confess. For Calvin himself, the outward test of the elect had been by profession of faith, an upright life, and participation in the sacraments, but New Englanders sought an account of the inner workings of grace on the heart as well.[14] That a truly regenerate person could be known with some degree of certainty veered dangerously toward the territory of God's sovereignty, and so a New England confession, unlike those practiced in the Anglican or Catholic churches, purported to display knowledge and understanding of doctrine and Scripture, and to reveal the struggle of the sinner now reborn as a saint. The great evil of the Roman Church had been to suppress the acquisition of the personal knowledge of its

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[14] Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966) 84

members, and the offense of the Anglican Church was continuing to appoint ignorant ministers and accept ignorant members. For these Congregationalists, the confessional narrative of the true saint should bear no relation to that of the Anglican, to them a worthless parroting of creeds not understood by the person proclaiming them.[15]

But understanding was not enough, for surely even Satan and his minions had knowledge of Christ's identity without having grace. A sinner could comprehend the doctrines of faith and be able to express them in Scriptural terms and yet not have "closed" with Christ. Yet for the purposes of qualifying for membership in the Church on earth, it had often been deemed sufficient to note that a person displayed and attested to "historical faith," that is and intellectual understanding of and consent to abide by certain doctrines, and that a prospective member's behavior conformed to the faith they professed.[16] In New England's Puritan congregations, however, the members of the body wanted to discern evidence that saving grace was present in the life of the person confessing. Even a seed of grace could save,[17] but God was both the author and finisher of that faith. Belief was not the work of the believer, but was itself a gift of grace. It was not always necessary that a person assert assurance of salvation, for to be too sure of this was to risk pride, itself an indication that a regenerating work had not been wrought in the heart of the one confessing. In fact, a certain degree of expressed doubt was

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[15] Edmund Morgan, *Visible Saints, The History of a Puritan Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1963) 41-42

[16] Edmund Morgan, *Visible Saints…* 43

[17] Norman Pettit, "The Work of the Spirit in Old and New England," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 3, (Sep., 1984), 423, see also Charles Cohen, *God's Caress* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1986) 9-10, Pettit argues that the idea of Christians hoping for a "seed" of faith somehow contradicts what he terms "predestinarian dogma," but a more reasonable exposition of that line in Matthew must take into account the understanding that Christ was the "author and perfector" of faith (Hebrews 12:2) and that when Paul commands believers to "work out" their salvation "with fear and trembling," (Romans 9:16) it is God who works both "to will and to do of his good pleasure." God is both the source of faith - the giver of the seed – and the gardener, growing a little faith into an impressive and sturdy tree.

necessary to ensure approval into the ranks of the visibly chosen. The delusional assurance of the unregenerate could easily masquerade as the solid security of the believer, and so the truly faithful always retained a modicum of angst about their status before God. As Edmund Morgan succinctly puts it, “to be sure one must be unsure.”[18]

The relation of public testimony concerning God’s salvific work in the life of the believer was also to edify and stir the hearts of the listeners. As such, the length and format varied according to the dictates of those in charge. Thomas Shephard, pastor of the Cambridge Church, even warned his congregation to steer clear of “extravagant, enlarged discourses of the set time of their conversion,” as this was “wearisome and uncomely.” [19] The contents of the confessions often would be buttressed with testimonials from church members and the candidate’s responses to follow-up questions propounded by elders or clergy,[20] but procedures for the delivery of confessions could be bent at the discretion of the church. In one instance, for example, one of Shephard’s flock was permitted to narrate her confession in private and simply confirm it on the following Sunday morning due to a debilitating fear of public speaking.[21]

The same flexibility in format was displayed in the creation of the first “praying Indian” church in 1660. The Indian applicants in John Eliot’s Natick flock engaged in a variety of confessional experiences over a seven year period. In 1652 they publicly confessed in addition to dictating their confessions privately to Eliot, who translated them and read the English versions to elders gathered from the various congregations, yet in 1654 they were simply subjected to an open question and answer session designed to

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[18] Edmund Morgan, *Visible Saints…*70-72
[19] George Selement and Bruce C. Woolley, *Thomas Shephard’s Confessions* in The Colonial Society of Massachusetts Collections Volume LVIII (Boston: The Society, 1981) 23
[20] Charles Cohen, *God’s Caress* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1986) 213
[21] George Selement and Bruce C. Woolley, *Thomas Shephard’s Confessions*…19

probe their knowledge of doctrine. In the 1659 confessions that led to the establishment of the church at Natick they confessed orally in the presence of multiple interpreters attesting to the accuracy of the translation.[22]

The confessional narratives often reflected the Puritan idea that conversion followed stages. The covenant of Abraham was wrought by faith, credited to him as righteousness, and the Law given to Moses had existed as a means of God's grace, guiding God's people even as it made them aware of their inability to keep it and the necessity of complete dependence upon God. Christ's death on the cross had erased the sting of the law, but it remained as a tutor. To truly come to saving faith in Christ a sinner must become acquainted with the Law and with the Gospel, so that he may understand his inability to measure up to God's standards of holiness. In the New England model of conversion, this conviction of sin and the subsequent acknowledgment of one's status as an enemy of God, a rogue outlaw challenging His sovereignty, could be achieved without the saving grace of God, as could the attending feelings of hopelessness and desperate terror that accompanied the knowledge that one's depravity was justly punishable by hell.[23] It was at this point that the saving grace of God enabled the elect to turn completely to Christ, longing to "close" with Him in complete dependence. This stage of the process was typically marked with great doubt and struggling, ultimately giving way to an imperfect assurance bolstered by outward changes in behavior. Sanctification provided the evidence of grace sought after by the saint, but the true

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[22] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance: or a Further Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New-England," (London: Printed by Peter Cole in Leaden-Hall, 1653) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834); "A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England," (London: Printed by M.S., 1655) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4; John Eliot, "A Further Account of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England," (London: Printed by John Macock, 1660)
[23] Murray G. Murphey, "The Psychodynamics of Puritan Conversion," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Summer, 1979) 138-139

believer would be continually plagued by anxiety and doubt. To assert perfect assurance was to call into question the authenticity of one's conversion.

How much one could prepare oneself for such conversion was the subject of much debate and central to the banishment of the Hutchinsonians in 1636. While New Englanders generally agreed that all parts of the process came from a merciful God reaching out His hand to redeem a portion of justifiably damnable mankind, the role that the individual could play in begging for that grace was a matter of contention.[24] Controversy over that issue aside, it was understood that knowledge of the Law and of the gospel came first before the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. From this was born the Puritan missionary emphasis on civility as a necessary prerequisite to salvation. As with all believers, those Native Americans chosen by God to be saved would have to become immersed in an environment in which the Law and the Gospel predominated. Their confessions, in turn, ultimately would have to reflect the Puritan ideas about conviction, despair, grace, and sanctification. In short, they would need to transition not only from cultural Algonquians to praying Indians but from praying Indians to "Red Puritans."

Translation Issues in the Natick Confessions:

The subject of Indian conversion in seventeenth century New England is fraught with difficulties. The question of whether one can discern an authentic "Indian voice" in the text of the confessional narratives proffered by native converts is complicated by assumptions about motivation on the part of the missionaries and on the part of the members of their flock as well as by questions of translation and language. Those historians who view the missionary project as principally part of a larger imperial

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[24] Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared...* 1-21

enterprise are inclined to view skeptically the reports of those in charge of rendering the Gospel to the indigenous New Englanders, and therefore view the professions of faith offered by the praying Indians with a good deal of suspicion. Even those who reject the more sinister characterization of John Eliot and the New England missionaries are confronted with the problem of multiple filters potentially obscuring the nuances of the original confessional narratives, which, in the case of the Natick Indians, were transcribed by Eliot in English from the Algonquian in which they were offered.

The potential issues with such a translation process are multiple. In the first place, as normal speech proceeds at a pace much more rapid than one can write by hand, the cadence of the delivery could possibly have been abnormally slow, perhaps rendering the relationship between thought and speech unnatural. Second, there was the potential for missing words and thus rendering only "the essence" of the confession but not the exact wording. Finally, there was the difficulty in expressing theological concepts that had established themselves in English but had no exact equivalent in Algonquian.[25]

If one is going to utilize the texts of the confessional narratives as being valuable sources of information, not only for the lives of the praying Indians with which they were so intimately connected, but also for more clearly understanding the attitudes and activities of the missionaries, then it is imperative to establish that there is reason to be hopeful about the translation of the narratives, at least in basic content if not in exact word choice. To do that, it is important to analyze the particulars of the procedures used

[25] For example, James Axtell notes that Algonquian provided no way of talking non-possessively about a triune God. James Axtell, ""Babel of Tongues: Communicating with the Indians in Eastern North America," in Edward G. Gray and Norman Fiering, eds. *The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492-1800* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000) 52

to produce their narratives as well as to connect them to other narratives, to the specific activities of the missionaries, and to events that give context to their words.

Attempts to find an "authentic" Amerindian perspective in the narratives are also complicated by circumstances and by the assumption that there is something static that can be identified as such. By the time the first confessions were offered in 1652 – to say nothing of those offered in 1659 – the praying Indians of Natick had already undergone dramatic changes in neighborhood, lifestyle, and government, and, to the extent that they had participated in Eliot's program of acculturation, had inevitably altered their reference points. Their world was already a blend of old and new ideas, and, if one assigns their recorded confessions and the associated missionary accounts any credence, they occupied a liminal space between the assumptions made by their non-praying kin and those of their newfound faith. The project of attempting to discern the completeness of their transition is probably a fruitless one, but the radical change in their circumstances induced by becoming praying Indians is undeniable. As such, the approach here will be to treat them as the people their confessions present them to be, struggling between the pull of the old world and the stringent requirements of the new.

We are confronted with layers of translation – the missionary message of salvation translated into halting spoken Algonquian and later quantified into catechism and into Scripture, the message translated again into indigenous terms[26] in the minds of the Native American listeners, the message given back in Algonquian and translated slowly back into English for the Puritan audience, and finally, the English translation

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[26] Here Kristina Bross has argued that the translation of Scripture into Algonquian had unintended consequences for Eliot's vision of the mission in that it enables praying Indians such as Ponampam to critique the colonial construction of the Indian wilderness, wielding the sword of God's word for themselves as their familiarity with Eliot's translation of the Bible increased. Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) 52-83

read centuries later by the modern analyst. Just as the Puritans felt themselves to be ultimately unqualified to assess the election of any particular individual, those of us examining the conversion narratives of seventeenth century New England, be they those of Englishmen or Native Americans, ought to exhibit extraordinary caution about proclaiming the motivations behind any particular assertion of conversion. Although it is not inappropriate to speculate in the presence of evidence, perhaps even to formulate an opinion as to the likelihood of the sincerity of a particular person's attestation of grace, it behooves us to operate within the strictures provided by the evidence, armed with the knowledge that our interpretations of the evidence are inevitably shaped by our own notions about what the conversion experience really meant. As such, I should assert at the outset that I do not, as Daniel Richter puts it, "squirm in my seat"[27] when confronted with notions of innate depravity, irresistible grace, and redemption solely through Christ. I do not think that the Puritan notion of conversion renders them ignorant or repellant. I find it thoroughly believable, indeed probable, that in the process of Native American missions and conversion that responses among those professing to be praying Indians ranged from those using the mission context for strictly utilitarian purposes to those who syncretized and incorporated the Christian message into a preexisting matrix of belief to those who were ardent believers in the Puritan brand of Christianity. As true conversion in the Puritan sense is indiscernible through historical investigation – and in Calvinist terms by any human effort - I leave the question of whether or not that happened in any specific instance aside.

[27] Dan Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) 115

But what of the praying Indian conversion narratives themselves? Even if we are ultimately unsure of the motivation of individuals taking the step toward acknowledgment as visible saints, there exist records of their delivered confessions, products of a process spanning well over a decade. How much confidence should be accorded to them as accurately representing the thoughts and experiences of the Indians themselves? In the words of Richard Mather, "...how shall we know that the confessions here related, being spoken in their tongue, were indeed uttered by them in such words, as have the same signification and meaning with these that are here expressed...?"[28] This concern adheres not only to the technical nuances of the translation of speech, particularly of new theological concepts, from one language to another, but also to the real possibility that Eliot or any other English translator would hear in the confessions the things they wanted to hear, rather than what was actually said.

When addressing the issue of the Eliot tracts as text, much of the scholarship has proceeded along two streams, one following Francis Jennings' insistence on missions as a smokescreen for imperial domination and the other an ethnohistorical attempt at reclamation of the "Indian voice." As Joshua Bellin points out, too many studies of the Eliot texts "overlook or underestimate the fact that they *are* texts, and highly mediated texts at that." [29] On the one extreme he positions what he perceives as Richard Cogley's face-value acceptance of the Eliot texts as sources of definitive information, at the other, Hilary Wyss's ethnohistorical interpretation of the texts as Indians writing their own

[28] Richard Mather, "Tears of Repentance..." 220
[29] Joshua David Bellin, "A Little Shall I Say": Translation and Interculturalism in the John Eliot Tracts," *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, Colin C. Calloway and Neal Salisbury, Eds., (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003) 54

narratives of conversion sans Eliot.[30] For her part, Wyss maintains that written narratives by Native converts are necessarily bicultural products, but she does not feel that Christianized Native writing automatically negates the native culture. She believes that cultural convergences between preliterate native traditions and literate Christianity – "transculturations" as she calls them – lent an opportunity to preserve Native traditions and to develop and expand them.[31] Richter notes that, although the confessions were mediated through the English translators, they possess two qualities which render them as valuable. First, despite the problem of English translation they do preserve something of what New England Native Americans said about themselves. Additionally, since they originated as largely self-contained oral texts, their structure was predominately under the control of the native speaker rather than the English scribe.[32] Nevertheless, Richter says, "Even under the best of circumstances translation is a tricky art, dependent not only on the linguistic aptitude of the translator, but on an ability to make subtle cultural references comprehensible in foreign contexts."[33]

The problems inherent to translation were keenly felt by Eliot and by his colleagues. Eliot's transcriptions of native confessions operate within the Puritan understanding of an absolute correspondence between word and meaning, but readily assert their failure to achieve it, claiming only to capture the "essence" of what was spoken. Far from being self-confident missives trumpeting the exactness of their

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[30] In Bellin's eyes, both approaches may rest on a precarious common assumption – that texts can reveal or disguise encounter but are themselves unaffected by it. This approach exempts texts from the idea that cultural productions are transformed by encounter, and, more ironically, ignores that Eliot's texts manifest a deep concern over the "ways in which encounter affects the writing of encounter." Bellin, "A Little Shall I Say…" 55

[31] Hillary Wyss, Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America (Amherst, MA, University of Massachusetts Press, 2000) 5-6

[32] Daniel Richter, *Facing East*…110-111

[33] Daniel Richter, *Facing East*… 117

representation, the missionary tracts exhibit an awareness of the difficulties presented by both language and process. Eliot even expresses his concern that, rather than inflating the contents of the confessions, he had "rather rendered them weaker" by his tendency to "miss some words of weight," partly by his deliberate shortening of long sentences, and partly by the differences in idiom from Algonquian to English.[34] For Eliot, who sought to ground his every move in Scripture, the Bible contained directives for the translation process. In fact, one of the reasons he gave for not attempting to gather a Natick church following the 1652 confessions is that he lacked what he believed to be the requisite number of witnesses Biblically ordained for verifying them.[35] He took pains to ensure that this was not the case for the 1654 and 1659 examinations.[36]

Eliot's concern for the accuracy of the translations is a theme throughout the missionary tracts. For the 1652 confessions Eliot met with individual members of his flock in order to write down their confessions prior to the actual day of public confession. In the 1653 tract, "Tears of Repentance," he included both his record of the confessions they gave to him personally and the confessions uttered before the gathered elders in August of 1652.[37] In his account of the 1654 examination, he related that the members of the assembly were encouraged to "propound their doubt" if they doubted the interpretations of the answers proffered by his Indian flock and that this was in fact done in at least one instance. Additionally, Eliot recounted that he was unable to write the questions and answers down because it was not possible "unless I had caused the

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[34] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance: or a Further Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New-England," (London: Printed by Peter Cole in Leaden-Hall, 1653) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 245
[35] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 244
[36] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England," (London: Printed by M.S., 1655) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 272; John Eliot, "A Further Account..." 35
[37] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 228

Assembly to stay upon it, which had not been fitting," indicating a concern for the pace gap between the spoken and written word. A member of the audience provided him with the transcript of the day's question and answer session.[38] Another feature of the 1654 examination that speaks to the concern for and attention to the issue of translation is the elders' calling out to the interpreters to "be attentive to all things that passed" because they were beholden to the accuracy of their accounts of what had been said. The interpreters were also asked to publicly testify to the authenticity of Eliot's translations of the Natick Indians' answers, and they affirmed that Eliot's rendering of the responses was "many times the very words which they spake and always the sense."[39]

A Helpful Uncertainty:

While there were other factors that delayed the creation of an Indian church, most notably the inherent suspicion some English colonists displayed toward all Native Americans, one reason the process took so long was Eliot's own reluctance to rush into the creation of such a church until God's requirements had been fulfilled: "...though I and some others know more of the sincerity of some of them, then others doe, and are better satisfied with them: yet because I may be in a temptation on that hand, I am well content to make slow haste in this matter, remembering the word of God, *Lay hands suddenly upon no man*."[40] His patience in the formation of the church is one of the better arguments against any characterization of Eliot as a self-aggrandizing, self-promoting

[38] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation..." 275-276
[39] William Walton, "A Late and Further Manifestation..." 284
[40] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation..." 285

glory seeker intent on impressing those overseas.[41] A more careful reading of his own texts indicates an awareness of his own eagerness and a desire to ensure that he was not prematurely rushing the praying Indians into church estate.

In his presentation of the 1659 confessions, the concerns over the exactness of the transcription become even more evident. With regard to the first batch of confessions, those written down by Eliot "in English from their mouths to the best of my endeavors," Eliot claimed only that the "substance hereof" was captured.[42] With respect to the oral confessions given he was even more frank about his difficulties:

> I did understand most things that some of those Indians spake; and though others spake not so well to my understanding, yet many things I understood of what they all spake: and thus much I may testify, that (according to what I understood) the substance of their confessions is here truly set down.[43]

In an effort to be as accurate as possible, there were multiple interpreters present for the delivery of the oral confessions including unnamed Indian scholars, Eliot's son, two of Peter Stanton's sons – who left following Ponampam's confession – and Peter Folger from Martha's Vineyard, who expressed concern that the Algonquian in question was of a different dialect than that to which he was accustomed.[44]

There are other indications in the text that the translation process left some of the assembled faithful uneasy. At the completion of all of the confessions, there followed an interrogation of catechism questions "too long to rehearse" covering grace, the ordinances, baptism, repentance, and faith. At one point in the process Mr. Danforth

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[41] Francis Jennings advances essentially this position in "Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer, 1971), 197-212. Philip Ranlet accuses Jennings of arguing without evidence on this point. Philip Ranlet, "Another Look at the Causes of King Philip's War," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 1, (Mar., 1988) 79-100

[42] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 29

[43] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 30

[44] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" In his *Key Into the Language of America* Roger Williams relates that within a two hundred mile radius "their Dialects do exceedingly differ" but not so much that it would prevent a man from conversing with "thousands of Natives" provided he utilized Williams' key as a "help."

insisted that Nishohkou answer a question regarding his previously confessed lusts in English. Eliot recorded that his own intercession on Nishohkou's behalf was rebuffed - "I said that a question to the like purpose was asked him when he made confession in private to which he answered in broken English, if the Assembly pleased I would read that: but he was desired to answer now…"[45] It is possible that in part Nishohkou was being asked to validate the fullness of his conversion by gamely attempting spoken English in front of the enquiring assembly, but perhaps Eliot's proffered rendition of Nishohkou's prior response was deemed inadequate to the purpose at hand due to a scrupulous insistence on more than one translator.

In a strange way, however, the very insecurity manifest in the Eliot tracts is one of the best arguments for being hopeful about their contents, at least with regard to the oft-repeated mischaracterization that they represent distorted missionary propaganda designed to put a rosy tint on events in Massachusetts in the hopes of soliciting funds from overseas. To be sure one intent – perhaps the primary intent – was to answer criticisms about the slothful nature of the New England missionary enterprise and to solicit money from the faithful overseas, but Eliot and the other writers record their failures and frustrations, not only a litany of seeming successes. For example, Eliot's relation of a drunken episode involving the son of Totheswamp, one of Natick's leaders, would have provided no encouragement as to the progress of the Gospel amongst the Native Americans, especially as it involved one of the interpreters who had used to translate "a good part of the Holy Scriptures." His frustration over this particular incident was so great that he barred this particular individual, sometimes thought to be John

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[45] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 75

Sassamon, from serving as interpreter for the 1654 examination.[46] The purity of the translation process – or the perception of it - could not be left in the hands of one implicated in sin.

There are other reasons to be cautiously hopeful that Eliot and his team of translators did in fact capture the essence, if not the exact wording, of the proceedings. Charles Cohen points out that in the instances where multiple confessions by the same person were recorded the accounts, while not identical, do not conflict.[47] In the four cases in 1652 for which a previously dictated trial narrative and a public confession were recorded – those of Totheswamp, Monequasson, William of Sudbury, and Ponampam – the biographical details provided match.[48] Furthermore, at the 1652 proceedings John Speene came forward twice to deliver his confession, as did Poquanum and Nookau; Speene's brother Robin came forward three times. Nishohkou had dictated two preparatory confessions before delivering his narrative to the assembly. Five of the men confessing in 1652 also confessed in 1659 and the basic storyline of their narratives remained unchanged. So in more than one instance there were multiple chances to capture the "essence" of what the Natick Indians said.

Additionally, if the 1652 confessions had been the product of deliberate deception induced by Eliot's eagerness to display the progress of the Gospel amongst the Native Americans, one would not expect to find them as wholly unsatisfying as they turned out to be. Furthermore, Waban's rather incoherent narrative, devoid of Scripture references,

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[46] John Eliot, 'A Late and Further Manifestion…" 273-4
[47] Charles Cohen, "Conversion Among Puritans and Amerindians: A Theological Perspective," in *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith*, Francis J. Bremer, Editor, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993) 236
[48] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians Before King Philip's War*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 127

is consistent with Eliot's and Shephard's impression of his deficiencies at self-expression, while Monequasson's narrative displays a greater knowledge of Scripture than the others, a fact consistent with his status as the schoolteacher. The confessions also contain no anachronistic statements[49] and the Scripture references of 1659 bear a direct relationship to the parts of the Bible that had been published in Algonquian to that point.

The rest of the "Eliot tracts" also exhibit a commitment to sharing information that would potentially damage the impression created. Were the sole purpose of the tracts to present an artificially glorious picture of the missionary effort, then the inclusion of other material present in the documents is strange, to say the least. For example, in Thomas Shephard's contribution to 1648's tract, "The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking Forth Upon the Indians," he discusses at length two difficult moral dilemmas created as a direct result of the English preaching to the Indians. The first involved the knotty problem of whether Eliot should encourage the repayment of gambling debts incurred before the offender renounced this sinful behavior. Eliot's rather utilitarian solution – negotiating a settlement to pay half – merely served to highlight the intractability of the situation.[50] Similarly, and more poignantly, the painful breakup of polygamous families, rendering the children illegitimate, is clearly identified by the missionaries as the direct result of their insistence that marriage be defined Scripturally.[51] There is no indication of a ready solution to this problem either. Throughout the tracts failure is recorded along with success and a careful reading yields the impression of a

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[49] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians Before King Philip's War,* 128

[50] Thomas Shephard, "The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking Forth Upon the Indians in New-England," (London: Printed by R. Cotes for John Bellamy, 1648) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 58

[51] Thomas Shephard, "The Clear Sunshine…" 63

slow and arduous struggle through obstacles, punctuated by enthusiasm at these "beginnings."

We are left then with texts proposing to contain the substance of what individual Algonquian speakers confessed but scrupulously avoiding the claim that they have achieved a perfect correspondence between word and meaning. Were Eliot to insist on his own accuracy or were the accounts devoid of negative publicity we would be justified in suspecting deliberate obfuscation of the actual contents of the confessions, but that is not the case. There is sufficient reason for a guarded optimism that "the essence" of what these confessing Algonquians was in fact captured.

So I have attempted to proceed with cautious confidence, buttressing the contents of the confessions with other material along the way. What follows is a look at Native American conversion in seventeenth century Puritan New England.

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Chapter I. - Millennial Fervor, Indian Identity and Eliot's "Errand Into the Wilderness"

Overview of the Praying Towns:

From 1649 to the end of the 17th century Puritan missionary activity in the New England colonies was funded by the Society for Propagation of the Gospel in New England, commonly referred to as the New England Company, an organization composed of sixteen people responsible for the acquisition and investment of funds gathered to spread the Word amongst the Indians. The funds were distributed by the commissioners of the United Colonies of New England, organized in 1643 primarily as a military, defensive structure against the Indians. The advantage the commissioners possessed was that they oversaw all the New England colonies with the exception of Rhode Island and so could distribute monies to Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven, which was absorbed by Connecticut in 1665.

A variety of Puritan missionaries attempted to bring the Gospel to the Indian populations of New England. The Reverend Richard Bourne was active with the Masphee in Plymouth as were other missionaries not associated directly with the New England Company, while James Fitch evangelized the Mohegans in Connecticut. The bulk of the funding, however, went to the missionary efforts of the Mayhews on Martha's Vineyard and to the "praying towns" established in Massachusetts.[1]

The praying towns of 17th century Massachusetts were largely the vision of one man, missionary John Eliot, the somewhat eccentric, if well-regarded pastor of the Roxbury church. With the assistance of men such as Daniel Gookin and support from

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[1] Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press) 1988

believers in England he founded a series of these towns between 1651 and 1670 which varied in size and whose populations fluctuated. When King Philip's War broke out in 1675 there were approximately eleven hundred residents of the praying towns combined. Eliot looked upon Natick, the first such community, as the model upon which not only other praying Indian towns would be constructed but potentially as a model for England and the rest of the world to emulate. His aspirations for this tiny polity were not only connected to his hopes for Native American evangelism but also to his dedication to a system of government rooted in the Old Testament.

The towns operated as no other towns in seventeenth century Massachusetts did. Even prior to King Philip's War, the residents suffered the suspicions of some of their English neighbors as well as the slings and arrows of their unconverted Algonquian brethren. Their attempts to blend into English Puritanism were complicated by a variety of factors, not the least of which was Eliot's insistence on running the praying communities by the governmental system outlined in Exodus, a significantly different setup from that under which the English lived. Additionally, their difficulties in adjusting to English agriculture and domestication of animals as well as their struggles with literacy left them on the outside of the mainstream of Massachusetts Puritan life. They also had to negotiate the tricky set of relationships posed by both family and their traditional leaders. Their reliance on Algonquian medicine was challenged, as they transitioned from a world in which their traditional healers held sway to one in which the God of the Bible trumped all pretenders. They struggled to understand a faith predicated on strict dichotomies between good and evil and between spirit and matter.

Their experiences took place in the midst of a much larger project, as Eliot sought to create his own even godlier enclave within the context of the Puritan colonies. With the arrival and subsequent settlement of thousands of displaced religious dissenters in New England, the native inhabitants of the region were confronted by a population whose lifestyle and worldview was decidedly different from their own. The English Puritans, who consciously viewed their enterprise as the construction of a "city on a hill," a beacon toward which apostate England could look, began to take seriously the concern for the salvation of these other inhabitants within their "city" in the mid-1640's. While Native American conversion had always ostensibly been a reason for settlement – Massachusetts Bay Colony's official seal being replete with an image of an Indian mouthing the words "Come over and help us"[2] – Puritan attempts at preaching the Gospel to the local population were initially scattered at best.

Through the efforts of Eliot, known as "the apostle to the Indians," and others sharing his passion for Native American salvation, the Massachusetts Puritans won Native American converts and had succeeded in establishing fourteen independent towns for these "praying Indians" by the time King Philip's War ravaged both the region and the missionary enterprise in 1675-1676. The towns, physically modeled after English towns albeit with wigwams,[3] were not only outposts of the gospel within the Algonquian community but were also markers of the creation of a separate identity within the colonies. There the components of a praying Indian identity – both experienced and symbolic – became possible.

[2] Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans…" 29

[3] In his "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, Massachusetts, 1646-1730, *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Sep., 1990), Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen points out that the wigwams in Natick were of a larger, more permanent variety than those common with migratory Indians.

For Eliot and for most of the English missionaries, true conversion of the Native American was most likely if preceded by the creation of the proper cultural and political environment. The initial problem was one of societal organization. From the English perspective, the Algonquians of the region lacked the guiding principle of law and were therefore living a wild, pre-civil existence, regulated only by the will of tyrannical sachems. Eliot's desire to create separate praying Indian towns was not only born of a desire to separate potential believers from rituals and practices that ran contrary to Scripture but also to create the disciplined legal environment in which the dictates of the Bible were reinforced. In short, for the Massachusetts Bay Puritans, civilization – a rejection of most things Indian and an acceptance of most of English culture and polity - must necessarily come before conversion. An unwillingness to "come in," that is, to structure one's daily life according to the mandates of God's Word and not only to avoid things proscribed by it, was itself a sin. To hunt rather than to till, to be idle when one should be employed in fruitful labor, to move rather than to settle – these were all indications of a heart that refused to bow before God.[4]

So Eliot's praying towns were mostly patterned after English Puritan life, both in their layout and in their culture. Long hair was shorn, crops were planted, forts and meetinghouses built, and animals husbanded. But if the missionaries put forth concerted efforts to create these separate spaces for praying Indians they did so as a means to a greater end. For it was in these towns that Sabbaths were kept, sermons were preached,

[4] For further discussion on the issue of settlement in relation to Puritan missions, see James Axtell, "The Invasion Within," *The European and the Indian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America 1632-1650* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000) is also helpful in addressing the topic of settlement and missions, albeit in the context of Jesuit missions in Canada. For an understanding of Puritan covenant theology see Perry Miller, *The New England Mind* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1939)

catechisms recited, literacy achieved, and eventually, Bibles read. The most important goal, after all, was not to create red Englishmen but red Christians.[5]

The fact that Eliot's vision was not strictly of an English world but ultimately a godly one is underscored by the radical difference in governance he implemented in the praying towns. Rather than adhere to the model of English local government, he instead took the opportunity in his creations to revive the Mosaic system of rulers outlined in the book of Exodus. Eliot, while eager to replicate Englishness in his flock as a means to conversion, believed that these praying towns were actually the start of something far greater in God's salvation plan. He sought therefore not to reproduce English polity but to etch on his civil tabla rasa a holy pattern suitable for emulation by the English and eventually by England and the whole world.

That vision was clearly articulated in *The Christian Commonwealth*, a manifesto that put Eliot far outside the mainstream on either side of the ocean. While millennially-minded New Englanders agreed that the changes of Christ's Kingdom would be comprehensive, congregationalism gave priority to ecclesiastical rather than political structures. For Eliot, however, Scripture clearly outlined God's preference for the structure of government in Exodus, Chapter 18, when Moses' father-in-law Jethro recommended setting up a system of leaders to be rulers over increments of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.

[5] Hilary Wyss mischaracterizes Eliot's devotion to this idea of civility before conversion, saying that he blends the will of God with his own will regarding civility. As revealed in his treatise *A Christian Commonwealth*, his vision is that the Mosaic government form would eventually be applied to the entire world. English civility was but a structure in which Sabbath-keeping, sermon-hearing, learning, and study of the Scriptures could take place – not an end to itself but a means to a greater end. Eliot's devotion to the government of Moses, so awkwardly outside the English system, revealed where his real priorities lay.

Eliot's approach to the establishment of praying towns was also integrally connected to his understanding of millennial prophecy. Woven into the millennial discourse of the seventeenth century was the role of the Jews, and now, with the potential conversion of these inhabitants of North America, the question of their lineage became an interesting one. Using the events in England as indications of the imminence of Christ's Kingdom on earth, the missionaries and their supporters attempted to fit their work among the native New Englanders into the context of the prophecies they believed either had been or were about to be fulfilled. Their understanding of the book of Revelation as something which had direct relevance to their own time on earth created a desire to identify the origins of Native Americans so that they could more readily understand what God was doing.[6]

However, for Eliot and the others who labored in the mission fields of New England, whether the Native Americans were in fact partly descended from God's chosen people was separable from the more pressing issue of their salvation as individuals. While such speculation might give indications about the prospects of the success of the mission, God's command to spread the Gospel was unchanged. Nevertheless, Eliot's commitment to creating a world ruled by Christ's preferred system of government moved him to experiment in the praying towns, thus further sequestering the praying Indians from New England life.

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[6] For more on sixteenth and seventeenth century English millennialism as it relates to New England missions see Avihu Zakai, "Reformation, History, and Eschatology in English Protestantism, *History and Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 3, (Oct, 1987) 300-318 as well as Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and J.F. Maclear, "New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 32, No. 2 (Apr., 1975) 223-260

From Bale to Eliot: The Millennial Backdrop of the Praying Towns

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw a surge of millennial speculation in England. Fueled by political events and access to Scripture, this wellspring of prediction and prognostication became an integral part of the morass of ideas circulating in that country. Millenarianism, far from being relegated to the province of cranks and kooks, became ingrained into the political discourse at home and ultimately across the ocean in the New England colonies. Eliot's views on government were in part the product of the millennialism that was a common feature of Puritan Christianity and yet his ideas were in some ways far from the mainstream. His commitment to a different style of government emerged out of the millennial discourse prevalent at the time and was connected to his own postmillennial perspectives.

Millennial speculation, while prevalent in seventeenth century England, was by no means unified in its conclusion. The interest in the end times was really a product of the late sixteenth century and of the Reformation when, in their efforts to justify their break with Rome, Protestants increasingly turned to an historical understanding of Scripture. This understanding was their attempt to provide an historical basis for the break with the Church of Rome, and to uproot the historical foundation upon which the Papacy built its claim to exclusive power. This appeal to history led in turn to a Protestant historiography based upon an "apocalyptic mode of historical thought."[7] The trend actually dated back to the first half of the sixteenth century, when Philip Melanchton's *Clarion's Chronicles* adapted the periodization of the four great

[7] Avihu Zakai, "Reformation, History, and Eschatology in English Protestantism, *History and Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 3, (Oct, 1987), 301

monarchies – Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, and Roman – in a way that would set history in a predestined, apocalyptic direction.[8]

Calvin always remained reticent on the subject, but Luther, while at first hesitant to interpret John's Revelation, would eventually come to embrace this new correlation between text and chronicle, or prophecy and history, associating the Sack of Rome by Charles V in 1527 with the destruction of "Babylon the Great" (Rev 18), the Turks' invasion of Europe with "Gog and Magog" (Rev 20; Ezekiel 38) and the Papacy with Antichrist.[9] He would thus join Protestants in replacing the Augustinian view of secular history as without sacred meaning with a new vision of history which injected it with divine significance.[10]

Apocalyptic interpretation had a particular hold on England, and in sixteenth and seventeenth century English Protestant millennial thought the most influential writers were assuredly John Bale, John Foxe, and Thomas Brightman. Bale, who produced *The Image of Both Churches* after he fled England in 1540 accepted Augustine's formulation of history as the space of time within which a struggle is waged between two opposite powers. For Bale, however, the two powers were Christ and Antichrist, or the true church of believing brethren pitted against "the proud church of hypocrites, the rose-coloured whore, the paramour of antichrist, and the sinful synagogue of Satan." Reading history through the lens of Revelation, he described an apocalyptic struggle that would be resolved within time, that is, within the course of history. He did not, however, seek to apply this resolution to his own time, choosing rather to identify the Reformation as the

[8] Avihu Zakai, "Reformation…" 303
[9] Avihu Zakai, "Reformation…" 304
[10] Avihu Zakai, "Reformation…" 305-306, See William Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion* (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd, 1969) for a discussion of the positions Luther and Calvin took with respect to the book of Revelation.

period of the sixth seal described in Revelation. Accepting the claim that Joseph of Arimathea had established the first church in England, he argued that the Church of England was practically apostolic in origin and had in turn been corrupted by papistry and "Romish" superstition. [11]

While Bale succeeded in apocalyptically reconfiguring history and particularly English history, John Foxe expanded on what he had done. In his *Acts and Monuments* Foxe took Bale's approach and applied it specifically to history in such a way that England would emerge as central. In his formulation, the present reformers in England were not seeking to establish anything fundamentally new but were rather attempting to recover what had been lost from the "ancient" church of Christ which preceded the corruptive influences of the Papacy. For Foxe, English history was in fact the history of the Church in England, and the reformation of the English church would finally reveal England's special role in providential history as nation chosen by God.[12]

But if Bale helped to change the understanding of history and Foxe sought to use it to argue for England's special place in that history, it was Thomas Brightman who most influentially articulated the possibility that the story of Revelation was in fact one of current events. While Bale and Foxe believed that the seventh trumpet of Revelation, while not far off, had yet to be sounded, Brightman thought that the first blast of the seventh trumpet had already occurred with the ascension of Elizabeth to the throne in 1558. Brightman's work created the understanding that the time of the millennium was at hand. The failure of the Puritans to reform the Church of England during Elizabeth's rule led Brightman to stress the importance of the true believers to work towards

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[11] Avihu Zakai, "Reformation…" 308-309
[12] Avihu Zakai, "Reformation…" 310-311

advancing the reformation. He correlated the seven letters written to the seven churches in Revelation with actual periods in Church history, with the last three churches aligning with the era of the Reformation, and associated England with the church of Laodicea, the church destined for God's wrath because it was spiritually lukewarm. For Brightman, the last ages were upon mankind within the scope of his own lifetime.[13]

Brightman's understanding of England as destined for destruction helped to motivate the thousands of Puritans who would ultimately journey across the ocean to establish their "city on a hill."[14] For a long time, much of the effort exerted by historians had emphasized the "errand into the wilderness" as one incompatible with a group of people who believed they were living near the end of the world.[15] But Puritans living under Charles I. found themselves engaged in the very struggle of Bale's two churches. Feeding off of Brightman's commentaries on Revelation, Daniel and Canticles – published between 1609 and 1616 – many English Puritans grew to accept the notion that the millennium of Revelation Chapter 20 was not a description of the past, but an imminently future event. As such, emigration to America provided the kind of freedom to work towards the coming of this event by planting Christ's message where it had not previously been sown.[16]

This spirit of optimism about the prospect of Christ's reign on earth is reflected in John Cotton's 1642 *Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation; The Powring Out of the Seven Vials*.[17] Cotton, who was a close associate of John Eliot,

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[13] Avihu Zakai, "Reformation…" 312-315
[14] Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
[15] J.F. Maclear, "New England and the Fifth Monarchy: The Quest for the Millennium in Early American Puritanism," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 32, No. 2 (Apr., 1975), 224
[16] J.F. Maclear, "New England and the Fifth Monarchy…" 226-230
[17] J.F. Maclear, "New England and the Fifth Monarchy…" 232

shortly to begin his career as "apostle to the Indians," diverged from Brightman in that, for him, the millennium would not be brought about through Christ's personal presence on earth but rather through the faithful propagation of His gospel.[18] This was the post-millennial perspective shared by Eliot. According to Cotton, the Church evinced three stages, just as Christ had undergone life, death and resurrection in His time on earth:

> They had a time to be established by the apostles, and such as they appointed: Afterward they grew to a dead frame. *Thou hast a name to be alive and art dead* saith Christ to the Angell of the Church of Sardis, meaning him and the whole Church with him, *Reve. 3:1.* And as they had a time of dying, that is to say, of deformation, of Apostacy by the Catholicke Mother Church, so afterward they came to a new Reformation such a Reformation as doth not only reform the outward face of Government in the Church, and the outward face of worship and Doctrine, but the inward frame of the Members of the Church...[19]

For Cotton, the Protestant Reformation was essentially an outward and failed reformation. In England and Scotland, people "live in their hypocrisie, in their ignorance, and dote upon the Episcopacy."[20] True resurrection of the Church would be brought about by the "throwing down of Antichrist and the destruction of Rome." The Lord would then "send such powerful ministers into the church" that all Popish practices and beliefs would be overturned and Satan, who used these as his tools, would be thus bound. When the "chains" of God were wrapped around Satan, not physically, but through implementation of the Ordinances of God in both civil and church governance, he would be restrained for a thousand years. The saints on earth – "not any one of them,

[18] J.F. Maclear, "New England and the Fifth Monarchy…" 233
[19] John Cotton, *Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation; The Powring Out of the Seven Vials*, printed by R.O. & G.D. for Henry Overton, 1642, 17
[20] John Cotton, *Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation*…15

but men of their spirits" - would "have their part in Christ" and thus reign with Him for a thousand years.[21]

By connecting the onset of the millennium to the destruction of the church in Rome, Cotton joined with others in placing this event in the near future on the grounds that the forty-two months in Revelation represented 1260 prophetic days, that is, one year for each day (Ezekiel 4:6). Following this calculation and dating the Roman Catholic Church to 395 A.D., the downfall of the Papacy was set to occur in 1655.[22] Cotton's understanding that Christ's Kingdom on earth was imminent was shared by some of those directly involved with the New England mission to the Indians. Eliot in particular believed that the creation of a godly polity would help to usher in the kingdom of God on Earth.

Gentiles, Jewish Conversion, the Millennium, and Eliot's Thoughts on these Matters

Woven into the hodge podge of millennial thought was the idea of the conversion of the Jews, one of the many signs identified in the book of Revelation as a necessary condition for the onset of the thousand-year reign of Christ. While opinions varied among reformed Protestants and Anglicans as to the correct interpretation of this requirement, many Puritans held the view that John was referring to actual Jews in the flesh, rather than to the spiritual Israel of believers. The New Englanders did not, as some have claimed, merely assume the mantle of Elijah in a spiritual sense by arguing

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[21] John Cotton, *Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation…* 6-10
[22] Peter Toon, *Puritans, The Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660* (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., Ltd, 1970) 34

that those whom God had saved were in fact the new Israel. Rather they interpreted the conversion of actual Jews as a prerequisite for the second coming.[23]

Brightman himself believed that the triumph of the true Church awaited the conversion of the Jews. Once the Jews had been "resurrected" to salvation through Jesus as Lord, Jerusalem would be restored as a center of the true faith, subject to attack from Gog and Magog (Rev 20:9), or the Turks and their allies. After God defended his people miraculously the Jewish nation would undergo a full conversion and restoration, the Earth would be filled with the glory of God and the stage set for Christ's return, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment.[24]

Cotton's discussion of Revelation also includes the idea that the "calling home of the Jewes ...will be the Resurrection of the Churches," that part of the first resurrection spoken of in Revelation was the rising of the true Church. Central to this interpretation was the text of Ezekiel 37:1-10, which, intriguingly, would become the text of Eliot's first sermon to the Indians in 1646:

> Can these bones live? Lord, thou knowest: Prophesy unto these bones, and say unto them, "O ye dry bones hear the word of the Lord." So I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. Then said he "prophesy unto the wind, and say to the wind, "Thus saith the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath come into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.[25]

For Cotton and for others in New England, the "dry bones" were the house of Israel "rising out of their graves of Ignorance and Apostacie, to a Church-estate."[26] The first

[23] Richard Smolinski, "Israel Redivivus: The Eschatological Limits of Puritan Typology in New England," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Sep., 1990) 362-363
[24] Peter Toon, *Puritans, The Millennium and the Future of Israel…* 29-30
[25] John Cotton, *Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation…* 8-9
[26] John Cotton, *Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation…* 9

resurrection was a resurrection of “particular persons,” including Jews, which would then be the restoration of the true Church, which was but a “body of godly persons.” The gentile Christians, who would include the Puritans of New England, were to be a provocation to Jewish conversion, in a way mirroring the time of the Apostle Paul, when many “Romans and Grecians did come in.”[27] Conversely, Cotton considered “popery” – whether it be of the Roman or Anglican variety – a great impediment to Jewish acceptance of Christ’s status as Savior and Lord. These themes of gentile (heathen) provocation and the importance of proper Church organization would feature prominently in the early missionary efforts in New England.

For Eliot, a postmillennialist who believed that the millennial kingdom on Earth was the product of the purification of the Church and the erection of what he deemed the Scripturally-ordained structure of government, the identity of his Native American flock was an interesting question. As the Jews were featured prominently in the millennial narrative, the issue of Native American descent became important, not to determine how he should proceed, but as information relevant understanding what God was doing in the New World and the likelihood of their attempts bearing fruit. Kristina Bross notes that Eliot positioned himself as a modern version of Ezekiel, seeing the possibility of native conversion as the restoration to life of the bones of Ezekiel 37, and, by implication, associating them with a restored Israel. This identification of the Native Americans survivors of epidemics and war as a “remnant” awaiting renewal was an important shift in the use of that passage. In this construction, the plagues were not the providential hand of God clearing the way for Puritan settlement, as Winthrop and others supposed, but

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[27] John Cotton, *Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation…* 13

were in fact a means for God to show grace on the survivors. Eliot thus shifted the focus of God's action in Massachusetts away from the English settlers and towards the Native American "remnant." Eliot's status as a modern-day Ezekiel is acted out as he observes the "bones" knit themselves together in civil order, choosing their rulers under Eliot's version of the Exodus-inspired system.[28]

However, Eliot's dedication to his program of a Exodus-style form of government was not a function of what he believed about Native American origin in relation to the lost tribes of Israel but rather simply reflective of his belief in the Bible as law book, a bulwark against the excesses of "humane wisdom." And his willingness to seriously entertain their Hebraic origin, while something of a comfort to him as he worked towards their conversion, was not shared by some of those who strove with him.

That fact is underscored in the preface to "Strength out of Weaknesse: Or a Glorious Manifestation of the further Progresse of the Gospel among the Indians." The eighteen signatories to the preface identified the letters in this tract as "a light to the Gentiles," in the "furthest parts of the earth." For these men, the mission to gentiles at the "ends of the earth" was nearing accomplishment so that the conversion of the Jews could be hastened. In an introduction "To the Reader," the authors identified the ensuing letters as "the outgoings of Christ as a light to the gentiles," as fulfillment of the promise in Isaiah 49:6. The "Kingdome of Christ is enlarged," establishing his "Dominion from Sea to Sea" (Psalm 118). His design is upon all the kingdoms of the earth, and they shall all "become the Kindgomes of the Lord and of his Christ" (Revelation 11:15). The

[28] Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) 28-52

"Kingdome and Dominion under the whole Heaven" would be "given to the Saints of the most High." (Daniel 7:18)[29]

For the authors of the introduction, the "Lord hath manifested that there is a *seed according to the Election of grace*, even amongst these also as well as other Gentiles." This "fullness of the Gentiles" would in turn hasten the "calling of the Jewes, which would end the Israel's blindness (Romans 11:25). The second conversion of Gentiles would occur *after* the conversion of the Jews:

> *After this I will returne and will build againe the Tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build againe the ruines thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whome my Name is called sayth the Lord*. (Acts 15:16-17) Hence it appears that there are some Gentiles upon whom the Lord's Name is called that are a people to him even whilst the Tabernacle of David lyes in its ruines; and when he hath built againe this Tabernacle of David, that there are a residue of men, the remainder of the gentiles that shall enquire after the Lord, and worship him, together with those Gentiles that were formerly converted, and upon whom his Name was called.[30]

Given this formula - that there would be two conversions of the gentiles, between which would be the conversion of the Jews - "to see this worke goe on" in America should cause God's faithful to "lift up their heads, and expect that the time of the fulfilling that Promise is neere."[31] The authors rejoiced in the missionary efforts of "those who were driven out from among us," that the Native Americans, gentiles like the English, might be grafted on to the "same good Olive Tree." While other nations' pursuit of pecuniary interests had "made the name of Christianitie and of Christ an abomination," the efforts of Eliot and those in New England were like Paul's mission to the gentiles, which, while bearing its own fruit, also acted as a spur to unbelieving Jews. So too might the work of

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[29] "Strength out of Weaknesse: Or a Glorious Manifestation of the further Progresse of the Gospel among the Indians," (London: Printed by M. Simmons for John Blague, 1652) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 155-156
[30] "Strength out of Weakness..." 7
[31] "Strength out of Weakness…" 157

the Lord in New England "be a good means to awaken the godly and faithfull of this Nation." The remainder of "Strength out of Weaknesse," consisting of letters from Eliot, Thomas Mayhew, Thomas Allen and Massachusetts Governor John Endicott, betrays nothing on the subject of Native American Jewish or Gentile origin.

In "Tears of Repentance," the lengthiest of the Eliot tracts, comprised largely of the confessions of several "praying Indians" in 1652, both the underlying assumptions of Gentile origin and Eliot's uncertainty on the matter are reinforced. Mayhew compared the New England Native Americans to "the Heathens of Chittim and Kedar."[32] Citing Ephesians 2:13, Richard Mather said of the Native Americans "that they which in time past were not a People, might ere long become the people of God," that they might be called "The children of the Living God."[33] (1 Peter 2:10, Romans 9:25-26) He also cited the parable of the wedding feast in Luke 14, where those "ranging and roving in the High-wais, and Hedges" are invited in. Like many writing before him, Mather reiterated the theme of the Native Americans as a provocation to England, drawing the parallel which positioned the English as the Jews of the New Testament and the Native Americans as gentile spurs away from apostacy. England must heed the warning, "lest for our unthankfulness, and many other sins, the Lord should take the Gospel from us, and bestow our mercy therein upon them as upon a Nation that would yield the fruits thereof in better sort than many of us have done." Not only would the Native Americans serve as provocation for Laodiceac England, but the mercy granted the Gentile

[32] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Tears of Repentance…" 204
[33] Richard Mather, "Tears of Repentance…" 218

Algonquians would also spur the Jews to "an holy Jealousie, and Emulation" so that they may at last obtain mercy.[34]

Eliot's short contribution to "Tears of Repentance" is far less decisive on the subject of Native American lineage. In a preface "To the Reader," Eliot referred to the "expectation of Faith for the conversion both of the Jewes (yea all Israel) and of the Gentiles also over all the world." As such, the faithful of the Lord longed to hear word of the "Conversion of our poor Indians, whereby such Prophesies are in part begun to be accomplished."[35] It is not clear which prophecy exactly was to be applied to the Native Americans, but their conversion was God's work nonetheless.

The theme of provocation was revisited again in 1655's "A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians," in which Joseph Caryl identified the spread of the Gospel amongst the Native Americans as a source of encouragement for the "the seed of Jacob," by which he meant the spiritual children of Jacob, that is, true followers of Christ. Eliot's contribution to the tract, an account of his attempts to begin a wholly Native American Church at Natick, is silent on the issue.

While the Eliot tracts themselves give indications of Eliot's emerging consideration of the issue of Indian Hebraic identity in relation to the millennium, his thoughts on the matter were more fully formed in correspondence with Thorowgood, who later included Eliot's remarks as "The Learned Conjectures of the Reverend John Eliot touching the Americans" in his own work *Jews in America, or Probabilities that Those Indians are Judaical*, published in 1660. The "Learned Conjectures" were written in 1653 after Eliot had considered the information in Thorowgood's original treatise *Jews in*

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[34] Richard Mather, "Tears of Repentance…" 224-225
[35] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 214-215

America. Unlike Menasseh Ben-Israel's account,[36] Eliot's speculations were based almost entirely on the Old Testament with little regard for anecdotal evidence. As in his approach to civil and ecclesiastical government, for Eliot, the Bible was the only guide to determine if these descendents of Shem were in fact "Hebrews of Eber, even as Abraham and Israel."[37] This approach, writes Richard Cogley, must have disappointed Thorowgood, who surely was hoping for a discovery of more remnants of the Law amongst the Native Americans.[38]

For Eliot, the populating of America could most likely be traced further back than the dispersion of the ten tribes. Carefully following the Biblical account of the post-flood repopulation of the world, he traced the movement of peoples from the location of the ark in the mountains of Ararat to their eventual spread across continents: "Shem, in whose family the holy line of the promised seed was, did first attempt this removal westward towards the land of Eden."[39] It was the rebellious Nimrod, who, "weary of government," moved himself and his followers eastward without permission. Here again it is clear that for Eliot, the Scriptures provided not only the resources for his inquiry into Native American lineage but also for his ideas about the ideal form of government. He saw Nimrod as the founder of monarchy, the first example of a government set up according to the evils of the "humane wisdom" he so detested.

Nimrod's rebellion aside, Eliot went on to use the Scriptures to establish that the Eastern world - in which he positioned America, contrary to other writers' references to

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[36] See Appendix for a more detailed description of the writings of Ben-Israel, a Jewish writer trying to make the case for a link between the peoples of the Americas and the lost tribes of Israel.
[37] John Eliot, "The Learned Conjectures of the Revered John Eliot touching on the Americans," in Thomas Thorowgood, *Jews in America, or Probabilities that Those Americans are Judaical*, (London, 1660) 2
[38] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*…87
[39] John Eliot, "Learned Conjectures…"4

"Western gentiles" – was populated by the descendents of Shem. The first "planters" of America, therefore, were "Ebrews of Eber," specifically the descendents of Joktan, son of Eber.[40] According to Eliot, when Christ came, He rewrote the covenant from that originally given to Noah and then to Moses through the Law, establishing "the gospel-policy of congregational churches." Shem's family was "wholly deserted." As to the dispersion of the ten tribes carried away by the Assyrians, Eliot used Deuteronomy 28:64, where Moses warns the twelve tribes that they shall be scattered throughout the earth and serve other gods, "even of wood and stone."[41] Eliot conjectured that the ten tribes of Israel who were scattered east may have mingled with the descendents of Eber, whose language may not have been "wholly strange" to them.[42] As for the two tribes that comprised the House of Judah, sufferers of their own captivity, they were dispersed westward to more affliction as a result of their greater sin (Ezekiel 16:46-47, 51-52).[43]

Eliot therefore emerged in 1653 with a dual lineage for the peoples of North America, each piece of which played a different role in his interregnum eschatology. The Joktanite theory gave him grounds to think that New England was in fact the birthplace of the eastern branch of the millennium. Because the Americas had been people from the East, he reasoned, America was part of the Eastern world, a view which diverged sharply from orthodoxy and from his own earlier statements.[44] Interpreting the figure of the temple found in Ezekiel 40-47 as a reference to the Eastern branch of the millennium, he

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[40] John Eliot, "Learned Conjectures…" 12-15
[41] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians…* 88
[42] John Eliot, "Learned Conjectures…" 18 – Eliot notes that the grammar of the New England Indian language, on which he was an expert, was nearer to that of Hebrew than are Greek and Latin.
[43] John Eliot, Learned Conjectures, 19
[44] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians…* 88

positioned New England as the "eastern gate" referred to in Ezekiel 40:6. For Eliot in 1653, England was no longer the only starting point for Christ's Kingdom on earth.[45]

Indians and the Christian Commonwealth

While Eliot entertained notions of the Native Americans being under the covenant of Jacob, and while he drew comfort from these speculations with respect to the portended success of his missionary enterprise, it was not a decisive factor in his commitment to what was perhaps the most striking feature of the Puritan missions to the Algonquians in Massachusetts. His interest in implementing "Scripture government" in the praying towns preceded the writing of "The Learned Conjectures," and his association of that government with the specific form he eventually proposed probably came between late 1649 and early 1651.[46]

Eliot' decision to implement Jethro's system of government in his praying towns was the product of the distaste for human invention he shared with John Cotton and his understanding of the unfolding of Biblical prophecy. For Eliot, Christ's return would follow the establishment of His kingdom on earth, and this could only be accomplished if the artifices of man were removed from both civil and ecclesiastical government. Simply put, Eliot believed that the Old Testament government he wished to put in place in Natick and the other praying towns was ultimately the form of government that Christ desired for the nations of the world. Bross, in her discussion of Eliot's use of the "dry bones" metaphor for the praying Indians, argues that Eliot's government was "politically

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[45] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians…* 89

[46] Theodore Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 273

conservative" in that it was submitted to the larger English colonial government.[47] In that limited sense she is correct, but in another way, Eliot's ideas about government were highly radical. He envisioned the ultimate destruction of monarchy and, in fact, of all governments other than an extended version of the system of rulers.

He expressed his unique vision most clearly in *The Christian Commonwealth*, which he wrote sometime after the installation of his system in Natick in September of 1651 and before July of 1652 when he sent it to England for publication,[48] but his ideas surfaced in his earlier works as well. In his May 1649 letter in the "Light Appearing" tract, Eliot identified Parliament as "that blessed Assembly, whom the Lord Christ hath delighted to make instrumental to begin to set up the longed for, prayed for, and desired Kingdome of the Lord." Christ was the only true King of Kings, and therefore the Pope and all monarchs must be "thrown to the ground."[49] In his October 1649 letter, despite having no "light to persuade" him that the "dry bones" to whom he preached in New England were in fact the "dry bones" of Ezekiel's Israel, he unequivocally advocated the establishment of the Scripture government in the praying towns he envisioned:

> ...they (the Indians) shall be wholly governed by the Scriptures in all things both in Church and State; they shall have no other Law-giver; the Lord shall be their Law-giver, the Lord shall be their Judge, the Lord shall be their King, and he will save them; and when it is so the Lord reigneth, and unto that frame the Lord will bring all the world ere he hath done, but it will be more difficult in other Nations who have been adulterate with their Antichristian or humane wisdome...[50]

Until the English could "produce Scripture grounds for all they do," they would continue to undergo travail so that they may "be forced to the Scriptures." This was "doubtlesse

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[47] Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) 42
[48] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians…*76
[49] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 120
[50] John Eliot, The Light Appearing, 127

the great design of Christ in these later dayes," but for Eliot, the project at hand was "to endeavor the setting up Christ's Kingdome among the Indians." He perceived himself at the vanguard of the return to Scripture which would usher in the reign of Christ on Earth. Native American connection to the lost tribes, while part of an analysis of the how God's plan was unfolding, was ultimately not decisive in determining Eliot's vision for the civil organization of the mission.

That vision was clearly articulated in *The Christian Commonwealth*, a document that put Eliot far outside the mainstream on either side of the ocean. While millennially-minded New Englanders agreed that the changes of Christ's Kingdom would be comprehensive, congregationalism gave priority to ecclesiastical rather than political structures. Eliot was the only American commentator between 1640 and 1660 to propose a detailed picture of the New Jerusalem.[51] Addressed rather predictably to "the Chosen, and Holy, and Faithful, who manage the Wars of the Lord against Antichrist in great Britain" as well as to the faithful brethren of England, this treatise proposed nothing less than a plan to put the Exodus system of incremental rulers - which Eliot was already implementing in Natick - in place of the governments of the world. While Theodore Bozeman is certainly correct in asserting that Eliot never explicitly put forth Natick as a model for the nations of the world – Scriptural grounds being sufficient justification[52] – Eliot's tone is consistent with the other remonstrances offered in previous tracts. For if a people once so far removed from the Gospel and "without government" could be brought under this system, surely this was an inducement to England.

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[51] Theodore Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Live…* 264
[52] Theodore Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives…*275

Eliot opened by decrying the efforts of "precious holy men" who were unwittingly speaking against the work of Christ and therefore setting up the kingdom of Antichrist in their misguided understanding of civil polity. His goal, therefore, was to "propound that unto them, the true state of the cause" so that those in power may "advance Christ Jesus in the Throne, and let him reign over them." The Lord Jesus would "bring down all people to be ruled by the Institutions, Laws and Directions of the Word of God."[53] Eliot envisioned this rule of Scripture in both church and civil government; the proper implementation of the system with faithful adherence to His Word would be the accomplishment of His kingdom on earth, mirroring what exists in heaven, where "all is done by Divine direction."[54]

In *The Christian Commonwealth* there was no room for monarchy or the Papacy, and both were surely constructs of the devil:

> It is prophesied, Daniel 2:34,35, etc. *Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out, without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth, etc*. which prophecie doth clearly foreshew the forenamed points; for there is a epitomy of all the Monarchies, Governments, and Polities of men, who have had their Humane Glory in this world: the last, and strongest of all Dominions is the Roman, so mixed and interwoven in many States, by the combining of that dirty Roman Religion, with civil Powers...[55]

Christ, by his chosen instruments, would "smite in pieces" all the "Romish religion" and the civil states with which it was interconnected. Ultimately all "Dominions and Governments of man" would be of no more importance than "dust or chaff" once the government of the Lord Jesus should arise, ordered by the formula laid out in the

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[53] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth* (London, 1652) A5
[54] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, A5-A6
[55] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, B1

Scriptures. Eliot saw hopeful signs that this worldwide establishment of Christ's government was on the immediate horizon, as the faithful in Scotland had given "the first blow at the dirty toes and feet of this Image."[56]

According to Eliot, the project at hand was now to determine "what Israel ought to do" in "setting up the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus," and for him, this meant radically reordering the civil government as well as ridding England of episcopacy. Cromwell's government, into whose hands Christ had entrusted this endeavor, must beware the temptations of power, lest they should rob Christ "of his Crown, Dominion, and Government" after He had moved to put them in place for the establishment of His Kingdom. The only safeguard against that was the "Platforme of Government" Christ had ordained, the very same kind of government now being practiced across the ocean amongst a tiny group of praying Indians in Natick, Massachusetts.

According to Eliot, there was "undoubtedly a forme of Civil Government instituted by God himself in the holy Scriptures," the one instituted by Moses at the suggestion of his father-in-law, Jethro, in Exodus chapter 18:

> Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself and they shall bear the burden with thee...[57]

Eliot believed this system to be not only workable for the small mission towns he wished to model after Natick but also for the largest nation. The system of incremental rulers could be extended to rulers of "myriads" or ten thousands, fifty thousands, hundred

[56] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, B2
[57] Holy Bible, KJV Reference Version (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI, 1994) verses 21-22, p. 63

thousands, and even millions. Not only would this be seemingly "the most excellent government that ever was in the world," but, Eliot says "it was a Divine Institution," which reflected the order that existed in heaven. While hell was a place of profound disorder, where God dwelled was marked by a Divine order. The mission of the Church and of civil polity should be to emulate that.[58]

According to Eliot, not only was the system of incremental rulers modeled by the Moses-led Israelites, but it possibly appeared in several other Scriptures as well. While Eliot could not say for certain if in fact the angels were so ordered, he thought the Scriptures gave clues that this was so, the lowest order of angels mentioned in the Scriptures being "myriads" (Hebrews 12:22), with higher orders such as thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads also appearing. Eliot was unsure whether this last was the highest order of angels, but it seemed to him that "the Angels are in this order of Government." He also noted that the saints in heaven were ordered in similar fashion (Jude 14). Jesus himself, when multiplying the loaves and fishes, had fed the crowd in groups of fifties and hundreds, "as if Christ delighted in that order."[59]

Eliot went even further with his Scriptural justification for his chosen form of government when it came to the overthrow of Antichrist:

> Let me be yet farther bold to propound another Meditation, under the correction of better judgments, according as I do the former, upon that text Daniel 7:10 where is set forth the judgment of God executed upon Antichrist. Many things might be shewed out of the context, to prove, that it is not the last judgment, which is there spoken of. The means of execution of that judgment, is by the Wars of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus, as appears in the Book of Revelation; and the people executing those Wars, by this text seem to be a people ruled by this order of Government; which if it be so, may it not give some light to find out the ten

[58] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, B5-B6
[59] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, C

> Kings, which shall hate the whore, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire?[60]

Eliot beseeched Cromwell and his associates to "consider the times," comparing the prophecies of Scripture with the "present Providences." The events in England were "the pouring out of the wrath of God upon Antichrist" by the holy saints according to Christ's command.[61] He was willing to propose such as bold plan, not only for his Algonquian flock in New England but for England, Scotland, Ireland, or "any other religious people in the world, who fear the command of God," as the time had come when the Lord was about to "shake all the Earth, and throw down that great Idol of Humane Wisdom in Governments."[62]

For Eliot, Natick and the other praying towns represented a chance to begin the reshaping of civil society so that Christ could be honored not only in the Church but in the commonwealth as well. His radical views about monarchy also helped him to interpret the rule of the Massachuset Sachems as a "tyranny," a yoke of oppression that needed to be thrown off if the work of Christ were to progress. His institution of almost universal male suffrage in the praying towns, a deviation from English Puritan communities in which only adult male church members could vote, also represented a departure from standard New England practice.[63] Thus Natick and the other praying towns, while in many ways modeled after the communities erected by the English saints, also represented a chance for Eliot to implement his own particular interpretation of Scripture government.

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[60] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, C
[61] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, C2
[62] John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, C3
[63] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians…* 114

That this plan had meaning for Eliot independent of the imminence of the millennium or of the Hebraic identity of the Native Americans is demonstrated by the fact that, although he eventually recanted his harsh criticism of monarchy as a form of government and apparently accepted the legitimacy of the new monarchy as the prospect of the Restoration loomed, he continued to found praying towns governed by Jethro's system of rulers. Nor did his belief that the millennium was near or his aversion to "humane wisdom" suddenly disappear, despite his disavowal of the views expressed concerning monarchy in *The Christian Commonwealth*. A 1664 letter to the Commissioners of the United Colonies saw Eliot referencing Revelation 3:10 and Ephesians 6:13, two Scriptures embedded in prophecies of the destruction of those institutions who oppose the true faith.[64] A reference to the government of God also surfaces in the preface to *The Indian Dialogues*, penned by the apostle in 1671.[65] Eliot came to believe, as he wrote in 1670, that "the time is at the door when ten kings shall be converted, and the stone (Christ) shall be hewn out of the mountains, that is formed in the hearts of kings and queens, who shall be nursing fathers and mothers to the churches of Christ."[66] Eliot had not given up his millennial vision but his dependence on the Exodus system of government as a precondition for its arrival. Nevertheless, as 1670's "Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians" reveals, the fourteen

[64] John Eliot, letter to the Commissioners of the United Colonies, June 25, 1664 in *New England Historical Geographical Review* (Volume 9, 1855) 13. Revelation 3:10 is part of a passage that promises the destruction of the "synagogue of Satan," (Rev 3:9) and the reference from Paul's letter to the Ephesians is couched in terms of a struggle against the powers of the world – "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."(Ephesians 6:12) *Holy Bible*, KJV Reference…941
[65] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*…3
[66] John Eliot, letter to Mr. Ashurst, Treasurer of the Corporation for the Promotion of the Gospel among Indians, September 30, 1670, in *Massachusetts Historical Society Papers* (Volume 17, 1879) 247

praying towns established by Eliot in Massachusetts Bay were all run exclusively by the system of incremental rulers.[67]

Implications of Eliot's Views for the Praying Indians in Massachusetts:

The furious millennial speculation in England in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries helped to shape the nature of the Puritan "errand into the wilderness"[68] that would become the New England colonies. The anticipation of a new world order in which Christ would truly be preeminent was a critical feature in the outlook of those involved in the mission to the New England Algonquians. Using the events in England as indications of the imminence of Christ's Kingdom on earth, the missionaries and their supporters attempted to fit their work among the native New Englanders into the context of the prophecies they believed either had been or were about to be fulfilled. Their understanding of the book of Revelation as something which had direct relevance to their own time on Earth created a desire to identify the lineage of Native Americans so that they could more readily understand what God was doing.

As a result, who exactly the Algonquians of New England were became part of an ongoing dialogue about New World heritage, and became a part of the English millennial discourse as well. As both gentile and Jewish conversion were prophesied, it was possible to accommodate different interpretations of their descent – gentile, Hebrew, or a mixture of both. Far from being an esoteric exercise in curiosity, the status of the Native

[67] John Eliot, "Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England" (London: Printed for John Allen, 1671) There is at least one indication that Eliot may also have retained his speculation about the Hebraic origin of the Indians. In his introduction to the "Indian Dialogues," published in 1671, he once again refers to Ezekiel Chapter 37, saying that the Indians "begin to be clothed with sinews, flesh and skin upon their dried bones." John Eliot, "Indian Dialogues" (Cambridge, 1671) A3
[68] Perry Miller, *The New England Mind* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1939)

Americans was integral to achieving a better understanding of the possibility of Christ's Kingdom being established on earth in the 1650's.

For those who strove to convert the native population, however, whether the Native Americans were in fact partly descended from a covenanted people was distinguishable from the more pressing issue of their salvation as individuals. While such speculation might give indications about the prospects of the success of the mission, ultimately the command of God to spread His Gospel was the same, be they Hebrew or not.

As such the Native Americans of New England came to represent two alternative positionings of Israel in New England. On the one hand, if they were Hebrew in origin, then their conversion represented the "calling in" of the Jews, a prior condition for Christ's Kingdom establishing itself on earth. On the other, if they were gentiles, they served as a poignant reminder of the true power of Christ, for if a people who were as far away from God as could be imagined could demonstrate a true love of the Lord, then the apostate English – like the Jews of old, a synagogue of Satan – could be stirred to real, heartfelt conversion. The New England missionaries were either the gentiles prodding the lost children of Israel to redemption or preaching to those who, when converted, would help to shame England into becoming the New Jerusalem it was supposed to be.

For John Eliot, the most notable of the missionaries to the Native Americans in early New England, the possibility of Amerindian Hebrew identity was a source of consolation as he faced the enormous financial, linguistic, and social challenges posed by his plan to establishing praying towns in Massachusetts Bay Colony. It was not, however, something that fundamentally altered his approach. Neither his movement

away from the speculations in the "Learned Conjectures" nor his official recantation of his criticisms about monarchy led him to stop using the Old Testament system of rulers in the praying towns. Whether or not the Algonquians were in fact descended from Eber or from the lost tribes or from both, his belief in Scripture government remained. The strict adherence to the Word of God provided both the foundations for his speculations about Native American origins and to his advocacy of Exodus-inspired structure in government.

Ultimately for Eliot and the millennially-inclined New England missionaries, probing the relationship of the Native Americans to Israel was simply an extension of their more general understanding of themselves as participants in the unfolding of God's work on Earth. The line between secular and sacred history erased, their every move could be scrutinized in the light of the oncoming reign of Christ they believed to be on the near horizon. When, as Richard Cogley says, the millennial moment passed and the restoration became a reality, Eliot became less certain about the imminence of God's kingdom but remained equally sure about what his own assignment was. The Exodus-style structure of his praying towns would remain unchanged until the ravages of King Philip's War in 1675-76 decimated them, leaving Eliot's heart heavy but his resolve firm.

For the praying Indians, however, Eliot's experiment created one more condition that separated them from their English neighbors. In their transition to Englishness, they were not full participants in Puritan English local government. Their towns were run by a the Exodus-inspired government and were yet blended into the model of the English magistracy in the person of Daniel Gookin, appointed by the United Colonies to act in that position with regard to the praying Indians, while working in conjunction with the

chosen rulers of fifty. As such their government was not an exact replica of that of an English colonial town.

While New England Puritans found their justification for their system of congregational church organization in the apostolic church of the New Testament,[69] Eliot took his method for organizing the praying towns from the Old. New England political theory linked the church community with the local government, both being the product of covenant relationships. Members of individual congregations entered covenants with one another, an act which bound one to an exclusive band of local Christians. Communion and baptism could only be received within the local church, as each covenant created a distinct body politic of believers. The synods of New England largely lacked the power to interfere in the matters of the congregations; unity was achieved through common belief and not through the hierarchical organization prevalent in the Roman or English churches.[70]

Congregationalism was, according to the Cambridge Platform of 1648, mandated by Scripture, as evidenced by the plural references in the New Testament to "churches," wherever more than one congregation was being described. "Church" in the earthly sense was a term reserved for single congregations, comprised of covenanted individuals.[71] Mobility and interaction amongst different local churches was, by design, limited, as congregants were only allowed to worship at other churches by virtue of special permissions granted on the grounds of being away on legitimate business.[72]

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[69] Joshua Miller, "Direct Democracy and the Puritan Theory of Membership," *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 53, No. 1 (Feb., 1991) 59
[70] Ibid, 61-67
[71] Cambridge Platform (Cambridge, MA: printed by S.G.) 1649
[72] James F. Cooper, Jr., "Higher Law, Free Consent, Limited Authority: Church Government and Political Culture in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts, *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Jun., 1996) 210

Puritanism as a political theory sought to steer a middle course between the extremes of Papacy and monarchy on the one hand and antinomian democracy on the other.[73] Local government was connected to the church covenant in that voting was restricted to male church members. Church membership was therefore scrupulously guarded so as not to profane the Body of Christ with the unrepentant, and in this way, the local government was also protected from the influence of the unregenerate. The idea, Richard Simmons notes, was a political society in which both electors and elected were in covenant with God.[74] In the praying towns, however, not only was the organization of local government a departure from the norm but voting was not limited to church members, and thus the leadership could theoretically be elected by those outside the Body of Christ. So in addition to the general tendency of New England Congregational principles to isolate particular church communities, the praying Indians operated in a system that further set them apart even as they attempted acculturation.

The identity of praying Indians was complicated by the millennialism of the period. John Eliot's postmillennial views, coupled with his ardent and somewhat radical support for what he believed was the Scripturally-ordained form of government erected yet another barrier to Red Puritanism. The praying Indians of Massachusetts Bay, while transitioning to an English lifestyle in almost every way, were organized under an Old Testament system of leadership that further distinguished them from their English brothers. Eliot's distinctive commitment to this government allowed him to conceive of the mission as the front lines of a worldwide revolution in government which would

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[73] William E. Nelson, "The Utopian Legal Order of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1630-1686, *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 47., No. 2, (Apr., 2005)
[74] Richard C. Simmons, "Property and the Franchise in Puritan Massachusetts: An Interpretation," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Dec., 1968) 498

topple the temporal powers who had strayed from God's plan and institute the Israelite model of government throughout the world. In the short term, however, his insistence on structuring the praying towns after the fashion of the Israelite system of incremental judges was one more way in which the praying Indians were differentiated from the English Puritans. This would not, however, be the only barrier they faced.

Chapter 2: Labor, Land, Law and Literacy: the Difficulty of Acculturation

"Six Days Thou Shalt Labor…"

There were many impediments in the path of praying Indians seeking to become visible saints. To aspire to church membership required that they first undergo a radical process of acculturation, making themselves as much like the English as possible. To achieve this, they needed to alter almost everything about their previous lifestyle. As did their Jesuit adversaries to the North, the Puritan missionaries saw the migratory tendencies of the Algonquian populations as a major impediment to conversion. Thus it was necessary that they should become permanently settled after the English fashion to allow for a regular program of education and Sabbath-keeping. As such, the kind of agriculture they practiced and their relationship to animals would also have to undergo revision if their settlements were to be modeled significantly after those of their English tutors. Their family and living arrangements would also change, as would their style of dress and even their hair.

For a Native American to enter the covenanting society of the praying town represented a "reduction" to civility,[1] a limitation on behavior not previously experienced. The outpouring of grace would inevitably result in visible fruit, especially with respect to what the Puritans acknowledged as industry. As Richard Mather put it, "if there be any work of Grace amongst them, it would surely bring forth, and be accompanied with the Reformation of their disordered lives, as in other things, so in their

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[1] James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The European and the Indian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English Facing off in Early America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000) Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections…*7

neglect of Labor, and their living in idleness and pleasure."[2] Being "fixed in an Habitation" with "some means of livelihood to lose" was, to the Puritan way of thinking, inextricable from a true commitment to the "Treasure of Christ" that the ordinances of the Church represented. If one were not tied to land and labor then the temptation would be to run rather than face the due remonstrance of Church discipline. So instrumental was this connection between labor and a godly life that Eliot gave it top priority in his ministry to the Indians:

> …therefore I told them that they and we were already all one save in two things, which make the only difference between them and us: first, we know, serve, and pray unto God and they doe not: secondly, we labour and work in building, planting, clothing ourselves, and would they but doe as wee doe in these things, they would be all one with English men…[3]

The concept of labor and godly living were intimately connected in the New England missionary mind, and so Eliot and his counterparts moved from one topic to the next without transition. Of one praiseworthy woman he wrote, "She learned to spin well. Her life was blameless after she submitted to the Gospel." In another instance, Thomas Shephard immediately followed his description of Eliot's theological discussions with the praying Indians with "At this time they are about fencing in their ground and Town given them some hundreds of acres, with a stone fence, for which end Mr. Eliot provides them mattocks, shovels, and crowes of iron…"[4] For Mather, the connection was a clear one:

> That since the Word of God came amongst them, and that they have attended thereto, they have more applied themselves unto Labor then formerly: For evidence whereof, appeal may be made to what was seen at Natick that day, and is still to be seen in that place, I mean the grounds that they have fenced in, and clawed and broken up, and especially their capacious meeting-house…little did I

[2] Richard Mather, "Tears of Repentance…" 223
[3] John Eliot, "Clear Sunshine…" 50
[4] Thomas Shephard, "Clear Sunshine…" 61

> think when I saw that fabrick, but that some English carpenter or other had had the chief hand in the framing and erecting of it…[5]

So impressive was the praying Indians' feat of constructing a "very sufficient" meeting house without the direction or assistance of English workmen that it served to remove Eliot's caution about attempting to delay their entrance into church estate.[6] The establishment of the civil government at Natick was also seemingly contingent on the completion of construction of the Pallizado Fort in which the meetinghouse and schoolhouse were to stand.[7]

But if English material culture was an essential component of Indian conversion its absence could hamper the creation of praying communities. Eliot perceived his mission as constantly hindered by the material deficits experienced by Indians attempting to revamp their lifestyle. In a 1649 letter in which he addressed the fencing efforts of the Indians at Natick he wrote, "They are hindered for want of tools, and by bad tools

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[5] Richard Mather, "Tears of Repentance…" 224

[6] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 228 There is evidence that the praying Indians retained a preference for their own style of construction for a considerable length of time. In his 1674 *Historical Collections*, Daniel Gookin praises their wigwams for being "as warm as the best English house," and says that the ease of construction without nails and their familiarity with that type of structure were among the reasons that "they do incline to keep their old fashioned houses." At another point, he relates that the praying Indians of Hassanamesitt had "two or three other houses after the {English} mode, but they fancy not to live in them." Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections...* 10, 41, 45

[7] John Eliot, "Strength Out of Weakness..." 171. With regard to the issue of assistance from the English on the fort, John Wilson reveals that it had "no Englishman's hand in it, save that one day or two they had an English carpenter with them to direct about the time or rearing..." John Wilson, "Strength Out of Weakness..." 177. John Endecott confirms this, praising their "industry and ingenuitie..." given that there had been "but one Englishman, a carpenter, to show them, being but two days with them..." John Endecott, "Strength Out of Weakness..." 191; Joyce Chaplin, in the course of arguing for the hybrid nature of colonial culture, asserts that the English did not see Indian adoption of their material culture apart from a project of total assimilation. Rather than acknowledge that Indians were selective in their adoption of English goods and technology, each material change was supposed to be a step in the road to full acculturation. With respect to the construction of forts, Chaplin notes that the English fort designs occasionally borrowed from the Indian styles of fort construction. Joyce Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500*-1676 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001) 204, 212. John Josselyn also notes the Indian usage of pallizado construction in his *Two Voyages to New England.* Paul J. Lindholt, Ed., *A Critical Edition* of *Two Voyages to New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988) 104

discouraged…"[8] In a letter written in a few months prior, he explicitly linked English material culture with the covenanted society:

> You would marvel if I should tell you how they long to come into a way of civility by co-habitation, and by forming government amongst themselves, that so they being in such order might have a Church and the Ordinances of Christ among them; but want of a Magazine of all sorts of tools and materials for such a work, is the present impediment.[9]

Saws and hammers, buildings and crops, these were the things of which civil society was constructed; and civility, to the Puritan mind, a necessary foundation for the workings of grace.

The connection between sin and the obligation to labor was evident in the confessions as well. The curse wrought by the fall had agrarian implications, as part of man's punishment was to work an unyielding soil to earn his sustenance. John Speene explicitly connected original sin and agriculture in his 1659 confession, saying "I have sinned against God, and I was born in sin. My parents broke that command, Thou shalt have no other gods but Me: but they served many gods, and so did I, and therefore the earth bringeth forth thorns and weeds unto man, when he laboreth."[10] Waban claimed that he "walked not in the right way" because the Bible said "six days shalt thou labour, then I was strong, yet I did not labour, and I was soon weary of praying to God."[11] Following his confession, Anthony was asked "whether he believed that it was the duty of men to labor six days in the week,"[12] and answered affirmatively, although admitting

[8] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 87
[9] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation…"
[10] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 17-18
[11] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 73
[12] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 75

he did not always do so. Labor, agrarian and English, was seen as an act of obedience to God's word or, alternatively, a stumbling block on the path to conversion.

This particular impediment would have been an especially difficult hurdle for men, as embracing agricultural labor represented a reorganization of traditional Algonquian gender roles. While women may have been attracted to the praying movement's redefinition of roles – to say nothing of the prohibitions on wife-beating and alcohol abuse[13] – men like Waban, John, and Anthony had to accept that God seemingly desired them to spend six days a week engaged in what they perceived as "women's work." In the New England woodlands, women were typically in charge of all aspects of cultivation with the exceptions of land clearing and the raising of tobacco, but English men were the principal cultivators in Puritan society.[14] The English consistently overlooked the importance of Indian agriculture in part because it was not accomplished with the use of heavy draft animals but also because apart from clearing the land, most agricultural tasks were performed by women and children.[15] Similarly, in Algonquian culture women were typically in charge of home construction, but in Natick it was the men in charge erecting the meeting house.

In some ways the nature of Algonquian female labor was more amenable to the division of labor the missionaries were preaching and, simultaneously, was less demeaned by English observers. The work that Algonquian women did was physically

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[13] Harold Von Lunkhuyzen, "A Reappraisal of…" 413; Howard S. Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower* (Hanover, NH, 1980) 96-103; William Wood, *New England's Prospect* (New York: De Capo Press, 1968, originally published in 1634) 94-98

[14] Harold Von Lunkhuyzen, "A Reappraisal of…" 413

[15] David D. Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge': A Prime Index of Savagism," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 29, No. 4, (Autumn, 1982) 285

demanding and required adherence to a specifically planned routine.[16] That they worked very hard was consistently acknowledged by English observers who both admired their industry and railed against what they perceived to be the exploitation of female labor by Algonquian men. In part these observations were shaped by English notions about savagery and settlement and by their idea of what constituted actual work, but Kathleen Bragdon cautions against quickly dismissing English descriptions of Algonquian male exploitation of women. While English characterizations of Native American men as lazy were assuredly influenced by the European idea that hunting was the province of the aristocracy, there is some evidence, in the form of unequal distribution of grave furniture, linguistic categories, and in English descriptions that social asymmetry did exist in coastal communities at the time of contact, possibly having its foundation in the growing control of men over the products of their wives' labor**,** particularly in the sale, trade, or tributary payment of agricultural produce.[17]

Algonquian men were perceived as non-agrarian hunters and gatherers, both lacking in industry and in the kind of routine that could be bent towards acknowledging the Sabbath. When John Speene confessed to his failure to honor the Sabbath in 1659 he said that he "played and catched birds," reflecting the English understanding of male hunting and trapping as recreation. Because for the English hunting represented a diversion rather than a means of survival, traditional Algonquian male labor was denigrated to the status of sport, rather than labor.[18] Conversely, the more predictable

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[16] Helen Rountree, "Powhatan Indian Women: The People Captain John Smith Barely Saw," Ethnohistory, Vol. 45, No. 1, (Winter, 1998) 4
[17] Kathleen Bragdon, "Gender as a Social Category in Native Southern New England," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 43, No. 4, Native American Women's Responses to Christianity, (Autumn, 1996) 578-579
[18] David D. Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge'…" 284-285; Calvin Martin reveals that for Algonquian groups hunting was also related to the balance of the spirit world and, as such, had more significance than simply

routine of women's labor was more easily recognizable as actual work and more agreeable to a workweek culminated by a Sabbath. The Puritan brand of Christianity, while requiring wifely submission to the husband, also entrusted the care of the home to the woman, thus in some ways reinforcing her pre-conversion domestic role. For men the new labor division represented a more dramatic change in schedule and lifestyle.

The Rule of Law

Eliot's vision of an Anglicized Native American population was only partially realized and was the source of tension, not only between praying Indians and their non-praying counterparts, but within the lives of the converts themselves. One source of conflict was the requirement of submitting to English law even while being locally governed under the Exodus-style system. Residents of praying towns were simultaneously subject to the particular codes enacted in the towns and to the guidance of their elected rulers, but by virtue of their submission they also fell under the aegis of Massachusetts colonial law. English observers recognized that Native American law, like English law, was largely based on "custome." This reliance on oral tradition, rather than on the congested labyrinth of written law even prompted some English writers to hold that the Indian system was superior to their own.[19] Nevertheless, in May of 1647 the Massachusetts General Court ordered that "the Indians dwelling among us and submitted to our government" were to be visited by English magistrates four times a year to hear all cases that were not capital offenses. Sachems who had acquiesced to Massachusetts' authority were empowered to bring any of their people to the courts and

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sustenance, to say nothing of sport. Calvin Martin, "The European Impact on the Culture of a Northeastern Algonquian Tribe: An Ecological Interpretation," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 31, No. 1, (Jan., 1974), pp. 4-26

[19] Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English*…103-104

"to keep a Court of themselves, every month if they see occasion, to determine small causes of a civil nature."[20] After 1656 when the position of Superintendent of Indian Affairs was created, the combination of the superintendent and the Indian Magistrate – in Eliot's system a ruler of fifty or one hundred – would constitute a court on par with an English county court.[21]

There are some indications in the missionary accounts that the separate legal status of the praying Indians was in fact a barrier to full acculturation. Gookin in particular made it clear that, in many ways, the praying Indians were still somewhat outside the legal system of the colony. He recounted one instance where the praying Indians[22] solicited the favor of the Court to execute five Maquas (Mohawks) who had been seized in Cambridge and whose admitted purpose for being in the area was to "avenge themselves of the Indians, their enemies."[23] The praying Indians argued that, given the repeated assaults and murders perpetrated by the Mohawks, to release their Iroquoian foes would be tantamount to inviting them to continue their depredations. Paraphrasing their argument, Gookin recalled them saying "Now if we had taken five wolves alive and should let them go again, and not destroy them, you Englishmen would be greatly offended with us for such an act, and surely, said they, the lives of men are of more worth than beasts."[24] This request, Gookin noted, placed the English in the difficult position of offending their "neighbor Indians" or of starting a war with the Maquas. Of the two courses, the English decided to avoid conflict with a fearsome enemy and to risk

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[20] Eliot, "The Day-Breaking if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England," (London: Richard Cotes for Fulk Clifton, 1647) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 49

[21] Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The Praying Indians" of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jan, 1974) 32, Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*...38

[22] Daniel Gookin does not specify the town where the attacks took place

[23] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections…* 24

[24] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*…25

offending the praying Indians. In fact, it was "not suitable to the Christian profession to begin a war with a people that had not killed or slain any Englishman."[25] It was also not possible to clearly assess the origin of the conflict between the praying Indians and the Mohawk, so to acquiesce to their request was not a viable option. The praying Indians might be their "neighbors" but they were clearly not fully integrated into the political life of the colony.

The sense of separation was also evident four years later, when, perhaps not confident in the protections offered by the English colonial government, a group of praying Indians joined an expedition to attack the Mohawk in their own territory. The leader of this ill-fated assault was none other than Josiah, nephew of Cutshamekin, the first sachem of the original Natick flock. In this instance the praying Indians involved disregarded the counsel of the English[26] and attacked, defending their own interests where the English would not. The outcome of the assault was so disastrous for the praying Indians and their allies that, according to Eliot, it led many of the survivors to "submit to pray unto God," which also implied being more willing to listen to English advice on their affairs.[27]

Gookin himself admitted that the role of the English magistrate was to see that the praying Indians lived "according to our laws as far as they are capable." Only matters "beyond their cognizance" were adjudicated by English powers, and the rest were left in the hands of the system of Native American rulers. Both the rulers and the teachers would be provided "some small encouragement" from tithes collected from the praying Indians. Here again there is a hint that the Old Testament system of government was a

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[25] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*…25
[26] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*…26
[27] John Eliot, "Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel…" 10

matter of some suspicion by the English as Gookin felt it necessary to justify the particulars of the tithing process:

> Perhaps this custom introduced among the Indians will be censured by some as favouring too much of Judaism and antichristianism. But it is hoped others will be candid and charitable, especially towards good Mr. Eliot, who first led them into this way; and this he did, not without good reason. First taken from the moral equity of the duty, for encouragement of such public persons. Secondly, from the rule and example prescribed in God's word, and the practices of the people of God. So Melchizedek being kind and priest, received the tenth of Abraham (Genesis 14:20, Hebrews 7:4) Doubtless some part of every man's estate is due to god, who is the giver of all. If any part, why not a tenth part, if the people agree to it; seeing there is such ample precedent for it, both before the ceremonial law, and in the time of it, and since it was abrogated?

More evidence that the Exodus-inspired system may have raised some English eyebrows can be found in Eliot's 1673 letter in which he answers questions regarding the praying Indians. In response to an inquiry as to whether their civil government was "wholly conformed to the English," Eliot replied with his standard refrain that the praying Indians' government was "conformed to the Scriptures." So even while Eliot strove to integrate the praying Indians into English civility, it seems probable that, even in the early 1670's, their separation from the larger English society was in part because of the different legal system under which they functioned.

The imposition of the Old Testament system had the potential to cause tension within the band of converts. Eliot freely acknowledged that social position influenced the choice of rulers but generally cast his approval on the choices made. The selections, however, had implications for the existing power structure. Waban admitted his ambition to become a ruler in his confession, and John Speene confessed to his resentment at the fact that his younger brother had been chosen ruler rather than him.[28] Nishohkou, on the other hand, rejected the opportunity because of his admitted unbelief, indicating that not

[28] John Eliot, "A Further Account..." 17

all praying Indians saw the new system merely as a chance to gain power in reconstituted circumstances. [29] While it is undeniable that many of the rulers chosen were of the more prominent families,[30] Speene's being spurned in favor of his younger sibling also indicates that the praying town government may have created opportunities for those tradition excluded.[31]

But for the Massachusetts Bay praying Indians, submitting to the strictures of Natick or of the other praying towns that would form in its wake posed a dilemma. In his confession, Nishohkou highlighted the contrast between "running wild" and the settled routine of a workweek revolving around the Sabbath, and, in so doing, the struggle involved in deciding to submit, not only to instruction and preaching, but to the strictures of a new legal system.[32] Even after two years of attending meetings and after being troubled by "the roots of sin" in his heart,[33] Nishohkou vacillated over whether to maintain his praying Indian status: "For if now I sin, or commit lust, I shall be punished, or put in prison, but if I run wilde, I have liberty to sin without danger: but I was ashamed of such thoughts and repented, but yet I doubted."[34] He was not the only one to express fear of civil authority in the confessions. In 1652 Owussumag confessed that he "sought to go away far off," not because of his conscience but because of his "fear of man." Monequassun stated that he "feared punishment because of my sins, therefore I thought

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[29] John Eliot, "A Further Account..." 39-40
[30] Elise M. Brenner, "To Pray or to be Prey: That is the Question: Strategies for Cultural Autonomy of Massachusetts Praying Town Indians," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring, 1980)
[31] Perhaps no better example of the missionary effort changing social status can be cited than that of Hiacoomes, the admittedly lowly individual whose conversion jump-started the formation of the Martha's Vineyard Church and simultaneously transformed him into a person of authority and social standing.
[32] For a discussion of the jurisdiction of English colonial authority and Indian populations in New England, see Yasu Kawashima, "Jurisdiction of the Colonial Courts over the Indians in Massachusetts, 1689-1763," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Dec., 1969) pp. 532-550
[33] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 4
[34] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 5

again I would run away..."[35] Anthony considered leaving so he would not be "hindered from sin."[36] Ponampam, seemingly less confident about the option of leaving the praying town, readily admitted that he initially only had "tarried" because he "still feared man."[37]

By choosing to become part of the body of praying Indians, Nishohkou and his praying brethren were subject to the legal system established therein, which combined an interesting mix of Native American adaptations of English law and Eliot's experiment. In so doing they would have to transition to an English system focused on punishment from an Algonquian model of restitution where "womponpague" was sufficient not only for the payment of tribute, but also for the purchase of peace with hostile neighbors and to "satisfy for murders and other wrongs."[38] On occasion the questions posed to Eliot reflect the awkwardness of this transition. In one instance an unidentified member of his flock asked "If a man hath committed adultery or stolen any goods, and the Sachem doth not punish him, nor by any law is he punished, if also he restore the goods he hath stolen, what then? Whether is not all well now?" indicating the tension between the Algonquian concept of reconciliation through payment or substitution and the English idea of justice. The code of laws and associated punishments developed by the praying Indians at Nonantum reflected both Eliot's emphasis on the ten commandments[39] and their seeming attempt to proscribe those things that the English found repugnant. Among the eight rules cited by Eliot – he claimed to have forgotten the other two – were penalties for failing to "labor" after the English fashion, breaking the Sabbath, fornicating, and wife-

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[35] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 259, 237
[36] John Eliot, "A Further Account..." 12
[37] John Eliot, "A Further Account..." 54
[38] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections...* 12; For a discussion of the uses of reciprocity between the English and the Algonquians see Katherine Hermes, "Justice Will be Done Us" in Christopher L. Tomlins and Bruce H. Mann, Eds., *The Many Legalities of Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 123-149
[39] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 4, 9

beating. Two separate regulations addressed the proper length and wearing of hair, and one, which Eliot labeled "ridiculous to English ears," prohibited the killing of lice between one's teeth.

Eliot's emphasis on regular Sabbath-keeping manifests itself in many places throughout the tracts. In an early application of the law, Cutshamekin's wife was penalized for her labor on the Sabbath, as was Waban, who dared to capture a raccoon on Sunday in an effort to please his dinner guests. Another man was reproved for splitting a piece of wood in order to add more fuel to the fire.[40] The praying Indian absorption of the English commitment to Sabbath-keeping even emerged in a jab at Roger Williams, whose Indian neighbors allegedly accused him of being "no goode man" for his supposed laboring on the Sabbath.[41]

The continued emphasis on Sabbath-keeping is evident in the confessions as well. In his 1652 confession Nishokou claimed that he had "heard of that good way, to keep the Sabbath, and not to work on that day" but that he eventually "sinned in it" out of a "lack of reverence for the Word."[42] In his 1659 confession before the gathered churches he recalled this theme, this time citing Exodus 20, Psalm 101, and Isaiah 58 as he expounded on the importance of keeping the Sabbath. John Speene confessed that, although he saw the English keeping the Sabbath he "cared not,"[43] occasionally running away from approaching Englishmen so they would not notice his violation of the Sabbath.

[40] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 52
[41] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 61
[42] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 250-251
[43] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 10

The praying Indians at Nonantum also agreed to a list of 29 "conclusions and orders" in November of 1646, touching on a wide range of subjects and varying from specific prohibitions – such as those on drunkenness or Pawwawing – to general statements about their intentions such as "They doe desire that they may be stirred up to seek after God."[44] Once again Eliot's emphasis on labor was present, as was the importance of the Sabbath. In this longer list, however, sexual behaviors were more clearly proscribed including fornication between unmarried people, bestiality and adultery, the latter two punishable by death. Polygamy was addressed with the somewhat ambiguous "they desire that no Indian hereafter shall have any more but one wife," again indicating the familial tension engendered by adoption of the missionaries' view of monogamy. Algonquian marriage customs were a bit puzzling to English observers, for whom the nuclear family was the essential building block of society. The English family was the primary means of organizing agricultural labor and education as well as of structuring relations between parents and children, husbands and wives, and masters and servants. Ann Marie Plane has argued that the English Puritans missed the complexities of Algonquian marriage and that marriage-like relationships existed in a variety of forms. Additionally, Plane notes that the English assumptions about family consisting of parents and children were different than those of their Native American neighbors, who tended to view family as lineal and not just nuclear.[45]

Lying was discouraged through a series of fines, but humility – seemingly a difficult concept to translate into Algonquian – was to be sought after. "Willful" murder,

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[44] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine…" 39

[45] Anne Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY and London, 2000) 5-34

like adultery, was punishable by death.[46] Stealing, interestingly, was to be dealt with through a seeming combination of the Indian system of replacement and New Testament guidance. Unlike the culprit guilty of murder, lice-eating, wife-beating gaming, and other offenses which carried fines or harsher penalties, a thief was required to restore what he had taken to his victim "fourfold,"[47] a number reminiscent both of Old Testament Law (Exodus 22:3-4; 2 Samuel 12:5-7) and of Zaccheas' pronouncement to Jesus on the day of his repentance (Luke 19:8). Significantly, the remedy for this particular transgression was decidedly more in keeping with Indian reciprocity than with English punishment. These early codes seem to reflect a combination of Eliot's preaching and Indian concerns.

Clothing, Hair, and Swine

The codes reveal as much about acculturation as they do about conformity to Biblical mandates. There were prohibitions entering an English man's house without knocking, a restriction they expected would be reciprocal, and on Indians taking English canoes "without leave."[48] Hair was to be worn "comely, as the English do," or the offender would suffer a fine of 5 shillings, also the penalty for engaging in the practice of "greasing themselves," a common practice for keeping out the cold among Native

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[46] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine…" 39-40
[47] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine…" 40
[48] Chaplin argues that this law was deemed necessary because of the English adoption of Algonquian canoe construction rendering the canoe a culturally ambiguous item. Joyce Chaplin, *Subject Matter…*208; The colony of Rhode Island also found the canoe issue worthy of attention. In August of 1640 the General Court ratified a proposal that "No Indian shall take any canoe from the English, neither from their boatside or shoreshide, and the like is not to be done with them." *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England Vol. 1* (Providence, R.I.: A. Crawford Greene and Brother, State Printers, 1856) 108

Americans in the Northeast. Grease, a partial alternative to clothing, was an impediment to the full transition from "naked" savagery to civility.[49]

Ideas about clothing and hair were also woven into the matrix of requirements for civility. Clothing was directly linked to knowledge and understanding of God, as God's blessings were of two kinds, "the great mercies," such as wisdom and eternal life and "the little mercies," such as food, houses, cattle, and clothes.[50] Recounting an example he gave to his Natick flock concerning the Mohegans, Eliot wrote,

> …you have some more cloths then they, and the reason why you have no more is because you have but a little wisdom, if you were more wise to know God, and obey his Commands, you would work more then you do, for so God commandeth, Six dayes thou shalt work, & etc. and thus the English do: and if you would be so wise as to work as they do, you should have cloths, houses, cattle, riches, as they have, God would give them to you.[51]

Evidence of God's favor and blessing could literally be seen in the possession of English clothing, as in the case of "a poor blind Indian," who was given a suit of second-hand clothes, enabling him to see "mercy also in a promise of a cast off worn suit of clothes."[52] The logically necessary corollary, however, was that deficiency in this area could be interpreted as a sign of unrepentance and a lack of submission to the Gospel.

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[49] Karen Kupperman, "Presentment of Civility: English Reading of American Self-Presentation in the Early Years of Colonization," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan., 1997) 193-228; Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English…* ; Gookin identifies an interesting mix of English and Algonquian culture when he notes that, while the praying Indians had given up grease, the non-praying Indians had modified their greasing practices by switching from bear's fat to the now more readily accessible pig's fat, available courtesy of English domestication of animals. Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections...* 13

[50] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 57

[51] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 57-58

[52] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 46

Clothing not only expressed the identity of the wearer, but it was potentially transformative.[53] When attending Eliot's lectures at Nonantum, Thomas Shephard "marvailed to see so many Indian men, women, and children in English apparel," the result of gifts from the English and their own labor. In Shephard's eyes, such was the effect of their wardrobe that "you would scarce know them from English people."[54] Eliot once described Waban's son as "among the rest of his Indian brethren in English clothes."[55] Such references to clothing as a marker of civility persist throughout the tracts and missionary correspondence. "Nakedness," on the other hand, was not only a sign of immodesty but of a failure to "labor as the English do." The use of the term "naked," while not indicating a complete lack of clothes, connoted distance from the Gospel; to be clad in Native American attire was both evidence of a failure to labor and connection to native lifestyle as well as to the post-Edenic state of man. Gookin described the Native Americans' clothing prior to English arrival as "of the same matter as Adam's was..."[56] To be deemed "naked" was essentially to be labeled ignorant and deprived. "I think it might make many Christians ashamed, who may easily see how far they are exceeded by these naked men in so short a time," wrote Shephard, who characterized his account as a "somewhat rent and ragged relation…suitable to the story of naked and ragged men."[57] To adopt English clothing, on the other hand, indicated a readiness to receive the Gospel, and as such was noted by missionaries much in the same way they discussed their use of tools.[58]

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[53] Ann M. Little, "Shoot That Rogue, for He Hath an Englishman's Coat On!": Cultural Cross-Dressing on the New England Frontier, 1620-1760, *The New England Quarterly*, Vo. 74, No. 2. (Jun., 2001) 240
[54] Thomas Shephard, "The Day-Breaking…" 45
[55] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking..." 3
[56] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections...* 12
[57] Thomas Shephard, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 64, 66
[58] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 87, John Wilson, "Strength Out of Weakness…" 178

Similarly, hair was also a signifier of civility and therefore of potential conversion. For the men who aspired to be praying Indians, long hair was a staple of fashion and of manhood. William Wood described the attention and significance ascribed to hair:

> Their black hair is natural, yet it is brought to a more jetty colour by oyling, dying, and daily dressing. Sometimes they wear it very long, handing down in a loose, disheveled, womanish manner; otherwhile tied up hard and short like a horsetail, bound close with a fillet, which they say makes it grow faster: they are not a little fanatical or customsick in this particular; their boys being not permitted to wear their hair long till sixteen years of age, and then they must come to it by degrees…

To the missionaries, long hair for men, in addition to violating the prohibition seemingly imposed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:14, was seen as a source of sinful pride for Native Americans, and cutting it was as much an expression of a willingness to renounce one's sinful past as it was a means of blending into an English lifestyle. Eliot, writing of his flock, related that "they have discerned the vanitie and pride which they placed in their haire, and have therefore of their owne accord (none speaking to them that we know of) cut it modestly," an act which caused other non-Praying Indians to "revile" them.[59] Cutting one's hair was seemingly a test of one's commitment to adopting the message of missionaries. In his 1652 confession, Nantous related that he had been challenged to cut his hair to demonstrate just that – "I went to Mr. Brown's house and told him I will pray to God as long as I live; he said 'I doubt of it, and bid me cut off my hair…"[60] For Monequassun, hair was "a stumbling" to his conversion. Having heard it preached that it was "a shame for a man to wear long hair,"

[59] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking…" 22
[60] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 234

and realizing that there "was no such custom in the Churches," he resolved to cut it off, only to find it incredibly difficult to follow through.[61]

With the English insistence on civility preceding Christianity, becoming accustomed to the outward accoutrements of English life was an essential part of the transition to visible sainthood. Ideas about civility and conversion were deeply embedded in the English psyche, in no small part as a result of their experiences with the Irish, and references to the Irish are sometimes found in seventeenth century descriptions of the Native Americans in New England. William Wood, for example, described the "leather drawers" worn by Algonquian elderly as "like Irish trousers." For Wood, the wearing of skins in the Algonquian fashion evoked the "forme of an Irish mantle."[62] Thomas Morton described the Native American method of wigwam construction as "much like the wild Irish."[63] Just as the Irish had been, the Algonquian tribes were not permanently settled and this "wandering" was taken as a sign of barbarity. Nicholas Canny points out that the travel literature of the sixteenth century, the Scythians and their offshoot, the Tartarians, were considered to be the most barbarous of peoples because of their nomadic lifestyle. This view was then applied to the Irish and thus reinforced in the English collective consciousness.[64] English speculation around the origins of Native Americans in turn often linked them with the Scythians and Tartars.

To overcome the characterizations associated with "nakedness," and "wandering" praying Indians would have to adjust their living and working patterns to render

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[61] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 239
[62] William Wood, *New England's Prospect…* 65
[63] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan…*24
[64] Nicholas P. Canny, "The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 30, No. 4. (Oct., 1973) 587; Robert Blair St. George, "Bawns and Beliefs: Architecture, Commerce, and Conversion in Early New England, *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Winter, 1990), 263-264 Josselyn describes Indian burial mournings as "somewhat like the howlings of the Irish." John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*…95

themselves someday eligible for visible sainthood. So they had to settle and learn to subsist in the ways that the English did. Thus in their earliest recorded attempt at a formal code, the fourth law stipulated that every unmarried young man who was not engaged as another person's servant must "set up a Wigwam and plant for himselfe, and not live shifting up and downe to other Wigwams."[65]

One of the most striking differences between the Algonquian and English economic systems was their respective relationship to animals. The English domestication of animals, a concept foreign to the Algonquian groups with the sole exception of the dog and the hawk, was a source of constant tension between them.[66] In fact, the resettlement component of the mission project was greatly inhibited by the threat English domesticated animals represented to Native American agriculture.[67] According to Eliot "Sundry in the Country in diverse places would gladly be taught the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, and would pray unto God, if I could goe unto them," but they were unwilling to live in close proximity to the English because they had "neither tooles nor skill" to erect fences around their crops which would render them vulnerable to being "spoyled by English Cattell." To make matters worse, the English were often "loath to restore when they want fence," a fact which Eliot characterized as a great discouragement to his prospective Indian flock and to himself.[68]

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[65] Eliot, "Day-Breaking…" 20
[66] Virginia Dejohn Anderson, "King Philip's Herds: Indians, Colonists, and the Problem of Livestock in Early New England," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 51, No. 4. (Oct, 1994) 601-624, William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1983) 162-163; Karen Kupperman, "Perceptions of Treachery, 1585-1640: The Case of the American Savages," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June, 1977) 267; Howard S. Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower* (Hanover, NH, 1980) 21, 57
[67] In his *Magnalia Christi Americana* Cotton Mather also alluded to the destructiveness of swine, this time because the hogs devoured "the clams which are a dainty to them." Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana or the Ecclesiastical History of New-England, Vol I., 1702* (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1820) 500
[68] Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 81

The nuisance posed by English animals is a recurring theme in the colonial records. Horses were a persistent threat to Indian corn, as were cows and pigs. The English courts were not entirely unsympathetic to the plight of the Native Americans and took measures to seek restitution for damage done. In March of 1657, for example, the Plymouth General Court responded to an Indian complaint by ordering that local officials at Mashpea "require those whose horses have done the damage to make satisfaction unto the said Indian."[69] In October of 1665 the Court appointed John Smith and John Russell of Dartmouth to oversee an enquiry into damage done by English horses to Indians living in the vicinity of Acushenah.[70] In 1660 the Court even permitted the Indians of Annawamscutt and Kekamewett to create an impound pen to hold offending swine until damages were paid.[71]

But protective measures such as these were often the source of controversy as well. In the 1666 case over a hog in the possession of a Native American named Sampson, the Court did not indicate that he was guilty of theft, presumably because they understood that the animal had possibly "aggrieved" him.[72] Other means of dealing with offending animals were more desperate. The Plymouth Court fined a Native American named Saquantam twenty shillings for "the coursing and hunting of horses."[73] Native Americans from Mashpee were fined fourteen pounds for killing John Allin's mare, and, in the event they could not accrue the equivalent in corn and oysters, were, ironically,

[69] Shurtleff, Nathaniel B., ed., *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 3* (Boston: From the Press of William White, 1855) 132
[70] Shurtleff, Nathaniel B., ed., *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 4* (Boston: From the Press of William White, 1855) 109
[71] *Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 4*…193
[72] *Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 4*…137
[73] *Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 4*…200

permitted to work off the debt by killing wolves, animals the English found threatening.[74] English cattle also met their ends in Native American traps, and the courts found this to be another sticky problem. When James Shaw's cow expired in the grip of a trap owned by Wawanquin, the Plymouth Court of Assistants ordered a reduced restitution on the grounds that Shaw had disposed of the cow, leaving the Indian with "none of it."[75]

Getting justice for the crop destruction caused by the colonists' freely roaming hogs was not easy for the Native Americans. Although the colonies each enacted laws enabling such complaints to be filed with local authorities, and, in the event of a failure to enforce an order to pay damages, to the Magistrate, negotiating a foreign court system in a foreign language was treacherous. Additionally, by the 1640's, the law required that the Native Americans fence their grounds in order to be eligible for restitution, and Native American victims of marauding animals had to be able to identify the specific beasts that had perpetrated the invasion. The frequency of such complaints often left these matters in the hands of local authorities, who were then asked to adjudicate impartially between Indians and their own neighbors.[76] Given these circumstances, the difficulty Eliot had in luring praying Indians closer to English settlement is not surprising. The praying Indians of Okommakamesit (Marlborough) even abandoned a valuable section of their property because this unfenced space was devoured by English beasts and was thus unprofitable to them. According to Daniel Gookin,

> In this Indian plantation there is a piece of fertile land, containing above one hundred and fifty acres, upon which the Indians have, not long since, lived, and planted several apple trees thereupon, which bear abundance of fruit; but now the Indians are removed from it about a mile. This tract of land doth so imbusom itself into the English town, that it is encompassed about with it except one way;

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[74] *Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 4*…17
[75] *Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 4*…57
[76] Virginia Dejohn Anderson, "King Philip's Herds…" 610-611

> and upon the edge of this land the English have placed their meeting house, which is an argument to demonstrate that they look upon it as near the midst of their town…the Indians will willingly devote it for this work; for it brings little or no profit to them, nor is ever like to do, because the Englishmen's cattle, etc. devour all in it; because it lies open and unfenced…[77]

Native Americans faced with these choices, negotiating a flawed legal system or abandoning their own ground, often resorted to killing the trespassing livestock. In fact, Eliot reported that "George the wicked Indian" – the one who used to enjoy heckling during the question and answer sessions – once killed an English cow and tried to sell its meat as moose.[78] Gookin himself had to intercede in 1671 when colonists angry over Indians dispatching their animals threatened violence on the Wampanoags of Mount Hope.[79] Because of the nuisance posed by unrestrained English animals, those who would be praying Indians faced a dilemma – to be close to the English was necessary if they were to adopt the English lifestyle, and yet proximity to those same English carried the danger of destroying their attempts at that very lifestyle.[80]

Similarly, adopting English style agriculture, particularly the planting of orchards, carried with it its own problems as praying Indians sought visible sainthood. The perils of demon alcohol and its effects on the Native American population led the General Court of Massachusetts to forbid the sale of liquor to the Native Americans, unless in

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[77] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections…*, 80 Gookin also revealed that the tension between the praying Indians at Okommakamesit and the residents of Malborough had made it so the Indians "did not much rejoice under the English men's shadow, who do so overstop them in their number of people, flocks of cattle, etc., that the Indians do not greatly flourish, or delight, in their station at present." Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections..."* 45

[78] John Eliot, "Clear Sunshine…" 55

[79] Virginia Dejohn Anderson, "King Philip's Herds…" 621

[80] Shephard related that the initial desire of the "Sachim of the Place" was to have a town within the bounds of Concord "neare unto the English" because "he knew that if the Indians dwelt far from the English, they would not so much care to pray, nor would they be so ready to heare the Word of God, but they would be all one Indians still, but dwelling neare the English he hoped it might be otherwise with them then." The opposition amongst the Indians to "these courses" was "the finger of Satan resisting these budding beginnings." Thomas Shephard, "The Day-Breaking…" 38-39

case of sickness and then only with special permission.[81] Fines were imposed by colonial authorities to dissuade the sale of spirits to the Native Americans, and liquor was occasionally confiscated from those found in possession of it.[82] In Rhode Island a 1655 law enjoined liquor merchants from selling more than a quarter of a pint per day to Native Americans, with a twenty shilling fine assessed to a delinquent merchant for each drunk Native American resulting from a violation. The law was repealed that same year and eventually replaced in 1659 with stiffer fines for any transfer of alcohol to Native Americans.[83] And yet the sale of alcohol by "ill-disposed people" for the sake of "filthy lucre" was commonplace.[84] "Thus instead of bringing them to Christianitie," wrote Josselyn, "we have taught them to commit the beastly and crying sins of our nation for a little profit."[85] Ironically, however, another source of Algonquian drinking was the cider they made from the orchards they planted.[86] On this sore subject, Gookin wrote,

> I have often seriously considered what course to take, to restrain this beastly sin of drunkenness among them; but hitherto cannot reach it. For if it were possible, as it is not, to prevent the English selling them strong drink that doth inebriate them; yet they having a native liberty to plant orchards and sow grain, as barley and the like, of which they may and do make strong drink...[87]

Native American alcohol abuse was therefore facilitated not only by the English liquor merchants for which Gookin, Eliot and their missionary brethren had so much disdain but by the conversion to English-style planting.

A dispute over land also plagued the relationship between the Natick flock and the neighboring town of Dedham. At the time of the 1659 confessions the praying

[81] Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections..." 38
[82] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 4*, 32… 162
[83] *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island, Vol 4…* 308, 338, 413
[84] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections…* 10
[85] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*…99
[86] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections...* 11
[87] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections...* 48

Indians of Natick had been "improving" land south of the Charles River for nine years. Whether this land was theirs by reason of de facto possession and as the result of the rightful aboriginal title passed on to the Speene family, as Eliot contended, or was part of Dedham, as leading citizens of that town insisted, was a sticky problem for the General Court. When Eliot and the praying Indians resisted the Puritan custom of arbitration through church elders, the court was twice forced to adjudicate the matter, both times setting aside the verdict of English juries who had found in favor of the Dedhamites. Despite the dangers inherent to the practice of appearing to validate traditional Native American land claims, the court understood that dispossessing the Natick Indians would deal a serious blow to the perception of the Puritans' "city on a hill," and they bought Eliot's argument that the Dedham case had the potential to both dissuade praying Indians from living at Natick and provide ammunition to the "prophane" Indians seeking to criticize the praying movement.[88]

Whatever the legal outcome of the protracted land dispute, the eagerness of the people of Dedham to use the Charles River as a natural barrier between them and their praying Indian neighbors must have sent a disheartening message to the Natick faithful. As Dane Morrison puts it, "They could not have been but confused and angered by the inconsistency which their fellow Christians used to undermine their own 'policies of perfection.'"[89]

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[88] Dane Morrison, *A Praying People: Massachusett Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission, 1600-1690* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1995)

[89] Dane Morrison…128; For more on the Dedham land dispute see Jean M. O'brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) Obrien comments that native right, combined with Indian possession of land in ways the English acknowledged, discouraged colonial officials from dispossessing them…38

Tension and Mistrust

That there was tension between the praying Indians and their English neighbors is readily apparent in both the missionary accounts and within the confession narratives themselves. The theme of hypocrisy is both internalized by those confessing and, at the same time, applied to the English. The questions the praying Indians posed to the missionaries at times reveal the proselytes' desire to challenge the English within the context of their own premises. One theme that emerges on more than one occasion is the idea that the English had been negligent in their attentions to spread the Gospel to the Native Americans. This of course was a charge rendered by critics across the ocean and admitted to in part by both missionaries and their supporters,[90] albeit with the caveat that their Jesuit adversaries' methods of "coyning Christians" were but a sham, but the missionaries also found themselves facing similar queries from the praying Indians. Wabbakoxets, reputedly an "old Powwaw" criticized the English for being "27 years in this land" without sharing the gospel to the Native Americans.[91] Similarly, Towanquatticks, a prominent sagamore on Martha's Vineyard, "wondered the English should be almost thirty years in the Country, and the Indians fools still."[92] The issue of English negligence was most likely lurking beneath the surface when one in Papassaconnaway's group posed the question, "If it be thus as you teach, then all the world of Indians are gone to hell to be tormented for ever, until now a few may goe to Heaven and be saved; is it so?"[93]

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[90] Edward Winslow, "Glorious Progress…" 75, John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine…" 55
[91] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine…" 55
[92] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Glorious Progress…" 78
[93] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 82

The English emphasis on sin as the condition of a "naughty heart," of the necessity of the inward transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit, made the issue of overcoming hypocrisy or praying for the benefit of men a central theme of the Natick confessions. Nishohkou admitted that his initial devotion was merely "praying before men,"[94] and marked himself as a hypocrite, citing the parable of the beam and the mote from Matthew chapter seven and adding, "My heart said, truly it is so; I teach others, but I do not well myself; I reprove sin and yet I do it."[95]

Yet Nishohkou was also willing to hold a mirror up to his examiners as well. In his confession he revealed that, while vacillating between doubt and belief, attempting to free himself from drinking, the English negatively influenced his ability to believe with their own seeming violation of the Sabbath:

> Afterward, I had temptation to drinking, and to vain courses, nigh half a year; yet when the Sabbath came, my heart would turn to God; when the Soldiers came upon us on the Sabbath, while wee were at meeting, and made us bring our guns hither; then my heart said, sure God hath not said, keep the Sabbath day holy, and then my heart cast of God, yet it was only in my heart. When we came to the Magistrates and Cutshamoquin asked, why they came on the Sabbath day, my heart was troubled…I was thirsty, and I drank a great deal, and I was drunk, and was carried before the Magistrates, and then I was ashamed.[96]

While Nishokou, citing Jesus' mention of David eating the temple bread (Matthew 12), eventually determined that the soldiers' behavior had not been a violation of the Sabbath, his response illuminates both the intensity with which Sabbath-keeping was preached and the distrust present between the praying Indians and the English. Even Waban, who is cited in the missionary tracts and in the confessions themselves as being pivotal in his encouragement of other praying Indians in the faith, confessed his previous ambivalence

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[94] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 6
[95] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 7
[96] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 5

toward the English, noting both that the English "loved" Native Americans but also that he sometimes thought the English "might kill us" if they failed to pray to God.[97] In his 1659 confession he also readily admitted to his anger over the missionary characterization of Native American religion as devil worship – "When the English came hither, they said, when I came to the English houses, that I loved the Devil: then I was very angry, and my words were, 'You know the Devil: I do not know the Devil…"[98]

The frustration experienced by praying Indians seeking acculturation is also present in the confessional narrative Anthony delivered to Eliot and the Roxbury church in 1659. Freely admitting that his motivation for dwelling in Roxbury had initially been to learn smithery, Anthony recalls his anger at being rejected as an apprentice for this trade: "But my master said, I may not teach him my trade, lest Indians learn to make locks and guns. Then I would not dwell with him, and thought to cast off praying…"[99] Like the missionaries, Anthony interpreted this rebuff with the understanding that English industry and enterprise were inextricable from faith. If English material culture was inaccessible to him, then so too must be the Englishman's God.[100]

Anthony was not imagining the Puritan ambivalence about his engagement in every aspect of English material life. The desire to absorb Native Americans into the English way of life was tempered by the recognition of the dangers adhering to a well-armed and technologically skilled population, particularly one who was "led" by the

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[97] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 31
[98] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 72
[99] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 11
[100] Anthony, along with his fellow applicant, John Speene, would later be identified by Daniel Gookin as "grave and pious men," in their station as teachers at Natick.

devil.[101] A 1630 royal proclamation had prohibited anyone from teaching Native Americans how "to make or amend" firearms or their components, and the colonial authorities enacted legislation to that effect in the 1640's, driving some Algonquians to become capable blacksmiths specializing in firearm repair.[102] Recognizing the military potential of boats, Massachusetts enacted a similar prohibition against selling them to Native Americans, and Connecticut and Plymouth forbade the sale of horses to their Native American neighbors.[103]

Connecticut tried to prohibit not only the trade, repair, and sale of firearms but also of "gunpowder, or shot, or lead, or mould, or military weapons, or armor." Sales of these items to persons outside the jurisdiction were also prohibited without a license out of a concern that they would end up in Native American hands.[104] A previous law proscribed even the handling of any Englishman's "weapon of any sort,"[105] and the Connecticut Court eventually went on to further ban trading "any instrument or matter made of iron or steel."[106] By 1653 the Court ordered their Native American neighbors to show good faith by giving up their guns; all who refused were to be regarded as enemies.[107] Even with the prohibitions on sales of firearms to Native Americans, the sale of gun parts to tribes with the capability of assembling them became commonplace,[108]

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[101] John Eliot, "New England's First Fruits," in Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Founding Of Harvard College* (Cambridge: MA, 1935) 428 Writing in 1643, even Eliot acknowledges that "we are wont to keep them at a distance" because of their affiliation with Satan.
[102] Patrick M. Malone, "Changing Military Technology Among the Indians of Southern New England, 1600-1677, *American Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Mar., 1973) 53
[103] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 4…*93; *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut prior to the Union with the New Haven Colony, 1636-1665, Vol. 1* (Hartford: Brown and Parsons, 1850) 285; Joyce Chaplin, *Subject Matter…*214-215. Chaplin notes that technology without martial implications such as female domestic technology was perceived as positive acculturation and non-threatening.
[104] *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Vol. 1…*79
[105] *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Vol. 1…*52
[106] *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Vol. 1…74*
[107] *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Vol. 1…240*
[108] Patrick M. Malone, "Changing Military Technology..." 57

and Native Americans were seemingly both well-acquainted and proficient with firearms before long. Describing his second voyage in 1671, Josselyn commented that "of late he is a poor Indian that is not master of two guns, which they purchase of the French and powder and shot, they are generally excellent marksmen."[109]

From time to time the colonial records reveal prosecution for the sale of guns to Native Americans[110] or even for the exchanging of firearms with them.[111] Laws could be bent if diplomatic considerations warranted it or if specific Native Americans had proven themselves trustworthy, however. While not wishing to honor Wamsutta's request to buy powder in 1660, the Plymouth Court ordered that he be given six pounds, seemingly in an attempt to maintain good relations with the new sachem.[112] Masshantampaine of Yarmouth, a minor sachem, was accused of stealing a gun only to have the court rule against his accusers and return the gun to him.[113] Despite similar prohibitions on the sale of horses to Native Americans, Philip was granted one as a gift in 1665.[114] In 1668 the Court granted a man named Powa his gun on the condition he perform agricultural labor previously agreed upon.[115] While Powa had to demonstrate his willingness to "break up ground" to retrieve his weapon, Keencumsett of Barnstable was evidently judged civilized enough to purchase a horse "for his use in husbandry."[116] Exceptions notwithstanding, the missionary impulse to anglicize was tempered by English concerns over equipping a savage population with those things that potentially conferred a military advantage. In this context, Eliot's insistence on merging the Gospel with the English

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[109] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*…104
[110] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 3…*132
[111] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 4…*16
[112] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 3*…192
[113] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol.3…*91
[114] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 4…*93
[115] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 4…94*
[116] *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 4…*93

brand of civility created another hurdle for the praying Indians; to the extent English material culture eluded them, so too did full participation in Puritan Christianity.

Despite the reservations of his countrymen, Eliot began requesting guns for his praying Indians in 1650[117] as a means of defense against hostile Native Americans, but this was not honored until the 1660's when their value as a defense against the Mohawks became apparent and the Commissioners of the United Colonies authorized missionary funds to be used for the purchase of arms for the praying Indians.[118] It had become clear that "ammunition was called for that the Indians whose faces are Godward might have for their defence against the Maquas (Mohawk), a people that lives up above two hundred miles west of us, who live by making inroads and depredations upon other Indians."[119] To make matters worse, the dreaded "Maquas" had seemingly made peace with the French by 1667, raising the specter of a truly fearsome and unholy alliance.[120] A gun-toting Iroquoian or Algonquian population in league with hostile European competitors constituted a significant source of fear for the New Englanders, and this had the potential to affect attitudes toward the praying Indians.[121] It is quite probable that the "jealousy too deeply apprehended" that the Indians, including Eliot's Natick flock, were "in a conspiracy with others, and with the Dutch" to harm the English was related to the smuggling of gun barrels and locks inside liquor casks into New Haven in 1653 by Dutchmen.[122]

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[117] Elise Brenner, "To Pray or Be Pray..." 145
[118] Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans…" (Jan, 1974) 41
[119] John Winthrop, *Correspondence*…20
[120] John Winthrop, *Correspondence*…20
[121] *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Vol. 1…*197
[122] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation..." 271, Patrick M. Malone, "Changing Military Technology..." 57

The authors of the missionary tracts were cognizant of the wariness with which their proselytes were regarded and of the fact that their own countrymen could be a hindrance to the work of the Gospel. Thomas Mayhew claimed it was difficult to find "a moderate voice" amongst the English with respect to the Native Americans.[123] In a November, 1649 letter Eliot decried the skepticism of those English who "may speak slightly" of the results of the mission. "If they say the Indians be all naught because such as come loytering and filtching about in our Townes are so," he wrote, "wish them to consider how unequal that judgment is, if all the English should be judged by the worst of them..."[124] Writing in 1727, Experience Mayhew compared the "spiritual pride" of the English to that of the Pharisees in Jesus' day, causing some to "speak too meanly of the Indians whom God has done so much for."[125] Indeed the theme of the "bad English," who were a hindrance to the propagation of the Gospel is not only perceptible in the Indian confessions, but in the missionary letters as well and in the actual teaching Eliot recounted of his early meetings with his Indian audience. There were "two sorts" of Englishmen, Eliot insisted to his flock, those who were "in a manner as ignorant of Jesus Christ as the Indians now are" and those who "for a time they lived wickedly also like other prophane and ignorant English, yet repenting of their sinnes and seeking after God and Jesus Christ, they are good men now and now know Christ..."[126] On another occasion Eliot told the inquiring Algonquians that many Englishmen "did not know God but were like Kitchamakins, drunken Indians."[127]

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[123] Thomas Mayhew, Sr., *Correspondence*…42
[124] Eliot, "The Light Appearing..." 126
[125] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*…XXI
[126] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking..." 6
[127] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking..." 11 One Indian acquaintance of Increase Mather's told him that there were "machet," or wicked, Englishmen just as their were "machet" Indians. Increase Mather in John W. Ford, *Some Correspondence between the Governors and Treasurers of the New England Company in*

A Degree of Education

For the missionaries, overcoming ignorance, be it of the Native American or of the wayward English variety, was to be accomplished through organized education. One of the most important components of English acculturation was the establishment of a systematized program of instruction for the praying Indians. From the very beginning of the missionary project, Eliot and his compatriots envisioned a program of catechism and literacy training that targeted both young and old. As early as 1646 Waban offered his son to be "educated and trained up in the knowledge of God" in Dedham[128] as did Wampas, who was evidently sent by the early company of praying Indians to offer his own son and three more Native American children to be "trained up among the English."[129] Wutasakompauin recalled in his confession that "we resolved we would pray to God and carry our children to Roxbury, that they might learn to pray..."[130]

Part of learning to "pray" in the Puritan context was the acquisition of literacy,[131] and the missionaries desired to implement a program of reading instruction. "If the Lord bring us to live in a Towne and Society," Eliot insisted, "we must have special care to have Schools for the instruction of the youth in reading, that they may be able to read the Scriptures at least."[132] The best and the brightest, he hoped, could be "wholly

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London and the Commissioners of the United Colonies in America, The Missionaries of the Company and Others Between the Years 1657 and 1712," (Burt Franklin: New York, 1896) 88

[128] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking..." 3

[129] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking..." 18

[130] John Eliot, "A Further Account..." 27

[131] Eliot's emphasis on prayer made "praying" the word Indians used to signify the whole of the Christian life, including those practices which were not actual prayer. In Eliot's words, "Their frequent phrase of Praying to God, is not to be understood of that Ordinance and Duty of Prayer only, but of all Religion, and comprehendeth the same meaning, with them, as the word (Religion) doth with us…" John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 215

[132] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing..." 121

sequestered to learning and put to school for that purpose..."[133] To a limited extent that did happen. The report of the Commissioners in 1662 reveals that two Native American students were matriculating at Harvard, while two more were in the grammar school at Cambridge and two others were at the English school learning to read and write. In addition "many others" were being instructed at various other locations to read and to write.[134]

Eliot believed that trained Native American missionaries would provide "the most likely instruments" for evangelizing the Indians even though he realized that training and sending them would be an expensive proposition.[135] Native American missionaries from Natick would eventually go forth to invite their countrymen into the ranks of the faithful.[136] It was with this purpose in mind that the Indian College at Harvard was founded in 1654, although John Sassamon most likely attended Harvard a few years prior.[137] While it is unclear precisely how many Algonquian youths matriculated during the college's forty-two year existence,[138] what is certain is that the confluence of disease and academic failure rendered the project a bitter disappointment.

Of the attempts to educate Native Americans at Harvard, the most successful appear to be Joel Hiacoomes, son of Thomas Mayhew Jr.'s first and most influential convert, and Caleb Chesehaumuck, son of a Martha's Vineyard sachem. Joel was presumably murdered on Nantucket by other Native Americans and Caleb died of

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[133] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing..." 121
[134] Commissioners of the United Colonies, *Historical Collections*...77
[135] John Eliot, "Reverend Mr. Eliot's Letter," *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, Vol. 10, 128; Gookin, *Historical Collections*..." 17; John Eliot, "Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England, in the Year 1670," (London: Printed for John Allen, 1671) 6
[136] John Eliot, "Letters of John Eliot," *Massachusetts Historical Society Publications*, Vol. 17, Nov. 1879, 246
[137] Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans..." 47
[138] For most of that time, the Indian College had no Indian students and was functioning as the home of the College printing press.

consumption shortly after receiving his bachelor of Arts degree in 1665. [139] Although not Harvard trained, Monoquassum, Natick's first teacher and admitted to church estate as one of the original eight members, also succumbed to consumption.[140] Others of those "bred up to school by the English" fell victim to consumption, causing speculation among some English that God had not ordained that any of the Algonquians would preach the gospel and still others to hold the opinion that Satan was attacking the mission at its root by dispatching these most promising Native American scholars. Commissioner Simon Bradstreet bemoaned the loss of the "Indian Scholars...of them very hopeful buds."[141] John Winthrop even saw the affliction with consumption of Eliot's son John, also active in the missionary effort, as "The Lord in his wise providence...drawing a black line" over the evangelizing of Native Americans.[142]

While Harry Dunster, the first president of Harvard, was a strong advocate of Native American education, his successor, Charles Chauncy, was seemingly more ambivalent about the prospects of educating Native American youth, largely because of the extra expense it required. In response to the new charter given the college in 1650, which gave Harvard the responsibility for educating both Native American and English youths, Dunster had initiated the construction of the Indian building at Harvard.[143] Chauncy, taking over the presidency in 1656, the first year of the new building, was concerned with the financial impact of the Indian College on Harvard's overall mission. In October of 1664 he wrote Robert Boyle, Governor of the New England Company,

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[139] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*... 33

[140] Walter T. Meserve, "English Works of Seventeenth-Century Indians," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Autumn, 1956) 267

[141] Simon Bradstreet, *Correspondence*...85

[142] John Winthrop, *Correspondence*... 20

[143] Walter T. Meserve, "English Works of Seventeenth-Century Indians"… 271

requesting that they make provision for "a fit salary for school masters and tutors in the College for every Indian that is instructed by them." For Chauncy, who graciously excluded himself from the parameters of the request, the tutors required such financial encouragement in part because they had "to deale with such nasty savages."[144]

Chauncy's main issue with the missionary enterprise was that it diverted funds away from the College. He had an ongoing dialogue with Robert Boyle regarding the cost of printing the Indian Bible and "other Indian Books," for which the College had not received its contractually agreed upon fees. In his eyes they had been "deprived" of an allowance "in the whole impression of the Indian Bible" in addition to the fact that other "Indian books" had been printed "without any advantage at all to the College."[145] As late as 1669 he was entreating Boyle to replace the printing equipment provided by the New England Company on the grounds that printing the Indian Bible and associated texts had rendered them worn and unusable, not only depriving America's scholars but also sounding the death knell of "the Common weal and the Civil laws passed for the general good will," and potentially causing the "unspeakable, almost irreparable, loss of the Christian religion and the Churches of the whole Community of New England."[146] Interestingly enough, in the same letter, despite his apocalyptic predictions regarding the fate of New England society without Harvard's printing press, he insisted that there was "no more need to issue yet further books from the Press for the use of the Indians."[147]

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[144] Charles Chauncy, *Correspondence*...10
[145] Charles Chauncy, *Correspondence*…9
[146] Further letters reveal that the New England Company did in fact provide the equipment requested, even though the Commissioners of the United Colonies claimed no prior knowledge of the transaction. *Correspondence*…35
[147] Charles Chauncy, *Correspondence*…64-65

Indeed the printing of the Indian Bible, which Eliot had translated completely by 1661, was plagued by financial concerns. A crisis caused by "some men who by force of fraud have endeavored to divert" missionary funds led Boyle to ask the Commissioners of the United Colonies to resist spending money on anything "not essential" to the missionary enterprise, including the printing and binding of books and stipends to those active in the effort.[148] Despite Chauncy's insistence that the amount of books provided to the praying Indians was adequate,[149] Native American education would continue to suffer from a lack of printed material, particularly after the destruction wrought by King Philip's war,[150] following which Eliot continued to clamor for the Algonquian Bible to be reprinted, for, he insisted, "until we have Bibles, we are not furnished to carry the Gospel unto them, for we have no means to carry religion thither, saving by the Scriptures."[151] Writing in 1694 Matthew Mayhew reported that although it was generally the practice on Martha' Vineyard to teach the children to read, many couldn't attend school because of a shortage of books. [152] Writing decades later in 1727, Experience Mayhew would emphasize that the Vineyard Indians of whom he wrote so fondly "must be considered as a people destitute of literature which the English and many other nations enjoy." According to Mayhew, the Native Americans of the Vineyard, by all accounts the most

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[148] Robert Boyle, *Correspondence*…16-17; In a previous letter written in May of 1662, Boyle had identified the printing of the Indian Bible as "most necessary for the Indians' instruction in religion." Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 75

[149] Lepore indicates that Chauncy was correct about the gross numbers of Indian Bibles that had been printed, saying that the output of the Cambridge Press had yielded an extraordinary 2.5 Bibles for every Indian Christian in addition to excess of other instructional materials. Jill Lepore, *The Name of War*…35 Yet the Commissioners of the United Colonies indicated in 1669 that both Eliot and Richard Bourne continued to insist that the instruction of the Indians suffered from a lack of these materials. *Correspondence*…33 Lepore calls the seeming overprinting "the mystery of the surplus Indian Bibles."

[150] In his account of his visitations to the various communities of Indians in 1698, Reverend Hawley notes that the three schools on Nantucket had been closed "for want of primers." *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, Vol. 10, 132

[151] John Eliot, *Massachusetts Historical Society Publications*, Volume 17, 1879

[152] Matthew Mayhew, "Brief Narrative of the Success Which the Gospel hath had Among the Indians of Martha's Vineyard in New England," (Boston: Printed by Bartholomew Green, 1694) 39

heavily concentrated haven of Native American Christianity, were deprived of books in their own language, and, since most who could read and write English had mastered the language only to "the level that poor men among the English are wont to do," they could not take full advantage of English texts.[153]

So despite the Puritan emphasis on literacy as a critical component of the Christian walk, many praying Indians could not read decades after Eliot's first sermon in 1646. Richard Bourne, writing in July of 1674, provided literacy statistics for Plymouth Colony's praying Indians, making distinctions among those who could read, write Algonquian, and read English.[154] His survey of readers indicates a significant variation amongst the groups, but only in one subgroup were a majority of congregants readers and this by a slim majority. Of the 458 total praying Indians included, only 152 were identified as readers, with only nine able to read English.[155] John Cotton, Jr., operating as pastor of the English church in Plymouth and preaching to Native Americans at Kitteaumut, recounted that of the forty Native Americans gathering to hear him, "about ten" could read English but many more were frustrated in their desire to acquire literacy because of the "great want" of Indian primers and Bibles. "I much desire," he wrote, "that the Commissioners would take some speedy course to supply that defect."[156] Writing in 1673 in response to inquiries concerning the inhabitants of Natick,

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[153] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*…XXIII
[154] For a more detailed discussion on literacy rates in New England, particularly concerning the differences between learning to read and learning to write see E. Jennifer Monaghan, "Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1, Special Issue: Reading America. (Mar., 1988), pp. 18-41 and Kathleen Bragdon, "Gender as a Social Category in Native Southern New England," *Ethnohistory* 43:4 (Fall, 1996) pp. 573-587
[155] Richard Bourne, *Historical Collections...* 57-58. Bourne was unable to collect data for the 35 praying Indians of Cotuhticut and Assoowamsoos due to distance and time considerations.
[156] John Cotton Jr., *Historical Collections...*60

Hassenemeset, Mashpege, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket, Eliot revealed that "sundry" could not read but "all Christians learn and rehearse catechise."[157]

The programs of catechism were not only rendered necessary by language and literacy considerations, but were also an effective way of tapping into Native American oral culture.[158] Throughout their confessions, the Natick applicants made repeated mention of "hearing" the word through the two principal means of instruction, catechism and sermons delivered on "lecture days." But the early Algonquian converts were conscious that they lacked the full-fledged interaction that literacy provided. Totheswamp worried that his ignorance rendered him ineffective: "Therefore I feared that I am one blind," he confessed, "and when I teach other Indians I shall cause them to fall into the ditch."[159] In his 1652 confession, Monoquassum, already functioning as somewhat of a schoolmaster before the founding of Natick, described his struggles with, and desire for, the written word. His feelings of inadequacy as a teacher were tied to his perception of his deficits as a reader. "Afterward, when I did teach among the Indians, I was much humbled," he revealed, "because I could not read right, and that I sinned in it." After much prayer and soul searching, he desired to become literate. Hearing that God grants wisdom to those who ask for it, he prayed "that He would teach me to read." His struggles intensified, however, as he fought to balance learning with the imposing task of surviving in a new economic system. "I feared," he confessed, "how should I, my wife, and child be clothed, if I spend my time in learning to read." God's response to

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[157] John Eliot, "Reverend Mr. Eliot's Letter," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Vol. 10, 125
[158] James Axtell, "The Power of Print in the Eastern Woodlands," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 44, No. 2 (Apr. 1987) 300-309 Josselyn, commenting on Algonquian culture, was struck by the Native Americans' ability to deliver formal speeches, sometimes an hour long, in rhymed meter. John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*… 97
[159] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 231

Monoquassum came through Matthew 6:25 when He "shewed" the worried teacher that he should "say not, what shall I eat, or drink, or wherewith shall I be clothed, wicked men seek after these; but first seek the kingdom of heaven, and these shall be added to you."[160] Evidently Monoquassum's fledgling interactions with the written Scripture quieted his fears about progressing further in his studies.

The Englishman's literacy gave him special access to God's Word and initially the Word was only available in English. For some of Eliot's flock the early perception was that the God whose Word was written in English might only respond to or understand that language. From the beginning of the mission Eliot had emphasized that truly knowing God was accomplished through the reading and hearing of the Word and through prayer. Although reading God's Word enabled one to see Christ most clearly, this was initially impossible for the fledgling flock, and so Eliot stressed meditation on the spoken Word and highlighted the importance of prayer.

> ...we wisht them to thinke and meditate of so much as had been taught them, and which they now heard out of God's booke, and to thinke, and to thinke much and often upon it, both when they did lie down on their mats in their Wigwams, and when they rose up, and to goe alone in the fields and woods, and muse on it, and so God would teach them; especially if they used a third helpe, which was, prayer to God to teach them and reveal Jesus Christ unto them; and we told them, that although they could not make any long prayers as the English could, yet if they did but sigh and groane, and say thus; Lord make me know Jesus Christ...that God would teach them Jesus Christ...[161]

Despite Eliot's assurances that God could interpret heartfelt sighs and groans, more than one of the praying Indians were initially uncertain about the omniscience of a God who

[160] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 236; Nishokou also makes mention of reading and teaching "weakly" in his 1659 confession delivered in front of the Elders. John Eliot, "A Further Account..." 7
[161] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking..." 5

seemingly revealed Himself only in English.[162] This perception was in part engendered by Eliot's initial foray into the mission field, which featured sermons in Algonquian but prayer conducted in English partly "to let them know this duty was serious and sacred."[163] The question of language and prayer arose in Eliot's first sermon at Waban's wigwam in 1646, where one congregant revealed that he had been thwarted from praying by another Indian who claimed that "Jesus Christ understood not what Indians speake in prayer."[164] In his confessions Waban revealed that he too originally had harbored the idea that God only comprehended English.[165] Eliot's answer to the question centered on the fact that God had created both Englishman and Native American and thus understood all prayers in all languages, but the Algonquians remained quizzical about how Englishmen had obtained special knowledge of Him. The apostle attempted to deal with the issue on his return by having one of his party lead the Native Americans in prayer in their own language.[166]

While Eliot and others were intent on translating the Bible and other spiritually beneficial material into Algonquian, there were many English who evinced a profound mistrust of the language itself.[167] Eliot found the Algonquian penchant for metaphor and simile enchanting, but for others this signaled that their language was unsophisticated and

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[162] In the continual practice of holding up the Native American converts as a foil for lukewarm England, the raw formlessness of Indian prayers were, in one sense, seen as superior to the prayers common to many English. In his contribution to the 1653 tract, Thomas Mayhew, Jr. noted that a particular group of Vineyard Indians prayed "not with any set form like Children, but like Men indued with a good measure of the knowledge of God." They were so "streitned (restrained) in respect of help from man," that their prayer seemed "more plainly to be the Dictates of God's Spirit." Thomas Mayhew Jr., "Tears of Repentance…" 206-207

[163] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking..." 3

[164] With regard to the issue of prayer in Algonquian, Cotton Mather reveals that it was necessary for Algonquian speakers to incorporate words from English in their prayers: "He that calls upon the most holy name of God, says *Jehovah*, or *God*, or *Lord*, and also they have learned and borrowed many other theological terms phrases from us." Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*…509

[165] John Eliot, "A Further Account..." 31; John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 231

[166] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking..." 5-13

[167] Jill Lepore, "Dead Men Tell No Tales… 479-512; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War…21-68*

incapable of abstractions beyond the material world.[168] He was clearly convinced that God's Word could be rendered faithfully in Massachusett, and he embraced Native American use of gesture and metaphor in his preaching. He always envisioned training Algonquian preachers and evangelists, not only because of the intrinsic authority they might enjoy within their own ranks but also out of necessity. Without Native American teachers the praying Indians would, in Gookin's words, "generally be destitute of teachers" because of the reluctance or inability of promising English candidates to learn Algonquian.[169] This deficit led Eliot to turn Natick into a sort of Algonquian seminary, training his flock not only in the Scriptures but in logic as well, sending some of the trainees to other praying towns. Of these several had begun their training as children in the program of catechism.[170] In his history of the mission, Gookin took pains to praise the efforts of some of these, including Anthony and John Speene, who remained in Natick. When Englishmen did preach to the praying Indians, as Eliot frequently did, it was sometimes with the aid of an interpreter. Gookin, having taken on Eliot's role after the apostle's infirmities made traveling untenable, prepared his sermons with the assistance of a Native American translator, who would then translate from English to Algonquian as Gookin preached. Ever seeking to ground their actions in Scripture, the praying Indians at Natick justified this procedure by citing 1 Corinthians 14:27-28, in which Paul discusses the necessity of translation if someone in the church is speaking an unknown tongue.[171]

[168] Laura J. Murray, "Joining Signs with Words: Missionaries, Metaphors, and the Massachusett Language," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 74 (Mar, 2001) 62; Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*…501
[169] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections...* 43
[170] John Eliot, *Correspondence*…44
[171] Letter from 16 Indians at Natick, Massachusetts to the Reverend John Eliot, *Correspondence*...75

General Conclusions

The residents of Eliot's praying towns faced serious challenges as they attempted to submit their hearts to Christ and their culture to the English. David Silverman has argued that a key component of the relative success of the Martha's Vineyard mission was Thomas Mayhew Jr.'s willingness to engage in a cultural translation process that anchored the Gospel message to the cultural moorings already present in Wampanoag culture.[172] While the Massachusetts praying towns were largely the product of Eliot's rather singular eschatology and of his relentless commitment to Anglicization preceding the outpouring of grace, the missionary approach employed by the Mayhews displayed an understanding of his Algonquian neighbors and, from the start, included Native Americans in the missionary strategy. Whereas Eliot had a difficult time convincing his following that he was replaceable, the churches on Martha's Vineyard were pastored by Hiacoomes and Tackanash, who were ordained in 1670. Hiacoomes had been actively preaching the gospel to Vineyard Indians as early as the mid-1640's, and he continued to do so after Thomas Mayhew, Jr. was lost at sea in 1657.[173] Thus while the vision for the praying towns originated with Eliot and was constrained by his views about acculturation, the Native American churches on the island were the product of a collaboration that did not rest as prominently on the efforts of one man.

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[172] David Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha's Vineyard, 1600-1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); David J. Silverman, "Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation: Creating Wampanoag Christianity in Seventeenth-Century Martha's Vineyard," The William and Mary Quarterly April 2005 <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/wm/62.2/silverman.html> (31 Aug. 2006)

[173] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*…10-11

Even before King Philip's War, the Praying Indians in Massachusetts Bay found themselves in a tenuous position as they strove to demonstrate the civility that was required as a prerequisite for their conversion to be acknowledged by English Puritans. Asked to display cultural as well as spiritual conversion, they struggled to circumvent roadblocks to that transformation ranging from fashion to language to surly English animals. Pressed by Eliot and his missionary brethren to acculturate fully, they were nevertheless excluded from full participation in English life. The connection drawn between civility and the Gospel linked the message of salvation with other requirements that were difficult for the praying Indians to fulfill. They could cut their hair, dress, plant and domesticate animals like their English neighbors, but it was clear that, when came to inclusion in all aspects of English life in New England, they stood with only one foot inside the gate.

Chapter 3: Between Two Peoples: Sachems, Friends, and Family

The transition to praying Indian was also rendered problematic by political and familial relationships. The existence of the praying towns and of bands of praying Indians posed a series of challenges and opportunities for the sachems of Southern New England. The towns constituted a potential subversion to the traditional power structure, and many sachems seemed to view them with distrust. What relationship the converts would retain with their leaders and what effect Biblical mandates would have on the status accorded them were questions without easy resolutions. The impact sachems had on the promulgation of the Gospel was also an issue, as their influence could be wielded to promote that enterprise or to dissuade their people from considering the missionary message.

The sachemships of Southern New England were typically hereditary in nature, with succession passing from sachem to eldest son, although Robert Hasenstab suggests that rules of succession were flexible enough to allow for the best qualified among the Sachem's kin to assume the title.[1] In the absence of the appropriate male heir, a woman could ascend to the position.[2] New archaeological evidence suggests that scholars were wrong to dismiss English reports of Native American hierarchy based on the assumptions that Amerindian civil society was egalitarian. By the fifteenth century many Native

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[1] Eric S. Johnson, "Community and Confederation: A Political Geography of Contact Period Southern New England," in *The Archeological Northeast*, Mary Ann Levine, Kenneth E. Sassaman, Michael S. Nassaney, Eds., (Westport, CT: Bergen and Garvey, 2000) 159

[2] Mourt's Relation, *Journal of the English Plantation at Plimoth*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966, originally published in 1622) 57; *Plymouth Colony Records: Court Orders, Vol. 4…*9, 187; William Wood, *New England's Prospect...*79; Howard S. Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower…*97

Americans were living under increasingly centralized authority.[3] While English understandings of authority and power assuredly influenced their descriptions of Native American government, Native Americans themselves attested to the hierarchical nature of their polities.[4]

Sachems attempted to retain the allegiance of their subjects through tribute or through trade routes they controlled. Such gift giving helped establish a network of alliances and friendships, as well as a hierarchy. Sachemships were often subdivided into smaller provinces given to sagamores, more minor sachems who also were owed tribute and exercised authority over their people but could also lose their support and cease to hold sway over various factions.[5] Minor sachems and common subjects alike owed tribute to more powerful sachems, who in turn owed protection to those in their domain.[6] This tribute, along with other goods and services collected by sachems, helped them to perform their duties housing important guests, giving gifts to allies, and caring for the material needs of the destitute among them. Generally, sachems allocated land-use rights, distributed the products of large-scale communal activities, decided on alliances and on war, regulated trade, and settled disputes.[7]

In this social system elites would logically be concerned about establishing their position relative to other elites, in Thomas Morton's words, "to maintaine their reputation

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[3] Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English Facing of In Early America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000) 38
[4] Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) 12
[5] Elise M. Brenner, "To Pray or to be Prey: That is the Question: Strategies for Cultural Autonomy of Massachusetts Praying Town Indians," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring, 1980); Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 203-235; William S. Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore 1620-1984* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1986)
[6] Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King…* 12
[7] Eric S. Johnson, "Community and Confederation…" 158-159

so much as they do."[8] Thus the new praying movement, replete with its Old Testament power structure, had the potential of siphoning off people from sachems' authority and perhaps even creating new authority for others.

Despite James Axtell's assertion that European observers usually characterized Native American society as being wholly without government or under the "capricious system of an absolute theocrat,"[9] New England commentators of the seventeenth century were generally united in claiming that the Native Americans living near them had a form of government. Karen Kupperman points out that all who actually saw Native American government up close affirmed that they lived in well-governed societies.[10] Far from being dismissive of sachems' authority and the loyalty shown them by their subjects, Kupperman argues, such obedience was held up by some English commentators as a source of shame for an England in which proper respect for authority was eroding.[11]

Generally the English in New England described Native American government in European terms. William Wood characterized Algonquian groups as inhabiting "shires" in which "every several division" was "swayed by a several king" and described not only laws but accompanying punishments as well. While acknowledging that the Native American system had "not so many laws" as the English one, he attributed it to the fact that "their evil courses" were not as advanced as those of many other nations.[12]

Gookin described Native American government in New England as a sort of mixed monarchy that relied upon the consent of those governed:

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[8] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan* (Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1969, originally published 1637) 39
[9] James Axtell, "The Invasion Within" in *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 148
[10] Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English*…91
[11] Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English*…97
[12] William Wood, *New England's Prospect*…80-81, 56

> Their government is generally monarchical, their chief sachem or sagamore's will being their law; but yet the sachem hath some chief men, that he consults with as his special counselors. Among some of the Indians their government is mixed, partly monarchical and partly aristocratical; their sagamore doing not any weighty matter without the consent of his great men or petty sagamores. Their sachems have not their men in such subjection, but that very frequently their men will leave them upon distaste or harsh dealing, and go and live under other sachems that can protect them, so that their princes endeavor to carry it obligingly and lovingly unto their people, lest they should desert them, and thereby their strength, power, and tribute would be diminished.[13]

Writing in 1694, Matthew Mayhew identified the former sachemships on Martha's Vineyards as "purely monarchical," but also pointed to the presence of "nobles" who served as counselors to the head sachem.[14] John Josselyn also called their government monarchical, noting that "they that descend from the eldest proceeding from his loins, is the Roytelet of the tribe, and if he have daughters, his son dying without a son, the government descends to his daughter's son."[15] James Fitch of Connecticut rejoiced that those at the Shawwtucket settlement of praying Indians were free from the "yoke" of Uncus' monarchy.[16] Eliot was consistent throughout the tracts in his depiction of sachems as monarchs subject to the influence of elites.

In the mid-seventeenth century moving to a praying town now presented itself as another option for those who found themselves sachemless or, conversely, under the authority of a sachem whose rule they found heavy-handed. The towns, like other missions, provided alternatives for status achievement and self-validation under changing conditions.[17] The confession narratives reflect the influence of sachems, and the

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[13] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*...14
[14] Matthew Mayhew, *Brief Narrative of the Success Which the Gospel Hath Had Among the Indians of Martha's Vineyard in New England (1694)* (Boston: Printed by Bartholomew Green, 1694) 7
[15] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*…103
[16] James Fitch, *The Public Records of Connecticut, from 1665-1678* (Hartford: F.A. Brown, 1852) 591
[17] Wolfgang Gabbert, "Social and Cultural Conditions…" 304

missionaries were quite preoccupied with influencing them. Sachems' attitudes towards the mission effort were seen as essential, as their influence could drive people either towards or away from the praying movement. Uncas' resistance, for example, gave "unhappy remoras" to the successes of the ministry in Connecticut according to Cotton Mather. [18] Eliot wanted the Commissioners to be supportive of Fitch's efforts with the sachem in part, even going so far as to speculate that Uncas' influence may even have implications for success with the Manquaogs (Mohawks),[19] despite their numerous depredations against Eliot's flock.

Sachems could be a boon to the missionary project. "I do endeavor," wrote Eliot, "to engage the Sachems of greatest note to accept the Gospel because that doth greatly animate and encourage such as are well-affected and is a damping to those that are scoffers and opposers."[20] Cutshamekin's influence apparently extended to some of the Martha's Vineyard Indians, to the encouragement of the Gospel message there.[21] Thomas Mayhew, Jr. recalled that, at the beginning of his efforts, three things "were greatly enquired into" by his Native American audience and that one of these was "what approbation they should get from other sagamores and governors."[22] Papassaconnaway, a sagamore of note and a pawwaw as well, pledged not only his own devotion to the Gospel but also that of his sons, at least one of whom was also a sachem.[23]

Many sachems were openly hostile to the praying movement, however. While Eliot initially sensed the greatest resistance from the pawwaws, he came to see opposition

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[18] Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*…46
[19] John Eliot, *Correspondence*…44
[20] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress..." 83
[21] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Glorious Progress…" 81
[22] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Light Appearing…" 112 Presumably the reason for asking about "other" sachems was that their own, Towanquatick, had already professed his support for the praying movement.
[23] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 82

from the Native American political leaders as an even greater impediment to the success of the Gospel:

> And the reason of it is this, they plainly see that religion will make a great change among them, and cut them off from their former tyranny; for they hold their people in absolute servitude...besides their former manner was, that if they wanted money, or it they desire any thing from a man, they would take occasion to rage and be in great anger..."[24]

According to Eliot, a sachem's "anger" was usually assuaged through material gifts. The missionary emphasis on labor, however, ran directly counter to this. Under the ethos promoted by the mission, sachems even had been admonished by praying Indians that they had to labor for their goods, rather than receiving them as mollification.

A closely related issue was the payment of tribute, which also was affected by the mission. Uncas, the Mohegan sachem whose power had grown in part because of the constraints on individual mobility imposed by English settlement and in part because of his alliance with the English[25] nevertheless cringed at the idea of missionary efforts among his people. According to Eliot, his resistance was related to the issue of tribute, and the Mohegan sachem even went to Hartford to complain to the Commissioners of the United Colonies about the prospect of missionary efforts among his people. Eliot met with Uncas to assure him that he had no intention of "meddling" with sachems' civil rights or jurisdiction or to interfere with the paying of tribute "or any other dues,"[26] but the Mohegan leader, it seems, remained unconvinced.

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[24] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing..." 139
[25] Eric S. Johnson, "Community and Confederation…" 164
[26] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*...51-52

Uncas went so far as to agree to attend meetings held at the house of James Fitch,[27] Pastor in Norwich, Connecticut but ultimately balked at the implications of the praying movement. Writing in 1674, Fitch described the reaction Uncas and two other Sachems had to his preaching at Montville:

> There at first carried it teachably and tractably; until at length the sachems did discern, that practical religion will throw down their heathenish idols, and the sachems' tyrannical monarchy, and then the sachems, discerning this, did not only go away, but drew off their people, some by flatteries, and others by threatenings; and they would not suffer them to give so much as an outward attendance to the ministry of the word of God.[28]

The connection between spiritual and temporal liberation was clear to the Puritan preacher, as religion and civil society were inextricable. To renounce idolatry potentially involved removing oneself from the control of leaders still bound by Satan, and Uncas evidently understood that all too well.

Fitch's frustration with Uncas' impact on the decisions of potential proselytes had risen to a fever pitch by the late 1670's. In a 1678 letter to the Connecticut General Court he excoriated the Mohegan sachem for inhibiting the growth of the praying movement in Connecticut. "I am sufficiently informed there are a considerable number more abiding with Uncas," he complained, "who doubtless are willing to come and settle with the others, but are merely hindered by Uncas." He was even of the opinion that the Mohegan leader's actions were so egregious that they merited some form of official punishment by the Court. Uncas, he said, was masterminding not only the "leading away" of "surrenderers," from the praying settlement, but also was behind all manner of mischief including the destruction of English livestock and possibly even murder.[29]

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[27] John Eliot, *Correspondence*…44
[28] James Fitch, *Historical Collections*...68-69
[29] James Fitch, *The Public Records of Connecticut, from 1665-1678, Vol 2*…592

As described by Fitch, Uncas' strategies for dissuading his followers included both the persuasion of flattery and the exercise of intimidation.[30] His power had grown tremendously in the years following the Pequot War and, as with many other sachems in the post-war period, his relationship with his subjects had grown increasingly exploitative in nature. The reciprocity that had formerly characterized the relationship between powerful confederations and their tributaries became strained by the demand for wampum created by the flow of European trade goods into the Northeastern woodlands,[31] as wampum not only functioned as currency among Native American groups and between Native Americans and Europeans but even functioned as legal tender for the payment of debts among the English.[32] Speaking of the "new" brand of sachem emerging in this changing economic context, Peter Thomas states that

> Various individuals gained prominence as a result of personal drive, magnetism, and the ability to manipulate resources, rather than from any ascribed right to leadership in their cultural systems. Such personalities have come to be called "big-men," in other geographical areas of the world. One quality of big-man authority stands out above the rest: personal power. Big-men frequently build their authority by bending their skills in one particular direction – to acquiring goods for redistribution to their immediate followers and to wider social units.[33]

In this new economy, the necessity of maintaining the ready flow of tribute was heightened, and the praying movement possessed the potential to disrupt it.

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[30] Eric. S. Johnson in *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1631-1816*, Robert Grumet, Ed., (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996) 39; see also Peter A. Thomas, "Cultural Change on the Southern New England Frontier, 1630-1665" in *Cultures in Contact*, William W. Fitzhugh, ed. (Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington and London, 1985) 131-157
[31] Eric. S. Johnson, *Northeastern Indian Lives*... 44
[32] Paul A. Robinson, Marc A Kelley, and Patricia E. Rubertone, "Interpretations from a Seventeenth-Century Narragansett Indian Cemetery," in *Cultures in Contact*, William W. Fitzhugh, ed. (Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington and London, 1985) 125 Robinson et al argue in part that the presence of European trade goods in Narragansett graves is an indication of both the prominence and importance of these goods in seventeenth century Narragansett life but that traditional technologies and crafts were not abandoned in favor of European replacements.
[33] Peter A. Thomas, "Cultural Change…" 139

The subject of tribute was also featured prominently in Eliot's 1671 *Indian Dialogues*, a work which Eliot characterizes as "partly historical, of some things that were done and said, and partly instructive, to show what might or should have been said."[34] The third dialogue is a conversation among Anthony Nahauton, his brother William, an unnamed sachem, and "Philip Keitassoot," a thinly veiled representation of Philip the Wampanoag sachem. In the dialogue Philip's character raises the tribute issue, prompting William's character to claim that "If any of the praying Indians should be disobedient (in lawful things) and refuse to pay tribute unto their sachems, it is not their religion and praying to God that teaches them to do so, but their corruptions...I am sure the Word of God commandeth all to be subject to the higher powers and to pay them tribute..." Citing Romans 13 and Christ's directive to render unto Ceasar that which is Ceasar's, he goes on to insist that tribute had always been rendered to Cutshamekin and to his successor Chikkatabuk (Josiah), even when the latter turned apostate.[35]

It seems that Cutshamekin, the original leader of Eliot's first band of praying Indians, would have disputed this account. In the early days of the mission, he openly quarreled with the apostle after Eliot lectured about the idea of creating a praying town, telling him that "all the sachems in the country were against it." For Eliot the conflict was a critical turning point in his relationship with that first group of prospective converts as the sachem seemingly got the worst of the argument.[36] More importantly, Cutshamekin freely admitted that the source of his resistance was that his constituents had ceased to pay him tribute as they formerly had. When Eliot reminded the disgruntled

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[34] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues, For Their Instruction in that great Service of Christ, in calling home their Country-men to the Knowledge of God, and of Themselves, and of Jesus Christ* (Cambridge, 1671) 1
[35] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*... 44-45
[36] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing..." 140

sachem that he had preached on Romans 13 in an effort to clarify the praying Indians' responsibilities towards their sachems, Cutshamekin insisted it had been to no avail. After more preaching by both Eliot and John Cotton, the praying Indians resumed the practice of giving gifts and services to their traditional leader, but with one critical difference. In Eliot's words, "But the bottom of it lieth here, he formerly had all or what he would; now he hath but what they will." Cutshamekin also had to endure admonitions from his people on improving his rule and for this he was "provoked by other sachems" not to suffer this indignity, enduring to such a point that Eliot expressed his pity for the stricken leader.[37]

While Cutshamekin seemingly came to terms with his reduced status, whether as a change of attitude wrought by Eliot's lectures on temptation or because he had little choice in the matter, other sachems continued to bitterly oppose the mission effort. According to Eliot, "The temptation still doth work strongly, in the country, the sachems opposing any that desire to submit themselves to the service of the Lord." Speaking of the Narragansett of Rhode Island being "indisposed" to embrace the Christian faith, Gookin cited the poor example of the English in the region and "the averseness of their Sachems."[38] Although Eliot saw a silver lining to the generally resistant attitude of sachems in that the opposition tended to keep "the wicked" from joining the praying towns, his concern over the fervor of sachem opposition even led him to insist on the construction of the Palizado fort and the stockpiling of weapons at Natick.[39]

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[37] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing..." 141
[38] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*...70
[39] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing..." 142-143

Sachems themselves felt pressure to avoid the mission. According to Gookin, Wannalancet, son of Pasconaway, the chief sachem of Pawtucket, was reluctant to become a praying Indian despite his seeming affection for the English:

> Many endeavors had been used several years to gain this sachem to embrace the Christian religion, but he hath stood off from time to time, and not yielded up himself personally, though for four years past he hath been willing to hear the word of God preached and to keep the Sabbath – A great reason that hath kept him off, I conceive, hath been the indisposition and averseness of sundry of his chief men and relations to pray to God; which he foresaw would desert him, in case he turned Christian...[40]

Philip's character in the dialogues echoes this concern, saying "If I pray to God, then all my men that are willing to pray to God will stick to me...but all such as love not and care not to pray to God...all these will forsake me."[41] Fictional representation or not, the fear was not without foundation, as Mittark, Sachem of Gayhead on Martha's Vineyard, was forced to leave his people on account of their dissatisfaction with his new faith.[42]

Sachems depended on the good graces of their constituents and so not only could they potentially lose power through the desertion of converts, but, should they choose to join the praying movement, they also risked alienating many in their own ranks. In some cases the tension affected the relationship amongst the elites. Mayhew recalled an individual who was accounted a "great man" among the Indians of Martha's Vineyard by virtue of his friendship with a powerful mainland sachem. When his desire to become a praying Indian became known, his life was threatened repeatedly.[43] Daniel Richter has argued that the violence engendered by the factionalism resulting from the Christianizing of Indians can be read as traditionalists responding not only to aberrant practices of the

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[40] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*... 47
[41] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*...46
[42] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*…23
[43] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Tears of Repentance..." 209-210

converts but also to the formation of divergent communities within villages, in a sense, the creation of enemies within the gates.[44]

Desertion from the traditional power structure was seemingly a motivating factor from the early days of the mission. Shephard wrote of a sachem attending Eliot's early lectures at Nonantum who attempted to overcome the opposition of his chief men by arguing that the English were a less oppressive authority than their traditional leaders:

> "...for (saith he) all the time you have lived after the Indian fashion under the power and protection of higher Indian Sachems, what did they care for you? They only sought their own ends out of you, and therefore would exact upon you and take away your skins and your kettles and your wampam from you at their own pleasure, and this was all that they regarded, but you may evidently see that the English mind no such things, care for none of your goods, but only seek your good and welfare..."[45]

The comparison emerged again during the 1654 examination where one respondent claimed that the English possessed the "true love" that their great Sachems lacked.[46]

In the *Indian Dialogues*, the missionary pitch to Philip is couched in terms that reflect the reciprocal relationship between a sachem and his subjects. Anthony and William urge Philip to pray out of an obligation to "do them all the good you can." Many in Philip's service would pray, the brothers insist, were it not for a dependence upon Philip. According to Eliot's Anthony character, a contrite heart from Philip would not only bring him under God's mercy but also lead his people to the Lord as well:

> Oh, how welcome will you be unto the Lord? And oh how happy and joyful will all your people be when they and their Sachem are all owned by God, to be in the number of his Children and Servants. It will be a joy to all the English Magistrates, and Ministers, and Churches, and good people of the Land, to hear

[44] Daniel Richter, "Iroquois versus Iroquois: Jesuit Missions and Christianity in Village Politics, 1642-1686," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter, 1985), 10
[45] Thomas Shephard, "The Clear Sun-Shine..." 38
[46] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation..." 278

> that Philip and all his people are turning to God and becoming praying Indians. We read in Luke 15:7 that *there is joy in heaven over one poor sinner that repenteth, and turneth unto God*; what great joy will it then be in heaven, when so great a number as you and your people be, are turned unto the Lord, and become praying Indians![47]

Regardless of the degree to which this dialogue reflects things that were said in actual conversation with Philip, the importance Eliot placed on Philip's conversion is clear, as is the missionary's understanding of Native American government. The assumption of Philip's sovereignty was tempered by his obligations as Sachem. If indeed the Christian walk was the better part, then Philip's conversion was not only mandated by a desire for his own salvation but out of concern for the subjects who would willingly follow him.

The message delivered to the Wampanoag leader in the *Dialogues* also appeals to the idea of alliance and to the numerical superiority of praying Indians relative to the loss of any detractors from the sachem's fold. William's character urges Philip to "consider what you shall gain by praying to God; do not trouble yourself with what you shall lose." By becoming a praying Indian Philip supposedly stood to gain the friendship of all of the Massachusetts Native Americans as well as that of the praying Indians from Nipmuk country, Nop (Martha's Vineyard), Nantucket, Mahshepog, and Cape Cod. Additionally, the benefits of an improved relationship with the governments of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, and therefore with the King, were an enticement to conversion:

> And suppose you lose a few Subjects that hate praying to God, but yet you shall gain a more intimate love of the Governour, and Magistrates, and good people of Plimouth, who were ever good friends to your Father Onjamequm, and to you hitherto; but if you pray to God, you shall finde a difference, they will more honour, respect and love you, then ever they did…Yea further, the Governor of the Massachusetts will own you, and be fatherly and friendly to you. Ye more, the King of England, and the great Peers who are heads of the Corporation there, who yearly send over means to encourage and promote our praying to God, they

[47] John Eliot, "Indian Dialogues…" 44

> will take notice of you; and what are a few of your subjects, that hate praying to God, in comparison of all these?[48]

The praying movement had other implications for the sachems' status, however. People "a little more remote from the great and proud ones"[49] seemed to be more receptive to the missionary message, and this was conceivably a threat to the established hierarchy. Traditionally under the sachems and their chief men were those who, as Matthew Mayhew put it, "having no stamp of gentility were yet esteemed as having a natural right of living within their prince's dominion." Beneath them were those still regarded as strangers, even if their ancestors had lived there for a long period of time.[50] The traditional leaders on Martha's Vineyard initially found Hiacoomes' relationship with the English alarming not only because his allegiance had shifted but because that relationship seemingly had the potential to upset the social order. Hiacoomes had been "looked on as but a mean person, scarce worthy of their notice or regard,"[51] but rose to a position of leadership within the church,[52] as church leaders on the island, according to Mayhew, were chosen according to the perception of their godliness and their ability to "suppress" sin.[53] The Philip character in the dialogues also objects to the potentially transforming impact of the mission, saying:

> I perceive that in your praying to God and in your churches, all are brought to an equality; sachems and people they are all fellow brethren in you churches, poor and rich are equally privileged; the vote of the lowest of the people, hath as much weight as the vote of the Sachem. Now I doubt that this way will lift up the heart

[48] John Eliot, "Indian Dialogues…" 48
[49] John Eliot "Strength out of Weakness..." 170
[50] Matthew Mayhew, *Brief Narrative…*9
[51] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts: Or Some Account of the Lives and Dying Speeches of a Considerable Number of the Christianized Indians of Martha's Vineyard in New England 1727* (Boston: Printed for Samuel Gerrith, 1727) 2
[52] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Strength out of Weakness..." 188
[53] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Tears of Repentance..." 209

> of the poor to too much boldness, and debase the rulers too low, this bringing all to an equality, will bring all to a confusion.[54]

The imposition of a rule of law had a leveling effect within the community of praying Indians. Believing Indians on Martha's Vineyard were at times willing to confront nonbelievers, including sachems, with their sinful state.[55] Men such as Waban and Cutshamekin, the acknowledged leaders of the Natick group, were not immune from the admonition and censure of the body. In one instance, Cutshamekin, whose wife previously had been reprimanded for "discoursing" on worldly matters with other women on the Sabbath, was himself reproved for his behavior regarding his teenage son, who had been called before the Assembly to answer for his repeated and deliberate refusal to include "and thy mother" in his recitation of the Fifth commandment. In the course of inquiry into the youngster's reticence, the young man began to "accuse his father of sundry evils," including saying his father physically abused him and forced him to drink alcohol. The young lad's stubbornness and subsequent refusal to allow his father to pay the fine for his drunkenness frustrated Eliot, who in turn exhorted Cutshamekin to address his son's complaints publicly in order to "remove that stumbling block," out of his son's way. Cutshamekin, seemingly feeling the grief of a stricken parent, obliged, confessing "his maine and principal evils of his own accord," whereupon Eliot, ever eager to seize a teaching opportunity, pressed him about other past behaviors including alcohol abuse, "filthiness," and fraud. For Eliot, the Sachem's public humiliation and confession "was profitable for all the Indians,"[56] but he understood the potential discomfort this kind of public censure held for Sachems. In the *Dialogues* his Philip

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[54] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*...49
[55] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., *Tears of Repentance*…210-211
[56] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine" 53-54

character insists that "If I must be admonished by the Church, who are my subjects, I know not how I shall like that."[57]

Despite Eliot's insistence that the praying towns represented no threat to the power of the sachems and that the praying Indians still owed fealty to their traditional leaders, many sachems clearly grasped that if in fact in Christ there was neither slave nor free, Jew nor Greek, then the praying movement had the potential to turn the inconsequential into the influential. In at least one case it may have elevated someone who wasn't a sachem by heredity to the equivalent status, as Waban's stature surely rose as a result of the praying movement. Of Waban, who freely admitted to his initial desire to become either a sachem or a "witch,"[58] Gookin wrote that he "*became*, by his example and activity, a leader."[59] Eliot indicated that his patience and prudence engendered so much respect amongst the praying Indians that they elected him Ruler of Fifty.[60]

Nevertheless, Elise Brenner has demonstrated successfully that the rulers in Eliot's system were disproportionately those who were already in or close to the traditional hierarchical line of descent. She sees the imposition of Eliot's Exodus-inspired government as his attempt to control the Christian Indians in a godly manner while undermining the system of bloodline rule.[61] A closer examination of the missionary tracts, however, reveals that this may be an artificial distinction. A 1647 General Court order officially utilized sachems submitted to Massachusetts Bay as pre-

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[57] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*…50
[58] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 231
[59] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*...29 (emphasis mine)
[60] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 232; The potential for disruption of the line of traditional leadership predates the formation of praying towns, as demonstrated by Squanto's attempts to use his position with the English of New Plymouth to gain power for himself. John H. Hummins, "Squanto and Massasoit, A Struggle for Power," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Mar., 1987) 54-70; Jenny Hale Pulsipher, "Subjects Unto the Same King: New England Indians and the Use of Royal Political Power," *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, Vol. 5, NA 2003
[61] Elise Brenner, "To Pray or to Be Prey..." 143

existing officers of the Court, empowered to bring their own people to English courts, to "keep a court of themselves," and to adjudicate in minor civil or criminal cases.[62] Eliot assumed that prominent members of the existing bands could act as either hindrances or draws, and he seemed content to allow the traditional ruling families to be elected in the new system, provided they conformed to the principles and standards of the praying community. Of Cutshamekin, Eliot wrote that he was the "chief sachem" and "*therefore* chosen the chief" in the new system. Despite Eliot's concern that he was "doubtful in respect of the thoroughness of his heart," the constancy of his profession and the potential influence he wielded sufficed to satisfy Eliot about the choice.[63]

The missionaries recognized that influence and sought actively to target Native American leaders with the Gospel. While Eliot's *Dialogues* may be somewhat fanciful in their construction, the real King Philip, like Uncas, was the target of a concerted evangelizing effort, and in 1671 Anthony and William Nahauton were actually sent to preach the good news to Massasoit's powerful second son and to attempt to mediate trouble brewing between Philip and the people of New Plymouth.[64] John Sassamon, Eliot's translator and perhaps the most acculturated of the pre-war praying Indians, was also sent to Philip, although some have questioned the purity of his motives in his role as the Sachem's scribe.[65] Gookin still had hopes for Philip's conversion as late as 1674:

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[62] Thomas Shephard, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 49

[63] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress..." 81; "Strength out of Weakness..." 173, (emphasis mine) The English, translating Indian relationships into their own set of categories, were inclined to see sachems and their relations as "princes" or "nobles." Thus it would be natural for them to see the ruling elites as logical choices for leadership in church and/or civil government. For example, Experience Mayhew writes that Jannawannit, a Martha's Vineyard Indian preacher, was "an Indian of good Quality, being a younger brother of one of their sachems or noblemen." Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*…20

[64] John Eliot, "Instructions from the Church at Natick to William and Anthony," *Massachusetts Historical Collections,* Vol. 5-6, 1st Ser. (1799) 201-202

[65] Jill Lepore, "Dead Men Tell No Tales...497

> There are some that have hopes of their greatest and chiefest sachem, named Philip, living at Pawkunnawkutt. Some of his chief men, as I hear, stand well inclined to hear the gospel; and himself is a person of good understanding and knowledge in the best things. I have heard him speak very good words, arguing that his conscience is convicted, but yet, though his will is bowed to embrace Jesus Christ, his sensual and carnal lusts are strong bands to hold him fast under Satan's dominions.[66]

But despite these potentially sanguine indications, Philip obdurately persisted in his rejection of the Gospel, as he associated that message with submission to the Plymouth Governor whom he regarded as a mere subject of King Charles II. Indeed many sachems attempted to utilize their submission to the King as a strategy for claiming equal footing with colonial authorities, three Narragansett sachems even going so far as to submit themselves, their people, and their lands directly to King Charles I. in 1644.[67] Philip's insistence that he stood as an equal with the various colonial governors meant not only resisting the authority of colonial governments and of the United Colonies but also the praying movement, as formal acceptance of the Gospel was linked to political deference.

The confessions reflect the influence of Sachems. In 1652 Nataous allowed that Cutshahmekin's decision to pray factored heavily in his own decision to do the same.[68] On the other hand, Montunkquanit asserted that his reluctance to pray was largely due to the knowledge that sachems and "the rich men" were averse to the praying movement.[69] Similarly, in both his 1652 and 1659 confessions Ponampam expressed his fear of invoking the sachems' displeasure:

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[66] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*...60

[67] For a detailed discussion of Sachems' use of royal authority as a resistance strategy, see Jenny Hale Pulsipher, "Subjects Unto the Same King: New England Indians and the Use of Royal Political Power," *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, Vol. 5, NA 2003 http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/mhr/5/pulsipher.html,1-34 and James Warren Springer, "American Indians and the Law of Real Property in Colonial New England, " *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 30, No. 1. (Jan., 1986) 25-58

[68] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 253

[69] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 65

> But if I pray afore the Sachems pray, I fear they will kill me, and therefore I will not pray. But yet when others prayed, I prayed with them; and I thought, if I run away to other places, they will pray too, therefore I will pray here. Then on a Sabbath none taught, and some bid me teach, what the Minister had taught us; but I feared, and durst not for fear of the Sachems, yet they urged me, and I did. And I taught them what I remembered, and they were angry at me, and we fell out, and I went away.[70]

His situation seems to indicate the tension existing between opposing social forces, the disapproval of established Native American elites on the one side and friends and family pressing for participation in the praying community on the other.

The Influence of Family

Family considerations also factored into the decision to become a praying Indian. Traditionally in Southern New England the nuclear family was the basis for living arrangements most of the time, but on occasion two or more families might combine to occupy one large structure.[71] Gookin described houses ranging from twenty to one hundred feet long depending on "activity and ability."[72] In some cases these houses would have accommodated more than one family. In the sixteenth century its seems that there was a shift towards more dwellings that were single family, which may also have allowed Algonquian husbands more power over the labor of their wives.[73] Marriage could be plural as polygamy was possible. Divorce was easily accomplished and could be initiated by either sex. A woman who felt intimidated or abused by an overbearing husband could leave with her children to live in another village,[74] and a husband who had

[70] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 21
[71] Howard S. Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower*…51
[72] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*…10
[73] Ann Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY and London, 2000) 21
[74] Howard S. Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower*…98

become disenchanted with his wife could end the marriage without much difficulty. "They also put away their wives," wrote Gookin, "and the wives also leave their husbands frequently upon grounds of displeasure or dissatisfaction."[75]

English observers disagreed about how common polygamy was, but some associated it with elite status. "The kings or great powwows, alias conjurers, may have two or three wives, but seldom use it," reported Wood, "men of ordinary rank having but one, which disproves the report that they had eight or ten wives apiece."[76] According to Gookin, the practice was common although one wife was usually held "chief in their esteem and affection."[77] Whatever the actual frequency of polygamous unions, marriages were typically arranged across clans. As Howard Russell puts it, "A Deer would not marry a Deer, but if well favored and providing proof that he was an accomplished hunter, he might be welcome among the Partridges or the Fox family. In Southern New England he would go to live with his bride's people and descent was reckoned through the mother."[78] In the case of elites this was not always the case. Thomas Morton recounted at least one example in which the daughter of Papasiquineo, a prominent sachem living near the Merrimac River, went to live with her new husband, a sachem at Sagus.[79]

Marriages solidified relationships across villages and created kinship networks that transcended tribe and political affiliation. Marriage outside of the village produced webs of relatives tied together through kin loyalties in other places, and provided individuals with options for changing their village affiliation as well as a host of places

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[75] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections…*9
[76] William Wood, *New England's Prospect…*81
[77] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections…*9
[78] Howard S. Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower*…99
[79] Thomas Morton, *NewEnglish Canaan…*39

for visiting.[80] Members of Eliot's group thus had kin in other places who could exert influence or simply provide a place to stay if one chose to flee the praying community. Conversely, they also provided an inlet for Indian-based evangelism. In his preparatory remarks to *Indian Dialogues* Eliot revealed that the material contained therein was, in part, the result of conversations that took place when praying Indians were sent to their kindred as missionaries. "The church did send sundry of the brethren," he explained, "to instruct, exhort, and persuade them to pray unto God." Piumbuhhou was sent to Nashaweeg where he was met by a kinsman and eventually by other relatives; their conversations formed the basis for Eliot's first dialogue.[81] Waban, a man with many contacts, was sent to a variety of places.[82]

Some of confessions note the influence of Waban and Totheswamp. Nataous related that when Waban told him to pray to God, he did so.[83] Anthony mentioned Waban in his 1652 confession in the same breath as his brothers, and he affirmed his influence in his 1659 confession.[84] Owussumag indicated that Waban's decision to pray had caused "many more" to become praying Indians.[85] Piumbuhhou said Waban's decision to pray was an incentive for him to do the same, although his concern for his family's health drove him away from the praying movement. "I thought if they were any of them sick," he explained, "the pauwaus could make them well, therefore I believed not Waban, when he exhorted me to pray to God."[86] In general, Eliot and Gookin's

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[80] Jean M. O'brien, *Dispossession by Degrees…* 16
[81] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…* A3
[82] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…* 24
[83] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 253
[84] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 233; John Eliot "Further Account…" 10
[85] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 257
[86] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 68-69

characterizations of Waban as a critical influence in assembling the native flock are borne out by the confessions.

Many in the praying towns came there as the result of influence exerted by friends and family. Both sets of confessions are full of references to the impact of loved ones as the encouragers and initiators on the road to faith, or alternatively, as the major impediment to joining the praying movement. Totheswamp, who would later be cited by others as an influential figure in their own transformations, revealed that his initial resistance to the praying movement was engendered by those nearest and dearest to him:

> Before I prayed unto God, the English, when I came unto their houses, often said unto me, Pray to God: but I having many friends who loved me, and I loved them, and they cared not for praying to God and therefore I did not: But then I thought in my heart; that if my friends should die, and I live, I then would pray to God; soon after God so wrought, that they did almost all die, few of them left; and then my heart feared, and I thought, that now I will pray unto God…[87]

The death of his friends caused him to reconsider, and yet that was seemingly out of a desire to replace his old relationships with new ones. "Yet at first I did not think of God and eternal life," he confessed, "but only that the English should love me and I loved them."[88] John Speene also made it clear in his confessions that when he first consented to pray to God he "prayed not for my soul, but for the sake of men." [89] Like Totheswamp, Speene claimed he was also spurred in the direction of real faith by the loss of a loved one, in his case his brother: "And now I fear because God hath afflicted me, in taking away my brother, a ruler," he explained, "now I am troubled, I fear I sinned in not believing our ruler because now God hath taken him away; he taught me good words but

[87] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 229
[88] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 229
[89] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 247

I believed him not."[90] John's brother Robin also interpreted the death of his three children, one of whom prayed to God, as an expression of God's anger towards him.[91]

The death of a brother and a friend had the opposite impact on Anthony, who temporarily swore off praying as a result.[92] "Then my heart said, surely it's a vain thing to pray to God," he revealed, "for I prayed, yet my friends die."[93] Yet it was his brothers' influence which at first drew him to the praying movement, although not right away – "Yet I heard move and more of the praying to God, and that my brothers prayed to God; but my heart said, praying to God is vain."[94] Eventually his brothers' exhortations won him over, but not for the reasons Eliot would have wanted most:

> A little after I came, and my brother said to me; I pray you pray to God. I answered him not, but my heart said, No; yet I was troubled, because I heard my brothers. I thought, if any should kill my brothers, I would kill him; if any wars were, I would go with my brothers, only I though of my love to my brothers: and then that, if by brother make war, I would go with him, to kill men. Now he prays, shall I not go with my brother? And my brothers love me, and they both pray to God, why should not I?…It was not for love of God, or fear of God, but because I loved my brothers.[95]

Anthony's brothers even went so far as to track him down after he ran "to the country" and exerted enough pressure that he returned.[96] Montunkquanit was partly influenced by the fact that the praying Indians at Dorchester were his friends.[97] Like Totheswamp, Owussumag at first sought the fellowship that he otherwise lacked apart from the praying town. After going "to the country" to "seek after wickedness" with his neighbors, he

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[90] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 248
[91] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 248
[92] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 256-257
[93] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 12
[94] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 10
[95] John Eliot, "A Further Account…"10-11
[96] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 47
[97] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 65

returned because he "could find no place where I was beloved."[98] For some in the fledgling praying town, it was the community of believers, if not the gospel message itself, that provided the initial incentive to enter the covenanted society of Natick.

For more than one Algonquian confessee the lure of the praying movement was centered around their women and children. Ponampam wanted nothing to do with the praying town after an argument he had with some of the praying Indians over his seemingly unsatisfactory attempt to teach what he had been taught. He quickly returned albeit to see his wife and children and "not for God's sake." [99] Monotunkquanit thought praying to God "a tedious thing," and his feelings were reinforced by relatives who told him that his praying was futile. And yet he carried his young son Samuel, who would grow to become one of the Indian schoolmasters, to be catechized by Eliot, leading to an incident which had a profound effect upon him:

> …the Minister called my son, and set him afore, and asked him, *Who made him?* And he was taught to answer, *God*. Then he commended my son, and asked whose son he was; they said, *mine*. The Minister gave him two apples; then the Minister said to me, Do you pray to God? You see your child's faith, God made him; and therefore it is your duty to pray to God. Then I considered what he said, I could not sleep that night.[100]

In Monotunkquanit's confession before the elders he related that Samuel's initial inability to give the desired response was because "I had not taught him."[101] That he may have felt embarrassed by this is indicated by the fact that it was the others, and not he, who identified Samuel as his son. While Montunkquanit's child received praise from Eliot

[98] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 258
[99] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 55
[100] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 25
[101] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 65

and the group, his father's lack of faith and failure to instruct were also on display and his confession implied that he felt pressure to correct his status as a negligent parent.

Poquanum also cited his attendance at his children's catechism as the moment when he truly "hearkened" to the message. "By them I came to know that there was a God, and that there was sin against God," he confessed, "and hereby God made me to see all my sins, both before I prayed to God and since; and I saw God's anger against me, before, and since I prayed, because sometimes I came not to the Meeting, brake my word, regarded not my children…"[102]

The praying movement had the potential to divide families, sometimes between parent and child. As with Cutshamekin and his son, the Gospel defined both parent and child as sinners but also conferred the responsibility of training children in godliness on the parents. Some of the questions posed by the praying Indians and recorded in the missionary tracts deal with the resistance of their children. One desperate father of "rude children" enquired "If a father prays to God to teach his sons to know him and he doth teach them himself and they will not learn to know God, what should such fathers do?"[103] An "aged" Native American at one of Eliot's early lectures wondered how to deal with his disobedient son who both resisted hearing the Gospel and persisted in drunkenness.[104] Eliot had made it clear that it was the job of the parents to make sure that children were "ready to answer their catechize."[105] The frequent repetition of the catechism by the children, in turn, was to further reinforce those principles for the adults overhearing

[102] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 253
[103] Thomas Shephard, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 46-47
[104] Thomas Shephard, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 42
[105] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 51

them.[106] A child's willingness to learn and to recite was thus a reflection on the extent of one's participation in the praying movement, and bad behavior – as in the cases of Totheswamp's or Cutshamekin's sons – reflected on the parents.

Questions posed to the missionaries also reflected a concern over how the doctrines of innate depravity and grace applied to their offspring. If all humankind was comprised of sinners separated from God, then what assurances did praying Indians have that their children were not predestined for eternal torment in hell? When faced with the question of "whither their little children go when they die, seeing they have not sinned?" the missionaries took care to expound on the theme of original sin but tempered this discourse with the promises offered by Puritan covenant theology. "Especially it gave occasion," wrote Eliot, "to teach them the covenant of God, which He hath made with all His people, and with their children, so that when God chooses a man or woman to be his servant, he chooses all their children to be so also…"[107] The unstated logical corollary to this premise, however, was that wayward children could be read as a sign of a lack of grace on the part of the parent.

Variations on the question persisted, however. In a 1649 letter Eliot recorded that he had been asked about the salvation status of children with only one believing parent. Another parent similarly vexed by the covenant doctrine enquired "When we come to believe, how many of our children doth God take with us, whether all only young ones, or at what age?"[108] The question could be asked in the reverse as well. "If the father be naught and the child good," one Indian enquired, "will God be offended with that child, because in the second Commandment it's said, that he visits the sins of fathers upon the

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[106] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 51, 53
[107] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 56
[108] John Eliot, "Light Appearing…" 132

children?”[109] Eliot, who often did not record his responses for his English readers, noted that he attempted to reassure his new flock of the individual responsibility for sin:

> We told them the plainest answer we could think of, if the child be good, and the father bad, God will not be offended with the child, if he repents of his own and his father’s sins, and follows not the steps of his wicked father; but if the child be also bad, then God will visit the sins of fathers upon them, and therefore (we) wished them to consider of the other part of the promise made to thousands of them that love God and the Evangenesh Jehovah, i.e. the Commandments of Jehovah.[110]

Native American forefathers were indeed rebellious and disobedient to the Lord, but so too had it been so with the English at one time as well. God, Eliot told the praying Indians, was like an elderly Indian father who had many children. Those who would go against his counsel would be shut out of doors unless they would “return and repent.” Those who would “be ruled by him” would attempt to learn his will and “come to know his mind.” This, in turn involved the active instruction of their own children. It was the stubborn nature of their ancestors that had left them in the state that they were in, deprived of the knowledge of God and bereft of His mercy. They were in fact suffering from the sins of their fathers, but the way of salvation was extended to them if they would only repent and believe. “An Indian child, if he would serve his father, he must first know his father’s will and love him,” explained Eliot, “then he would serve him, and then if he should not do some things as his father commands him, and yet afterwards grieve for it upon his knees before his father, his father would pity and accept him; so we told them it was with God…”[111]

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[109] John Eliot, “The Day-Breaking…” 7
[110] John Eliot, “The Day-Breaking…” 7
[111] John Eliot, “The Day-Breaking…” 10-11

Relationships between husbands and wives were also impacted by the praying community. The husband was to be head of the family and to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, and this in turn required a response of wifely submission to his authority. The godly husband, as the servant-leader of the household, was to lead by example and in prayer. Due to the fact that the missionaries regarded women propounding their own questions without first privately discussing them with the interpreter or with their husbands as inappropriate,[112] the number of recorded questions in the missionary tracts that can clearly be directly attributed to women is small. At one of Eliot's 1647 lectures, Wampoas' wife enquired about her role in her husband's prayers, if it were necessary for her to pray aloud with him or if her quiet inward assent was sufficient.[113] Totheswamp's wife asked about the relationship between conversion and behavior:

> The meaning in her question (as we perceived) was this, "whether a husband should do well to pray with his wife, and yet continue in his passions and be angry with his wife?" But the modesty and wisdom of the woman directed her to do three things in one, for thus she spake to us, "before my husband did pray he was much angry; wherein first she gave an honorable testimony of her husband and commended him for the abatement of his passion; secondly, she gave implicitly a secret reproof for what was past, and for somewhat at present that was amiss; and thirdly, it was intended by her as a question whether her husband should pray to God, and yet continue in some unruly passions; but she wisely avoided that, lest it might reflect too much upon him, although we desired her to express if that was not her meaning.[114]

Totheswamp's wife seemingly understood that if his response to the missionary message of conversion and grace were sincere, then her husband ought to exhibit those qualities consistent with his status as a "new creature" in Christ. She also must have

[112] Thomas Shephard, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 41
[113] Thomas Shephard, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 41
[114] Thomas Shephard, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 42

comprehended that Eliot and his colleagues, for now the arbiters in this new system, represented a means to turn her "silent reproof" into public knowledge. However restrained her expression, Totheswamp's unruly heart and consequent abusiveness, much like Montunkquanit's failures in catechism, were a matter of record in the fledgling praying community.

The praying movement also had more dramatic implications for spousal relationships. Just as the bond between parent and child could be strained by conversion, so too could the ties that bound husband and wife. Two questions recorded in 1649's "Glorious Progress," directly address this issue. "If a wife put away her husband," asked one Native American in lecture attendance, "because he will pray to God, and she will not, what must be done in this case?" Another related question concerned the question of marriage to unbelievers – "If there be young women (who) pray to God, may such as pray to God marry one that will not pray to God?"[115] If dedicated to following Scriptural mandates about being "unequally yoked" in marriage with unbelievers, single praying Indians found themselves with a significantly reduced population of potential spouses. Married believers whose spouses rejected the Gospel risked divorce initiated by unbelieving partners or, in the absence of such a split, living with the angst caused by their understanding of the spiritual condition of their loved ones.

The existing practice of polygamy also created some intractable problems for those who would become members of the praying community and for the missionaries who would guide them. Shephard admitted that there were "many difficult questions propounded by them, which we have been unwilling to engage ourselves in any answer unto, until we have the concurrence of others with us." Chief among these was the idea

[115] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress..." 83

that the polygamous man becoming a praying Indian would be required to “put away” all but his first wife. Clearly this had some devastating potential consequences for families, and Eliot and his associates had no ready solutions at hand. Writing in 1648’s “Clear Sun-Shine,” Shephard summed up the problem created by the missionaries’ insistence on monogamy:

> …suppose a man before he knew God, hath had two wives, the first barren and childless, the second fruitful and bearing him many sweet children, the question now propounded was, *which of these two wives is he to put away?* If he puts away the first who hath no children, then he puts away her whom God and Religion undoubtedly binds him unto, there being no other defect but want of children; if he puts away the other, then he must cast off all his children with her also as illegitimate, whom he so exceedingly loves. This is a case now among them, and they are very fearful to do anything cross to God’s will and mind…[116]

To allow polygamy seemed impossible given the mandates of Scripture, but to sever the relationship between father and child seemed equally egregious. As Anne Marie Plane puts it, “Clearly reformers had to contend with the lingering effects of earlier marital freedoms.”[117] In the case of polygamy, the missionary understanding of the praying Indian man’s role as husband seemed to be at odds with the ideal circumstances necessary for him to fulfill his role as father and leader of the home.

Family in the context of the praying movement required redefinition. The body of Christ, comprised of all believers, transcended blood ties and family structure. “Suppose there should be one wise Indian that teacheth good things to other Indians,” Eliot’s flock enquired, “…should not he be as a father or brother unto such Indians he so teacheth in the ways of God?”[118] The closeness of their fellowship with believers created a new

[116] Thomas Shephard, “Clear Sun-Shine…” 63
[117] Anne Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY and London, 2000) 55
[118] Thomas Shephard, “Clear Sun-Shine…” 64

sense of connection that, in some instances, may have superseded family relationships. Eliot's flock expressed wonderment over these feelings:

> Hereupon did the question arise, namely what is the reason, that when a strange Indian comes among us whom we never saw before, yet if he pray unto God, we do exceedingly love him: But if my own Brother, dwelling a great way off, come unto us, he not praying to God, though we love him, yet nothing so as we love that other stranger who doth pray unto God.[119]

Still stranger was the notion that their new family could include Christians in England who donated to the mission project out of love for them.[120]

The shift in priority from the temporal family to the spiritual could create tension in the extended family. One dying woman, mother of two grown daughters, attempted to keep them from living with her own relations:

> I shall now die, and when I am dead, your grandfather and grandmother, and uncles, etc. will send for you to come live amongst them, and promise you great matters, and tell you what pleasant living it is among them; but do not believe them, and I charge you never hearken unto them, nor live amongst them; for they pray not to God, keep not the Sabbath, commit all manner of sins and are not punished for it; but I charge you to live her, for her they pray unto God, the word of God is taught, sins are suppressed and punished by laws…[121]

Eliot recalled that, as the woman predicted, the girls' relatives did indeed solicit them to live with them but that their mother's dying wishes were honored although it is not clear from the account exactly how that happened. Surely even more tension was created when a prominent pawwaw of Martha's Vineyard converted, not only leaving his wife, children, and most of his other friends and family behind but also depriving them of his services. "This man," wrote Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "hereby hath made those of his own house to be his enemies; his wife, his children, and most of his friends and kindred, who

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[119] John Eliot, "Light Appearing…" 125
[120] John Eliot, "Light Appearing…" 126
[121] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 80

remain obstinate still, whereby he meets with many troubles and temptations." This pawwaw, pressured to treat a gravely ill relative by his unbelieving family, refused, lest he should "break his Covenant and sin against God."[122]

It is possible to read the incident with Totheswamp's son prior to the 1654 examination as a purposeful attempt to test the new priority system. When it was discovered that his eleven year-old son had participated in a bout of drunkenness with three grown praying Indians, who, in Eliot's words, were only at Natick because they were "hemmed in by relations, and other means," it raised an obvious challenge to the new ethos of a family of which Christ was the actual head. As Eliot rendered it, the three deliberately intoxicated the young boy in an effort to test Totheswamp's resolve to function as ruler in the new system and as a man for whom God came first. Totheswamp's official response was decisive. Ruling that his son was in fact culpable of subjecting himself to the evil company of profligate Native Americans about whom he had been warned, he also took the opportunity to validate the new concept of family:

> I am greatly grieved about these things, and now God tryeth me whether I love Christ or my child best. They say, they will try me; but I say, God will try me. Christ saith, he that loveth father, or mother, or wife, or child better than me is not worthy of me. Christ saith, I must correct my child; if I should refuse to do that, I should not love Christ. God bid Abraham kill his son, Abraham loved God, and therefore he would have done it, had not God withheld him. God saith to me, only punish you child, and how can I love God, if I should refuse to do that?[123]

Totheswamp then tearfully sentenced his son to the stocks and a public whipping at the school.

The missionary accounts also reveal evidence that praying Indians were attempting to fit their relationships to their traditional leaders into the context of the

[122] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Strength Out of Weakness…" 187
[123] John Eliot, "A Late and Further…" 274

Christian understanding of family, applying Biblical principles to redefine the parameters of that relationship. In one of the questions recorded in 1649's "Glorious Progress" the Indians wondered "when God said honor thy father, doth he mean three fathers – our father, our sachem, and God?[124] If the sachem's authority came from God, then was that authority to be respected or did the system of rulers supplant it? Did the newfound knowledge of the believer render the sachem's counsel irrelevant if he were an unbeliever? "If a man be wise, and his sachem weak," one of Eliot's flock asked him, "must he yet obey him?"[125] Another question evoked the apostle Paul's instructions in Ephesians 5 for the godly husband, in a way relating the New Testament construction of a healthy marriage to the relationship between sachem and subject. "We are commanded to honor the sachem," a praying Indian observed, "but is he commanded to love us?"[126] If a sachem were to still function for the praying Indians as a type of earthly father, then he would be constrained by the mandates of their newfound heavenly one.

Some new converts may have seen themselves as transferring from the family of one great father to an even greater one. Mayhew recorded that one Indian had insisted that "if the greatest sagamore in the land should take him in his arms and proffer him his love and riches and gifts to turn from this way, he would not go with him from this way of God."[127] In a letter included in 1652's "Strength Out of Weakness" tract, William French recounted that another praying Indian had assured him that "If the Lord should strip me as bare as my skin again, and so big Sagamore should come to me and say, I will

[124] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 84
[125] John Eliot, "Light Appearing…" 132
[126] John Eliot, "Light Appearing…" 132
[127] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Light Appearing…" 117

give you so big wampum, so big beaver, and leave this way, and turn to us again, I would say take your riches to yourself, I would never forsake God and his ways again."[128]

Those in the praying movement faced the challenge of reconstituted circumstances with regard to their government and their family. The authority of sachems was both challenged and conscripted into the new system, although submitted sachems had to adapt to a new role as defined by Scripture. The egalitarian aspects of the priesthood of all believers undercut the traditional elevated position of indigenous leaders and had the power to create new status for others, but, for the most part, the praying movement edified, if reduced, respect for godly authority. Similarly, family was redefined, not only in the troublesome case of polygamy, but in the creation of a new extended family of believers. For some, blood kinship was a lure into the praying movement while for others it was a hindrance. Some, like Anthony, followed their kinfolk into the praying communities and others, like the pawwaw Mayhew recalls, left all behind to join the body of believers. The meaning of the Gospel was a two-edged sword, for while it held out salvation to the truly converted it promised damnation to loved ones who rejected it. Praying Indians faced not only the anxiety caused by this realization, but the challenge of a redefinition of family that prioritized the spiritual connection over the bonds of kinship.

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[128] William French, "Strength Out of Weakness…" 193

Chapter 4: Pawwaws and Disease: The Mission and Medicine Men

Catastrophe

The experience of epidemic diseases dominated the mission landscape in the mid-seventeenth century. Conversion of New England Indians in the middle of the 17th century occurred in the wake of upheaval wrought by disease. The specter of epidemic, past and present, hung over the Algonquian populations and informed individual decisions about whether or not to become a praying Indian. The presence of disease or, conversely, of good health could be interpreted as signs that validated or disproved the spiritual claims of Puritan missionaries or their Algonquian rivals, the pawwaws.

While native populations were not disease-free prior to contact with Europeans, they were spared the horrors of "crowd type" infections such as smallpox and measles. Diseases caused by malnutrition such as rickets were also seemingly not a feature of pre-contact society, but arthritis, rheumatism, neuralgia, and pleurisy were.[1] While American medicine seems to have been reasonably effective in treating native diseases, it was wholly inadequate in the presence of the "virgin soil epidemics" that crossed the Atlantic with the Europeans. These old world diseases were perhaps the chief determinants in the demographic histories of some tribes for one hundred to one hundred fifty years.[2] The most devastating of these crowd-type infections was smallpox, but Native Americans were also subjected to bubonic plague, diptheria, typhus, measles, cholera, mumps, virulent forms of pneumonia, and more.

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[1] Howard Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower*…35

[2] Alfred W. Crosby, "Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 33, No. 2 (Apr., 1976) 289-299

The early epidemic occurring just prior to the arrival of the Plymouth separatists could have been smallpox or perhaps bubonic or pneumonic plague.[3] Even though John Josselyn and Thomas Morton both identified it as "plague," they may have been using the word as an equivalent for "epidemic."[4] Snow and Lamphear argue against the idea advanced by Henry Dobyns that bubonic plague made its way from Mexico to New England by the early 17th century, in part using Daniel Gookin's description of yellow-skinned victims in the 1616 epidemic as a possible indication of hepatitis. They also rule out smallpox, claiming that the circumstances of early contact in New England were not conducive to the spread of the disease. Only after the introduction of significant numbers of children to the Northeast in 1630, they contend, was the widespread transmission of smallpox possible, paving the way for the epidemic of 1633.[5] Dobyns, for his part, agrees that smallpox struck in 1639 but surmises that 1636 Algonquian disease victims were battling an outbreak that may have been scarlet fever.[6] In any event, as the waves of contagion were recurring and because new pathogens were continually being introduced, many native populations had little chance of recovering. Whatever the exact causes may have been, what is clear is that New England's Indian populations had suffered from two devastating waves of infection prior to the organized mission efforts in Massachusetts Bay and Martha's Vineyard.

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[3] Alfred W. Crosby, "Virgin soil epidemics…" 290; William A. Starna, "The Biological Encounter: Disease and the Ideological Domain," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Special Issue: Shamans and Preachers, Color Symbolism and Commercial Evangelism: Reflections on Early Mid-Atlantic Religious Encounter in Light of the Columbian Quincentennial (Autumn, 1992) 511-519

[4] Dean R. Snow; Kim Lanphear, "European Contact and Indian Depopulation in the Northeast: The Timing of the First Epidemics," *Ethnohistory*, vol. 35, No. 1 (Winter, 1988) 22

[5] This is in contrast to the Spanish colonies where the combination of larger ships' crews, early settlements, and the introduction of African slaves served to promote the spread of smallpox. Dean R. Snow; Kim Lanphear, "European Contact and Indian Depopulation in the Northeast..." 21-28

[6] Henry F. Dobyns, "Disease Transfer at Contact..." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 22, (1993) 281

The first wave of disease preceded the arrival of significant numbers of the English to the region, lasting from 1616 through 1619. Josselyn recalled that "a great mortality" occurred among the Pokanakets, who lived to the West of Plymouth prior to the arrival of the Separatists. Regions further east and north were "sore smitten" with contagion, first by the plague and later, after the arrival of the English, by smallpox. He estimated that the three kingdoms of the Massachuset were reduced from 30,000 to a mere 300.[7] Thomas Morton described the early plague as the hand of God falling upon the Indians with such a mortal stroke that there were heaps of dead bodies. Those who were able to care for themselves fled, leaving the carcasses for birds and vermin to exploit. "And the bones and skulls upon the several places of their habitations, made such a spectacle after my coming into those parts," he recalled, "that as I traveled in that forest, near the Massachusetts, it seemed to me a newfound Golgotha."[8] Roger Williams also reported witnessing survivors fleeing the bodies of the dead out of fear of contamination.[9]

By any account the population decline in the first half of seventeenth century New England was precipitous. Estimates of mortality rates vary widely, but in certain populations rates may have ranged as high as eighty-four to ninety-five percent. Snow and Lanphear put the total mortality from the epidemics of 1616-1619 and 1633-1639 for the New England region at no less than eighty-six percent.[10] English observers described a calamitous and unsettling series of epidemics that devastated whole communities and left the detritus of familial and political groups in their wake.

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[7] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages…*89
[8] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan…*23
[9] Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America…*243
[10] Dean R. Snow; Kim Lanphear, "European Contact and Indian Depopulation in the Northeast..." 28

Alfred Crosby has noted that the devastation associated with old world diseases in America was caused by a variety of factors other than the oft-cited lack of immunity in the new world. In the first place, as these were viruses new to these populations, many people got sick at the same time. As these "virgin soil" epidemics eliminated a significant number of people between the ages of fifteen and forty – those vital to the society for the acquisition and production of food, for defense, and for reproduction – they had crippling effects on the ability of the society to function. Additionally, as Indian children were typically weaned around their second birthday, any contamination or failure of mother's milk was devastating. Diseases not usually fatal, operating in conjunction with one another, could cause greater mortality than when acting alone. The result was that communities attacked by a variety of infections with which they were ill-prepared to deal became dysfunctional, with people weakening and dying from hunger, thirst, and cold brought on from lack of firewood.[11]

To compound the problem, traditional Native American healing practices often accelerated the effects of crowd-borne diseases. Sweat-lodge ceremonies, designed to purify the body and prevent disease, actually facilitated the spread of disease by confining people to tight spaces. The practice of transferring the patient immediately from sweatlodge to frigid lake was also detrimental to recovery as was the dehydration caused by sweating and by the use of herbs that were cathartics and emetics. In light of the failure of these practices, Algonquian populations increasingly looked to the curative

[11] Alfred W. Crosby, "Virgin Soil Epidemics…" 289-299; Russell Thornton, "Aboriginal North American Population and Rates of Decline," *Current Anthropology*, Vo. 38, No. 2 (Apr., 1997) 310-315

power of shamans themselves, who in turn sought new and more effective rituals to deal with the catastrophe.[12]

Traditionally seventeenth-century New England Algonquians recognized two causes for disease. Disease caused by Cautantowitt, the creator god who dwelt in the Southwest, was considered incurable. Simmons suggests that there is some evidence that native shamans attributed widespread misfortune such as the 1617-1619 plague to this source. The Plymouth-area Wampanoag considered the idea that the tragedy could have been avoided had they performed the property destruction ritual the Narragansett used to honor the creator. Shamans were also noted for their failure to treat victims of such epidemics,[13] perhaps indicating that people regarded these diseases as produced by a cause greater than the strength of the pawwaws' powers.[14] The other main cause of disease was thought to be sorcery, and this was considered treatable.

Shamans, Black Robes, and Puritans

European missionaries of any stripe had to deal with the faith Indians placed in local religious leaders, most frequently referred to as pawwaws. Rivaling the power of the sachems, these were indigenous medicine men who sometimes also doubled as sorcerers. Throughout the missionary tracts both the dependence on and fear of these local shamans is evident, as is the fact that not all of them were reputed to possess the same powers. In the woodlands of New England, pawwaws were supposedly the recipients of special dreams that put them in touch with the spirit world more intimately

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[12]William A. Starna, "The Biological Encounter: Disease and the Ideological Domain…" 511-519; Alfred W. Crosby, "Virgin Soil Epidemics…" 296
[13] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages…*94; Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*243
[14] William Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes…*55

than those around them. As such they were held in high esteem. "Yet could not all that desire that dignity (as they esteemed it), obtain familiarity with the infernal spirits," explained Matthew Mayhew.[15] Each spirit entering the pawwaw theoretically brought with it its own particular talent such as the ability to cure, to harm, to affect the weather, or to attract game.[16] Not all pawwaws, therefore, could practice the kind of malicious witchcraft that induced so much fear in their fellow Algonquians. Pawwaws could either attain their status through immediate revelation or through the deliberate use of rites and ceremonies designed to conjure the desired spirits, but this latter method was often unsuccessful.[17] Eliot summarized the explanation of the dream phenomenon offered to him by two practicing pawwaws:

> …for they were asked how they came to be made pawwaws, and they answered thus, that if any of the Indians fall into any strange dream wherein Chepian appears unto them as a serpent, then the next day they tell the other Indians of it, and for two days after the rest of the Indians dance and rejoice for what they tell them about this Serpent, and so they become their pawwaws.[18]

Chepian, alternatively known as Abbamacho or Hobbomok, was one of two principal deities generally acknowledged by the Indians and was equated to Satan by the missionaries. Of Hobbomok, William Simmons states that he "seems to have been a collective term for the disembodied souls of the dead, both Indian and English, which reappeared in the shape of humans, animals, and mythical creatures, and entered living humans."[19]

While every pawwaw was inhabited by one or more spirits by which he healed, not every pawwaw was supposedly capable of the kind of witchcraft which the Indians

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[15] Matthew Mayhew, *Brief Narrative…* 11
[16] William S. Simmons, "Cultural Bias…" 61
[17] Matthew Mayhew, *Brief Narrative…* 11
[18] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 19-20
[19] William S. Simmons, "Cultural Bias…" 60-61

feared and the Puritans largely acknowledged as real. Pawwaws' sorcery took two basic forms, which Simmons has labeled magical intrusion and dream-soul capture.[20] The former technique involved preparing a physical object such as a hair or a bone from a dead creature, which would then be transported by the pawwaw's spirit to the body of the victim. Dream-soul capture involved seizing the spirit of the unsuspecting person and imprisoning it "in the form of a fly" that was then tormented, causing harm to the victim.[21] These concepts were not entirely alien to the English New Englanders, among whom the belief in the efficacy of witchcraft was commonplace. As English witches were also thought to be able to utilize physical objects in their sorcery and to be able to cause illness or death in their victims,[22] the claims of pawwaws were both easily recognizable and taken seriously.

Just as the Puritans interpreted pawwawing as devil worship and Chepian as the Devil, Indians also interpreted European interlopers using their categories. Amanda Porterfield speculates, for example, that Papassaconnaway's fleeing from Eliot may have been because he viewed Eliot as a witch, one working for a powerful and malignant spirit.[23] There is even one moment recorded by Josselyn in which Native Americans claimed that they had just seen Chepian appearing as "all one Englishman," replete with shoes, stockings, hat and coat.[24] Jesuit missionaries, the Puritans' chief competitors in

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[20] William S. Simmons, "Conversion…" 199
[21] Matthew Mayhew, *Brief Narrative…*7; William S. Simmons, "Conversion…" 200
[22] Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (W.W. Norton and Company: New York) 6-14
[23] Amanda Porterfield, "Witchcraft and the Colonization of Algonquian and Iroquois Cultures," *Religion and American Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter, 1992) 110; See also William Simmons, *Spirit of New England Tribes…*63-64 where Simmons discusses Passaconaway's coming to the conclusion that the God of the English was more powerful than any he could conjure and that his arts were completely ineffective against the English. Simmons notes that with the outbreak of King Philip's War in 1675, Passaconaway's son and his followers choose to remove themselves from the conflict entirely.
[24] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages…*95

conversion, also battled the interpretation that they were witches and that the baptism they proffered was actually the darkest sorcery, their mechanism of inflicting epidemic disease.[25]

James Axtell has argued that, through writing, both the French and the English could seemingly duplicate the greatest feat of the pawwaw, that of reading the mind of a person at a distance and thus foretelling the future. Native shamans were thought to possess powerful souls who could leave their bodies and travel across time and space to divine the future. In a self-induced trance, the pawwaw might unearth the location of lost objects or predict the outcome of major undertakings. Pawwaws could also use their mind-reading capabilities to see into the thoughts of witches and thus divine their evil intentions. Yet, as Axtell points out, reading a handwritten note could create the same effect.[26]

Axtell argues that "the Protestant failure to capitalize" on this mystical power of print contributed to the Jesuit victory in the "contest" for converts in North America.[27] He claims that Eliot, by creating a written grammar for Algonquian and striving to create literate Indians, demystified print as potential competition for the shamans' magical arts. Peter Wogan, on the other hand, challenges Axtell's assertion that Native peoples necessarily responded to literacy with awe, ascribing the role of shaman to the Jesuit priest. He points out that some Native groups were able to replicate the Jesuit feat of transcribing messages through a series of pictographical representations and thus were not obliged to respond to the Jesuits' ability to communicate across long distances with

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[25] Peter Wogan, "Perception of European Literacy in Early Contact Situations," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Summer, 1994) 407-429; Kenneth M. Morrison, "Baptism and Alliance: The Symbolic Mediations of Religious Syncretism," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Autumn, 1990), 416-421
[26] James Axtell, "The Power of Print…" 305
[27] James Axtell, "The Power of Print…" 301, 309

anything resembling astonishment. He sees the assertion that they did as grounded in Western assumptions about literate and oral cultures.[28]

The Puritan missionaries' understanding of the pawwaws was informed by their perception of the Catholic missionaries. In their eyes, the Jesuits and the local shamans were both guilty, not only of misleading their adherents, but of deceiving them in many of the same ways. To Eliot and his colleagues both groups attempted to devalue Scripture and both positioned themselves as roadblocks between God and man. Because of their willingness to assign spiritual power to ritual, objects, and images, Jesuits appeared to their Puritan counterparts to be engaged in the same kind of deception as the pawwaws. Given their intense distaste for Roman Catholic ritual, symbolism, and theology, the Puritan missionaries could easily read pawwaws as an American version of the priests and this comparison is prevalent throughout the missionary accounts and in the *Indian Dialogues*.

One way in which the Jesuits could position themselves as "better" shamans was through the use of the sacrament of baptism, which they presented as the door to salvation and as a replacement for the healing powers of the pawwaws. Throughout the *Jesuit Relations*, a series of reports sent from the mission field of Canada back to Catholic authorities, it is clear that the Jesuits, ever competing with the local shamans and their arts, on occasion intentionally created an aura of mystery and awe amongst their potential converts. As such, the actual baptismal ceremony was deliberately enacted with as much solemnity as possible. Writing of the Huron at Sillery, Father Vimont recalls, "I have said that they had been baptized as solemnly as possible, - and this designedly,

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[28] Peter Wogan, "Perception…" 407-429

because that has much effect upon the minds of the Savages, and is to them not a slight incentive to belief."[29]

Eliot, Gookin, Mayhew, and their colleagues lacked a ceremonial equivalent to the French conception of baptism and regarded the efforts of the Jesuit priests as "juggleries" akin to those of the people they were trying to convert. In *Indian Dialogues* Eliot's William character rails against the "wicked ministers" of Catholicism who deliberately keep their converts ignorant of Scripture and who practice all sorts of sin under the guise of a false gospel. The Philip character responds by voicing the Puritan view of the Jesuits – "Are these the men that manage their religion? These are worse than our pauwaus. If any Pauwau in my dominions should be half thus vile, I would scoure him. I see that in some places of the world there be worse men then we Indians be…"[30]

While both Jesuits and Puritans reacted with similar intensity against many indigenous practices and beliefs, the Jesuit belief that baptism represented the accomplishment of salvation also served to make their standard for what constituted a "Christian" quite different than that of the Puritans. Thus, Axtell's contention that "In large measure whatever success the Jesuits enjoyed was gained not by expecting less of their converts, but by accepting more"[31] rings somewhat false with respect to acknowledgement of actual conversion. There was simply no Puritan equivalent for Jesuit assumptions about the saving grace conferred by hastily performed baptisms or by

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[29] Jean Vimont in Thwaites, Reuben Gold, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791* (New York: Pageant Book Company, 1959) Vol. 24, 117

[30] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…*58

[31] James Axtell, "The Invasion Within," *The European and the Indian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 70

baptism in general. Indeed baptism for the Puritans was not the cause of church membership but rather one of its effects.[32]

The Jesuits' beliefs about how God operated in the world enabled them in some ways to more directly compete with the pawwaws than the Puritan missionaries could. In his examination of the impact of Catholicism in Africa, John Thornton argues that Catholicism, with its tradition of continuous revelation, was more easily transferable to cultures in Africa than was Protestantism because of its pantheon of saints and because of the African emphasis on dreams. Protestant insistence on the discontinuous revelation of the Bible, says Thornton, seemed alien to peoples who relied on dreams for connection to the spirit world. Conversely, the assortment of saints and the affirmation of continuous revelation through apparitions of saints and the Virgin and by other means, provided a readily accessible cosmology which could be accepted or syncretized by West Africans.[33]

In his examination of the French Jesuits and the Montagnais between 1632 and 1642, Kenneth Morrison postulates that the Jesuits were able make use of their symbolic appreciation of grace as power. Because the priests scrutinized daily life for the workings of God and the Devil, their idea of grace corresponded to the Montagnais notion of power. Even though the Jesuits affirmed God's omnipotence and omniscience, they also confirmed His involvement in the daily affairs of mankind. Their emphasis on the potential corporal healing powers of baptism, argues Morrison, served to facilitate the acceptance of Catholicism by the Montaignais.[34]

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[32] Perry Miller, *The New England Mind* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1939) 450
[33] John Thornton, *Aftrica and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 235-271
[34] Kenneth M. Morrison, "Baptism and Alliance: The Symbolic Mediations of Religious Syncretism," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Autumn, 1990), 416-421

This view, that Catholicism was more easily blended into polytheistic faith, is largely sustained by both the *Relations* and by the Puritan accounts. As were the Jesuits in West Africa, both the Puritans of New England and the French Fathers in Canada were faced with peoples for whom revelation through dreams was an accepted concept and who believed in a multiplicity of spiritual interventions. According to James Axtell, Native American cosmology centered around a "hierarchy of states of being and a science of the principles of their interaction."[35] The most populous tier in this spirit world was filled with "souls," who were capable of interaction with human beings, particularly through dreams. Thus many missionaries, Jesuit and Puritan, regarded dreams as lying at the heart of Native American belief.[36]

In his 1643 *A Key Into the Language of America*, Roger Williams related that when the local Indians "have a bad Dreame which they conceive to be a threatening from God, they fall to prayer at all times of the night…"[37] He told the story of traveling to "an Island of the wildest in our parts" where he encountered an Indian who had a "vision or dream of the Sun (whom they worship for a God) which he conceived to be the messenger of his Death." According to Williams, this resulted in "the poor Native" calling all his friends and neighbors to assist him as he fasted for ten days and nights "in great Humiliations and Invocations."[38]

The Jesuits encountered similar situations in Canada to what Williams describes in Rhode Island. Father Jean de Lamberville, writing among the Iroquois, revealed his frustrations at the Indians' custom of honoring their dreams. One woman was even

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[35] James Axtell, "The Invasion Within," *The European and the Indian*…73
[36] Ibid, 73
[37] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (Menston, England: Scolar Press Limited, 1971) 19
[38] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*20

"impertinent enough" to claim that she had dreamed of the father's cassock and that she would die if he did not give it to her. He quickly took the opportunity "to disabuse them of that silly belief that the fulfillment of their dreams prolongs life."[39] Father Nouvel recalled his chagrin at returning to the Outawac mission to find "a large Dog suspended at the top of a painted pole, as a sacrifice to the sun." Later on an excursion to a more remote location he found a sick Catechumen who had "had recourse to the sun by sacrificing a Dog, which he had immolated thereto by suspending it from the top of a long pole."[40]

The Jesuits and Puritans, both reacting with revulsion to Native American religious belief, were differently equipped by their own theologies to address it. While Eliot and his associates responded in a typically reformed Protestant way – by preaching sermons, encouraging repentance and prayer, and constructing Indian Puritan towns to cultivate the body of believers, Jesuits, with their Catholic understanding of the importance of "works," were able to access a wholly different set of techniques. In the *Relations*, the Jesuit method of combating blasphemous practices often seems to be a kind of spiritual quid pro quo, of trading rosaries for drums. In the case of Nouvel's delinquent catechumen, the required penance for those involved in the dog sacrifice was to make a large Cross, "as a reparation for that sin" and to plant it on the bank of the River in front of the Chapel. "This they did," writes Nouvel, "and, after I had blessed it, all the guilty ones came to make reparation to Jesus Christ and to ask pardon from God…After that, all the Christians saluted the Cross by Singing *O Crux Ave* in their own

[39] JR 60:189
[40] JR 60:225

language."[41] The Jesuit's solution incorporated a firm rejection of cultural practices deemed contradictory to his brand of Roman Catholicism with a willingness to substitute his symbols for theirs.

The Jesuits clearly perceived the physical objects of their faith as a means to win converts. In a letter from his place among the Abnaquis and the Socoquis, Father Jean Enjalaran constructed a wish list of helpful items,

> I hope that the good God will obtain for me, by means of some zealous persons, the things which may help us to win these poor savages. One must be provided in this country with medals, small crucifixes a finger in length, or smaller still; small brass crosses and brass rings, also some in which there is the figure of some saints, or the face of Jesus Christ or the Blessed Virgin; wooden rosaries, very black and rather thick…[42]

Another example of the Jesuits willingness to utilize physical objects to inculcate the faith amongst their proselytes can be found in Vimont's account of Father Buteux's instruction of the Atticamegues:

> Then he made them two presents, in order to remind them of two things: the first was a Crucifix, to warn them to keep the Faith all their life, and to remember that the Son of God had died for them. The second was a dry stick, which was good only to put in the fire, - adding, that it would be the same with those who should not obey God; that they would be like dead wood, and would burn forever in Hell.[43]

Still another instance of the Jesuits' willingness to replace physical elements of Indian cosmology comes in Nouvel's account. In ministering to a gravely ill woman, he was "strongly impelled to Urge Her to have recourse to a supernatural remedy," which turned out to be drinking of water mixed with powder Nouvel had obtained from the grotto of Manresa, "where St. Ignatius performed his penance." Then, after invoking the name of

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[41] JR 60:227
[42] JR 60:139
[43] JR 24:99

Jesus five times and of Mary five times, she was to beg St. Ignatius for the restoration of her health and for the grace of being baptized. After recovering, Father Nouvel reported, the woman was granted baptism three days later.[44]

The Puritans would have been equally scandalized by the "solution" to the dog sacrifice as to the problem itself and they would have regarded the use of St. Ignatius' powder and the invocation of his name as the darkest blasphemy. Adoration of the object of the cross or the use of the powder was just as problematic for them as adoration of the sun, but for the Jesuits the use of these objects represented a way to refocus their proselytes on the faith. Thus they undertook large projects such the replication of Loretto and small, ad hoc projects such as Nouvel's cross construction as a means of drawing their flock away from past practices and beliefs. Their idea that Native Americans, or human beings in general, could participate in the performance of meritorious service was rooted in their adherence to Thomas Aquinas's teachings that human will was not entirely obliterated by sin and could therefore cooperate with Grace and be active in salvation.[45] Crucifixes, chapels, images, and rosaries were all tools that Jesuits employed in an effort to invite participation by their converts and potential converts in their own redemption.

Because the Jesuits were so willing to replace Native American symbols, images, and ceremonies with their own, they faced early complications of interpretation. They were frequently accused of witchcraft and of being the cause of the disease epidemics that often struck Native American populations after contact with the French. Baptism was first interpreted by the Huron as a healing rite, much to the annoyance of the French Fathers, and incorporated into Native American healing ceremonies. The images of

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[44] JR 60:225
[45] Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America 1632-1650* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000) 24

Christ and of Mary displayed by the Jesuits in the chapel in Ossossane were assigned magical powers and indicted as the means by which these black-robed shamans worked their evil magic. Still, despite the confusion that could result, their willingness to replace ceremony with ceremony and object with object was an integral part of their conversion strategy.

Reformed Protestants like the Puritans had none of this at their disposal, and their condemnation of the French as idolaters emerges in both French and English accounts. A good example of the conflict over the use of objects and images surfaces in Father Jogues' narrative in his discussion of his life amongst the Iroquois.[46] Having formed a large cross on a great tree by stripping off the bark, he was discovered by his antagonists. "They attacked me most violently," he recounts, "saying that they hated the cross: that it was a sign that they and their friends and neighbors (Europeans) knew not, alluding to the Dutch Protestants."[47] Of the Jesuits' fondness for the use of icons and symbols, Daniel Gookin accused the Jesuits of teaching "image worship, which our Indians do despise and condemn as a thing below rational men to fall down and pray to a painted board and dead image."[48] In his account of Hannah Dustin's abduction by French-affiliated Indians, Cotton Mather related that her captors,

> In Obedience to the Instructions which the French had given them, they would have Prayers in their family, no less than thrice every Day, nor would they ordinarily let their Children eat or Sleep, without first saying their Prayers.

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[46] At the time of this incident, Jogues was a surviving captive in an Iroquois village. He remained among them in a wretched state, making no effort to escape, as he believed God had placed him there to preach the Gospel to his captors. Part of his experience was constant harassment from many in the village who were hostile to his preaching.
[47] Richard Vanderbeets, ed. "Captivity of Father Isaac Jogues, of the Society of Jesus, Among the Mohawks," *Held Captive by Indians* (Knoxville: the University of Tennessee Press, 1973) 29
[48] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*…18

> Indeed these idolaters were like the rest of their whiter Brethren, Persecutors; and would not endure, that these poor Women should retire to their English prayers.[49]

Jesuits and Puritans were each painfully aware of the activities of the other, and they shared a sense of competition, not for the same souls in the immediate sense, but in the spread of their beliefs. The English ever felt the presence of the "papists" to the North. In his account of Indians "no less than one hundred fifty or two hundred miles" whom he describes as "tractable" and "capable to receive impressions" Gookin wrote, "We are informed, that some of the fathers of the Romish religion do travel among them, and have distilled some of their corrupt principles into them."[50] Nevertheless, Gookin trusted that the Lord would provide instruments, "both English and Indian" to "travel into those parts...to convert souls unto the Christian faith. Gookin went on to say that the "Canada Indians" were on the whole a peaceable lot, victim to the treacherous "Maquas" (Iroquois) and to the blasphemies of the French.[51] In Gookin's eyes, it was the French fathers – black-robed shamans every one - and their Romish proclivities that kept the indigenous Canadians in spiritual darkness.

Healing and Witchcraft

Conversion in the Puritan sense required a renunciation of many things, but particularly high on the missionaries list of indigenous evils were all forms of pawwawing, whether it was healing by the invocation of spirits or the practice of malicious witchcraft. For Eliot and his missionary brethren, pawwawing, be it of the

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[49] Neal Salisbury, ed.. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God with Related Documents*, (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997) 166-7

[50] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections...*18

[51] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections....*18-19

indigenous or "Romish" variety, was directly inspired by Satan. This characterization led the pawwaws to be generally resistant to the Gospel and its implications for their place in their communities. Even though all unregenerate Indian and English were seen by the Puritan saints as bound by Satan, they also believed that there were those who made a conscious union with the Devil in exchange for power. These they commonly referred to as "witches." The Puritan understanding of Lucifer was that he was able to transform himself into animal, human, and other forms and even to communicate directly with people through visions, voices, and trances. Those who covenanted with the Devil did in fact receive some of his power, although it was clearly inferior to the power of the Living God. With Satan's assistance, witches could control familiar spirits, sometimes referred to as imps, devils, or demons, and could utilize them to cause possession or physical harm. Witches were also thought to be able to project their spirit across space while their body remained somewhere else.[52] As such, it was perfectly natural for the missionaries to identify the pawwaws as witches, as they often claimed to be able to do those same things.[53]

Witches were thought to be able to cause not only death, sickness, and injury but also storms, fire, and crop damage as well. They were known to enter the rooms of their victims and attack them, sometimes directly enlisting the help of the Devil himself. Other activities included flying, fortune-telling, and the use of "poppets," dolls which, when tortured, reproduced similar torment in those whom they represented.[54] It was also believed that female witches would engage in sexual intercourse with Satan, resulting

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[52] Edgar J. Mcmanus, *Law and Liberty in Early New England: Criminal Justice and Due Process, 1620-1692* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993) 136
[53] William S. Simmons, "Cultural Bias in the New England Puritans' Perception of Indians," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 38, No. 1 (Jan., 1981), 58
[54] Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman…* 6-17

occasionally in impregnation. Hutchinsonian Mary Dyer's stillborn child was interpreted by some of her critics as a sign of such a union. The witch, usually cast as female, was willingly united with Satan, rather than being an unconverted, unwitting dupe in his legions. Elizabeth Reis writes that, "Her soul specifically chose the devil, rather than passively waiting for Christ, and she purposefully allowed the devil to use her body. She presumably gave the devil permission to commandeer her body – her shape – to recruit more witches and perform maleficium."[55]

The pawwaws were also willingly united with the spirits who dwelled within them. Thomas Mayhew referred to possession by the Algonquian term "pawwawnomas," signifying the imps possessing the native healers. One former pawwaw described the process of his initial possession as Chepian – or the Devil, in Mayhew's terms - appearing in the likeness of four living creatures, each having a different role to play. The first was like a man and floated in the air, telling him that he was able to "know all things upon the Island, and what was to be done." This particular pawwanoma, according to the pawwaw, possessed his whole body. The second was in the form of a crow, living in his head and discerning "mischiefs" that were to be perpetrated against him. The third was in the shape of a pigeon and resided in his breast, being "very cunning about any business." The last was like a serpent, and was the imp that provided him with his ability both to cure and to inflict harm. Another pawwaw by the name of Tequanonim claimed to have been possessed "from the crown of the head to

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[55] Elizabeth Reis, "The Devil, the Body, and the Feminine Soul in Puritan New England," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Jun., 1995) 25

the sole of the foot" with pawwanomas taking not only the shape of living creatures but of inanimate substances such as brass, iron, and stone.[56]

Pawwanomas communicated to the possessed through dreams, but for the Puritans dreams were not typically acknowledged as a source of revelation. God had spoken in the past through the prophets, through His Son, and through the writers of the New Testament, but revelation now came to the believer through the Word and not directly to the believer. It was this claim of special, direct revelation that had made Anne Hutchinson so unsettling, and it was one of several irritating characteristics the Quakers possessed. William Simmons is generally correct in his assertion that New England Puritans "knew their God through the pages of their Bible and the reasoned words of their ministers" and therefore looked with extreme suspicion at visions, voices, tongues, possession, trance, or dreams as a source of revelation.[57]

Yet in at least one instance the missionaries were willing to entertain the possibility of God speaking to the Native Americans through dreams. In one of the early conversations taking place amongst the missionaries and their newfound Native American audience, one man related a dream that made the evangelists take notice. About two years before the English arrived in Massachusetts, he told Eliot and his colleagues, there was a great epidemic among the Native Americans in the region. One night he fell into a dream in which he pictured many men dressed as the English were now attired; among them was a man in black, clutching what he now knew was a book in his hand. On the one side of the man, he recalled, were a great number of English, on the other, a great gathering of Indians. The man in his dream said that God was

[56] Thomas Mayhew, "Strength Out of Weakness…" 186-187
[57] William S. Simmons, "Cultural Bias…" 59

moosquantum, or angry, with the Indians, and that he would kill them for their sins. When the dreamer enquired of the man about his family, the figure smiled at him and promised that he, his wife and children would be safe. Shephard, who heard the man's account of the dream, was moved to write "What similitude this dream hath with the truth accomplished, you may easily see. I attribute little to dreams, yet God may speak to such by them rather than to those who have a more sure Word to direct and warn them…"[58]

While they may not have known exactly what to make of the Native Americans' claims about dreams, typically English observers agreed on three things about pawwawing, although they each gave them different levels of emphasis. First, they equated pawwaws to "priests," that is, performers of rituals that they usually labeled as "juggleries" or some other similarly pejorative term. Second, they likened them to surgeons or physicians in that they made their living by curing or pretending to cure people who employed them. Finally, although they disparaged the success rate of the pawwaws, they acknowledged that they were sometimes able to cure, albeit only because they were akin to witches empowered by the Devil.

Both missionaries and Algonquians agreed that the pawwaws did in fact possess the power to make people well, but the missionary characterization of native healing practices was that they sometimes did so through their union with Satan. Gookin described them as "partly wizards and witches, holding familiarity with Satan" and partly as physicians who utilized roots and herbs "at least in show." Through their diabolical incantations, he allowed, they "seem to do wonders."[59] Mayhew basically concurred with this assessment. "I have sometimes marvelled," he wrote, "to see the vehemency of

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[58] Thomas Shephard,
[59] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections…* 14

their Spirits, which they acted with no less bodily violence therein." According to Mayhew, the pawwaws "treasured up" their imps in their bodies, bringing them forth to either hurt or heal as they chose. The pawwaws, when they had performed some notable cure, would show these imps to Native American onlookers, creating an effect of awe and amazement in the crowd and solidifying their own exalted status. The Devil occasionally even appeared to pawwaws.[60] People lived in fear of the pawwaws due to their ability to effect either bodily harm or mental anguish through their charms, both of which Mayhew claimed to have witnessed.[61]

Josselyn described pawwaws as "priests" who were "little better than witches" who had "familiar conference" with Satan. This connection with the devil made pawwaws invulnerable to weapons, and they possessed the very real ability to heal the sick "by reason of their diabolical art."[62] English observers such as Josselyn and Roger Williams also characterized the pawwaws as abusive tricksters, who, while occasionally successful because of their alliance with Satan, were merely using a combination of tricks and "juggleries" to deprive the people of their goods and money. In Williams' eyes,

> These priests and conjurers (like Simon Magus) doe bewitch the people, and not only take their money, but do most certainly (by the help of the Devil) work great cures, though most certain it is that the greatest part of their priest doe merely abuse them, and get their money, in the times of their sickness, and to my knowledge, long for sick times; and to that end the poor people store up money, and spend both money and goods on the powwows, or priests, in these times; the poor people commonly die under their hands, for alas, they administer nothing, but howl and roar, and hollow over them, and begin the song to the rest of the people about them, who all join (like a choir) in prayer to their gods for them.[63]

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[60] Thomas Mayhew Jr., "Glorious Progress…" 77
[61] Thomas Mayhew Jr., "Tears of Repentance…" 203
[62] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages…*96
[63] Roger Williams, *Key Into the Language of America…*245; the reference to Simon Magus is to the trickster magician in the New Testament book of Acts who attempts to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit from the Apostle Peter.

Thomas Morton recalled one pawwaw who used sleight of hand to create mists and clouds to cover his handiwork and give the illusion of real power. However, he also acknowledged that pawwaws occasionally effected real cures through Satan's help.[64]

One of the most striking and specific English attestations to the power of the pawwaws is found in Matthew Mayhew's *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel on Martha's Vineyard (1694)* in which he claimed that a certain pawwaw on Martha's Vineyard was capable of ascertaining through his arts the location of stolen goods. Such was his reputation that at least one English man – who reported the tale to Mayhew directly – had made inquiries into his services regarding some of his own property. Mayhew also insisted that pawwaws were able to kill, cause lameness and impotency through their "diabolick" arts. "Their practice was," he wrote, "either by desiring the spirit to them appearing to perform, what mischief they intended; or to form a piece of leather like an arrow head, tying an hair thereto or using some bone, as of fish (that it might be known witchcraft to the bewitched) over which they performed certain ceremonies and dismissed them to effect their desire." He had no doubt that these enchanted implements could either enter the bodies of the intended victims or that the Devil could "form the like" within their flesh, even going so far as to assert that such things had been removed from the bodies of those on whom the spell had been cast.[65]

Mayhew also claimed to know of many examples of cures wrought by pawwaws. In one such case an Indian known as George was supposedly both bewitched and then cured by the same pawwaw, who was coerced into effecting a cure for his handiwork by the angry friends and relatives of his victim. Allegedly George was cured as soon as their

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[64] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan…*34-36
[65] Matthew Mayhew, *Brief Narrative…*13-14

chosen method of persuasion involved literally putting the pawwaw to the fire, whereupon he released George from his torment. "This was a thing publicly known to the English as well as the Indians in the neighborhood," insisted Mayhew, "there can be no doubt about it." In another instance, the family of a woman deemed bewitched sought unsuccessfully the cure of pawwaws, ultimately sending for a more eminent one from Martha's Vineyard who was able to free her from possession by, of all things, the spirit of an Englishman who had drowned in the sound.[66]

Eliot, who described pawwaws' principal employment as "to cure the sick by certain odd gestures and beatings of themselves" also validated the power of the pawwaws on more than one occasion, even as he decried their arts as satanic. In the *Indian Dialogues*, his Piumbuhhou character tells a pawwaw that his craft is more offensive to God than other sins because it is tantamount to the direct worship of Satan:

> Your murthers, lusts, stealing, lying, etc., they are great sins. Your Pauwauings are worse sins, because by them you worship the Devil instead of God. When you Pauwaus use physick by roots, and such other things which God hath made for that purpose, that is not sin, you do well to use physick for your recovery from sickness but your praying to, and worshipping the Devil, that is your great sin…[67]

In a margin note near the second rule of the 1646 Concord orders that prohibited pawwawing he wrote "pawwows are witches or sorcerers that cure by the help of the devil."[68] He recalled that the praying Indians told him that the pawwaws literally pulled the sickness out of the afflicted person with their hands and blew it away, drawing this

[66] Matthew Mayhew, *Brief Narrative…* 14-15
[67] John Eliot, "Indian Dialogues..." 20
[68] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 39

power from “the old Serpent to whom they pray.” That they could in fact sometimes do this, despite frequent failures, was something Eliot accepted.[69]

Mayhew was relieved to reveal that God had mercifully delivered all the praying Indians of the island “from all extraordinary evil, whereby the Devil and witches use to torment the bodies and minds of men.” He reported that some of the pawwaws themselves admitted their arts held no power over the praying Indians.[70] Logically, if the Holy Spirit indwelt the believer, then no lesser spiritual power could assail him. Those who resisted the call of the Gospel, however, were vulnerable to the depradations of the ill-intentioned shamans. Mayhew recalled an incident in which a youth, whose family did not pray, was afflicted through the sorcery of one pawwaw and engaged the services of others to free him from his torment. “I then took the opportunity to reason with them about their way with the best wisdom God gave me,” he wrote, “but all in vain, for they would not hear to seek the true God.” Even though Mayhew insisted it was obvious that God had voiced his displeasure with the family by allowing the youth’s misery, they still pursued their “wonted Serpentine machinations” in vain, and the youth perished.[71]

Pawwaws’ failures could be hazardous to their own health. If pawwaws were unable to cure a patient they were reviled and sometimes even killed by some of the dead man’s friends, “especially if they could not get their money again out of their hands, which they received aforehand for the cure.”[72] According to Mayhew, since the advent of the praying movement on Martha’s Vineyard the pawwaws had been “much foiled in

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[69] John Eliot, “The Day-Breaking…” 20
[70] Thomas Mayhew Jr., “Tears of Repentance…” 205-206
[71] Thomas Mayhew Jr., “Tears of Repentance…” 204
[72] John Eliot, “The Day-Breaking…” 20

their devilish tasks," killing many instead of curing them.[73] Pawwaws were also reputedly hesitant to come among those with infectious diseases,[74] and so a willingness to do so on the part of either praying Indian or missionary could advance the reputation of the praying movement. Eliot noted in a 1651 letter that some praying Indians risked their own lives to treat those stricken with the pox and that some of these were in turn infected. Their willingness to hazard their own health, the fact that some coming in contact with the sick were not themselves stricken, the cheerfulness with which those who were infected bore their illness, and the fact of their ultimate recovery in the face of a disease that was "very mortal" to them all served to highlight their own mercy and, at the same time, implied the cowardice of the pawwaws.

Pawwaws, "Physick" and the Gospel

These failures, especially in light of the epidemics facing New England Native Americans, provided an opportunity for missionaries to tout the healing power of the God of the Bible. Mayhew in particular managed to utilize healing as a tool to demonstrate the power of the Gospel. On more than one occasion he was able to contrast the shortcomings of native healing practices with the power of English medicine and prayer. In 1646 and 1647 three separate incidents provided the opportunity to proclaim the superiority of God to the "juggleries" of the Indian shamans. In the first, Ieogiscat, a Martha's Vineyard native of about sixty years of age, was severely ill with what Mayhew

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[73] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Strength Out of Weakness…" 187

[74] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages…*95; Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*243; Williams noted that the new epidemic diseases so terrified the Native Americans that they were willing to abandon those who were infected. "I have often seen a poor house left alone in the wild woods, all being fled, the living not able to bury the dead, so terrible is the apprehension of an infectious disease, that not only persons, but the Houses and the whole town takes flight."

described as a "consumptive" disease. The pawwaws, having resigned themselves to his imminent demise despite their best efforts, brought him to Mayhew, perhaps as a test or an attempt to invalidate his claims about the power of God. Mayhew recalled that he convinced the suffering man "by reasoning" of both the inadequacy and wickedness of the pawwaws' methods and "commended his case to the Lord." Ieogiscat's quick recovery bolstered Mayhew's reputation and gave credibility to the God he served, so other gravely ill persons were referred to him.

One of these was the eldest son of Vakapanessue, a prominent Martha's Vineyard Sachem. Mayhew visited the young man, who requested that the missionary pray for him. He happily obliged and left with "good affections," relieved that the young man had chosen the better way. To his great dismay, the youth "sought again unto witches" despite remonstrances to the contrary from his acquaintances. Mayhew sent a message to the sick man, warning him of his impending death, that his decision to return to the pawwaws would result in his destruction, just as such rejection of God had ruined King Ahaziah of Judah. When the young man did in fact die, Mayhew not only appeared somewhat prophetic, but his claims about the inefficacy of the pawwaws' methods were bolstered.

He was also summoned to the bedside of Towanquattick's eldest son, Sachachanimo, who was suffering greatly with a fever. Mayhew honored the sachem's request to pray, doing so in Algonquian, and also took the opportunity to acquaint the Native Americans with the English practice of bloodletting. This time it was the pawwaws who had given assurances that the patient would die for failing to consult them, and, when he recovered shortly after Mayhew bled his arm with a pen knife, they were

left once again looking foolish and ineffective. Towanquattick, deeply impressed, arranged for Mayhew to preach to his people more often.[75]

The case of Pakeponesso, one of Hiacoomes' principal antagonists, also served to highlight the relationship between faith and health. Mayhew reported that shortly after the sachem mocked Hiacoomes for forsaking the pawwaws, he was struck by lightning as he tried to cover the chimney opening of his wigwam during a rainstorm. Hiacoomes, who later became the most influential of the Native American preachers in seventeenth century Martha's Vineyard, interpreted the incident as the direct action of God in response to his persecution[76] and surely must have spoken of it in that way when recounting the story to others. Seemingly Pakepanesso also viewed it in these terms as he became, in Experience Mayhew's words, "a brand plucked out of the fire," a follower of Christ.[77]

Hiacoomes' own challenge to the pawwaws, if not the most heroic then certainly the most flagrant flouting of their power recorded in the missionary tracts, was itself a great lesson to the Native Americans on Martha's Vineyard. In many ways he represented the perfect test case. As he was a person of mean estate and not himself a pawwaw, he was perceived by the Indians to have no power of his own, yet as the most aggressive of the early Native American evangelists on Martha's Vineyard he was directly targeted by the pawwaws. When one such disgruntled native healer harangued the Martha's Vineyard praying Indians following a meeting, the result was a direct challenge to the converts' level of commitment. "I know the meeting Indians are liars," Mayhew recorded the Pawwaw as saying, "{because} you say you care not for the

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[75] Thomas Mayhew, "Glorious Progress…" 77-78
[76] Thomas Mayhew, "Light Appearing…" 110
[77] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts…* 4

pawwaws." He went on to claim that the pawwaws could kill all the meeting Indians through their arts, which in turn led to Hiaccoomes' throwing down the gauntlet:

> …Hiacoomes told him also that he would be in the midst of all the Pawwawes of the island that they could procure, and they should do their utmost they could against him, and when they did their worst by their witchcrafts to kill him he would without fear set himself against them, by remembering Jehovah; he told him also that he did put all the Pawwaws under his heel, pointing unto it; which answers did presently silence the Pawwaw's devilish spirit; and he had nothing to say, but that none but Hiacoomes was able to so to do.[78]

Hiacoomes' challenge and the nature of the Pawwaw's response, which ascribed special power to a man heretofore regarded as inconsequential and in essence admitted that he was immune to witchcraft, must have been a source of confidence for those at the meeting. After all, it was Hiacoomes who more than any other Indian on the island advocated devotion to the God of the Bible in lieu of all others, Hiacoomes whom Pakeponneso mocked with the pejorative title of "English man."[79] For the pawwaw to now allow that he was impotent in the face of this new God was reassuring for those inclined to become praying Indians.

Hiacoomes' bravery in rejecting traditional healing practices and belief in the power of the pawwaws was in turn influential to others on the island. In 1649 the "meeting Indians" gathered together to discuss the renuncation of pawwawing and the difficulties in doing so, given the power to maim and kill they seemingly possessed. Here again Hiacoomes' public renunciation of the pawwaws served to convince many at the meeting that their charms need hold no fear for the true believer. Hummanequam, in the process of confessing his sins to the Martha's Vineyard meeting, asserted his decision to forsake his old ways for God was the direct consequence of Hiacoomes' counsel and

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[78] Thomas Mayhew, "Light Appearing…" 116
[79] Thomas Mayhew, "A Light Appearing…" 110

his steadfast courage. Mayhew, who would later take Hummanequam along when he preached to Eliot's flock,[80] judged him to be sincere in no small part because of his decision to forsake the assistance of a pawwaw living "within a bow shot of his door."[81] A converted sachem who also had been a pawwaw publicly declared that his decision had been greatly influenced by Hiacoomes' resistance to his own attempts at killing him through witchcraft:

> That having often employed his god, which appeared to him in the form of a snake, to kill, wound, or lame such as he intended mischief to, he employed the said snake to kill, and that failing, to wound or lame Hiacoomes, the first Indian convert on the island, all which proved ineffectual. And that, having seriously considered Hiacoomes' assertion, that none of the pawwaws could hurt him, since his God whom he now served was the great God to whom theirs were subservient, he resolved to worship the true God.[82]

Like Mayhew, Eliot was also eager to highlight the deficiencies in Indian medicinal practices. "They have no means of physick at all, only make us of pawwaws when they are sick, which makes them loath to give it over," he writes, "but I find, by God's blessing, in some means used in physick and in surgery, they are already convinced of the folly of pawwawing." To this end, he requested medicines and "wholesome cordials" as a means of further proving the superiority of English medicine, and, by implication, the degraded nature of Native American "physick." [83] Despite the admission that pawwaws did sometimes employ herbs in their healing regimens, Eliot insisted that the Native Americans lacked a real system of medicine because of their lack of understanding when it came to the body and the application of treatment. Thus, even

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[80] John Wilson, "Strength Out of Weakness…" 176
[81] Thomas Mayhew, "A Light Appearing…" 142
[82] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts…*7
[83] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 84; Cotton Mather shared this opinion of Indian medicine, saying that "Their physick is, excepting a few specifics, nothing hardly." Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana…*504

though they admittedly understood “the virtues of sundry things,” they were unable to correctly utilize them. This lack of knowledge left them with little choice but to resort to the “conceits” of the pawwaws who practiced delusion and deceit on an unsuspecting population. The solution in Eliot’s mind was to train the Native Americans in English medicine and thus further undermine the juggleries of the indigenous practitioners. English medicine, along with English shovels, crops, and books, would be instrumental in the civilizing mission so necessary to the spread of the Gospel. “I have shewed them,” he recalled “the anatomy of man’s body, and some general principles of physick, which is very acceptable to them, but they are so extremely ignorant, that these things must rather be taught by sight, sense and experience then by precepts…”[84]

On the other hand, Eliot acknowledged that the New England countryside no doubt contained many helpful plants possessing healing properties. English observers generally agreed that there were plants particular to the region that could be utilized as medicine. Roger Williams, William Wood, and John Josselyn all acknowledged the special medicinal nature of Indian corn.[85] Williams identified samp, an English dish using Indian corn, as “exceedingly wholesome for English bodies,”[86] and claimed that it acted as “an admirable cleanser,” both reducing the risk of and curing “the stone.”[87] The English across the ocean also stood to gain from the wonderful digestive attributes of Indian maize. “If the use of it were known and received in England (it is the opinion of some skillful in physick),” he insisted, “it might save many thousand lives in England, occasioned by the binding nature of English wheat, the Indian corn keeping the body in a

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[84] John Eliot, “Clear Sun-Shine…” 56
[85] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*100,131,171; William Wood, *New England’s Prospect…* 23; John Josselyn, *Two Voyages…*52-53
[86] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*101
[87] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*131, 170

constant moderate looseness."[88] American corn had other potentially salubrious effects on the body. Josselyn even claimed that corn leaves boiled and drunk provided a remedy for back pain.[89]

Other plants found in America had medical uses. Williams noted that a "certain root dried," which he likened to ginger, was utilized by Indian women as a pain reliever during childbirth.[90] Josselyn provided an extensive list of New England plants that had the power to heal wounds, treat scurvy and prevent seizures, claiming that sumach was a good toothache remedy and that the sap of the maple tree was helpful to ease the discomfort of a sore throat. Boiled fern helped with "all manner of fluxes," and "American beans" supposedly strengthened the kidneys. Watermelon, like corn, was a good antidote for "the stone."[91]

But to English commentators, the plant with the most diverse set of benefits was, ironically, tobacco. A typical Algonquian man would travel with his pipe, sometimes as long as two feet, and a bag of tobacco.[92] Williams noted that the Narragansett took tobacco "against the Rheume, which causeth the toothache," and as a means of reviving and refreshing themselves.[93] Josselyn claimed tobacco was good for digestion, treated gout and toothaches, and promoted good health in a variety of ways:

> …it heats the cold, and cools them that sweat, feedeth the hungry, spent spirit restoreth, purgeth the stomach, killeth nits and lice, the juice of the green leaf healeth green wounds although poysoned, the syrup for many diseases, the smoke for the phthisick, cough of the lungs, distillations of rheume, and all diseases of a

[88] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*170
[89] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages…*52
[90] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*131
[91] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages…*44-51. Josselyn also refers to "American beans" as "French beans" and "kidney beans."
[92] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*127
[93] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America…*103

> cold and moist cause, good for all bodies cold and moist taken on an empty stomach…[94]

Josselyn's commentary, as with Eliot's and much of Williams', focuses mostly on the healing potential of native plants, and, in some cases, on the English appropriation of those plants for medicinal purposes. Despite their willingness to extol the virtues of plants indigenous to New England, for the most part the English were relatively silent on the Algonquian methods of applying them. New England herbs could be transposed into the existing English system of "physick," in much the same way that the missionaries sought to transplant Algonquian Native Americans into English culture and faith.

To this end, Eliot dreamed of a school designed to impart the knowledge of English medicine to the Native Americans that would nonetheless take advantage of those helpful herbs native to New England. Native American knowledge would be incorporated into English medicinal practices to the "benefit of the people of this country, and it may be of our native country also." As real "physick" was a blessing from Almighty God, a transfer of English medical knowledge and the application of that knowledge to plants already known to the Indians would validate the God of the Bible and thus serve to further "root out" the pawwaws.[95]

The concept of real English "physick" paralleled the idea of spiritual conversion. Just as pawwawing was a perversion of true medicine and true worship, Christ offered real healing, both corporal and spiritual. That Christ could heal bodily ailments served to

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[94] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*…54-55
[95] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-Shine…" 56-57

qualify him as the physician of the soul as well.[96] John Speene confessed that his concern about leaving pawwawing was overidden by the thought that pawwaws were themselves mortal. "But again," he recalled, " I thought man could not make us well, because he must die himself, and therefore pawwawing is a vain thing, and they die even though they pawwaw."[97] On the other hand, Christ, as Nishohkou pointed out in his 1659 confession, healed the leper and he alone was qualified to heal sins as well. "Many came to Christ," he confessed, "the halt and blind and lame and deaf and sick and He healed all, and if they did but touch Christ they were healed; and therefore now I will pray, and oh, let Christ save me."[98] Conversely, the pawwaws' failures to heal in the face of epidemic were similarly convincing. Piumbuhhou, for example, resisted Waban's advances until his faith in the pawwaws was destroyed by the death of his family.[99]

There were times when it seemed as if praying was in fact insulation against disease. When a "universal sickness" swept through Martha's Vineyard in 1645, those Native Americans attending to the Gospel seemingly were less affected and Hiacoomes and his family were virtually unscathed.[100] Shortly afterward even those who had previously despised him sent for him to receive instruction about this new God who could preserve health in the face of epidemic. Thus, Hiacoomes' good health not only encouraged renunciation of pawwawing on the island but led to the first real public preaching there.[101]

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[96] In the *Indian Dialogues*, Eliot has both his Waban and Anthony characters address this topic, Waban claiming that praying towns have "physick for the soul" and Anthony asserting that Christ was the "skillful physician to heal and cure our souls." John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…*43, 51
[97] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 58
[98] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 15
[99] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 69
[100] Thomas Mayhew, "A Light Appearing…" 111, Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts…5*
[101] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts…5*

In the winter of 1650 Eliot reported that God had "shewed" the praying Indians "a very great testimony" by largely preserving them from the pox. On the other hand, the company of "prophane" Indians living at Weymouth, whom Eliot surmised may have been sent directly by antagonistic pawwaws but certainly at the instigation of Satan to subvert the fledgling praying community, was greatly affected by the epidemic. Not only were "sundry cut off," but those who died were, in Eliot's estimation, "of the worst and most mischievious of them all."[102]

But the praying Indians were not immune to illness and this fact had to be incorporated into the explanations offered by the missionaries. Praying Indians sought an explanation for why God would make "good men" fall ill.[103] Part of the missionary response centered around the necessity of heartfelt conversion. For Eliot, if converts were completely immune to disease or to hardship in general then the sincerity of conversion could be called into question. As Eliot's Piumbuhhu character explains in the *Dialogues*:

> If praying to God did bring with it outward plenty then all carnal people would pray to God, not because they love God…but because they love themselves…If we are loath to part with sin, God will chastise us with sickness, poverty, and other worldly crosses.[104]

The real Piumbuhhu knew that pain well as did Nishohkou, who lost a child. Ponampam spoke of many of his kindred dying, and Wutasakompauin lost two wives.[105] Hiacoomes, preserved in 1645, received Mayhew's admiration for his steadfastness when his infant child died five days after delivery. Mayhew praised him for making "good

[102] John Eliot, "A Light Appearing…" 133-134
[103] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 85
[104] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…3*
[105] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 20, 28; The context of the confession would indicate that he was married at two separate times rather than having two wives at the same time.

use" of the tragedy. Eliot similarly commended Wamporas, an early convert, for using his death as a testimony. "God giveth us three mercies," Eliot reported the dying man as saying, "the first is health and strength, the second is food and clothes, the third is sickness and death; and when we have had our share in the two first, why should we not be willing to take our part in the third?"[106]

Not all who overtly renounced the services of the pawwaw experienced physical recovery. Richard Bourne, reporting from Plymouth in 1674, recounted the story of one man who forsook native remedies to the point of death despite the urging of his wife and others.[107] Indeed God, being sovereign, was in no way obligated to preserve his followers completely, sometimes choosing to use ill health as a means of reproof or as an impetus to conversion. Physical infirmity or hardship as a means of correction was really to be understood as an expression of love for His wayward children.[108] Native Americans and English alike could suffer God's judgment in this life as a call to repentance. Anthony's conversion followed both illness and injury, as he saw both the mercy and wrath of God embodied in his physical distress. Following the deaths of a brother and a friend, he had resolved never to pray to God, but soon he fell ill himself. "When I was sick and recovered again," he confessed, "I thought that God was merciful to me."[109] When God "brake" his head in a construction accident, he prayed fervently despite being near death. Drawing on the New England Puritan emphasis on covenanting, he attempted to make peace with God. "And my heart prayed to God," he recalled "for now I know my sins, and that I have deserved misery…oh, God if thou give

[106] John Eliot, "Strength Out of Weakness…" 166
[107] Richard Bourne, *Historical Collections…*59
[108] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…*10
[109] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…257

me life again, I will assuredly believe and obey."[110] Following his recovery he became a mainstay of the Natick community for years to come.

Resistance and Renunciation

Conversion of pawwaws also provided encouragement to those joining the praying movement. Pawwaws were often among the missionaries' chief antagonists, as the mission effort targeted their profession as sinful. This resistance took various forms, from encouraging Indians to "flee" to other places where the missionary message was not being preached,[111] to the use of their arts on converts such as Hiacoomes, and, finally, to espionage and attempted assassination. Mayhew recalled that one of the early converts in the Martha's Vineyard meeting had originally been sent by one of the island's more eminent pawwaws to spy on the activities of the meeting Indians, ultimately joining them instead.[112] Towanquatick, who invited Hiacoomes to preach to his people in 1646 was "exceedingly maligned" by those allied with the pawwaws and even suffered an attempt on his life when an Indian presumably sympathetic to the pawwaws shot him in the face with an arrow at close range. When the projectile strangely glanced off his brow causing only superficial damage to the nose, Towanquatick arose with the conviction that the God of Hiacoomes and the Bible was powerful indeed. For the most part, however, pawwaws sought to win their battle with the missionaries by discrediting them. Any problem with the mission effort, therefore, could be used as a way of calling both the English and God into question. Eliot reported that his initial success at Nashawog was dampened by

[110] John Eliot, "A Further Account…"
[111] John Eliot, "Clear-Sunshine…" 51, John Eliot, "Light Appearing…" 133
[112] Thomas Mayhew, "Light Appearing…" 117

distance and “the slow process of the work.” This stagnation resulted in a partial return to pawwawing among those who had embraced the Gospel there.[113]

Sometimes, however, as with sachems, pawwaws renounced their arts and became praying Indians themselves. Writing in the fall of 1651, Mayhew reported that two pawwaws on the island had become inclined “to run after those that followed hard after God,” convinced of the villany of their former craft. According to Mayhew such was their disgust for pawwawing that they wished to “trample it down in the dust with the Devil and pawwawnomas (or imps).”[114] One year later he put the total of converted pawwaws at eight.[115] Eliot also reported pawwaws in Massachusetts renouncing “their wicked employment.”[116] By his own admission Waban had aspired to become a pawwaw, although neither he nor any of the missionaries ever indicated that he had attained that status. Tequaomin, a pawwaw of notorious reputation on Martha’s Vineyard, gave up his practice after his efforts to cure his wife proved fruitless.[117]

Many challenges awaited pawwaws renouncing their practice. In addition to the pain of splitting with family members and friends who formerly relied on the pawwaws’ supposed connection to the world of spirits for protection and healing,[118] pawwaws were walking away from their livelihood, as their role as healers was their source of survival. In addition, some pawwaws reported a kind of spiritual withdrawal, of being tormented by the very spirits from whom they now sought freedom. One former pawwaw told Mayhew that his imps assailed both his flesh and his mind for months after his public

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[113] John Eliot, “Light Appearing…” 134
[114] Thomas Mayhew, “Strength Out of Weakness…” 186; see also Thomas Allen, “Strength Out of Weakness…” 194
[115] Thomas Mayhew, “Tears of Repentance…” 203
[116] John Eliot, “Clear Sun-Shine…” 51
[117] Thomas Mayhew, “Strength Out of Weakness…” 187
[118] Thomas Mayhew, “Strength Out of Weakness…” 187

renunciation of pawwawing.[119] The pawwaw who had unsuccessfully tried his arts on Hiacoomes also reported similar unrest:

> …that from the time of his doing so {giving up pawwawing}, for seven years the said snake gave him great disturbance; but that he never after his praying to God employed that snake in anything; about the which time the said snake ceased to appear to him.[120]

Thus, for pawwaws, conversion presented special difficulties, including loss of status, reduction of income, the resentment of those formerly dependent on them, and spiritual torment. The magnitude of their sacrifice, therefore, was potentially persuasive for those around them if they lost confidence in the effectiveness of their spirits relative to the power of the God of the Bible.

Ultimately the missionaries' presentation of the God of the Bible was competing with the pawwanomas for the bodies as well as the souls of New England Algonquians. The power of God, if it were to be seen as trumping that of Chepian, had to be relevant to the physical infirmities suffered on such a catastrophic scale. The pawwaws also faced a crisis of unbelief, as their inability to deal with widespread epidemics reduced their significance in the eyes of some of their constituents. Disease and health played a major role in the success of the praying movement.

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[119] Thomas Mayhew, "Tears of Repentance…" 205
[120] Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*…7

Chapter 5: Good, Evil, and Manitou: The Problem of Worldview

Universality and the Word

Whatever connection they may have perceived between Algonquians and the lost tribes of Israel, the Puritan missionaries recognized their Native American neighbors as descendants of Noah. As such, the Algonquian peoples of North America were people who had fallen away from the knowledge of God, and in part the topic of lost tribes was intriguing because it spoke to how recently that knowledge was lost. Either way, the Algonquians of New England were thought to retain vestiges of truth in their worldview even though Indian religion was a bastardized version of the truth, a long-term apostacy from the awareness of God once held by all men. This understanding formed the basis of Eliot's response to the question of why the English appeared to possess a special knowledge of God.

The missionaries and their Indian converts sought to highlight what they saw as a principal deficiency of native religion, that its form and substance was orally transmitted rather than being grounded in the text of God's Word. Native religions did not possess a specific theology codified into a canon of tenets and overseen by an organization like the church.[1] As such the missionary pitch had to justify the primacy of Scripture as the very words of the one Creator and therefore as a trustworthy source of knowledge. That the Puritans were "people of the book" was clearly understood by the indigenous inhabitants of New England, as their deliberate destruction of Algonquian Bibles during King Philip's War would later attest. The claim that the Bible represented the actual mind of

[1] Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) 68-69

God was met with a combination of resistance and interest. Reactions ranged from that of a sachem acquaintance of Williams who urged listening to the newcomer because "he hath books and writings,"[2] to the underlying suspicion that the Bible was a mere prop in English trickery.

The *Dialogues*, partly intended as an instructional manual by Eliot, offer insight into the way in which the missionaries sought to justify the authority of Scripture as well as the nature of Native American suspicions regarding that authority. That this was a pressing concern is emphasized by the fact that the issue is a recurring one throughout that text. At one juncture Eliot uses the character of Piumbuhhu's kinsman to voice indigenous concerns about the connections between Puritan faith and colonial ambition. "May not we rather think that English men have invented these stories to amaze and fear us out of our old customs," he says "and bring us to stand in awe of them, that they might wipe us of our lands, and drive us into corners, to seek new ways of living, and new places too?"[3]

Given these fears, it was necessary for missionaries, English or Algonquian, to distance the Bible from the English. Piumbuhhu's character insists that "This book was written long before the English-men prayed to God, and English-men have learned all their wisdom out of this book."[4] For the message of the mission to resonate, the Native Americans' tendency to see the God of the Bible as merely the god of the English had to be replaced with the insistence of a universal Creator and a universally applicable Word. As such, it was equally necessary to render English people as converted heathens rescued

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[2] Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America*, 198-199
[3] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*...7
[4] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*…23

from their own spiritual darkness by the power of the Word.[5] There need be no shame in the ignorance of Native American forefathers when the missionaries acknowledged the lost condition of their own.

In the dialogue featuring Anthony and William, a suspicious Philip says "I perceive also that in your worshipping of God morning and night, you read in that Book; I pray tell me what Book that is, what is written in it and how do you know that it is the word of God? Many say that some wise English men have devised and framed it, and tell us that it is God's Word, when it is no other than the words of wise men."[6] Anthony's reply signaled a desire to affirm the Algonquian notion that their forefathers in fact had been wise while still insisting they had been deprived of the truth:

> And what though we are not wiser than our forefathers, yet God can teach us such wisdom as our forefathers did not know. I think we that we are bound to think that our fathers were so wise, that if God's Word had been brought and offered to them, they would have received it, and would have learned by it to be wiser than they were, and why therefore should not we be so wise, as to do that which our wise fathers would have done…[7]

To be deprived of the Word was to be in a most pitiable condition, and this could be turned into a charge the missionaries leveled at their Jesuit rivals. Just as "the Papists" were shamans by another name, practicing deception and idolatry with the worst of the pawwaws, they also were guilty of the deliberate suppression of the Word. Incorporating this notion into his missionary approach assisted Eliot in emphasizing that depravity and distance from the Gospel was not something confined to the Indians but was in fact a

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[5] John White reminded his English readers of their own pagan past. "Let us be entreated to reflect upon ourselves, and set before us the face of our progenitors 1500 or 1600 years since, that we may answer to our own hearts such were some of us, or our progenitors before us." John White, *The Planter's Plea*…38-39

[6] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*…54

[7] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*…55

universal problem. He resisted the notion, seemingly proffered by some of his flock, that if the Bible really did contain God's words it was, in the words of Philip's character, "too deep for ignorant people to meddle with." Ignorance was not, insisted Eliot, only a Native American problem. The Catholic priests were guilty of sustaining such darkness in their flocks, choosing to "lead all their people with them to hell, (rather) than to suffer them to see the light."[8] This intentional deprivation was, according to Eliot, an attempt to keep power over their converts, especially over sachems, who, without the Word, were subject to the human inventions of the priests. This reliance on persons, be they priests or pawwaws, was inferior to the permanence of the written Word:

> The word and will of God written in a Book, whereby we may not only hear it with our ears, when it is spoken by others, but we may see it with our eyes…and this is a great benefit to us, to have Gods' word and will written; for a word spoken is soon gone, and nothing retaineth it but our memory…[9]

A great sin of the Jesuits, according to the Puritans, was their penchant for adding to and subtracting from the Word.[10] The oral transmission of knowledge, whether by Catholic fathers or by Algonquian forefathers, was not to be trusted.

So how were Native American missionaries like Anthony, Waban, and Piumbuhhu supposed to defend the authenticity of the Bible? In contrast to modern apologetics, the model Eliot provided in the Philip dialogue primarily utilized arguments that assumed the authority of the text even as they attempted to demonstrate it. First, Eliot said through his William character, the fact that Scripture provides an account of creation was grounds to take it as authoritative, although this conveniently ignored the fact that the Native Americans had a variety of competing accounts themselves. He

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[8] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…*54-55
[9] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…*58
[10] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…*58

insisted that the Bible's holiness and perfection were demonstrated by the purity of the Law given in the commandments. The record of miracles wrought by God's ambassadors such as Moses and by God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ provided further evidence. Lastly, the power of the Scriptures to reveal the Gospel and to convert the soul of the lost constituted the remainder of his justification. The only argument offered in the *Dialogues* for the reliability of the Scriptures external to the text is the assertion that the integrity of the Bible's transmission had been maintained since the time of Moses.[11] If this represents an accurate rendition of the justifications used to validate the Scripture by Eliot and by other missionaries, then it is not clear that such arguments would have much force for those not already engaged with Scripture for themselves.

Interestingly, the idea of justification for the Scriptures was reflected back upon the praying Indians in the 1654 examination when one questioner attempted to get them to explain why they believed the Bible was God's Word. When asked, "How do you know the Word of God is God's Word?" the respondent merely affirmed his belief, saying "I believe the word you teach us was spoken of God." This was unsatisfactory and prompted the examiner to try again to ascertain the reason for confidence in the Scriptures. "Therefore I believe it to be the word of God," the examinee said, "because when we learn it, it teacheth our hearts to be wise and humble."[12] Ultimately, the true justification for Scripture was its effect on the heart.

Eliot initially struggled to overcome the suspicion of his Native American audience that the God of the Bible was not relevant to them. They wanted to know,

[11] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*…66-67
[12] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation…" 278

among other things, to what nation Christ had appeared first.[13] God's identification in the Bible as "the God of the Hebrews" may have caused confusion. "You said God promised Moses to go with him," they noted, "how doth he go with us?"[14] Eliot's explanation to his flock likened them to rebellious children whose forefathers' resistance to a relationship with God accounted for their current sorry condition:

> We confessed that it was true that at first we had all but one father, but after that our first father fell, he had diverse children. Some were bad and some good, those that were bad would not take his counsel but departed from him, and those God left alone in sin and ignorance, but others did regard him and the counsel of God by him, and those knew God, and so the difference arose at first, that some together with their posterity knew God not; and so we told them it was at this day…[15]

God was like a father of recalcitrant children, Eliot explained. He would "shut out of doors" those who rejected Him, but, like a loving father, he would accept their sincere repentance if they would truly turn and, like many of the English, "learn by him and come to know his mind."[16] Eliot utilized the language of the some of Jesus' parables to communicate the message of grace. God would render the same reward to those hired at the "eleventh hour," he insisted. "If a father had a son that had been disobedient many years, yet at last if that son fall down upon his knees and weep and desire to love him his father is so merciful that he will readily forgive him and love him," he counseled.[17] Eliot also freely acknowledged what was apparent to his fledgling flock, that there were those among the English in the same state as they were.

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[13] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 47
[14] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 129
[15] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 10
[16] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 11
[17] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 10

How Many Masters?

There were some common starting points for a theological dialogue between the Puritans and their Algonquian neighbors. From the English perspective, their Indian brethren practiced a sort of monotheism, even though they acknowledged a variety of other deities. "They have (at least) a traditional knowledge of God, as the maker of heaven and earth," explained Dury, "It is true they talk of other gods; but yet they hold that the chief god is he, who made all things."[18] Additionally, in their acknowledgment of Hobomok or Chepian as a source of harm, they had a concept of something the Puritans could readily identify with Satan, even if the comparison was not perfect.[19] And yet while they were quick to acknowledge that God existed and was "a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him," they sometimes took the position that the Englishman's God made the English and their gods had made them.[20] Monotunkquanit confessed that he had harbored such notions at first: "My heart said, it may be God made English men, but not as poor naked men, as we are of a strange language; and therefore I doubted to pray."[21]

Whatever difficulties existed initially in translating the omnifiscence of God, the prospective converts were receptive to the concept of creation, although indigenous accounts of this event varied. The origin of the Native Americans, a topic of speculation for the Puritans, was also seemingly a subject of contention among themselves. In his

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[18] John Drury, "Glorious Progress…" 94

[19] Hobomok was, in Frank Shuffleton's estimation, a very curious devil, because it was he that the Native Americans called upon to cure them. Frank Shuffleton, "Indian Devils and Pilgrim Fathers…" 111 From a Puritan standpoint, however, the idea that the pawwaws could cure through the assistance of the Devil, who was willing to do so as a way to keep them in spiritual bondage to him, was easily understandable. They believed that those deliberately covenanting with Satan did in fact have access to very a real, if ultimately destructive and malevolent, power.

[20] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, 189

[21] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 66

Historical Collections Gookin recalled two competing narratives, one claiming only that they were descendents of those from the sea coast and another of a more descriptive nature:

> Others say that there were two young squaws, or women, being at first either swimming or wading in the water. The froth or foam of the water touched their bodies, from where they became with child; and on of them brought forth a male and the other, a female child, and then the two women died and left the earth. So their son and daughter were their progenitors.[22]

Gookin went on to report that the New England Algonquians entertained a variety of "fables and figments" concerning their origins. The Narragansett version of creation Williams recorded held that Cautantowitt first made one man and one women out of stone but was dissatisfied with them, and, having smashed his initial creation, started over, this time using a tree to furnish the raw material for his creation. These two new people were "the fountaines of all mankind."[23] Opinions among this group also diverged, with some telling Williams that they could not tell the origin of the world and others ascribing creation to the work of many gods.[24] For Williams, the subject of creation provided an apt starting point for evangelism to the Native Americans and in his *Key Into the Language of America* he laid out a series of Algonquian phrases designed to be useful to English speakers for that end:

> I shall propose some proper expressions concerning the creation of the world, and man's estate, and in particular theirs also, which from my self many hundreds of times, great numbers of them have heard with great delight, and great convictions: which who knows (in God's holy season) may rise to exalting of the Lord Jesus Christ in their conversion and salvation?

Josselyn recorded a flood story, that "a great while ago" their country was drowned save for a pawwaw with the foresight to flee to the mountains. Upon releasing a hare in an

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[22] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*…6
[23] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, 197
[24] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*...195

experiment parallel to Noah's release of the raven and the dove, the pawwaw and his kin descended from the mountain, thus founding the society. Others told Josselyn that the beaver was their father.[25] Morton also noted that the Indians believed God had created two people, eventually destroying their wicked descendants with a flood:

> ...yet are they not altogether without the knowledge of God (historically) for they have it amongst them by tradition, that God made one man and one woman, and bade them live together, and get children, kill dear, beasts, birds, fish, and fowl, and what they would at their pleasure; and that their posterity was full of evil, and made God so angry that he let the sea upon them and drowned the greatest part of them that were naughty men."[26]

While the indigenous origin stories varied from each other and from the Genesis account considerably, when Eliot and his associates proffered the Biblical record of creation, that God had fashioned man out of the dust of the Earth to begin all of mankind, it was not a completely foreign suggestion. This in turn opened a dialogue about nature between the missionaries and their Native American proselytes. Many of the partial conversations recorded in the missionary tracts reveal the Algonquian listeners testing the knowledge of the English missionaries about the physical world. If the Puritans were correct about the origin of all mankind, then surely this would be reflected more generally in an ability to account for the sun, stars, and moon, the genesis of salt and freshwater, and a host of other intriguing facets of the natural world.

Eliot, in turn, seized on the Native Americans' willingness to make the inference of creation from their observations of design in nature. At one point he compared God's relationship to his creation to the relationship between a weaver and a basket. Just as the weaver was the only one who knew precisely the process by which the basket had been constructed, Eliot argued, so too was God the only one with complete knowledge of

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[25] John Josselyn, *A Critical Edition…*96
[26] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan…*49

creation's mysteries. His Piumbuhhu character in the *Dialogues* takes a similar tack with his semi-fictional kinsman:

> And to show you what great reason we have thus to do, considering that God doth some of his chief works in this world, in the matter of our eating, which no creature can do; for take you a trap of meat, and ask, who can turn this into blood, and flesh, and sinews, and bones, and skin? And who can give every part of our body its due proportion, that one part shall not overgrow the other, but every part alike? Who but God can do this?[27]

God, as the Creator of all men, English and Algonquian alike, was capable of intimate knowledge of man's every thought, action, word, and desire. "The light of nature," or general revelation, demonstrating God's existence from the things that He had made, was just as available to people in the Eastern woodlands as it was to Englishmen. "Hereupon we sought to confirm them the more," recalled Eliot, "and we asked them if they saw a great wigwam or a great house, would they think that raccoons or foxes built it that had no wisdom?"[28] Eliot taught that God had revealed himself in two "books," the Bible and "the book of the creature," the revelation written by the hand of God in nature.[29] This instruction did not entirely miss its mark as in their confessions both Ponampam and Anthony cited their consideration of the creation as pivotal to their conversions.[30]

But while the general revelation of nature was sufficient to demonstrate the existence of God, the specifics of the Biblical account were not as easily ascertainable. One issue of interest for Eliot's flock was the place Satan occupied in the creation. Did God create man or Satan first and why, if God was omnipotent, would he allow the Devil

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[27] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*…11
[28] John Eliot, "The Day Breaking…" 7
[29] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 129; Williams wrote that "The wildest sons of men hear the preaching of the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars; yet not seeking after God the maker are justly condemned though they never have or despise other preaching…" Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America*…156
[30] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 243; John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 11, 48

to wreak havoc on the hearts of men? "Why did not God," Eliot recorded them asking, "kill the Devil that made all men so bad, God having all the power?"[31] Algonquian praying Indians struggled, as the body of believers always had, to confront the problem of evil. As such the order of creation was of importance, and Eliot's flock challenged him as to why God would create hell before Adam sinned. For Hilary Wyss this particular query represented an unanswerable problem for Puritan theology and she assumes that Eliot - who, writing for an English audience, seldom recorded missionary responses to the Indians' questions - offered no cogent reply. Assuming this teaching on hell to reflect an accurate interpretation of missionary instruction to the Native Americans, it can be reasonably conjectured that Eliot's Puritan response would have centered on the fact that a foreknowing God operated in eternity unbound by the strictures of the linear time He created.

Yet the Algonquian concern with the problem of evil went beyond the issue of the origin of either hell or the Devil, as they were also very concerned about God's relationship to evil. God, as Creator of all things, including Satan, seemed indirectly responsible for the existence of evil, but in the minds of the Eastern Algonquians Cautantowitt was at times the direct cause of it. Could this also be true of the God of the Bible? The Puritan conception of God entertained the possibility of God acting in judgment, sending sickness or hardship, but always as the just penalty for sin or as the loving chastisement of a righteous Father. As the creator of all physical and moral laws for the universe, God's right to judge His creation meant that His actions were, by definition, good. The praying Indians, perhaps drawing on their conception of Cautantowitt, were inclined to wonder whether God could be a direct source of evil.

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[31] John Eliot, "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 46-47

Both Cautantowitt and Hobbomok required ritualistic propitiation to avoid disaster, and so serving both was considered prudent. Writing about Virginian Algonquians, John Smith observed that Okee, seemingly a Hobbomok equivalent whom Smith identified as Satan, was placated more out of "fear than love."[32] Yet, as Karen Kupperman has noted, Algonquians believed Hobbomok, within the force of manitou, was capable of helping them control their environment and help their lives.[33] Hobbomok was also therefore an object of worship because of the benefits he seemingly provided.

The English quickly realized that the Algonquians' two-god system lacked the strict polarity that existed between God and Lucifer. Not only did their Algonquian neighbors see Cautantowitt as a potential source of evil but they did not view their creator in opposition to Hobbomok and were initially perplexed by the Christian prohibition on serving two masters.[34] While Cautantowitt occupied a special place in the Algonquian pantheon, numerous other gods were acknowledged including gods for women, children, the home, north, south, east, west, the sun, the moon, the sea, and fire, and to the Puritan mind the comparison to the Catholic collection of saints was an obvious one.[35] Serving multiple deities, each with an area of specialty, was therefore ingrained in those to whom Eliot and the others preached. In the Algonquian view, Hobbomok, as a source of harm, was to be placated out of fear, and in the third missionary meeting with the Natick group, the question of appeasing him was raised. "Because some Indians say that we must pray

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[32] John Smith, Barbour, Philip L., ed., *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631)* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press) 122
[33] Karen Kuperman, *Indians and English*…122
[34] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 132
[35] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*…190

to the Devil for all good and some to God" Eliot recorded, "they would know whether they may pray to the Devil or no."[36]

God's holiness and sovereignty were also subject to investigation as they attempted to reconcile the image of forgiving Father with a God who was "musquantum" over sin. "Why does God hate them that teach sin so much?" they asked.[37] Additionally, if God foreknew all, then why would He go to such lengths with those, such as Pharaoh, whose heart was hardened against Him? Why would damnation last for eternity?[38]

The direct supplication of Hobbomok, combined with the belief in Manitou, led the English to characterize Native American religion as "devil worship" and polytheism, which amounted to the same thing. For Puritan referees to endorse the visible sainthood of praying Indians, a strict and overt renunciation of any and all indigenous religious activity was demanded, and this in turn necessitated an implicit indictment of friends, relatives, and ancestors. In his 1659 confession Anthony admitted his parents "prayed to many gods," and John Speene said that his parents "served" many gods. Nishohkou confessed that he and his parents had previously "prayed to many gods." Wutasakompauin characterized their previous religious activity as praying "to the Devil," as did Waban, who admitted to "loving" such worship in the past.[39]

Flesh and Spirit

The physical separation of the praying communities, in part, was undertaken to remove the confusion of a system that suggested the God of the Bible could simply be

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[36] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking…" 17
[37] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 92
[38] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 129
[39] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 9, 17, 27, 31

incorporated into an existing system. In the *Dialogues*, Eliot has a partly fictionalized Piumbuhhu address the risks associated with even looking upon indigenous ceremonies:

> And whereas you say, that many of my friends are there, the more is my grief. I desire that I were able to pull you all out of that deep pit and filthy puddle; which to perform, I should utterly be disabled, if I should go in myself, and so be defiled with the same filth, which I persuade them to forsake and cast away.[40]

Being separated from God forever was of course the consequence of such idolatry, but Eliot acknowledged that hell was initially a particularly difficult concept to translate. To communicate the idea of eternal anguish, Eliot used the word "chechainuappan" meaning "tormented alive," for he knew no other word to express such punishment. Conversely, believers would "wowein wicke Jehovah," that is "live in all bliss with Jehovah the blessed God," as Eliot rendered it.[41] Both hell and heaven were the subject of questioning by Algonquian praying Indians, and their exact location was of particular interest. Among the questions recorded by Eliot in "The Light Appearing" is "If all the world be burnt up, where shall hell be?" Seemingly the person posing the question conceived of hell as being physically present on the Earth. Indeed the idea of the destruction of the world by fire was itself a difficult concept to envision. "When all the world shall be burnt up," one elderly woman enquired, "what shall be in the room of it?"[42] When broaching the subject of the world's impending destruction by fire, Roger Williams fielded a similar question: "What then will become of us? Where then shall we be?"[43]

The physical relationship between heaven and earth was also a matter of intense interest. A close analysis of the questions praying Indians posed to the missionaries

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[40] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues…*3
[41] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking…" 13
[42] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 132-133
[43] Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America…*200

reveals that, just as they struggled with the idea of hell as separate from the earth, they had to reconceive the location of heaven. Josselyn reported that the New England Native Americans envisioned heaven as "beyond the white mountains."[44] Cautantowitt's house was reputed to be somewhere to the Southwest, but the heaven preached by the missionaries was not part of this world, and recorded questions hint at their struggle to grasp where exactly it was. In the Narragansett tradition, the wind from the Southwest was the most pleasing and therefore the dwelling of the gods must be in the "Sowwaniu." Williams reported that the Native Americans were loathe to kill crows, whose depredations on their corn crops were a nuisance, because of their belief that the crow had brought them both the first grain of Indian corn and the first Indian bean from Cautantowitt's fields.[45] Southwest was therefore at once a physical location and a concept, associated with all that was good. That God dwelt somewhere outside of the boundaries of earthly directions and that this was to be understood as "up" took some processing. They wanted to know how God could "arise" and what it meant to "lift up" one's hands to heaven.[46] One Connecticut Native American objected to the Puritans' attempts to describe heaven as "up" by saying "'that souls went (not) up to heaven, or down to hell; for,' saith he, 'our fathers have told us that our souls go to the Southwest."[47]

There was more than one concept of the afterlife among Algonquians. Cautantowitt's heaven was a kind of earthly paradise, where they could "have hopes of carnal joys," but the souls of murderers, thieves, and liars were condemned to wander

[44] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*…96
[45] Roger William, *A Key Into the Language of America…*160-161, 164
[46] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 129-130
[47] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*…196

abroad on this earth or, alternatively, as Thomas Morton reported, were doomed to the center of the earth where Abamacho would feed upon them.[48] Wood observed that wampum was buried with corpses to assist them in receiving "more immense prerogatives" in paradise. "For their enemies and loose livers, who they account unworthy of this happiness," he wrote, "they pass to the infernal dwelling of Abamacho."[49] In either case, however, the afterlife was bound by the physical space and time of the earth. A distinct heavenly realm and its opposite, a separate and eternal place of perdition, were new.

The praying Indian questions reveal that they struggled with the idea that both God and the soul were separate from the physical world.[50] In one of Eliot's earliest forays into the mission field, he asked his audience whether they were tempted to reject the idea of God because they were unable to see Him. "Some of them replied thus," he recalled, "that indeed they did desire to see him if it could be, but they had heard from us that he could not be seen, and they did believe that though their eyes could not see him, yet that he was to be seen with their soul within."[51] They wondered if God could be seen through the dreams in which they put so much stock. Allowing that God could not be seen with the eye, perhaps he could be seen with the soul while in a state of slumber.

Roger Williams reported two Algonquian words for the human soul. The first, "cowwewonk," derived from "cowwene," the word signifying "to sleep" because they

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[48] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*…194
[49] William Wood, *New England's Prospect*…93
[50] In his discussion of seventeenth-century Illinois conversion, Christopher Bilodeau reveals that the Illinois also "made no distinction between what could on could not be spiritual within their environment, nor did they separate a spiritual realm from a physical one." According to Bilodeau, the Illinois viewed every earthly object as having the potential to be a spirit. Christopher Bilodeau, " 'They Honor Our Lord among Themselves in Their Own Way': Colonial Christianity and the Illinois Indians," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Summer, 2001), 354
[51] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking…" 7

believed that the soul was in operation when the body slept. Thus it was logical for the praying Indians of Natick to enquire whether the soul could see God in a dream. "Michachunk," also signifying the soul, was close to a word meaning "looking glass, or clear resemblance," and Williams thought this an appropriate metaphor. Archaeological and linguistic research has shown that glass was incorporated into traditional practices, which in turn included the idea that a soul could be reflected in either water or grease-slicked polished stone.[52] Other than the fact that Algonquians typically conceived of at least two souls, little is known about the exact operation of the souls, but Williams' account of two souls is consistent with ideas held by numerous Algonquian tribes in Southern New England and further south. Cowwewonk, or the dream soul, may have been imagined as able to free itself from the body during sleep, hallucinations, and daydreams. Michachunk may have been thought to control the individual's vital energy, sustaining life while the free soul roamed.[53]

Viewing the soul as part of matter or, at least, as something that could interact with matter stood in contrast to a worldview that made sharp distinctions between spirit and flesh. Consistent with their understanding of the physical nature of the soul, when discussing either the resurrection of the soul or of the body, praying Indians typically incorporated the idea of being physically transported to heaven, either by angels or by Christ. They frequently repeated the image of being "carried" to heaven throughout their recorded responses and confessions. "When good men die," William of Sudbury confessed, "the angels carry their souls to God."[54] Nishohkou claimed that "nothing can

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[52] Christopher Miller and George R. Hamell, "A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (Sep., 1986). 316
[53] William S. Simmons, *Cautantowitt's House* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1970) 54
[54] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 232

carry me to God but only Christ," and Ponampam spoke of being led into heaven by Christ. [55] In response to questions about the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, one 1654 examinee confessed that he believed "when a good man dyeth, the Angels carry his soul to heaven, when a wicked man dyeth, the devils carry his soul to hell." Another respondent,[56] addressing his need for Christ, indicated that "when I dye, Christ carrieth my soul to heaven."[57]

The notion of being carried to heaven may have been a helpful concept for those raised in a culture where it was not certain that the soul of the deceased was gone for good. If the soul was capable of wandering in time and space during life, it stood to reason that it could do so after the body's destruction. The impending departure of the soul was thought to be accompanied by physical phenomena as the Native Americans pointed out to Josselyn:

> They have a remarkable observation of a flame that appears before the death of an Indian or English upon their wigwams in the dead of the night; the first time that I did see it, I was called out by some of them about twelve of the clock, it being a very dark night, I perceived it plainly mounting into the air over our Church…[58]

The burial process was designed to usher the soul to the Southwest, and the intention was in part to ensure that the soul of the dead person was in fact truly and permanently departed. Bodies were often buried with the head to the Southwest, perhaps to ease the departure of the dream soul.[59] Grave goods were included, seemingly not symbolically, but with the understanding that the deceased would have need of them in his new surroundings. This notion is supported by the gender specific nature of grave

[55] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 42; John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 254
[56] Given the format of the questioning in 1654 it is not possible to determine for certain whether a given response was offered by a new respondent or by the same one, but the two answers come as part of different sections of the examination.
[57] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Account…" 279, 283
[58] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*…95-96
[59] Howard S. Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower*…47

goods unearthed in Narragansett burial sites, the men having the preponderance of cutting, chopping, and honing tools, and the women being buried with kettles. Glass and shell beads were found with men, women, and children.[60] Smith reported that in Virginia, "kings" were buried with a full complement of jewelry, copper beads, hatchets, and "such trash."[61] The grave itself was important to ensure expeditious passage to the next world, and it was thus regarded as extremely important. Thomas Morton recalled that the Indians near Plymouth were outraged at the desecration of a gravesite by the English in part because of their custom to regularly return to the grave for ritual mourning, keeping up the practice for a period of time relative to the respective social importance of the dead person.[62]

It is also possible that the reluctance to speak the name of the dead was related to the idea that this utterance may invite the departed soul to return.[63] Simmons notes that, "A sympathetic connection might be assumed between a person's name and his soul, and one who pronounced a dead man's name risked coaxing the soul back from the portals of death to cause mischief."[64] Williams recorded that the Narragansett went so far as to require that anyone bearing the name of the deceased should change his name and that a willful breach of the taboo on speaking the name of the departed could result in a fine or, in the case of a dead sachem, in war.[65] Morton recalled that "it was a thing very

[60] William S. Simmons, *Cautantowitt's House*...45-47
[61] John Smith, *The Complete Works*…p. 122
[62] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan*...51
[63] William S. Simmons, *Cautantowwit's House*...58, Bruce White "Encounters with Spirits: Ojibwa and Dakota Theories about the French and Their Merchandise," *Ethnohistory*, Vo. 41, No. 3 (Summer, 1994) 377
[64] William S. Simmons, *Cautantowwit's House*...59
[65] Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America*...248

offensive to them, at our first coming into those parts, to ask of them for any one that had been dead."[66]

The praying Indians were moving from a belief system operating on what Axtell has described as a "hierarchy of souls" to one that insisted on a definitive distinction between the flesh and the spirit. Their attempt to identify the distinctions between body and soul and the operation of the Holy Spirit emerges consistently in the early missionary writings, and their interest in seeing God periodically surfaces in their queries. Where exactly was Christ now, they asked, and how might they "lay hold on him…being that he was now absent from them?"[67] They also wanted to know if Adam could see God before he sinned and if believers would be able to see God when they were in heaven.[68] Years later the question was still being asked of Eliot. "Shall we see Christ at the Day of Judgment? Can we see God?" they wondered.[69] The connection between people in heaven and on earth was also a subject of inquiry for the praying Indians. They wanted to know if people in heaven could see those on earth. Could the soul in heaven, they wondered, remember things about the world, or was the gulf between the two places so great as to remove memory?[70]

The idea of spirit separated from the physical world was not immediately absorbed. One of the more intriguing queries posed to the missionaries concerned physical limitations on the human soul. "If a man should be enclosed in iron a foot thick and thrown into the fire," they asked, "what would become of his soul, whether the soul

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[66] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan*…52
[67] John Eliot, "The Clear Sun-shine…" 47
[68] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 85
[69] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 129
[70] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 132; John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 91

could come forth or not?"[71] Perhaps it was not impossible that a soul, like a body, could die. In the *Dialogues* Eliot has one of the unsaved Indians, interestingly labeled as "Nishohkou,"[72] raise this possibility, saying "We see with our eyes and know certainly that the body dieth, and turneth to rottenness and dust, and why may not the soul do so likewise?" Waban's answer addressed the fundamental separation between matter and spirit necessary to the Christian worldview. "(The soul) is a Spirit," he replies, "and it is immediately created by God, and therefore dieth not."[73] Perhaps it is not coincidental that the real-life Waban admitted in his confession that he had questioned the immortality of the soul.

They also wondered about the exact operation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "How is the Spirit of God in us," they enquired, "and where is it principally present?"[74] To the Algonquian way of thinking, the soul had to have a physical location within the body, as the dream soul was thought to reside in the brain[75] and the soul of life and vitality was possibly associated with the heart.[76] Similarly, they wondered about Satan's exact location in an unredeemed sinner - "does the Devil dwell in us as we dwell in a house?"[77] If the soul and body were distinct from one another, they asked Eliot, then

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[71] John Eliot, "The Clear-Shine…" 47
[72] Kristina Bross has argued that the reason for identifying the unconverted Sachem in the dialogue as "Nishohkou" was to highlight the transformation process. By returning the real-life Nishohkou – by this time a recognizable figure from the missionary tracts and a symbol of the praying Indian movement – to his unconverted state, Eliot highlighted the successes of the mission. Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*…119
[73] John Eliot, *Indian Dialogues*…37
[74] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 91
[75] Roger Williams identifies the Narragansett belief that the soul "keeps her chief seat and residence" in the brain. Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America*…130; Simmons reveals that the practice of taking enemies' heads in battle may have been related to this belief regarding the location of the soul. Simmons, *Cautantowitt's House…*55
[76] William S. Simmons, *Cautantowwit's House*…54
[77] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 84

why would the soul be punished for the sins of the body?[78] Ironically, while the Algonquian conception of souls allowed for interaction with the material world, the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body may have been a stumbling block for some. Roger Williams recalled a conversation he had with one of his neighbors. "As one answered me when I had discoursed about many points of God, of the creation, of the soul, of the danger of it, and the saving it, he assented; but when I spake of the rising again of the body, he cried out, I shall never believe this."[79]

They tried to connect their conception of the soul with that of the missionaries. What was the relationship between man's soul and those possessed by animals? "Why have not beasts a soul as man hath, seeing they have love, anger, etc. as man hath?" they enquired.[80] This question, seemingly worded as to reflect directly on past missionary teaching, reveals the tension between the Biblical concept that even though some animals had "nephesh" souls they lacked a spirit enabling a direct connection to God and the Algonquian understanding that failed to recognize such a distinction. This confusion is hinted at by another of the questions recorded in 1651. "What meaneth that," Eliot recalled them asking, "let the trees of the wood rejoice?"[81] Spoken from a worldview in which pawwaws could be possessed not only by animal souls but also by inanimate objects such as brass and stone,[82] the idea of trees being animated by something that had the ability to rejoice may not have seemed farfetched.

That spirit, or manitou, was infused in all of creation was one of the premises on which indigenous Algonquians operated. John Smith noted that the Virginian

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[78] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 132
[79] Roger Williams, "
[80] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 91
[81] A reference to Psalm 96:12
[82] Thomas Mayhew, "Strength out of Weakness…" 187

Algonquians adored "with a kind of divine worship" all things "that are able to do them hurt beyond their preventions."[83] In addition to a pantheon of gods, the Indians of the Eastern Woodlands ascribed spiritual characteristics to both creatures and things around them. Williams observed that,

> Besides there is a general custom amongst them, at the apprehension of any excellency in men, women, birds, beasts, fish, etc. to cry out 'Manittoo," that is, it is a god, as thus if they see one man excel others in wisdom, valor, strength, activity, etc. they cry out 'Manittoo," a god: and therefore when they talk amongst themselves of the English ships and great buildings, of the plowing of their fields, and especially of books and letters, they will end thus: 'Manitowock' they are gods, 'cummanittoo," you are a god, etc."[84]

Williams recorded the "reverend esteem" the Narragansett had for the conie, or hare, as they believed there was "some divinity in it." Conversely, White reported that some Algonquians of the East Coast incorporated the conie into the creation story, the initial bliss of mankind being ruined by the "seduction by envy" of the conie, moving them to "abhor" that creature "more than any serpent."[85] Divinity could also be discerned within the body of man, in his heart, his lungs, his pulse, and more.[86] Williams' attempts to dissuade his neighbors from their belief that the divine inhabited both beast and inanimate object alike met with resistance. Fire must be infused with divinity, they reasoned, for out of a stone a spark could arise, to assist in necessary daily tasks and even to preserve life. Fire could also display anger, burning both house and countryside at its whim.[87]

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[83] John Smith, *The Complete Works*...121

[84] Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America*...191 Elisabeth Tooker distinguishes between the concept of animism, that spirits necessarily inhabit all things, and animatism, the attribution of pure spiritual power to the object, not dependent upon it being directly inhabited by an individual spirit. Elizabeth Tooker, ed., *Native American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) 22

[85] John White, *The Planter's Plea*…13

[86] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*…192

[87] Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America*...191

Neal Salisbury has argued that the Native Americans' initial recognition of manitou in the English did not serve to move them away from their own religious views but rather to confirm them and that the waves of disease were interpreted by some as the logical consequence of a failure to perform the appropriate rituals to appease Cautantowitt. Bruce White, in turn, has attempted to demonstrate that the Ojibwa called the French "Manitou" in response to the power they perceived in French technology, and Christopher Miller and George Hamell have shown that items such as glass and reflective metal were thought by Eastern Native Americans to be imbued with other-worldy power. Items such as beads and glass were, to the Algonquian mind, not worthless trinkets, but fit into the preexistant category of "crystal," and were therefore incorporated into a ceremonial tradition.[88] Other English items were also interpreted as potentially invested with power. A werowance acquaintance of John Smith professed belief that the God of the Bible exceeded his gods in power "as our guns exceeded their bows and arrows,"[89] and Williams records that the Narragansett called the Englishmen "Chauquaquock," that is, "knife-men."[90] For the Native Americans, material goods such as brass arrowheads,

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[88] Bruce White, "Encounters with Spirits: Ojibwa and Dakota Theories about the French and Their Merchandise," *Ethnohistory*, Vo. 41, No. 3 (Summer, 1994), 369-405. White attempts to demonstrate that the Ojibwa and Dakota fit European "baubles" into their own ideas about spiritual power. Europeans were perceived to have power because of their inventions, but the value of European trade goods, at least initially, had little to do with their utilitarian purpose and much to do with their spiritual value. Miller and Hamell argue that Indians were in fact "trading in metaphors," rather than focusing on the usefulness of the particular item. Christopher Miller; George R. Hamell, "A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (Sep., 1986), 311-328; see also George R. Hamell, "The Iroquois and the World's Rim: Speculations on Color, Culture, and Contact," *American Indian Quarters*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Special Issue: Shamans and Preachers, Color Symbolism and Commercial Evangelism: Reflections on Early Mid-Atlantic Religious Encounter in Light of the Columbian Quincentennial. (Autumn, 1992), 451-469; Roger Williams recorded the practice of burying "thunderbolts" which were "like unto a chrystall" to produce luck in Algonquian dice games. Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America*…229

[89] John Smith, *The Complete Works*…125

[90] Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America*…21

copper kettles, iron axes, and textiles were not only valuable in the material sense but also transmitted some of the power behind their creation.[91]

Material possessions could be infused with manitou and thus had spiritual significance, with power even being invested in objects as seemingly mundane – to English eyes – as the calumet pipe commonly smoked by Algonquian men. Thus destruction of material objects had significance beyond what the English would allow. Williams recalled a grief-stricken Canonicus burning his home and all of his property "in a solemn remembrance of his son and in a humble expiation to the gods" after his son had died.[92] Josselyn reported that in one area Hobbomok was placated by the practice of throwing valuable items into a deep hole by the sea.[93] In Canada the Jesuit strategy of utilizing religious objects to induce conversion may have fed into the Algonquian understanding of objects having spiritual power in and of themselves. Similarly, the archaeological evidence suggests that many Indians who embraced aspects of English material culture integrated it into their own understanding of spiritual power.[94]

But from the Biblical perspective man's spirit was distinct, not only from his body, but from animal spirits and certainly from the world of matter. To enter the body of believers, praying Indians had to come to terms with this duality, to recognize, as John Speene put it, the "two deaths," inherent to mankind. "First," he confessed, "the soul is dead, and we are made guilty of Adam's sin, and have lost God's image, and hereby my

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[91] Neal Salisbury, "Religious Encounters in a Colonial Context: New England and New France in the Seventeenth Century," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Special Issue: Shamans and Preachers, Color Symbolism and Commercial Evangelism: Reflections on Early Mid-Atlantic Religious Encounter in Light of the Colombian Quincentennial. (Autumn, 1992), 501-509
[92] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*…249
[93] John Josselyn, *Two Voyages*…96
[94] Neal Salisbury, "Religious Encounters in a Colonial Context: New England and New France in the Seventeenth Century," 502; William S. Simmons, *Cautantowitt's House: An Indian Burial Ground on the island of Conanicut in Narragansett Bay* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1970); Christopher Bilodeau, "They Honor Our Lord Among Themselves…" 364-366

soul is a fool, and hereby my soul is dead; and a man dead can do nothing, nor speak, nor go, nor stand, and verily so is my soul dead, and shall fall to eternal damnation by sin."[95]

The trying circumstances of the 1630's and 40's, in addition to loosening the grip of the pawwaws, may have also challenged faith in the Algonquian worldview that death merely signified a transition to a new life similar to that experienced on earth.[96] Waban told the assembly that when he considered "that all men in the world died," he wondered how his soul might live forever. His comment, coupled with the praying Indians' seeming fascination with the soul, may hint that there were those Algonquians who, as they experienced epidemics, social and political upheaval, and the frequent impotence of the pawwaws, had begun to wonder whether life continued on when the body died. Given traditional Algonquian premises, the scores of unburied dead resulting from the epidemics should have led to a countryside teeming with unescorted souls. The devastation experienced in the body may have led some to question their worldview[97] and therefore to have doubts, as Waban seemingly did, about the destination, or even the existence of, the human soul.[98]

The Problem of the Naughty Heart

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[95] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 18

[96] Robert James Naeher, "Dialogue in the Wilderness: John Eliot and the Indian Exploration of Puritanism as a Source of Meaning, Comfort, and Ethnic Survival," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (Sep., 1989), pp. 346-368

[97] Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans…" 50-51; Salisbury argues that the hostility arising from the humiliation and deprivation experienced at the hands of the English was turned inward, so that the converts blamed themselves and their culture for their failures. He calls this self-loathing the "price of admission to the missionaries' favor," but any conversion in the Puritan sense required a high degree of disgust with oneself. The leap was perhaps a greater one for the Algonquians who had to reject most of their cultural system.

[98] There may also have been differences among groups with regard to the universality of soul immortality. Smith notes that the Virginian Algonquians though their Werowances and priests lived on after death beyond the mountains in the west but that the common people were to "rot in their graves like dead dogs."

Eliot and the missionaries insisted that true conversion was a matter of the soul or of the heart. Sin as a condition, as an inherited disease, was seemingly another difficult concept for the Algonquian praying Indians. Robert Naeher has argued that the disruption wrought by disease and by European land use gave the Native Americans an "immediate, existential understanding of the Puritan notion of alienation from God and His universe,"[99] but the questions recorded in the missionary tracts reveal just how difficult grasping original sin was for them. The Puritan preachers insisted that the fundamental problem experienced by mankind was that of a "naughty heart" and that it was not meritorious action that could get one into heaven, as all had fallen short of the glory of God. Many of the recorded praying Indian questions entertained the notion of "good" and "wicked" men but not always in the Puritan sense of regeneration. They were unclear if "good" men were completely sinless. "May a good man sin sometimes?" they wondered. "Could one be "almost a good man," and if so, where would one's soul go? Could a wicked man make a "good" prayer? Were more frequent prayers the key to true forgiveness? "If one man repent, and pray once in a day, another man often in a day; whether doth one of them go to Heaven, the other not?" queried one member of Eliot's flock.[100] "If my heart be full of evil thoughts, and I repent and pray, and a few hours after it is full again, and I repent and pray again; and if after this it be full of evil thoughts again, what will God say?" another asked.[101]

In many of their questions they sought clarification on specific sins. The Natick group of the late 1640's wanted to know, among other things, whether Abraham was a

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[99] Robert James Naeher, "Dialogue in the Wilderness…" 352
[100] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 84-85
[101] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 91; Thomas Morton writes that lying and stealing were considered the most egregious sins by the Algonquians he encountered. Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan*…50

sinner for the lie he told Abimaleck about Sarah.[102] Furthermore, if the English held the truth, then why did some of them practice deceit? "Do not Englishmen spoil their souls, to say a thing cost them more than it did?" they asked Eliot, "and is it not all one as to steal?" [103] Lying seemed especially important as they wanted to know what the punishment for liars was, questioning Eliot not only about the English and Abraham but about the Jewish leaders who paid money to the guards at Christ's tomb to lie about what they had seen.[104] But their questions also probed the meaning of other behaviors proscribed by Puritan preaching as they attempted to make sense of the lifestyle Eliot and his colleagues offered. What did taking the Lord's name in vain mean? What if a minister wore his hair long? Why did God hate murderers so much?[105] It seemed that there should be a direct correlation between action and reward. If Eve sinned first, they wondered, did she also die first? Conversely, why would God allow "good" men to fall ill? How many "good" people were in Sodom when it was burnt?[106] These questions reveal an emphasis on action, rather than on the internal regeneration so central to Puritan doctrine, hardly surprising given Eliot's obsession with changing their behavior patterns.

The praying Indian questions reveal a desire to know what kinds of attitudes were expected of the believer, and they struggled with the idea of how to confront one another with sin. Since anger was to be avoided, was remonstrance of sin amongst the praying Indians a violation of the command to love one another? "If I reprove a man for sin, and

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[102] Abraham, fearful for his life on account of the beauty of his wife, asserted that she was his sister only, leaving out the fact that they were married. In this he was technically accurate, as she was his half-sister, but deceived through omission.
[103] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 84-85
[104] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 91; Williams recorded that he had heard Indians question the English about their deceit, saying "You know God, will you lie, Englishman?" Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*…197
[105] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 91
[106] John Eliot, Glorious Progress…" 84, 85

he answer, why do you speak thus angrily to me; Mr. Eliot teacheth us to love one another, is this well?" enquired one of the Natick faithful. "If any talk of another man's faults, and tell others of it when he is not present to answer, is that not a sin?" another wondered.[107]

The questions recorded in 1651's "Light Appearing" tract reveal progress toward the concept of the "naughty heart," but still Eliot fielded inquiries that suggested "works" rather than grace were of paramount importance. Coveting, a sin of the heart, was not something easily grasped, and more than once Eliot recorded questions seeking the meaning of the concept. Similarly, the idea of being commanded to love others, friend and foe, was difficult to comprehend. If the company of the wicked was to be scrupulously avoided, as the idea of separate praying community insisted it was, then what did it mean to "love enemies and wicked men?"[108]

The relationship of internal heart change to action was a subject of inquiry. Eliot's flock wanted to know whether someone could teach God's Word as a non-believer and if, as a consequence of such teaching others believed, their faith was valid. It is possible to see this particular question as related to the concept of manitou. If the one preaching the gospel lacked true faith, that is, the true indwelling of the Spirit, then would this prevent the transmission of that power to those believing his teaching?

The praying Indians clearly grasped that internal change should manifest itself in outward behavior. When Eliot asked them how they could know if someone who knew God's Word failed to believe it, they answered "when he doth not do in his practice

[107] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 84-85
[108] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 129

answerable to that which he knoweth."[109] They even wondered if it was exclusively the intention of the heart that mattered or if participation in the praying community was required to secure salvation. "If one purposeth to pray, and yet dieth before that time, whither goeth his soul?" one asked.[110] Despite his emphasis on reshaping Indian behaviors, Eliot continually sought to preach repentance of the heart, and this theme is present in the 1659 confessions and, to a lesser extent, in the 1652 confessions.

Heart hypocrisy was a recurring idea in the 1652 confessions, although perhaps not with the regularity displayed in 1659. William of Sudbury (Natous) expressed anger at himself for the "many evil thoughts in my heart."[111] Nishohkou confessed to a heart "full of sin" and to hypocrisy in general. Magus, who thought of physically leaving the praying community, revealed that his heart had "run away." Owussumag's heart "feared" when he heard the word, turning eventually to pray. "Daily my heart wept, that Christ might pardon all of my sins," he confessed," and now unto this day my heart saith I desire the good ways of praying unto God." Ephraim said his heart "sinneth" and that he prayed "outwardly with my mouth but not with my heart."[112]

The 1659 confessions personified the heart more consistently than those recorded in "Tears of Repentance." Nishokou allowed that the roots of sin were in his heart and that the will of his heart was "sometimes backward." "My heart saith, 'Oh! I do therefore desire church ordinances'…now my heart desireth and thirsteth," he admitted.[113] John Speene confessed that when he heard Matthew 12 his heart "feared." Anthony, who said his heart was ashamed of his sins, recalled that when he heard

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[109] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 128
[110] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 129
[111] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 235
[112] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 251-252, 258-259
[113] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 4, 7

Matthew 6 his heart "said, 'be it so to me, Oh Lord.'" Ponampam insisted that his heart "did not rightly pray" until he heard a sermon on 1 Chronicles 28:9 and that his heart "said" that he desired to pray to God. When he heard the Word, his heart "rejoiced" but then "misbelieved and feared."[114] Waban revealed that he had come to realize that God knew the "thoughts" of his heart:

> I do confess my heart did not submit to God, only I hoped I might learn the Word of God, which you taught us. My heart did love praying to the Devil, but I did not find that I so love praying to God: therefore I did pray, Lord break my heart, that I may pray to God aright. My heart was weary of praying quickly; and therefore my heart said, surely my heart is nought, and I am like a dead man.[115]

Piumbuhhou confessed that his heart was hard, proud, and hypocritical, leading him to "hypocritical acts."[116]

The distinction between faith and behavior paralleled those between soul and body and spirit and matter. Behavior could change without a real conversion of the heart taking place. The condition of one's soul was eternal and independent of the flesh and of the physical world. By attaching so much significance to the outward accoutrements of civility as preconditions for salvation, Eliot risked compromising the message of salvific grace upon which the Gospel rested. Nevertheless, there were those Algonquians who managed to receive and then transmit their newfound understanding of grace and of being a new creation of the Spirit. The cultural complexities of the covenanted life notwithstanding, they were able to perceive themselves with the necessary loathing and to acknowledge the separate lost condition of their souls. Doing this required use of the

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[114] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 21-24
[115] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 32
[116] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 69

commonalities shared by the two systems but also required overcoming serious conceptual differences about flesh and soul, matter and spirit.

Chapter 6: To Pray or Not to Pray: From Praying Indian to Visible Saint

The Context of Praying

The tepid nature of the early Puritan attempts at proselytizing to New England Algonquians can be traced in part to the political circumstances that existed in New England prior to the 1640's. The 1630's had been marked by disease and war, and the epidemic of 1633-34 had severely weakened the populations of many bands of Algonquians. The isolation and subsequent subjugation of the Pequot, upon whose good graces many smaller bands of Native Americans had been dependent, left these groups unprotected from the advances of other Native American groups and therefore more receptive to the possibility of alliance with the increasingly powerful English.[1] In addition, the Puritan change of focus from trade to expansion and settlement made the issue of land a more pressing one as the 1630's drew to a close. The English-supported execution death of formerly powerful sachem Miantonomo severely damaged any pan-Indian attempt at unification against the threat of the English. Many villages which had welcomed the English presence as a means of furthering trade were now realizing the devastating consequences English land hunger and animal husbandry were having on a lifestyle organized around the availability of game.[2]

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[1] Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 203-235; Salisbury contends that the previous conflict between the Dutch and the Pequot, in conjunction with an internal split and defection of some Pequots to the Narragansett, had left the Sassacus-led Pequot in decline years prior to their downfall in 1637. James Axtell contends that, for those groups experiencing this level of political disenfranchisement, the Eliot plan was "a tailor-made remedy." James Axtell, "Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter, 1982), 39

[2] William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1983) 162-163

In this set of circumstances, Eliot's praying towns potentially held out more than the possibility of spiritual redemption. Typically by the time Eliot had begun preaching to a group of Native Americans they had felt the ravages of disease and experienced the loss of much of their land.[3] Most of the early converts were Massachuset or Nipmuc, a group already fragmented prior to the arrival of English settlers to the region. [4] The life offered in the fledgling praying towns could be sought out as a means of escaping traditional alliances, of gaining new ones with the English, or, within bands, of subverting the previous power relations.[5] The political dynamics and the increased vulnerability of certain groups, coupled with the desire for European goods and technologies, combined to provide the material incentives for becoming a "praying Indian" in one of Eliot's towns.[6]

In addition to the material and political possibilities residence in a praying town offered, there may also have been the incentive to acquire literacy. But, as Jill Lepore reveals, this was a mixed blessing, for even though entrance into the world of the written

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[3] Eliot recognized the fractured status of his early Indian audience, calling them "but a remnant...for there be few that are left alive from the Plague and the Pox..." John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking if not the Sun Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England," (London: R. Cotes, 1647) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 16

[4] Elise M. Brenner, "To Pray or to be Prey: That is the Question: Strategies for Cultural Autonomy of Massachusetts Praying Town Indians," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring, 1980), 138 and Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The "Praying Indians" of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jan., 1974) 36

[5] Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen, "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, Massachusetts, 1646-1730," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Sep., 1990) 40. Perhaps the most recurrent example in the literature is the case of Waban and Cutshamekin, who were seemingly vying for power within their band. Waban preceded Cutshamekin into the fold and was one of those applying for Church-Estate in 1652.

[6] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England," (London: Richard Cotes for Fulk Clifton, 1647) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 16-17. See James Axtell, "The Invasion Within," *The European and the Indian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 144-45 for a discussion of Eliot's program of gift-giving, James P. Ronda, "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul., 1981), 387-88 for benefits particular to women, and Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen, "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, Massachusetts, 1646-1730," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Sep., 1990) 399-401 for a discussion of the desire to acquire English technology.

word may have facilitated the ability of the literate praying Indian to negotiate the spaces between his old culture and his new one, the acquisition of literacy came with a heavy social price.[7] For a praying Indian to speak English, live in one of Eliot's towns, or even to dress as an Englishman did not by itself fully separate him from all things Indian. Reading, one of the last steps to conversion, marked the praying Indian as having crossed over more thoroughly. As Lepore puts it, "Literacy was a special kind of marker, one that branded its possessor, perhaps most especially in his own eyes, as an Indian who had spent years and years with the English; his very 'Indianness' was thus called into question."[8]

Throughout the missionary tracts it is clear that the much of the resentment generated towards the praying Indians came from the indigenous religious leaders, or "pawwaws," and the more powerful sachems. The sachems ruled by hereditary authority, with the title generally passing either from father to son or to eldest brother to younger brother, but there were instances of female sachemdoms where no male heir was in place. They relied heavily on persuasion and consensus and their subjects could transfer their loyalties to another leader if they were disgruntled with their own.[9] A significant portion of the missionary letters and tracts are dedicated to the activities of sachems, those who were supportive of the mission and those who resisted it. In an September 1649 letter, Eliot opined that "Linn Indians are all naught save one, who sometimes commeth to hear the word...and the reason why they are bad is, partly and principally because their Sachem is naught, and careth not to pray unto God." In the margin, as an addendum to

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[7] Jill Lepore, "Dead Men Tell No Tales: John Sassamon and the Fatal Consequence of Literacy," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Dec., 1994) 479-512

[8] Lepore, 498

[9] William S. Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes* (London: University Press of New England, 1986) 12-13

this thought, he wrote “Bad governours have an evil influence upon the people.”[10] As such, missionaries made many attempts to cultivate conversion amongst the sachems who, according to Mayhew, “generally” were “against the way.”[11] That the English saw the sachems through the prism of the “bad governor” model is sustained throughout the tracts. They understood that the reaction of the more firmly established sachems to the Gospel was a political one. According to Eliot, threats of violence from the Sachems kept their subjects “in great awe” of their leaders. But whether or not English conceptions of the power of the sachems were exaggerated, it is clear that English preaching about sin and, more specifically, about the sin of idleness, was a threat to the system of tribute the sachems had long enjoyed.[12]

That the praying Indians faced the wrath of other Indians is a theme prevalent in the missionary tracts from the very beginning. In the first, 1647’s “The Day Breaking if not the Sun Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England,” Eliot recalled that he received an Indian report of opposition from “the wicked sort” of Indians to his initial preaching and another complaining of their being reviled for cutting their hair.[13] In 1648’s “The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking Forth upon the Indians,” he related that many pawwaws “mock and scoff at those Indians which pray.”[14] According to Eliot, the unbelieving Algonquian population seemingly evinced a combination of resentment and curiosity at their praying Indian cousins:

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[10] John Eliot, “Glorious Progress…” 88
[11] John Eliot, “Glorious Progress...,” 83 also Thomas Mayhew, Jr. in “Light Appearing...,” 113
[12] Eliot, “Light Appearing...,” 139, Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen, “A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians…”; Neal Salisbury: “Red Puritans…” 37; Karen Kupperman argues that, contrary to the overemphasis historians have placed upon the dependence of the Sachems on community consensus, archaeological evidence suggests that the Sachemships were in fact quite hierarchical. Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English Facing off in Early America.* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000)
[13] John Eliot, “The Day-Breaking…” 14, 22
[14] John Eliot, “Clear Sunshine…” 51

> I have been with the Indians to teach them and one of their questions among many others was to know what to say to such Indians as oppose their praying to God and believing in Jesus Christ, and for their own information also. What get you, say they, by praying to God, and believing in Jesus Christ? You go naked still, and you as poor as we, and our corn is as good as yours, and we take more pleasure than you; did we see that you got anything by it, we would pray to God and believe in Christ also as you do.[15]

The tracts are riddled with references to the embattled status of praying Indian communities. In a February 1650 letter Eliot indicated that

> ...there is a company of profane Indians that lately are come to a place near Wamouth, not farre from our Indians, who do not only refuse to pray unto God, but oppose and apprehend that they are sent thither, if not by the policy of some Pawwaws, yet by the instigation of Satan, on purpose to seduce the younger sort from their profession and discourage others; and indeed they being so near, had that effect evidently in some of the younger sort.[16]

Eliot also cited Wampooas, often held up in the tracts as a paragon of the praying Indian, as saying "That because we pray to God, other Indians abroad in the country hate us and oppose us, the English on the other side suspect us and feare us to be still such as do not pray at all."[17] The praying Indian population occupied a liminal social position, never fully shedding their Indianness in the eyes of the English but increasingly separate from the unbelieving Native American population.

But the "profane" Indians reserved a special anger for those praying Indians who were most heavily invested in the propagation of the Word. The story of Hiacoomes, Thomas Mayhew, Jr.'s first convert on Martha's Vineyard, is prominent example of such harassment, both in the missionary tracts and in the secondary literature. Hiacoomes, who had earned the pejorative nickname of "the English man" from other

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[15] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine…" 57
[16] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 133
[17] John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine," 63

Wampanoags,[18] squared off against the pawwaws and the nearby sachems. Recalling one particular episode, Mayhew wrote

> About this time it so fell out, that this Indian went with some English men to a little Island, where meeting a surly Sagamore whose name was Pake Ponesso, who reproached him for his fellowship with the English, both in their civil and religious ways, railing at him for his being obedient to them. Hiacoomes replied that he was gladly obedient to the English, neither was it for the Indians' hurt he did so: Upon which the Sagamore gave him a great blow on the face with his hand...[19]

In another incident, one which was seemingly pivotal in inclining many Martha's Vineyard Indians to the preaching of the Gospel, Hiacoomes essentially dared "all of the pawwaws of the land" to gather together in an effort to kill him through their witchcraft. According to Mayhew, their lack of success, in conjunction with the Martha's Vineyard praying Indians' seeming immunity from that island's epidemic of 1645 was instrumental to the cause of propagating the faith.[20]

Another excellent example of the socially tenuous position in which Native American converts found themselves is the case of John Sassamon, Eliot's interpreter, missionary to King Phillip, and ultimately murder victim. While Sassamon's high level of literacy gave him social and economic capital, as he functioned for a time as scribe to King Phillip, it also marked him among the Wampanoag as a man who could not be trusted. Literacy marked a clear dividing line between those who were committed to the English way of life and those who were content to leave a foot in either camp, living in an English praying town without fully investing in the Word. Perhaps no one exemplified this uncomfortable place more than did Sassamon, whose status as a Native

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[18] James P. Rhonda, "Generations of Faith…" 377
[19] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "The Light Appearing…" 109-110
[20] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "The Light Appearing..." 116

American was called into question by the power of the words – and of the Word – that he wielded. Working as a scribe for Philip and an evangelist for Eliot, Sassamon found himself in the middle of an increasingly tense situation in the early 1670's. When in January of 1675 he trekked fifteen miles to unburden himself to Josiah Winslow, telling the Plymouth governor that Philip was conspiring to attack English settlements, he put his life at risk only to have his warning ignored by the increasingly mistrustful English. In February when Sassamon was found floating dead in Assawampsett pond, his body strangely bruised, suspicion immediately fell on three of Philip's henchmen.[21]

The Inadequacy of Coercion as an Explanation

If in fact the social price paid by Native American converts correlated with their degree of investment in the spreading of the Gospel and in the literate world of Puritan Christianity then it calls into question whether church membership and the requisite public display of that investment was socially beneficial in the larger context. Those living in the praying towns for material reasons would logically be leery of such alienation from the larger Native American community and it is not clear that church membership conferred any special privilege not already obtained by simply living in a praying town. Even the right to vote, usually held in reserve for church members in New England, was extended to all adult male residents.

The potentially intense social pressure operating on the praying Indians was one disincentive to living in a praying town and needs to be considered in any assessment of how attractive the proposition was to Algonquians in Massachusetts Bay in the late

[21] Jill Lepore, *The Name of War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998) 21-47. The three were subsequently put on trial and hanged for the murder on rather questionable evidence, inflaming an already tense situation to the point of war.

1640's and early 1650's. But even if one grants the idea that, for those small bands reeling from sickness and political fragmentation, the advantages of praying towns outweighed the social disadvantages, there is still a problem with the recurring assertion that circumstances essentially coerced praying Indians into living in that arrangement. In "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians," Howard Van Lonkhyzen points out a glaring weakness in this line of argument:

> While they have outlined the essential story of the New England conversions and offered tentative interpretations, recent studies of the praying Indians are problematic in several respects. First, the literature argues that conversion was forced, that it was a necessary adaptation to a changing environment – ecological, political, military, demographic, and economic – created by the English. Yet numerous bands living in close proximity to converted groups never adopted the English religion until decades after King Phillip's War.[22]

Additionally, it is clear that, even after the war, there were those living in praying towns who also refused to bow to the dictates of Puritan Christianity. Eliot revealed in a 1677 letter that the "youth and rising generations" in the towns were not yet receptive of the gospel and that there were "strangers" who had sought the relative safety of the praying towns in the aftermath of the conflict.[23]

Historians who emphasize the coercive nature of Eliot's highly structured towns at times also overlook more simple objections concerning the totality of that coercion. When Francis Jennings remarked that "an Indian would think twice about heckling Eliot" after learning about the 1646 anti-blasphemy laws of Massachusetts Bay, he ignored the mention of such heckling in the missionary tracts.[24] Richard Cogley counters Jennings'

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[22] Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen, "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians…" 399

[23] John Eliot in Martin Moore, *Memoir of the Life and Character of John Rev. John Eliot, Apostle of the N.A. Indians* (Boston, MA: Timothy Beddington, 1822) 126-129

[24] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill, 1975) 241 in William S. Simmons, "Conversion from Indian to Puritan," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Jun., 1979) 217 In recounting one example of such disruption, Eliot relates that an Indian known

claim that the blasphemy laws were designed to intimidate the Indians into submission by noting that the General Court records of Massachusetts Bay never once indicted, much less convicted or executed, any Native American for blasphemy. Further, according to Boston Reverend John Cotton, the Puritan covenant theology provided "no warrant" to enact the statutes without the pledge of Cutshamekin's band to obey the Ten Commandments. They simply did not apply to those Native Americans who had not so covenanted. So while the extent of the intimidation provided by these laws is open to question, the prevalence of the assertion that the two laws forced Native Americans into becoming members of praying towns obscures the myriad other factors which may have played into that decision.[25]

Additionally, some who argue for the existence of a high degree of coercion do so with an equally high degree of speculation. In *The Invasion Within*, James Axtell proclaims that "the exact inspiration and nature of the Christian application of force to their pagan neighbors is still a mystery." He goes on to acknowledge that the praying Indians never enjoyed numerical superiority over their unbelieving counterparts, the largest town having an adult male population of "no more than twenty-five or thirty" adult men." He speculates that the praying Indians may have had the advantage when it came to the possession of guns but admits that "we would like to know" if the praying Indians ever used those guns against their non-praying neighbors. "From what we already know of English missionary activity in America," he concludes "virtually nothing

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as George thought it amusing during a question and answer session about creation to shout out "Who made Sac (wine)?" John Eliot, "Clear Sun-shine…" 51

[25] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) 42-43

would be surprising."[26] Given the proclivity of Dutch and French arms dealers to trade with non-praying Indians and given the fact that the Commissioners did not authorize guns for the praying Indians until the 1660's, what would be really surprising is if the first generation of praying Indians did indeed enjoy such an advantage in the first place.

Elise M. Brenner, in her efforts to downplay even the possibility of the sincerity of Indian converts, manages to overlook a significant comparative piece of evidence offered by the situation on Martha's Vineyard. While she is correct in her general assertion that missionaries, be they Jesuit Catholics or Puritans, most often sought to establish settled populations of indigenous peoples in order to facilitate conversion, she errs in her statement that "only after political control was established could religious teaching get underway."[27] For the most part, Massachusetts Bay missionaries essentially shared Brenner's basic assumption, although the way they connected civil authority and regenerate hearts was different. For example, in his 1674 account of the mission effort, Daniel Gookin - appointed by the Commissioners as Superintendent of Indian Affairs - pilloried what he perceived as Roger Williams' attempts at conversion, saying that where "civil government and religion amongst the English runs very low," God had not yet permitted "any" of those Indians to know Christ.[28] Notwithstanding the obvious tension

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[26] James Axtell, "The Invasion Within," *The European and the Indian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 148

[27] Elise M. Brenner, "To Pray or to be Prey…" 140 Richard Cogley claims that this assumption wasn't even the case for the Massachusetts Bay Puritans, saying "Sources I have consulted contain no expression of the idea that the natives had to accept the General Court's authority before a mission could begin." Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission...*, 39

[28] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England*, (Boston: Apollo Press, 1674) 70 This characterization of Rhode Island polity is representative of a general tension that exists between the Massachusetts Puritans and Williams. Prior to his missionary efforts, Eliot was one of the panel of ministers who expelled Williams for his views on the relationship between ecclesiastical and civil authority. Williams' ideas about Indian conversion, as expressed in *A Key into the Language of America* do set him apart from the program of cultural conversion implemented by the Massachusetts Bay missionaries. Gookin is not questioning his sincerity but rather his methodology. His characterization of

between Massachusetts Bay Puritans and Roger Williams on the issue of civil authority, the idea that submission to civil authority was linked to the creation of true believers was a part of Puritan covenant theology. No sooner did the Holy Spirit liberate the individual soul from sin than that soul sought at once to willfully submit itself to moral obedience, the foundation for civil authority.[29]

But both Brenner's and Gookin's assertions are dealt a severe blow by the success of Mayhew's missionary enterprise in Martha's Vineyard, in which the level of political control enjoyed by the English was significantly less than in Eliot's praying towns. As James Ronda explains,

> Mayhew and the very small English population could not compel Indians to follow John Eliot's demand that natives must "have visible civility before they can rightly enjoy visible sanctities in ecclesiastical communion." No codes required Vineyard Indians to cut their hair, wear English clothing, give up customary mourning ceremonies, or attend church meetings. It was in this more permissive environment, as Indian congregations and praying towns rose and flourished, that political power and cultural leadership remained in Wampanoag hands.[30]

William Simmons calls the conversion of many of the Native Americans of Martha's Vineyard an example of "deep and rapid voluntary change to colonial ideology."[31] Indeed the Martha's Vineyard Indian churches sustained themselves past King Phillip's War, although Eliot's praying towns were reduced to almost nothing.

So the relationship between civil coercion and conversion remains unclear. But even if it could be firmly established that the decision of Massachusetts Indians to live in Eliot's towns and subject themselves to a cultural and spiritual remodeling was primarily

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Williams' lack of results displays the assumption that without Indians being first "reduced" to civility they were in no position to cultivate a Christian lifestyle.

[29] Perry Miller, *The New England Mind* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1939) 420

[30] James P. Rhonda, "Generations of Faith…" 371

[31] William S. Simmons, "Conversion from Indian to Puritan…" 215

the result of some combination of material advantages, political protection, and fear of English power, the issue of Indian aspiration to Church membership would still remain, for the benefits of the praying town adhered to both members and non-members. If, as Brenner suggests, the goal of the praying Indians was simply to "mau mau," that is, to subvert English conversion attempts while simultaneously enjoying the possible privileges offered by the town,[32] then aspiring to church membership, something not attained by the large majority of the English living in Massachusetts Bay, would have been an unnecessary step.

As such any estimation of the praying Indians who strove to be accepted formally into the body of Christ over the better part of a decade must include the possibility of their heartfelt conversion. As Ronda insists, "We must not overlook the possibility of genuine conversion on the part of Indians searching for spiritual meaning in an increasingly hostile world."[33] But the sincerity of Native Americans proffering confessions in front of the solemn assembly of Puritan church elders is separable from the issue of Puritan acceptance of their confessions. The process of the official recognition of that sincerity took seven years and three official examinations of the Natick flock.

From Hopeful Beginnings to Visible Sainthood

Even though several Native Americans at Natick had sought church estate, baptism, and the ordinances of God "for some years," Eliot chose to delay their first attempt at attaining the visible recognition of their faith by the body of Christ until they were settled in an English-style town.

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[32] Elise M. Brenner, "To Pray or to be Prey…" 136
[33] James P. Ronda, "Generations of Faith…" 370

> I have from time to time, delayed them upon this point, that until they were come up unto Civil Cohabitation, Government, and Labor, which a fixed condition of life will put them upon, they were not so capable to be betrusted with that Treasure of Christ, lest they should scandalize the same, and make it of none effect, because if any should through temptation, fall under Censure, he could easily run away (as some have done)...[34]

For Eliot, the idea of church membership was inextricable with being "fixed in a habitation" with some means of livelihood and property that one would be loathe to leave behind in order to escape the just punishment of the law. Thus the agricultural and permanent lifestyle of the English town served as an inducement to the order required for the flowering of true faith as well as a hindrance to sin.

By 1652, however, the Natick Indians were settled enough, "bending themselves to labor" as evidenced by their construction of fences and buildings, including a meetinghouse created without English assistance.[35] Eliot, overcome by their industry and warmed by their professions, moved to introduce their confessions of faith before the elders of the various churches. The first round of confessions were written down by Eliot and read to the elders, who determined that it would be acceptable to have a day of confessions from fifteen Natick Indians in an effort to "try how the Lord would appear therein."[36] Thus from 1652 there are most often two confessions recorded for each of the men appearing before the elders.

Eliot's request that the elders would ask them some questions on the "fundamental Points of Religion" was rejected pending a hearing of the actual confessions to see if "there should yet be cause to inquire further." Realizing that the praying Indians evinced a dread of speaking before the solemn assembly, the elders

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[34] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance…" 227
[35] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance...," 227
[36] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance...," 228

considered reading the former confessions aloud before proceeding with the new ones, but time considerations caused that idea to be rejected. Eliot later published both sets of confessions in the 1653 tract *Tears of Repentance*.

A careful study of these professions of faith by the Natick Indians reveals a number of similarities among them, the first of which is the distinct lack of confidence in their own conversion despite having grasped the basics of the salvation message. Totheswamp, the first to confess, while affirming the doctrine of original sin, that hell was his just deserts, and that Christ was his redeemer, expressed severe doubts about his ability to correctly teach other Indians the Gospel, saying "Therefore, I feared that I am one blind and when I teach other Indians I shall cause them to fall into the ditch." When asked whether or not he was truly repentant, he answered "I am ashamed of my sins, my heart is broken for them and melteth in me, I am angry with myself for my sins, and I pray to Christ to take away my sins, and I desire that they may be pardoned."[37]

Even less satisfactory was the confession of Waban, an influential leader among the Natick Indians, who ended his confession with "I have nothing to say for myself that is good; I judge that I am a sinner, and cannot repent, but Christ has deserved pardon for us."[38] Eliot noted that the elders did not approve of his confession and that he felt compelled to defend Waban, pointing to his qualities as a judge and ruler of fifty and to the fact that his influence had been a great "drawer on to Religion" for other Indians.[39]

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[37] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Tears of Repentance...," 231

[38] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Tears of Repentance...," 232

[39] Elise M. Brenner points out the tendency of the praying Indians to disproportionately select their previous leaders as rulers under Eliot's mosaic system in "To Pray or to be Prey: That is the Question: Strategies for Cultural Autonomy of Massachusetts Praying Town Indians," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring, 1980), 143. She views this as a deliberate subversion of the system of rulers implemented by Eliot in an effort to retain their own more traditional hereditary power structure, but the distinction she draws between the Indian notion of leadership and Eliot's idea of wise and able rulers in the Mosaic sense is not entirely clear. Sachems traditionally were those who could retain the consent of their people by being

Indeed Waban would be remembered by Daniel Gookin, a close friend and associate of Eliot's, in his *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England* in the most appreciative terms:

> But at Nonantum especially, one {Indian} of the most remark was named Waban, a grave and sober person, of whom we shall have occasion to speak more hereafter. God was pleased to open the understanding and affect the heart, of this man, that he became, by his example and activity, a leader and encourager to many others. And thus Mr. Eliot continued to preach there two lectures at Nonantum and Neponsut for several years with good success.[40]

On that day in 1652, however, his profession of faith, or rather the lack of it, left much to be desired.

The significant level of uncertainty was not limited to one or two of the confessees but rather was pervasive throughout the process. William of Sudbury also ended his first confession with a statement of marginal unbelief, saying "but I want faith to believe the Word of God, and to open my eyes and to help me cast away all sins."[41] His second confession concluded even more starkly, as he claimed "I am angry with myself because I do not believe the word of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ."[42] Similarly, Monequassin revealed in his second confession that he "desired" to believe Christ. Ponampam ended his first confession by saying that his heart "desireth to pray to God" as long as he lived, although in his confession made before the elders he "betrusted" his soul to Christ. Robin Speene, who actually made three confessions that day, claimed that he "wanted Christ" but that he could not "tell whether God hath

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politically and socially adept and conceivably it may have been natural for praying Indians to consider these "first families" as the most likely candidates under the new system. Nor was Eliot unaware of this connection either. In an 1651 letter printed in 1652's "Strength Out of Weakness," he acknowledges that Cutshamoquin (Cutshamekin) was "chief Sachem and therefore chosen the chief" when it was time to select rulers in the Mosaic system.

[40] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*… 29

[41] Thomas Mayhew, Jr. "Tears of Repentance...," 233

[42] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Tears of Repentance...," 234

pardoned my sins."[43] Nishohkou indicated in his first confession that he found his heart "backward, and not so forward to make a Church." In his second confession, which was not read before the elders, he claimed that "true faith I cannot work; Oh Jesus Christ help me, and give it me." Magus said that he did not know "whether yet God hath pardoned my sins or not." Noukau stated in his first confession that he thought God would not forgive him because he had not yet forsaken his sin and in his second he expressed the fear of losing his soul because of his unbelief. Ephraim, whose Indian name Eliot could not recall, went so far as to say "I do not truly in my heart repent and I think that God will not forgive me of my sins."[44]

Lack of assurance in confessions was not necessarily unusual in such proceedings, and indeed a degree of it was expected, even required. Out of the fifty-one people applying for church membership in Thomas Shephard's Cambridge church in the late 1630's and early 1640's, only eighteen expressed an overt confidence in having "closed with Christ." A close examination of Shephard's *Confessions* indicates that an expression of the assurance of salvation was not a requirement for admission into Shephard's congregation, raising the issue of the actual severity of Puritan standards for church admission.[45] This hesitancy to express assurance also may have been the result of Puritan theology in general and, for the Cambridge church, Shephard's preaching on the subject of God's sovereignty in the process of election. However, most of the others

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[43] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Tears of Repentance…" 248
[44] Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "Tears of Repentance...," 250-259
[45] George Selement and Bruce C. Woolley, *Thomas Shephard's Confessions*, (Boston: The Society, 1981) 23

expressed some measure of closure.[46] By contrast, the 1652 Natick confessions are riddled with sentiments ranging from uncertainty to manifest expressions of unbelief.

This profound lack of confidence may be tied in to the primacy of the Word in Puritan life. For Puritans, the idea was always that God could be accessed through prayer, through hearing the Word in preaching, and through the interaction of the individual believer with the written Word. In their 1652 confessions, all of the Natick Indians save Monequassin claimed their knowledge through hearing the word rather than through reading it. By contrast, the best estimates for the members of Shephard's congregation put their rate of literacy at comparable to the numbers postulated for first generation New Englanders.[47] The doubts pervading the 1652 Natick confessions may in part have been the product of the Puritan emphasis on literacy as a component of a true Christian walk with Christ.[48] At this stage of the mission project, Eliot had not yet begun to publish the Algonquian translations of Scripture, a project that would later earn him the awe and admiration of linguists and theologians alike, and thus his efforts were confined to the preaching of sermons and to an active program of catechism.

The pattern of the 1652 confessions reveals the clear emphasis of Eliot's ministry up to that point. Most Native Americans applying for church-estate were able to articulate the idea of original sin, usually with a direct reference to the Genesis account of

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[46] George Selement, "The Meeting of Elite and Popular Minds at Cambridge, New England, 1638-1645," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 41, No. 1, (Jan., 1984), 44

[47] George Selement, "Meeting of Elite and Popular Minds…" 35; On the basis of a variety of evidence, Selement believes that eighteen men (64%) and 5 women (23%) of the Shephard applicants were literate, numbers that he equates to Kenneth Lockridge's standard of 60% and 30%, respectively, for New England as a whole.

[48] For a discussion of literacy as a marker of identity see Jill Lepore, "Dead Men Tell No Tales: John Sassamon and the Fatal Consequences of Literacy," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 4, (Dec., 1994) as well as Jill Lepore, *The Name of War* (New York: Vintage Books) 1998. Also helpful is Norman Earl Tanis, "Education in John Eliot's Indian Utopias, 1646-1675," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Autumn, 1970)

Adam and Eve. They were also clear on the concept of salvation through Christ rather than through works, that Christ "has deserved pardon for us." Indeed there is a discernable pattern to several of the confessions. First, the believer heard the Word or, in some cases, of the Word through his peers, and he initially rejected it. Next, he began to "pray to God," although most often not in a heartfelt way – as Owussumag put it, out of "fear of man, not of God" – and then ultimately became aware of his hypocrisy and desired Christ's pardon, even as he doubted whether he had received it.

Despite Eliot's hope over these "beginnings," any further examination of the Natick Indians was delayed, in part due to the tenuous political status of the praying Indians. Sensitive to the skepticism of many of his English brethren, Eliot wanted to wait to publish the 1652 confessions in England in order to "hear what acceptance the Lord gave unto them, in the hearts of His people there," and so that this response would positively impact the attitude of the Puritans in New England. He also decided to forego attempting a 1653 examination because of concern that it may have been tainted by a "groundless" mistrust of praying Indians. Eliot reveals that there was a "jealousy too deeply apprehended," a concern that all Indians were in league with the Dutch to do "mischief" to the English. There are indications in Eliot's narrative that this concern was not as prevalent in 1654, as all the churches observed a public fast and made the Indian examination the "principal matter in their prayers."[49] On April 13, 1654, several[50] praying Indians, none identified by name in the 1655 missionary tract, came to Roxbury to answer questions propounded by the assembled pastors and elders.

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[49] Eliot, "Strength out of Weakness..." 271

[50] The number is thought to be "about eight," according to Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians Before King Phillip's War*, 130

In any event, the 1654 examination represented a break from the standard personal confessional narrative as its seeming purpose was largely to allow the elders to decipher to what depth the praying Indians had absorbed Puritan theology. As such, the format of the June 1654 examination was such that any elder gathered in the Assembly could propound questions in any order, a strategy perhaps designed to flummox any attempt at rote memorization of a catechism.[51] In order to expedite the translation process, William Walton of Marblehead transcribed the contents of the confessions while Eliot and others focused on the actual translation.[52] Throughout the process the issue of language was of preeminent concern, and Eliot enlisted the help of other interpreters, Native American and English, to verify his own translations:

> ...meanwhile I dispatched letters unto such as had knowledge in the Tongue, requesting that they would come and help in Interpretation, or attest unto the truth of my interpretations. I sent also for my Brother Mayhu {missionary Thomas Mayhew, Jr.}, who accordingly came, and brought an interpreter with him."[53]

The scrupulous concern regarding the answers and their exact wording is evident throughout Eliot's account of the proceedings. Eliot had insisted that, "If any one doubted of the interpretations that should be given of their answers, that they would propound their doubt, and that they should have the words scanned and tried by the interpreters, that so all things may be done most clearly."[54] Eliot recorded that concerns were raised concerning the translation of specific words - in one instance regarding the word "Hohpooonk," which Eliot translated as signifying "humility" - but that his

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[51] Eliot's first Algonquin printings, the catechism and *Indian Primer* were begun in 1654
[52] John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England," (London: Printed by M.S., 1655) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 276
[53] John Eliot, "A Brief Narration of the Indians Proceedings in respect of Church-Estate, and How the Case Standeth at the present with us," (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1655) 5
[54] John Eliot, "A Brief Narration...," 7

translations ultimately bore up under the scrutiny of the interpreters. The examination ended with each of the interpreters giving a public testimony as to the veracity of the translation given.

A close look at the recorded answers of the Natick Indians in 1654 reveals a fairly sophisticated understanding of reformed doctrine. The converts had to respond to follow-up questions and be ready to clarify their previous answers, and the record indicates that they were able to do so for the most part. In response to the question "What is sin?" an examinee replied "There is the root sin, an evil heart: and there is actual sin, sin is a breaking of the Law of God." In replying to the question "What reason or justice is there, that Christ should dye for our sins?" one examinee's response was "God made all the world, and man sinned, therefore it was necessary Christ should dye to carry men up to Heaven. God hath given unto us his Son Jesus Christ, because of our sins." Another replied to the same question by quoting John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[55] The prospective church members were also able to explain creation, the fall of man, and the difference between "works" and "grace."

In the 1654 examination the Natick praying Indians were able to articulate the relationship between Adam's corruption and the sin nature of the human race – "Adam was the first man, and father of all men, and in him we sinned." To the specific question "How many are the offices of Christ?" the answer was "Three. A Priest, a Prophet, and a King." To "What else has Christ done for us? the response was "He hath kept all the Commandments of God for us, and also dyed for us."[56] They were also able to explain

[55] John Eliot, "A Brief Narration…" 14-16
[56] John Eliot, "A Brief Narration...," 17

Christ's ascension into heaven, His intercession for sinful man, the covenant of grace, the resurrection of the body, and the workings of the Holy Spirit towards the conviction of sin in the human heart. On the whole, the account of the examination reveals a scrupulous desire for clarity on the part of the English "referees" and a detailed knowledge of reformed Protestant belief on the part of the Indians. Only one direct quotation of Scripture, however, is recorded.

According to Eliot, the examination revealed in some measure "how far the Lord hath let in the light of the good knowledge of God into their souls," but that it was best to "go slowly" on the matter of the creation of an Indian church, as to entrust the "holy privileges of God's house," to those "newly come out of that great depth of darkness" would be to endanger the name of Christ "among their barbarous friends and country-men." Eliot's millennial expectations aside, Natick was likely to be a pattern after which successive Native American settlements would be constructed, and so it was important to make sure those in charge of the Natick church were not likely to slip up in front of the watchful eyes of both skeptical English and impressionable Algonquians.[57] In this sense, although the feedback Eliot received from the assembly was significantly positive, and the understanding was that the Natick applicants could form a church once they had delivered satisfactory confession narratives,[58] Eliot proceeded cautiously. It would be five more years before a group of Natick Indians would try again.

Concerning the results of the examination, Eliot reported that the Elders were somewhat pleased with what they had heard and even offered words of encouragement to him and to the praying Indians. Yet in the end, even though the praying Indians had in

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[57] John Eliot, "A Brief Narration...," 20-21
[58] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians, 131*

some measure demonstrated "what taste they have of the principles of Religion and doctrine of salvation," their answers did not display sufficient progress to allow them the establishment of an independent church. In holding the Natick Indians to such strict standards, Eliot and the Puritans were not being discriminatory, as their theology dictated that a sound conversion required intense self-examination, which in many cases did not bring assurance of salvation to the believer for several years.[59] In fact, the majority of English persons in Massachusetts Bay Colony were not admitted into the full communion of the visible saints.

Furthermore, despite their relative sophistication, many of the 1654 answers may have been learned through Eliot's program of catechism.[60] An examination of the "Indian Covenanting Confession," probably penned around 1660, reveals many of the themes and even similar wording to the answers given to the queries of the elders. In addition to the more obvious declarations concerning God's triune nature and Christ's redemptive sacrifice, there are more specific references to the "three offices" of Christ and the "twofold" nature of sin.[61] Assuming the content of Eliot's original catechism was similar, it would be possible for the early Natick Indian candidates to obtain their understanding through oral instruction. However, by 1659, the year they passed the

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[59] Constance Post, "Old World Order in the New: John Eliot and "Praying Indians" in Cotton Mather's Magnalia Christi Americana," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (Sep., 1993) 421 For more discussion on the Puritan notion of preparation for grace, see Norman Petit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1966)

[60] Although there are numerous references to Eliot's catechisms in the sources, no surviving copy of the original 1654 version is known to be in existence.

[61] John Eliot, "Indian Covenanting Confession," (Unpublished: copy at University of Edinburgh, circa 1660)

examination to the referees' satisfaction, Eliot had been successful in publishing an Algonquian copy of the Gospel of Matthew, Genesis and of some of the Psalms.[62]

For the Puritans, to create real Christian Indians meant creating literate Indians or, at least, an environment of literacy surrounding them. An emphasis on literacy and education as an indicator of Christianity emerges throughout the Puritan accounts, in many ways appearing "as an accessory to religion."[63] Richard Bourne's 1674 letter to Gookin includes a count of people who can read "Indian," read and write "Indian," read English, and read and write English.[64] Thomas Mayhew's[65] 1670 letter also reports that "many can read and write Indian, very few English; none to great purpose."[66] In any event, literacy was always an assumed part of Native American Christianity for the Puritans, as to be a Christian for them meant an individual interaction with the Word of God, rather than participation in sacraments as the result of confessed belief. Church membership was the last stage of the conversion process.[67] Accordingly, the conversion narratives given by the eight examinees in 1659, which qualified them for acceptance into Eliot's Roxbury congregation, reveal a greater degree of familiarity with Scripture.[68]

The Puritan emphasis on literacy and learning was pervasive as the light of learning walked hand in hand with the light of the Gospel message. In addition to the Psalms, the New Testament, and eventually the entire Bible, Eliot also produced several tracts, an Indian Primer, and a Logic Primer in Algonquian. This last, according to its

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[62] Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *John Eliot: "Apostle to the Indians,"* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968) 200
[63] Norman Earl Tanis, "Education in John Eliot's Indian Utopias, 1646-1675," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Autumn, 1970) 310
[64] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England*, (Boston: Apollo Press, 1674) 57
[65] Based on the year, this has to be the elder Mayhew, who took over his son Thomas' work after he was lost at sea.
[66] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England,* 65
[67] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*, 9
[68] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*, 133-134

title page, was "some logical notions to initiate the Indians in the knowledge of the rule of reason, and to know how to make use thereof. Especially for the instruction of such as are teachers among them." According to Eliot, "logick" was instrumental to "in some measure...understand, open and improve the plain things of the Kingdome of Christ Jesus revealed in the Scriptures."[69] As Perry Miller has observed, this attitude was quite in keeping with the Puritan understanding that logical analysis of the Scriptures was a prerequisite to truly understanding them.[70]

A close analysis of the 1659 confessions not only shows that these Indian candidates had studied Scripture but that they had studied very specific parts, consistent with what Eliot had been able to reproduce in Algonquian. The completion of the entire Bible not yet a reality, very specific stories, Scriptural references, and parts of the Bible play prominently in their accounts. Each confession has some reference to the fall of man, often with specific references either to verses or to chapters in Genesis. The story of Noah and God's righteous wrath in his punishment of the world's wickedness also receives multiple mentions. The Gospel of John is quoted with some regularity. But by far the most cited text, and the one from which Scripture is quoted verbatim, is the Gospel of Matthew, which is specifically referenced multiple times in almost every narrative. Nishohkou, in the course of his assertions about his former profligate lifestyle, quoted the book of Matthew no less than nine times. This makes sense given that Eliot produced copies of this gospel early in the creation of his "Indian Library."[71]

Indeed the Natick examinees were so thorough in their use of Scripture in this their third attempt at church-estate that there were only follow-up questions asked after

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[69] John Eliot, *Logick Primer* (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Company, 1904) title page
[70] Perry Miller, *The New England Mind*, 114-115
[71] Both Genesis and Matthew were printed in Algonquin for the first time in 1655

the first candidate had spoken. By the time the examiners had gotten to the third candidate, John Speene, they had actually asked the praying Indians to shorten their confessions in the interests of time. In the 1652 confessions, the 1654 examinations, and the 1659 confessions, the critical distinction does not center around the ability to comprehend or express the concepts of original sin, sinful behavior, God's relationship with mankind, Christ's mission, or salvation, but rather of the ability to directly access, utilize, and quote Scripture in doing so. The candidates in 1659 were consciously displaying not only their repentance and acceptance of the *message* of Scripture but also their engagement with the actual *text* of Scripture and therefore with that essential component of Puritan culture.

A helpful point of comparison for the 1659 Natick Indian confessions are the fifty-one confessions recorded for those seeking membership in Thomas Shephard's Cambridge congregation between 1638 and 1645. A careful examination supports the notion that the Natick Indians were in fact demonstrating a facility with Scripture that was similar to that of their English lay counterparts, even though Eliot's incremental printing schedule forced them to focus more specifically on particular sections of the Bible. A statistical analysis of the 1659 confessions and the fifty-one Cambridge confessions yields comparable results. While Shephard's fifty-one aspiring members averaged over eleven direct Scripture references per confession, the Natick Indians averaged over eight. The first two to confess, Nishohkou and Antony, directly quoted or referenced the Bible eighteen and sixteen times, respectively. After their lengthy confessions, the others were asked to shorten theirs, and so the sample may be a bit skewed from a simple numerical standpoint. While Shephard's flock ranged from one

Scripture reference to a high of thirty-five, the least number of references for the Natick Indians was made by Wutasakompauin – who went last – with two.[72] Additionally, the Natick Indians demonstrated a facility with the concepts behind their Scriptural references which put them on par with their English lay brethren.[73]

The praying Indian confessions differ from their English counterparts with regard to the type of sin emphasized in the confession. Lust and "running wild" are frequently mentioned, as are pawwawing and praying to many gods, which were not featured as prominently in the 1652 confessions. While the mention of the desire for the sacraments in the 1659 confessions is a clear addition,[74] much of the other perceived differences are reflective of the ability to ground what was said in 1652 in the Word. For example, although Richard Cogley claims that only three of the fifteen Indians noted the doctrine of original sin in 1652,[75] that interpretation denies references to the concept that are less overt such as the one made by Magus:

> ...sin always hath continued, from the beginning of the world. I believe that word which God told Eve, that in sorrow she should bring forth children, and I see it daily to be true. I believe that word of God, that sin brings misery, and all shall die, because we sin...[76]

The 1652 confessions reveal that the Natick Indians were able to articulate the concept of man's inherently lost and sinful condition, but their description of that condition was, in

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[72] While this cursory statistical analysis elides the issue of sophistication of understanding, it does add another piece of information into the discussion concerning the standards of admission applied to the Indians. While Cotton Mather insisted that the standards for the Native Americans were in fact tightened, Constance Post suggests that the requirements were actually loosened. Constance Post, "Old World Order in the New: John Eliot and 'Praying Indians' in Cotton Mather's Magnalia Christi Americana," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (Sep., 1993) 421

[73] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*, 138

[74] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*, 130

[75] Presumably Cogley is referring to Totheswamp who refers to mankind as "Children of Adam, poor sinners," Monequasson, who refers to the "first man" breaking God's commandments, and Ponampam who refers to being "born in sin." Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 231, 236, 241

[76] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 252

most cases, not based in the kind of overt Scriptural reference that their examiners would recognize as trustworthy.

All of the applicants in 1659 mentioned the doctrine of original sin and did so in a way that was grounded in Scripture. Eliot had printed Algonquian copies of Genesis in 1655, and the 1659 statements reflect its influence. Of the over fifty direct references to Scripture in the 1659 confessions, fifteen were to Genesis. These confessions did not so much represent an addition of the concept of man's inherent sinfulness but the ability of the Native American proselytes to Biblically ground that concept in an historical narrative. In a very real sense, the Natick Indians were speaking the Puritans' language.

Another very clear difference between the 1652 and 1659 questions is the care some of the 1659 applicants took to articulate a reason for desiring baptism and communion and therefore church membership.[77] They positioned participation in the ordinances as a means of strengthening their walk with Christ and as a means of bolstering their ability to resist sin. Nishohkou expressed his desire to gain "strength" from Christ in His Ordinances, saying "Then I desired my heart might be made strong by Church-covenant, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, which might be as a Fort to keep me from enemies, as a Fort keepeth us from our outward enemies."[78] Ponampam wanted to "receive the Seals to make strong my heart," and John Speene stated that he desired baptism "as a sign" of Christ's cleansing of his sins. Monotunkquanit equated his striving to enter the Church Covenant as the fulfillment of the covenant God had originally made with Abraham. As such they were putting church membership in its

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[77] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*, 135
[78] John Eliot, A Further Account...," 9

proper Puritan context – as the participation in the community of "visible saints" after conversion and after personal internalization of the Word.

In his analysis of the Cambridge Church, George Selement has argued that, in seventeenth century New England, "ministers and their flocks held a theology in common."[79] Accordingly the confessions of the Natick Indians reflect the emphasis of Eliot's ministry. Shephard's flock had access to a wider range of clergy than did Eliot's, and their confessions reflect that, with 106 references to ministers besides Shephard recorded in the confessions.[80] In contrast, the Natick Indians relied heavily on Eliot and on those among them who had been trained by him as teachers. As such the recurring themes in both the 1652 and 1659 confessions match closely with those things Eliot emphasized in his preaching and in the laws governing Natick. For example, Eliot's insistence on the need for a settled life appears in the both sets of confessions. Anthony confessed that he "first feared praying to God" and "hated instruction by the Word of God" and therefore "went into the Country" where daily he and his neighbors were drawn to "seek after wickedness."[81] In his only confession, Magus revealed that he had "thought of going away," but that he feared "losing his ground," an indication that land ownership was working in the way Eliot had intended. Even Monequassun, the schoolmaster, stated that at one point he "thought of running away" out of fear of civil punishment for his sins.[82]

[79] George Selement, "The Meeting of Elite and Popular Minds…" 48
[80] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*, 135
[81] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 258-259
[82] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 229-259

The dichotomy between settlement and movement is also featured in the 1659 confessions, but the terminology changes from "running away" to "running wild."[83] Nishohkou revealed that, even after being a praying Indian for three years, he still "desired to run wild, as all sundry other did." Anthony lost faith after the death of his friends and decided that he would "run wild and cast off praying." John Speene confessed that he was tempted in a similar fashion:

> My heart said, cast off praying because you are filthy in lust, your heart and eyes still commit adultery; therefore run away from these that pray to God, and go to Quiniticot (Connecticut) or some other place; and if you be in other places, you may to what you will, and my heart almost inclined to this sin...[84]

Ponampam revealed that upon the death of his brothers he toyed with the idea of leaving - "my heart said I will run away, for here we a hindered from sin, in other places I may freely sin." Monotunkquanit characterized his former lifestyle as "wild" and full of "mad works" because he "kept no sabbath, nor lecture, nor and work of prayer."[85] Once again the Indian applicants were able to not only renounce their former life of sin but to do so in a way which linked their acceptance of the Puritan lifestyle with a newfound godliness, demonstrating that they comprehended the reasoning behind the Puritan notion of a permanent, ordered lifestyle's effect on the individual pursuit of a sanctified life.

Similarly, the 1659 confessions also couch the praying Indians' previous worldview in terms recognizable to their Puritan examiners. While the 1652 confessions contain cursory references to "pawawwing" but no real connection of that act to the Puritan view of it,[86] the 1659 confessions more clearly encapsulate the Puritan understanding of that practice. Not only is participation in pawawwing more frequently

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[83] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*, 298
[84] John Eliot, "A Brief Relation...," 22
[85] John Eliot, "A Further Account…" 2-28
[86] John Eliot, "Tears of Repentance..." 248, 254

mentioned in the 1659 confessions but the Native American proselytes took more care to elaborate on precisely what the problem with that practice was. Both Wutasakompauin and Waban identified their former religious practices as "praying to the Devil," thus verbalizing the Puritan understanding of the Algonquian god Hobomok.[87]

By the time the eight Natick candidates were admitted into church-estate, they had made multiple confessions, some as many as four and five times.[88] They had years of sermon attendance under their belt, had encountered their oral language as written text, and internalized Scripture to the point of using it with facility within a prepared statement. To be an acknowledged believer in Massachusetts Bay required that one participate fully in the rigorously intellectual approach the Puritans brought to the Word and submit to the civil authority such a life engendered. The Natick proselytes had to demonstrate both an interaction with the word and an understanding of the connections between the civil polity of Massachusetts Bay and visible sainthood. The seven years that passed between their first forays into public confession and their success in gaining the seals of church membership were a seasoning period, in which their immersion into the Puritan triad of prayer, sermon absorption, and a relationship with the Word was cultivated to the satisfaction of the already "visible" saints. By 1659 they had demonstrated sufficient knowledge and had struggled for sufficient time as to be granted church-estate. As John Caryl put it,

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[87] John Eliot, "A Further Account...," 27, 32. For more on the subject of English perception of Hobomok, also known as Abbamacho, see Frank Shuffleton, "Indian Devils and Pilgrim Fathers: Squanto, Hobomok, and the English Conception of Indian Religion," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Mar., 1976), 108-116, David S. Lovejoy, "Satanizing the American Indian," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Dec., 1994), 603-621, and Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (Menston, England: Scholar Press Limited) 1971

[88] The 1652 confessions reveal that several of the candidates were asked to give their narratives multiple times, and often in revised versions.

> What strong and clear convictions of sin, both of the sinfulness of their natures, and of the sins of their lives have they been under, who lay (before) dead in trespasses and sins, wholly alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them? What strugglings and strivings with corruption and temptation do they speak of before they could come off from sin, and from that vain conversation received by tradition from their Fore-fathers? What wrestlings had they with unbelief, before they could close with Christ in the promise? What full resignations of themselves have the made to the commands of Christ after closing with him by faith in the promise? Yea, what hungrings and thirstings do some of them express for more intimate communion with Christ in attendance upon all his Ordinances in a Church-state of holy Fellowship with his People?[89]

The eight praying won a unanimous decision in favor of their admission to the Roxbury church and, within a year, for the formation of their own church at Natick. From that point on, the Natick church members would no longer be dependent on English referees but would instead control the admission process to the congregation themselves. In that they were "so severe" in their standards that Eliot was compelled to counsel them towards "moderation and forbearance" in assessing prospective applicants.[90] As the war fifteen years on the horizon later would demonstrate, they had not fully transcended their status as Indians or blended fully into Englishness. They had, however, successfully convinced the English saints of their sincerity, not only through the content of their confessions but also through a demonstration of their participation in the study, struggle, and spiritual angst that the Puritans recognized as the lot of the truly redeemed. They had, at least for a time, blended the categories of praying Indian and visible Christian believer.

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[89] Joseph Caryl, "A Further Account...," Introduction, 3
[90] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians*, 136

Conclusions

The Southern New England missionary activity of the mid-seventeenth century was greatly impacted by a variety of factors, most notably the social and political devastation wrought by the waves of disease preceding it. Historians have argued effectively for the susceptibility of groups and individuals due to the desperation of their material circumstances in the wake of epidemics and the political changes caused by the destruction of the Pequot nation. Yet it is also worth noting, as Robert James Naeher and others have, that such upheaval may have lead those experiencing it to question the foundational premises of their lives and to look for answers elsewhere. For some in the praying movement, Eliot's message of salvation may have resonated all the more clearly in part because their own worldview seemed to be failing. To some the idea that God was disappointed with their idolatry yet merciful to those who were truly repentant represented a hopeful message that they could reconcile with their experience.

The inhabitants of Eliot's praying towns, however, were receiving a somewhat different presentation of the Gospel than those elsewhere. While Eliot's preaching did not stray from orthodoxy when it came to the ideas of innate depravity, salvation, or even Puritan covenant theology, his unique understanding of the form of government God desired had implications for the praying movement in Massachusetts. Members of those communities were, in Eliot's mind, the vanguard of what eventually would become a worldwide Kingdom of God, ruled at every level by the system outlined in Exodus. To what extent Eliot communicated this to the Native American converts is unclear, but the difference in government was just one other way in which the praying communities

remained separate from their English Puritan brethren. In contrast, the praying Indians of Martha's Vineyard were not confronted with this particular burden.

The distinct status conferred by living under a different form of government was just one of a series of hurdles encountered by the praying Indians of Massachusetts, many of which were also challenges for those in other parts of New England. Conversion to Puritanism required a complete overhaul in lifestyle, to a routine bounded by the Sabbath and centered around permanent farms. In this the praying Indians faced many challenges including the availability of land, the mistrust of English neighbors, and the destructive capacity of English domestic animals, to name a few. As Eliot made spiritual conversion, in practice if not in theory, contingent on a conversion of lifestyle, the problems encountered with the English material world proved to be impediments to the faith.

Changing over to English agriculture, animal domestication, and clothing were challenging enough, but the praying Indians also faced the tremendous difficulty of transitioning from an oral culture to one in which the written word – and the Word – reigned supreme. Literacy marked perhaps the most significant cultural barrier between the indigenous and English cultures, and those in the praying movement struggled with this well after the publication of the Indian Bible and other Algonquian devotional material. The Puritan devotion to education and literacy made full participation in their lifestyle more of a challenge for their Indian brethren.

In addition to negotiating a maze of very specific cultural considerations, those in the praying movement sometimes faced the heartbreak of choosing between the way of salvation offered by the missionaries and the considerations of their unsaved family members. The missionary tracts reveal that family concerns could cut both ways,

providing an impediment to praying at times and an incentive at others. The gospel message insisted on a new conception of family. Not only did this require occasional changes in family structure, in the case of polygamous unions, but it also insisted on the principle of adoption into the family of God the Father through salvation offered through Christ the Son. The Body of Christ, the family of all true believers, was a new and eternal association to which praying Indians aspired to belong. But in some cases not all members of one's actual family were praying Indians, and, for some, becoming a praying Indian required severing ties with or alienating their biological family. For others their initial avenue into the praying community was the desire to avoid such separation.

The praying community also posed numerous challenges for indigenous leaders. Finding their subjects divided between those adhering to the new message and those eschewing it, sachems risked dissension no matter which way they turned. The praying movement, with its emphasis on labor and reward, provided a direct challenge to the system of tribute and protection. In Massachusetts, the Old Testament system of rulers provided a completely new power structure that potentially stood in opposition to the hierarchy of sachems and sagamores already in place. In all areas, however, the Gospel message served as a leveling agent, insisting as it did on the equality of sinful man before God. Believing subjects used their newfound faith to critique the behavior of their leaders, and sachems within the praying movement found their authority greatly reduced. As such, sachems were primarily resistant to the gospel, although some attempted to give it an audience to placate the English or some of their constituents and still others converted. As did that of family members, their resistance or acceptance of the gospel influenced the willingness of those under them to listen to the gospel message.

The issue of physical health and healing was inextricable from the success of the mission to the Indians. Not only did the epidemics of the late teens and the 1630's create a region reeling from social and political devastation, but they also called into question the utility of the pawwaws, who, as the keepers of manitou, found themselves at odds with the missionaries, who saw them as combinations of witch and charlatan. Woven into this characterization was the comparison with the Puritans' principal missionary competition, the Jesuit priests. Pawwaws' successes and failures had direct implications for the success of the missionary message. If their methods were inadequate to confront the diseases that so troubled their adherents, then it followed that the power they claimed was inferior to the power of the missionaries' God. Missionaries sought to highlight the deficiency of native medicine, even though they distinguished between legitimate "physick," the use of herbs and roots, and the spiritual destitution of pawwawing. While missionaries did not deny the power of the pawwaws to heal and to harm, attributing their abilities to their pact with Satan, the fact that Christian believers seemed to be immune to the dark arts of these shamans served to bolster the claims of Eliot and other missionaries. Nowhere was the issue of health a greater boon to the missionary message than on Martha's Vineyard, where the failures of the pawwaws even in the face of direct challenge caused many to consider the Gospel.

While most pawwaws ardently opposed the mission effort, as it branded them as evil sorcerers and threatened their livelihood, a few actually converted, in some cases doing so after losing faith in the efficacy of their own practice. These defections, while infrequent, served as incentives for others, for the pawwaws represented spiritual leadership in much the same way the sachems possessed political influence.

Conversion from a worldview centered on the concept of manitou to one that placed all power in the hands of a sovereign God was laced with conceptual challenges. Puritanism privileged the authority of the Word and operated on the premise that the individual believer would interact with it personally. Thus the missionaries encountered the difficulty of insisting on the universality of the Bible even before it could be translated into Algonquian. Even after that monumental task had been completed, the hurdle of literacy in any language was also a challenge. Eliot and his associates strove to distance the Word from the English, framing themselves as the descendents of pagan people, who, like their new audience, were ignorant of the living God as a result of successive generations of apostacy. The idea that the mind of God was in part to be found on the pages of the Bible was woven into the polemic against the Jesuits, who, like the pawwaws, sought to keep the true knowledge of God contained therein from the minds of their hapless followers.

Eliot and other missionaries also struggled to overcome the cultural relativism of their Algonquian flock. As they were inclined to see the force of manitou in many places and acknowledged the existence of multiple gods, it was possible for them to see the God that Eliot spoke of as yet another spiritual force to be added to the existing pantheon or to wonder if perhaps God was only for the English. Yet there were common starting points for the two worldviews, one of which was the idea of creation. Eliot attempted to utilize the natural world as evidence for the existence of an omnipotent Creator, and found some fertile soil for this argument amongst his proselytes, who themselves seemingly entertained a variety of creation and flood accounts, some of which had elements similar to the one contained in Genesis.

The Algonquians also had differing accounts of the afterlife, although it was commonly understood that there were two destinations, one of reward and one of punishment. But they did not share the idea that there was a dichotomy between a perfectly good, all powerful God and a thoroughly evil Satan. Hobbomok, whom the Puritans styled as a Satan equivalent, did not function that way in the Algonquian mind. Additionally, the Puritan distinction between inanimate matter and eternal spirit was a conceptual hurdle for the Algonquian converts, whose upbringing had conditioned them to see the potential for spirit everywhere as manitou could dwell in people and in animals as well as in inanimate objects. The Biblical concept of the spirit as being completely distinct from the world of matter was not immediately apparent to them, as their understanding of souls was tied to the material world. While the missionary message cast the fundamental problem of humanity as that of a degenerate heart, the message of salvation through grace was, in the case of the Massachusetts mission, filtered through a system that stressed lifestyle and behavior. This emphasis was reflected in the praying Indians' questions and confessions recorded in the missionary tracts. Again the situation in Martha's Vineyard, where the cultural transformation was not as comprehensive, stands somewhat in opposition to the highly regulated world of Eliot's praying towns.

To transform themselves into visible saints, the praying Indians of seventeenth century Massachusetts were forced to negotiate both the material culture and the ideas of two societies. Facing opposition from indigenous leaders, suspicious English, and often from family members, they undertook the difficult course of acculturation, which not only meant radically changing their lifestyle but also the ways in which they viewed their environment, physical objects, and, most importantly, themselves.

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Appendix: Indian Hebraic Identity and the Mission

The prominence of Jewish conversion in the Church's resurrection would play a role in defining the missionary endeavors of Eliot and his colleagues. This interpretation of Scripture, when combined with speculation about the presence of the lost tribes of Israel, would have implications for the missionary project in New England through the 1650's.

While those involved in bringing the Gospel to the Native Americans of New England held different positions on the probability of Jacob's seed being dispersed amongst the inhabitants of the New World, they shared a sense that their efforts in the New World were very much connected to the ultimate establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth. Their early mission to the Algonquians took place in the context of the millennial anticipation that was a feature of English thought in the first half of the seventeenth century, and this millennial fever was itself linked to ideas about Jewish conversion.

As such, speculation about the Jewish identity of the inhabitants of the New World was quite in fashion in the early and mid-1600's among those concerned with their conversion, although the conclusion that the Native Americans were in fact Hebraic in lineage was seemingly not the majority opinion. A variety of evidences was brought to bear on the subject, ranging from linguistic analysis to physical appearance to the observance of certain customs associated with the dispersed Israelites to straightforward appeals to Scripture. The notion that Native Americans were at least partially the seed of Jacob competed primarily with the theory that they were in fact descended from Tartars

who migrated across the Bering Strait to North America, but, given the thoroughness of the dispersion of the lost tribes, these two ideas were not always perceived as mutually exclusive.

Associating the American Indian with the lost tribes of Israel predated the Puritan migration to America. Seemingly the first published articulation of that position was Fredericus Lumnius' *De Iudicio et Indorum Vocatione*, issued in Antwerp in 1567.[91] Drawing on the apocryphal book of IV Esdras and supporting it with the prophet Isaiah and II Kings, Luminus' work was characterized by theological arguments to justify Native American Jewish identity. Later authors such as Diego Duran relied only on the canonical account of II Kings, in which the king of Assyria captures Samaria and carries away the Israelites.[92] Duran's account is more typical of the kind of evidence which ultimately would be utilized by English accounts, in that it attempts to correlate the customs of the Native Americans with Old Testament Jewish practices. The Native Americans, argued Duran, had passed on histories of long journeys, akin to the one from Assyria to Arsereth, as well as of flights like the exodus from Egypt. They also maintained traditions of earthquakes swallowing evil men and of objects (manna) falling from heaven. One elderly Native American had even begun an account of his people's origins with "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth."[93]

Spanish authors' attempts to link the cultures found in the New World with the customs and practices of the Israelites persisted and gave rise to a variety of theories throughout Europe concerning Indian origins. Some argued for the lost tribes connection,

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[91] Lee Eldgridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts 1492-1729* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1967) 34
[92] Lee Eldgridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*… 38
[93] Lee Eldgridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*… 39

others for any number of possible lineages. Virtually all accepted the fact that the Native Americans were descended of Noah, although from which of his three sons was a point of contention. According to Richard Popkin, "The debate that went on among the experts was whether the Indians came from Carthage, Atlantis, China, Palestine, etc."[94] The discussion was, for the most part, decidedly not about whether the inhabitants of the New World were sons of Adam. Puritans in New England, while different than Spanish Catholics in many ways, were operating with this shared assumption. Their accounts also reference the variety of origin theories postulated by the Spanish and other Europeans.

Inquiry into Native American Jewish identity was a feature of travel accounts and reports from New England, interwoven with descriptions of other facets of Native American life, although opinions on the subject varied. In *New English Canaan*, published in Amsterdam in 1637, Thomas Morton identified a range of opinion on Native American origin. He cited similarities in the use of certain words in both Native American languages and in Latin and Greek as evidence that "the natives of this country might originally come of the scattered Trojans,"[95] and he rejected the speculation that American Indians were in fact descended of Tartars. Morton's account, while not advocating Native American Hebraic origin, nonetheless includes information that would become standard fare for those who took such a position. He related that the Algonquians of New England acknowledged the existence of God (Kytan) and the Devil (Sanaconquom), of the creation of one man and one woman whose posterity was so evil that God caused a great flood to wash them away, and of a version of heaven and hell.[96]

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[94] Richard Popkin, "The Pre-Adamite Theory in the Renaissance" in *Philosophy and Humanism*, Mahoney, Edward P., Ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976) 63

[95] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan* (Amsterdam: De Capo Press, 1969) 20

[96] Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan*… 49-50

John Josselyn, author of *Two Voyages to New England*, wrote that “the people that inhabited this country are judged to be Tartars called Samonids that border upon Moscovia.” As Jews could be told by their “goggle eyes,” these mostly beardless “handsome timber’d people” with their “pale and lean Tartarian”[97] visage would not qualify as such.

In his *Historical Collections*, Daniel Gookin, Superintendent of Indian Affairs and a close associate of Eliot’s, also undertook to address the question of Native American origins. His account sheds doubt on Constance Post’s claim that Eliot’s view of the Indians’ origins was “widely shared by Roger Williams and other Puritans.”[98] Putting Roger Williams – who takes no firm position on the subject in his *A Key Into the Language of America* – aside, it is clear that Gookin did not think that the lost tribe theories about the Indians were widespread. According to Gookin, “Some conceive that this people are of the race of the ten tribes of Israel, that Salmanasser carried captive out of their own country ...But this opinion, that these people are of the race of the Israelites, doth not greatly obtain.” The view that presumably did “greatly obtain” amongst Puritans inclined to consider the matter was that “the original of these Americans is from the Tartars or Scythians, that live in the northeast parts of Asia.” Gookin went on to point out that even if Native Americans were descended from Asians, that this “doth not hinder the truth of the full conjecture, that this people may be of the race of the ten tribes

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[97] John Josselyn, *A Critical Edition of Two Voyages to England*, Paul J. Lindholt, ed. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1988) 88-90

[98] Constance Post, “Old World Order in the New: John Eliot and ‘Praying Indians’ in Cotton Mather’s Magnalia Christi Americana,” *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (Sep., 1993) 420; The opposite of Post’s claim was made by Roy Harvey Pearce who claimed that the Tartar theory was “universally” held. Roy Harvey Pearce, “’The Ruines of Mankind’: The Indian and the Puritan Mind,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 13, No. 2. (Apr., 1952)

of Israel: for the kind of Assyria who led them captive...transported them into Asia and placed them in several provinces..."[99]

Of course it is important to note that both Josselyn's and Gookin's accounts were published in 1674, well after the critical period in the late 1640's and early 1650's when Eliot was formulating his ideas about possible connections to between native New Englanders and the lost tribes of Israel. Yet a detailed examination of both Eliot's writings and of the writings of those engaged in the missionary effort with him bear Gookin's assessment out. While speculation was a constant, the idea of Hebrew Native Americans simply was not widely held.

One of the most influential works for those involved in New England missions to the Indians who seriously entertained the lost tribes speculations was Rabbi Manasseh Ben-Israel's *Hope of Israel*, which he was moved to write in part because of the account of a Jew named Antonio Montezinos, also known as Aaron Levi, who began sharing the story of his journey in the New World with those in Amsterdam in 1644. Ben-Israel published Montezinos' report in 1649 and used it as the first part of his own treatise on the subject of the possibility of Israelite remnants in the New World.

For Eliot, the reports of evidence gathered by Ben-Israel were seemingly critical in his shift toward acceptance of a theory of Native American origins that included the lost tribes of Israel. While there is no evidence that Eliot ever read *The Hope of Israel*, he did read Thomas Thorowgood's *Jews in America* in May of 1650. Thorowgood, a Presbyterian minister who in the 1630's had exchanged letters concerning the presence of the lost tribes in America with Roger Williams, was the link between Ben-Israel and Eliot. When John Dury, self-identified in the Eliot tracts as "an unworthy Labourer in

[99] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England*, (Boston: Apollo Press, 1674) 4-6

Christ's work," read Thorowgood's unpublished manuscript on the subject it lead him to contact Ben-Israel for more information. Eliot subsequently received a summary of this evidence in his correspondence with Thorowgood.[100]

Ben-Israel's arguments for the presence of the lost tribes in America were extensive and, taken as a whole, compelling. Like the Eliot tracts, his work is addressed to the Parliament, whom he acknowledged had "hitherto favoured our Nation."[101] He rejected the Cartheginian origins theory and the Ophir theory, and provided a number of evidences garnered from the accounts of Montezinos and others, the Scriptures, and even Jewish apocrypha.

Ben-Israel used geographical arguments based in the apocryphal book of IV Esdras, arguing that "Arsereth is that promontory which is near to Scythia or Tartary, near the sea called by Pliny Tabis, where America is parted from the country of Anian by a narrow sea, which also on that side parts China, or Tartary, from America."[102] He cited the Spanish discovery of sepulchres with Hebrew letters in the Azores and subjected the inscriptions to analysis. He reported the ruins of structures in the Americas resembling synagogues, which the Indians reported were dedicated to "the maker of the world." One such building, near the city of Guaranga in Peru, was by tradition constructed long ago by bearded men. He discussed the similarities of the laws and customs of the New World Indians and of the Israelites, noting many parallels including circumcision, rules about the purification of women and access to the temple, the burial of the dead on mountains, the celebration of a jubilee every fifty years, and the rending of garments to signify

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[100] Richard Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War…*
[101] Menasseh Ben-Israel, *The Hope of Israel*, *The English Translation by Moses Wall*, edited by Henry Mechoulan and Gerard Nahon (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987) 99
[102] Menasseh Ben-Israel, *The Hope of Israel*…116

misfortune or loss. The Rabbi also pointed to the knowledge of the creation of the world and of the Flood as evidence of the presence of Israelites in the New World.[103]

Ben-Israel made much use of the reported presence of "white and bearded men" living separately from other Americans in many parts of the New World, but he did not limit his discussion to the Americas. Drawing on reports from Jesuit priests he established the presence of self-identified Israelites in China, who built synagogues in which they housed the Torah. According to Ben-Israel, these Chinese Hebrews could recognize Hebrew letters, but the years had seemingly worn away their ability to speak or read the language. In similar fashion, drawing on very specific reports and often linking those reports to the Old Testament prophecies, he was able to demonstrate the presence of Jews in Ethiopia and in Media (Persia) as well as in the New World.[104]

Ben Israel summarized his treatise in seven points. He argued that the West Indies were once inhabited by a part of the Ten lost tribes, who came from Tartary by the strait of Anian, that the tribes were dispersed as Isaiah had prophesied, that they had not returned to the Second Temple following captivity, that they were still "keeping the Jewish religion," that the prophecies concerning their return to the Holy Land were yet to be fulfilled, that they would meet in Assyria and Egypt en route to Jerusalem, and that they would be joined under the Messiah and never driven out of their land.[105] Ben-Israel's argument, while coming from the perspective of one who did not accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ, was so thorough that it commanded the attention of Dury and Thorowgood, correspondents and associates of Eliot. His influence would play a

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[103] Menasseh Ben-Israel, *The Hope of Israel…* 117-119
[104] Menasseh Ben-Israel, *The Hope of Israel…* 119-142
[105] Menasseh Ben-Israel, *The Hope of Israel…* 159

prominent role in changing Eliot's thinking about the identity of his Algonquian flock in the early 1650's.

Missionary Tracts, Lost Tribes, and Millennial Speculation

A thoughtful examination of the "Eliot tracts" published between 1647 and 1655 reveals a varying degree of speculation on the subject of the Native Americans' connection to the lost tribes. While overt discussion is not uncommon in these letters, many of which were not written by Eliot himself, quite often the references to Native American origin are more subtle, couched in Scriptural references that would be clear to a 17th century Puritan but may challenge the discernment of one less schooled in the Bible. In "The Day-Breaking if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New England," published in 1647, one year after Eliot's inaugural Algonquian sermon, Eliot quite clearly identified the Massachusetts natives as "Tartars passing out of Asia into America by the straits of Anian."[106] Lest there be any confusion about whether he held out the possibility that such people could also have a lineage that was part Hebraic, he later asserted that one of the reasons that the progress of the Gospel amongst the Native Americans was slow was that "until the Jewes come in" there was a "seale set upon the hearts of those people."[107] For Eliot, those in England who would upbraid Massachusetts Puritans for their lack of zeal in converting the indigenous population not only did not fully appreciate the difficulty involved in "coyning" true Christians – as opposed to the lax standards of their "Popish" adversaries – but did not fully understand the true order of God's plan. Assuming their gentile origin, Eliot believed God would

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[106] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking…" 14
[107] John Eliot, "The Day-Breaking…" 15

move in the hearts of these pitiable Tartars en mass only after he moved the hearts of the seed of Jacob.

"The Clear Sun-Shine of the Gospel Breaking Forth Upon the Indians in New-England," published one year later and addressed to Parliament, saw Eliot being joined by other authors in an effort to recount the progress of the Gospel among New England Indians. In a preface with twelve signatories, the missionary project is laid out in distinctly millennial terms. Citing Psalms, Isaiah, Luke, Acts, and Revelation, the authors made it clear that they see the stirrings in the hearts of a small number of Native Americans as a sign of great things to come:

> This little we see is something in hand, to earnest to use those things which are in hope: something in possession, to assure us of the rest in promise, when the ends of the earth shall see his glory, and the Kingdomes of the world shall become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christs, when hee shall have Dominion from Sea to Sea, and they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him. And if the dawn of the morning be so delightfull, what will the clear day be?[108]

In the second epistle of this collection, this time directed towards "the Godly and well affected of this Kingdome of England," the same twelve authors introduced a theme that weaves its way throughout the Eliot tracts, of England as a chosen but backsliding nation. In this construction England is positioned as the twelve tribes of Israel, and the Native Americans as the recipients of the Grace of a God who is disgusted with the idolatry of England: "We are sick of plenty, wee surfet of our abundance the worst of Surfets, and with our loathed Manna and disdained food, God is preparing them a table in the wilderness."[109] The authors reminded the people of England that "the temple did not preserve the Jews when their hearts were the Synagogues of Satan." Of the "ancient

[108] "The Clear Sun-Shine of the Gospel Breaking Forth Upon the Indians in New-England..." 29
[109] "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 32

Jews" who were God's chosen, "they are scattered abroad as a curse, and their place knows them no more."[110] Just as the gentiles, who included the ancestors of the English, were the recipients of God's grace when many of His chosen people had fallen away, now the Native Americans of New England would receive mercy even as those in England apostatized.

The Native Americans, stirred as they were by the grace of God, could serve as a spur in the side of the graceless English – "Oh that England would be quickened by their risings, and weep over her own declinings...let these poor Indians stand up incentives to us, as the Apostle set up the Gentiles a provocation to the Jews: who knows but God gave life to New England to quicken Old..."[111] There is no hint at all in either preface that the Indians are to be associated with the lost tribes of Israel.

In Thomas Shephard's introduction to a series of Eliot letters, however, lost tribes conjecture begins to surface. He revealed that an aged Native American had informed the missionaries that "these very things which Mr. Eliot had taught them as the commandments of God, and the making of the world by one God, that they had heard some old men, who were now dead, to say the same things."[112] Shephard speculated that perhaps they had some knowledge of these ideas from the influence of some "French preacher," but he drew no definite conclusion. Largely a collection of Eliot's letters recounting his early missionary efforts and Native American response, the remainder of the tract continues on uneventfully with respect to Native American Jewish identity or millennial speculation until Shephard's postscript, where the millennial flavor of the missionary project first reveals itself full force.

[110] "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 33
[111] "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 34
[112] Thomas Shephard, "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 44

For Shephard there were two reasons that made him believe that "the Lord's time is come to make a preparative at least for the coming of his grace, and kingdome among them." The fact that these particular heathen were, in his mind, "as farre off from God" as any non-believers in the world, when coupled with the fact that their hearts were inclining "more and more" to God, was a powerfully persuasive sign. The second harbinger for Shephard was the "mighty spirit of prayer" [113] that God had raised up in churches, who were earnestly praying for Native American conversion.

In the postscript Shephard gave his first overt reference to one of the most influential millennial prognosticators, Thomas Brightman, even referencing a specific date when God may begin to move towards the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth:

> If Mr. Brightman's interpretation of Daniel's prophesie be true, that Anno 1650 Europe will hear some of the best tidings that even came into the world, viz rumors from the Easterne Jews, which shall trouble the Turkish tyrant and shake his Pillars when they are comming to reposesse their own land...I shall hope then that these Westerne Indians will soon come in, and that these beginnings are but preparatives for a brighter day wherein East and West shall sing the song of the Lambe...[114]

Shephard was still clearly identifying the Native American inhabitants of New England as gentile in origin. His juxtaposition of the term "Western Indians" with "Eastern Jews," as well as his assumption that they would "come in" following Jewish conversion provide evidence of this, as does his later reference to Native American dwellings as "Tartarian

[113] Thomas Shephard, "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 59
[114] Thomas Shephard, "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 60

tents."[115] Later on he reiterated his desire for English revival spurred on by the "rising of these American gentiles."[116]

The following year's tract, entitled "The Glorious Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England," reveals the influence of the work of Rabbi Mennaseh Ben-Israel creeping into the consciousness of those English concerned with native American conversion. While the title page Scripture is Malachi 1:11, which refers to God's name being "great among the Gentiles," publisher Edward Winslow directly confronted the issue of Native American origin in his preface. For Winslow the fate of the lost tribes and the lineage of the peoples of the Americas constituted "two great questions Right Honourable," which had commanded the attention of "men of greatest depth and ability" both in ancient times and in his own.

To this end, Winslow informed Parliament of communication between an unnamed minister of London[117] and Ben-Israel, who resided in Amsterdam, on the subject of possible links between Native Americans and the lost tribes. Winslow eagerly reported that Ben-Israel claimed to have "infallible tokens of their being there (America)," and went on to add his own observations regarding what he and others had observed among New England Indians "in relation to some things enjoyned in the ceremoniall Law of Moses."[118] He echoed Shephard's earlier comments concerning the Native Americans' claims that their ancestors had knowledge of God that was now lost among them in addition to their belief in "the general deluge, and of one man only that ever saw God, which they hold forth to be a long time since, (even with the greatest

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[115] Thomas Shephard, "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 62 – It should be noted that some, including Eliot, eventually, did not hold "Tartar" as a category mutually exclusive with "Jew" or "Hebrew."
[116] Thomas Shephard, "The Clear Sun-Shine…" 64
[117] The unnamed minister is John Dury, Correspondent of Thorowgood and Eliot, among others.
[118] Edward Winslow, "Glorious Progress…" 73

expression of length of time that may be) which certainly I believe to be Moses." Alluding to other "circumstances" which he failed to enumerate, Winslow concluded that "it is not less probable that these Indians should come from the Stock of Abraham than any other Nation this day known to the world."[119]

Winslow's willingness to believe that the Native Americans may have an Israelite past, while the product of his own observations and the proofs offered by others, was also integrally tied to millennial speculation. After all, God had chosen to open their hearts to the Gospel at this time, which Winslow deemed "so nigh the very years in which many eminent and learned Divines, have from Scripture grounds, according to their apprehensions foretold the conversion of the Jewes."[120] Ultimately for Winslow, however, the precise origin of the Native Americans - gentile, Hebraic, or some combination thereof – should be irrelevant to Parliament's attitude toward the missionary effort, as it was "glorious in reference to *Jews and Gentiles*."[121]

The remainder of "Glorious Progress," includes a 1647 letter from Thomas Mayhew, Jr. and two long Eliot letters, penned in late 1648. There is nothing in these communications to suggest that either man had embraced the idea that the American Indians were connected to ancient Israel. Mayhew specifically requested prayer for "wisdom, to preach unto the Heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ, that so the root of Jesse standing for an Ensigne of the people, the Gentiles may seek unto it…"[122] Eliot indicated that Christ's coming to New England was not "as he formerly came amongst the Gentiles, a poor underling…but Christ will come unto these, rich, potent, above them

[119] Edward Winslow, "Glorious Progress…" 73
[120] Edward Winslow, "Glorious Progress…" 74
[121] Edward Winslow, "Glorious Progress…" 74, emphasis in original
[122] Thomas Mayhew, "Glorious Progress…" 79

in learning, riches, and power."[123] His accounts of his preaching to the Native Americans also indicate his firm conviction of their gentile origin, as he recalled how he used the text of Malachi 1:11 with his audience, substituting the word "Indian" for the word "Gentile" wherever it appeared in the text.[124] If Eliot was ever to be convinced of Native American Hebraic lineage, it was not in 1648.

At least one of the authors appearing in "Glorious Progress" was, however. In a brief section titled "Appendix to the foregoing Letters, holding forth Conjectures, Observations, and Applications of Them," John Dury, identified only as "an unworthy Labourer in Christ's work here, and an ardent desirer of further progresse thereof in New England, J.D." argued for the Hebraic descent of American Indians:

> And the general consent of many judicious, and godly Divines, doth induce considering minds to beleeve, that the conversion of the Jewes is at hand. It's the expectation of some of the wisest Jewes now living, that about the year 1650 either we Christians shall be Mosaick, or else that themselves Jewes shall be Christian. The serious consideration of the preceding Letters, induceth me to think, that there may be at least a remnant of the Generation of Jacob in America.[125]

For Dury there existed the distinct possibility that the Native Americans may be "as the first fruits of the glorious harvest of Israel's redemption."[126] In support of this conjecture he advanced a list of reasons, beginning with the Indians' monotheistic leanings. Despite their belief in and propitiation of other gods, he revealed, they "hold that the chief God is he *who made all things*." He maintained that the Native Americans possessed a notion of God's providential action in the world and that they were prone to interpret success and

[123] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 83
[124] John Eliot, "Glorious Progress…" 82 – Eliot's version of the verse was rendered thus: "From the rising of the Sun, to the going down of the same, thy name shall be great among the Indians, and in every place prayers shall be made to thy name, pure prayers, for thy name shall be great among the Indians."
[125] John Dury, "Glorious Progress…"93
[126] John Dury, "Glorious Progress…" 93

failure as the result of God's pleasure and displeasure, respectively. Their careful preservation of the records of their families and their attention to "the advancing of their houses and kindred" was "a thing which had a great tang of, and affinitie to the Jewes' care of preserving the memoriall of their Tribes." Allusions to a lost body of wisdom possessed by their ancestors, along with their propensity for using parables – "a thing peculiar to the Jewes" – also help to persuade him of the link between the lost tribes and the native New Englanders.[127]

"J.D." also permitted himself to join Shephard's exhortations to the English people, "to be ashamed of, and bewaile our want of affection to, and estimation of that glorious gospel..." Once again, the Native American believers are positioned as a source of shame for an England grown slack in its faith:

> Be ashamed ye pretended-Men and fathers in Christ for coming short of Babes and Children! In truth the very light of Nature will condemne you...The *converted Heathens in New-England*, goe beyond you, O ye Apostate Christians in England![128]

To do nothing in the face of this opportunity to spread the Gospel among the Native Americans was to shirk one's duty to the Lord, an especially fearsome proposition if, as the author of the postscript did, one entertained notions of the imminence of Christ's Kingdom on earth. The minister's willingness to "entertain (at least) a Conjecture" that the Native Americans might have been Jews, assisted him in doing just that.

Featuring an introduction by Henry Whitfeld and letters by Thomas Mayhow and John Eliot, 1651's "The Light Appearing more and more towards the perfect Day..." revisits the theme of English apostacy and more aggressively takes up the question of Native American Jewish identity. In one of the included letters, penned by Eliot to

[127] John Dury, "Glorious Progress…" 94-95
[128] John Dury, "Glorious Progress…" 97

Whitfeld in May of 1649, the apostle addresses the identity question, requesting that Dury make more inquiry into Rabbi Ben-Israel's work. For Eliot, the question of origin was inseparable from the grounds on which he could expect his missionary efforts to bear fruit:

> I had some thoughts in my heart to search the Original of this People, that I might finde under what Covenant and Promise their fore-fathers have been, for the help of my faith: for Jehovah remembers and giveth being to ancient Promises. What had become of us sonnes of Japhet, if the Lord had not remembered that (and such like ancient Promises) God shall perswade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem. If these people be under a Covenant and Promise as ancient as Shem and Eber, it is a ground of faith to expect mercy for them.[129]

In "The Light Appearing," Eliot was quite sure that the Native Americans were the children of Shem, just as he was sure that the English were the children of Japeth. He also speculated that it was "probable that these people are Hebrews, of Eber, whose sonnes the Scripture sends farthest East," a speculation he would later seek to justify in his "Learned Conjectures." For Eliot, Shem and Eber, both great men in the Church, were under God's covenant with the Hebrews. God's enlargement of the covenant with his promise that Jacob would be the father of a multitude of nations was in part fulfilled by the "Nation of the Jewes" and in part "accomplisht in the lost Israelites scattered in the world."[130] This scattering, in turn was "principally, if not wholly, amongst the sons of Japhet and Shem." Out of respect for his covenant with Jacob, God would "finde out" these lost Israelites and "bring in with them" the Nations amongst whom they had been scattered. In this way, Jacob's promise would truly extend to a multitude of nations. According to Eliot this was a "great ground of faith" for the conversion of the "Eastern

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[129] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing more and more towards the perfect Day..." (London, Printed by T.R. and E.M. for John Bartlet, 1651) in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* 3:4 (1834) 119
[130] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 119

Nations" and perhaps for the inhabitants of the Americas, provided Ben-Israel's claims regarding the lost tribes and America could be substantiated.

Eliot took comfort in this possibility, for it gave him hope that Christ's Kingdom was imminent. In the letter he moved immediately, seemingly without transition, from speculation about lost tribes in America to a discussion of Parliament's role in bringing on the millennium, a reflection that he viewed the two subjects as inextricable. For Eliot the prospect of Native American Jewish identity was seamlessly connectable to a discussion of "all those signes preceding the glorious coming of Christ" because the "bringing in" of the seed of Jacob was itself a harbinger of the Lord's return. He referred to Parliament as "that blessed Assembly, whom the Lord Christ hath delighted to make instrumental to begin to set up the longed for, prayed for, and desired Kingdome of the Lord Jesus." It was Parliament's obligation, as the "instruments" chosen to establish Christ's kingdom to support the American missionary efforts "when the Lord Jesus is about to set up his blessed Kingdome among these poor Indians also."[131]

It was in the "Light Appearing" that Eliot began to allude to his plan for "Scripture government, not only among the Algonquians of New England but for England and eventually for all the nations of the world. While "Popism" cut him to the core of his Puritan heart, so too did monarchy or other government that was the product of "humane wisdom." As Christ was the only legitimate sovereign of England, he considered it an "Antichristian principle for man to be above God, whether the Pope in the Church, or Monarches in the Commonwealth."[132] For this reason, before Natick, the first of his fourteen "praying towns" was established, Eliot had decided that the Native

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[131] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 120-121
[132] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 121

Americans would be “wholly governed by the Scriptures in all things both in Church and State.” The Native Americans, who in Eliot’s eyes possessed no firmly entrenched civil government, would be more likely candidates for the inauguration of a true Scripture government in which the Lord would be their judge, Law-giver, and King. It was the established polities of the world, in his eyes, who would resist what he had come to regard as the only form of government ordained by Scripture. The nations of the world would “be loathe to lay down their imperfect own Star-light of excellent Lawes, in their conceits, for the perfect Sun-light of the Scripture, which through blindness they cannot see.”[133] The Indians of New England, as civil tabla rasa – and perhaps as the lost children of Jacob – were the perfect people with whom to begin the form of government which would prevail in Christ’s reign. England itself would “never rest until they come up to the Scriptures” as its sole source of law. All governments would be “shaken” until the world was “brought into this frame.”[134]

Eliot’s October 1649 letter, also included in the “Light Appearing” tract, reiterated his desire to set up this Scripturally ordained form of government amongst the Native Americans, but it also revisited the idea that the Puritan missionary project in New England could have implications for the establishment of Scripture government in England. Because the Native Americans had “no principles of their own wherein to stick,” Eliot wrote, they would not be as resistant to the implementation of the kind of government ordained by Scripture as the English might be. Eliot longed for the day when “the Word of God shall be their Magna Charta and chief Law book,” when the “Gentile

[133] John Eliot, “The Light Appearing…” 127
[134] John Eliot, “The Light Appearing…” 127

Nations take up Moses policie so farre as it is morall and conscionable."[135] According to Eliot, not only would the establishment of Mosaic government in praying towns hold a mirror to England's apostate face, but such a form of government, if adopted by England and other countries, may have the added benefit of opening the eyes of Jews to come to Christ. Thus Eliot sought to use this style of government to usher in the millennium and therefore Christ's eventual return.

[135] John Eliot, "The Light Appearing…" 131