

Anglican Imperialism: The Society for the Propagation  
of the Gospel and the Peoples of Colonial  
New York and South Carolina

by

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## ABSTRACT

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Founded in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was the missionary branch of the Church of England. Signifying a revitalized Church, the SPG sought to unite all the peoples of Britain's colonies under the banner of Anglicanism. The SPG provided the colonies with Anglican clergy, opened free schools, and employed schoolmasters. The Society also initiated specific programs to convert Indians and blacks who resided within Britain's North American provinces. These programs included two free schools for slaves and an Indian mission that operated for more fifty years.

Perceiving every person as either an Anglican or a potential one, SPG clergy attended persons of all ages, all faiths, and all colors. Because of financial constraints and other considerations, however, the Society concentrated much of its work in two colonies, New York and South Carolina. Serving as the northern and southern focus for missionary efforts, the SPG attempted to convert the religiously and ethnically diverse population of each colony

to Anglicanism. Establishment buttressed the Society's efforts in New York and South Carolina. In New York, the Church of England was established in six counties; in South Carolina, it was established throughout the province.

The SPG succeeded in bringing Anglicanism to the inhabitants of New York and South Carolina. But the Society was unable to create an Anglican society in either colony. Concentrating its efforts on the white population, the Society converted few colonists to Anglicanism. The SPG was even less successful in its Indian and black program. Except for the Mohawk tribe, few Indians were converted. And only a small number of blacks were converted. The Church of England did not unite all under the banner of Anglicanism, though the SPG labored diligently in each colony and served the needs of many in New York and South Carolina.

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### Chapter I

This was by no means a new idea, but it was a new one for the few who were working by works.

### Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Benevolence

Seventeenth and eighteenth century benevolence was a moral reform and social philosophy. After the Reformation, the Episcopal Church foundered in a state of decay and disrepair, especially among the poor, and was holding the populace in a state of ignorance and superstition. These programs were part of a broader movement within the Church which culminated in the formation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1699 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

1. James Syles, *The English Religious Tradition: Origins of the Influence on Church, State, and Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 57. Also quoted in John Keble, *Wilson, "Anglican Missions in America, 1701-1705: A Study of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts"* (Ph.D. dissertation, North Carolina University, 1952), p. 3.

2. *English Literature, ed. Evelyn After the Manner* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp.

## I

This age was by no means one of the ages of faith; but few epochs have given more convincing proof of their faith by works.

Norman Sykes<sup>1</sup>

Seventeenth and eighteenth century clerics integrated moral reform and social amelioration into a new social philosophy. After the Glorious Revolution in England, Episcopal Church leaders designed programs to improve living conditions, especially among the lower classes, while molding the populace into God-fearing Anglicans.<sup>2</sup> Such programs were part of a decades-long spiritual revival in the Church which culminated in the formation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

<sup>1</sup> Norman Sykes, The English Religious Tradition: Sketches of Its Influence on Church, State, and Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 59. Also quoted in John Kendall Nelson, "Anglican Missions in America, 1701-1725: A Study of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University), 1962, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Holmes, ed., Britain After the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp. 12-13.

(SPG) in 1701.<sup>3</sup> Yet this revival was not "a sudden efflorescence of fervor and enthusiasm," it was, as John Nelson Kendall noted, "a quiet though cumulatively significant awakening to human need, an outpouring of benevolence."<sup>4</sup>

The desire to help fellow men was rooted in the "theology of divine benevolence." This theology was a synthesis of Christianity with the philosophic and scientific knowledge of Descartes, Locke, and Newton. According to the theology, God had given man nature. Nature functioned as a laboratory evincing a divine creator, and its works demonstrated that man was God's favorite. In gratitude for this blessing, man was obliged to imitate this divine benevolence. Churchmen, thus, were not motivated to do good from a love of self-sacrifice. Rather, their charity works proceeded from a disinterested, pragmatic exercise of duty.<sup>5</sup>

The "theology of divine benevolence" manifested itself in a various philanthropic and social works. Numerous charity schools, for example, were established throughout England during the eighteenth century. These schools taught children of the poor how to read, write, and perform simple

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge will be referred to as the SPCK; the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts will be referred to as the SPG or the Society.

<sup>4</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.



arithmetic.<sup>6</sup> So popular was this movement that several thousand schools were established throughout England during the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

The spirit of benevolence was also tempered by pietism. This German movement against impiety took root in England under Dr. Anthony Horneck, a German Anglican priest. Under his influence, over forty religious societies were formed. Starting in London, these societies spread rapidly into the provinces after the Glorious Revolution. Pietism was primarily an Episcopal movement that recruited thousands of young men. Under clerical supervision, these men met weekly to pray, sing psalms, and study. They pledged to live "a holy and serious life...to love one another...[and]...To speak ill of no man." Pietists were expected to attend church services on weekdays as well as on Sunday, and they were to receive communion once a month.<sup>8</sup> Believing that their religious life compelled them to acts of piety, these men worked toward the relief of the destitute. In purpose and composition, religious societies were remarkably similar to the groups which John and Charles Wesley founded at Oxford fifty years afterwards. At the close of the

<sup>6</sup> Holmes, Britain after the Glorious Revolution, p. 90. As Sykes noted, however, the Charity School Movement was not designed to encourage upward mobility, only basic literacy. Sykes, English Religious Tradition, p. 58.

<sup>7</sup> Sykes, English Religious Tradition, p. 58.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in A[rthur] Tindal Hart, Clergy and Society, 1600-1900 (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1968), p. 86. See also Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 7.

seventeenth century, individuals from religious societies influenced the establishment of both the SPCK and the SPG.<sup>9</sup> The reforming zeal engendered by pietism naturally lent itself to moral reform. Whether or not morality had actually declined from the beginning to the end of the seventeenth century is debatable. Yet contemporaries felt threatened by what they perceived to be a dangerously low morality rampant among the populace. Beginning in 1691, members from the pietistic religious societies, Anglican churchmen and non-conformists formed societies for the reformation of manners. Their purpose was to help establish and enforce legislation prohibiting debauchery and profanity. These societies also fought against Sabbath breaking and disorderly behavior, such as drunkenness.<sup>10</sup> Supported by lay powers, reformation of manners societies influenced Parliament to pass acts against swearing and profanity in 1695 and 1699.<sup>11</sup>

Britain's monarchs also endorsed such societies. In 1698 and 1702, William III and Queen Anne respectively issued proclamations against immorality.<sup>12</sup> In 1699,

<sup>9</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," pp. 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> William Webb Kemp, The Support of Schools in Colonial New York by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. American Education: Its Men, Ideas, and Institutions. (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1913; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969) p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Hart, Clergy and Society, p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> R[onald]. W. Harris, A Short History of Eighteenth-Century England (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1963), p. 223.

Archbishop Thomas Tenison lauded the over twenty societies existing in London, and he recommended the formation of more throughout the country.<sup>13</sup> Historians estimate that between 1692 and 1702 societies aimed at moral improvement charged 20,000 people for profanity and 3,000 for being "lewd and disorderly" in London and Westminster alone. Thomas Bray, the founder of the SPCK and one of the builders of the SPG, believed that since England's prestige and power were suffering from moral decay, responsible people were obliged to become public informers in order to obliterate evil.<sup>14</sup>

This acute consciousness of spiritual and moral affairs inexorably spread to the American colonies. Precariously positioned in these territories, the Church of England lacked any systematic or uniform method for the establishment and spread of Anglicanism. As a result, dissenters were entrenched in several colonies; and where not entrenched, the frontier itself eroded the appeal of institutionalized religion.<sup>15</sup>

Officially, the Episcopal Church became interested in the religious state of the colonies in 1634. A commission was created to regulate spiritual affairs, controlled by the archbishops of Canterbury and York. That same year the bishop of London's jurisdiction was extended to include

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<sup>13</sup> Hart, Clergy and Society, p. 87.

<sup>14</sup> John Calam, Parsons and Pedagogues: The SPG Adventure in American Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 8.

Anglican congregations and clergy in overseas territories. As a member of the Virginia Company, the bishop of London was solicited to assist the colony in procuring ministers. This has been cited as the first time the bishop of London demonstrated his concern in the ecclesiastical affairs of the colonies.<sup>16</sup>

The Church of England's role in the spiritual affairs of the colonies, however, was nominal until the latter part of the seventeenth century. On 25 May 1676, John Yeo, the first notable Anglican minister in Maryland, addressed the archbishop of Canterbury, Gilbert Sheldon, in "some rude and indigested lines." After informing Sheldon that only three ministers conformable to the Church existed in the colonies, Yeo observed that "no learned men" existed "to confute" the Quakers, the Puritans, and the Jesuits. All of whom, Yeo noted, appeared to be "well defended." Therefore, he stated, "the Lord's day is profaned, Religion despised and all notorious vices committed soe that it is become a Sodom of uncleanness and a Pest house of iniquity."<sup>17</sup>

After examining Yeo's letter, Archbishop Sheldon forwarded it to the bishop of London, Henry Compton.<sup>18</sup> Representing the resurgent Episcopal Church, Compton immediately investigated the status of Anglicanism in the

<sup>16</sup> Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> John Frederick Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism in North America (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984) pp. 82-3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

colonies, determined to effect change but unsure of his specific powers. The resulting inquiry disclosed Compton's jurisdiction to be so inadequate that "scarce[ly] four" Anglican ministers resided in the colonies. And of that number, only one or two had been sent according to established procedures.<sup>19</sup> Faced with an impotent Anglican presence, Compton redoubled his efforts to augment his power over colonial ecclesiastical affairs. In July, 1677, he presented the state of colonial religion before the Lords of Trade. Thereafter, Compton was empowered to license, or withhold licensing from, Anglican clerics leaving for colonial posts. But Compton's new authority was vitiated by colonial governors, who granted this power to the bishop as a favor rather than a right. Subsequently, Compton was required to renew his authority at each new gubernatorial term. Although this division did not generally hinder the bishop's effectiveness over ministerial appointments, it meant that the Church was never free from political suspicion before the populace.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, although able to control the quality of clergy, Compton's control over licensure only nominally affected colonial affairs. Few clergy desired posts in the colonies; even fewer American communities were able to support them. And Compton was unable to offer financial assistance.<sup>21</sup>

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19 Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 5.

20 Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 83.

21 Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 9.

The extension of the bishop of London's jurisdiction was further restricted by the distance between England and the colonies. Because the colonies were without a resident bishop, ecclesiastical power had to be delegated to colonial officials. Much of this power was vested in the office of commissary, a position Compton created in the 1670s. As the bishop's official representative, commissaries arranged conventions, conducted visitations, and evaluated candidates for holy orders. But commissaries could neither ordain nor confirm.<sup>22</sup> Despite these limitations the office of commissary was powerful, and those who held it possessed an inside line to the bishop of London, who sat on both the Privy Council and the Lords of Trade.<sup>23</sup>

Compton's efforts to expand control over the religious affairs of the colonies engendered a new interest from English patrons. In his will, dated 9 November 1685, Sir Leolyn Jenkins established two fellowships for priests at Jesus College, Oxford. The recipients of the fellowship were required to serve either in the colonies or in the Royal Navy. Another bequest, from Robert Boyle, established a yearly stipend for "Some learned Divine or Preaching Minister forever," if they encouraged programs for the promotion of Christianity overseas. Boyle also bequeathed money to the College of Virginia for the education and

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<sup>22</sup> Calam, Parsons and Pedagogues, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 84.

Christianization of nine or ten Indian children.<sup>24</sup>

Compton's greatest impact, however, was on his former pupil, Queen Mary. Queen Mary supported a provision for a royal bounty to help defray traveling expenses of clergy bound for the colonies, and she personally gave a £200 benefaction for the establishment of American missions. Her support of higher education, moreover, included helping to erect a lectureship at King's College in Boston and assisting in the founding of William and Mary College in Virginia.<sup>25</sup>

Yet these efforts gave the Church of England only a marginal presence in the colonies. Not until the establishment of the SPCK and SPG was the Anglican Church able to make any significant impact. The SPCK and the SPG were the first organizations that the Anglican Church supported, but they were not England's first missionary attempt.<sup>26</sup> That attempt was initiated by dissenters, who began a religious society movement for New England. The movement was based on the work of John Eliot, a dissenting

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 7; Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Several times prior to the establishment of the SPCK and SPG, the Church of England periodically sent priests overseas, but they were not part of a concerted missionary effort. In 1534, Archbishop sent two chaplains to serve in Calais. In 1578, Queen Elizabeth's council sent a priest on Martin Frobisher's voyage in search of the Northwest Passage. In 1583 and 1584, two Anglican clerics accompanied voyages to New Foundland and Virginia. See Charles Frederick Pascoe, 3 vols. Two Hundred Years of the SPG: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900, (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Publishing, 1901), 1: 1-2.

minister who devoted more than forty years toward the conversion of New England tribes. As a result of his correspondence and tracts, Eliot's work became known in England. In 1649, Parliament passed an ordinance which established "A Corporation for the Promoting and Propagation the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England." The corporation was composed of a president, treasurer, and fourteen assistants. It was named "The President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England." In 1661, the corporation received a new charter and was renamed the "Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, and parts adjacent in America." Now composed of Anglicans and dissenters, its goal was to maintain missionaries assigned to New England tribes. The organization operated in New England and areas of New York until 1775, thereafter transferring to New Brunswick.<sup>27</sup>

The Church of England's first missionary attempts, the SPCK and the SPG, represent the culmination of seventeenth century religious fervor and the desire of Bray to propagate Anglicanism overseas. Each group sought to solve problems that time and circumscribed authority rendered impossible for the bishop of London to accomplish alone.

The SPCK and the SPG were both the inspirations of Bray. A product of his age, Bray participated in numerous activities connected with the various organizations for the reformation of manners, the religious societies, the revival

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1: 2-3.



of Church discipline among clergymen, and prison reform.<sup>28</sup> In many aspects, Bray exemplified the Church's evangelical revival, and he was similar to other great religious leaders of his age. According to John Frederick Woolverton, Bray was similar to other great religious leaders of the age: "a pietistic reformer similar to Cotton Mather in his desire to learn 'how to do good.'" Woolverton also believes that Bray resembled John Wesley. Like Wesley, Bray cared about those without a church, and the Anglican cleric was an exceptional administrator. Foremost in an age of "projectors," Bray excelled over his peers because he transformed ideas into deeds, without even occupying a position of eminence in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>29</sup>

From his experiences as a rector in the parish of Sheldon in Warwickshire, Bray saw that the children of his parish were inadequately grounded in religious knowledge. To combat the influences of dissenters, deistic ideas, and irreligion among the young, he constructed catechetical lessons tailored for specific age groups.<sup>30</sup> Compiling these lectures in 1696, Bray published his noted Catechetical Lectures on the Preliminary Questions and Answers of the Church Catechism Giving an Account of the Covenant of Grace. The lectures enjoyed immediate popularity, for they were a

<sup>28</sup> Kemp, Support of the Schools in Colonial New York, pp. 9-10.

<sup>29</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 84.

<sup>30</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 12; Kemp, Support of the Schools in Colonial New York, p. 9.

well-written summary of Anglican theological teachings.<sup>31</sup> Bray presented these lectures to the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Tenison, at an opportune time. That prelate and the bishop of London were concerned about the neglect of religious instruction to the young. Only a year before Tenison had given a directive to the clergy and demanded compliance to the Church's fifty-ninth canon that required regular Sunday catechism. Compton was also impressed with the lectures. They offered a positive alternative for religious instruction against the coercive methods employed by the societies for the reformation of manners in their war against vice and irreligion.<sup>32</sup>

Insufficient religious instruction was only one of the problems Bray discovered during his rectorship at Sheldon. Clerical poverty was also rampant. Subsisting almost solely from glebe lands, parsons could not even afford the most humble libraries to supplement their teachings.<sup>33</sup> A contemporary spoke in 1670 of "'a little hole above the over called the minister's study,'" whose only literature was comprised of "'a budget of old stitched sermons hung up behind the door.'"<sup>34</sup> These conditions greatly disturbed Bray, who believed effective preaching demanded a continuing stock of educational literature. When Bray journeyed to

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<sup>31</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> Glebe lands were properties that ministers were allowed to use part of their benefice; such lands were provided only for the duration of a minister's term.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Hart, Clergy and Society, p. 60.

London in 1695, he began immediately to devise methods to raise funds to establish parochial libraries for country parsons. Readily ascertaining the connection between this program and Compton's plans to strengthen the colonial Church, Bray published a pamphlet that same year proposing that colonial parishes be equipped with libraries as an inducement to English clergymen to emigrate overseas.

Compton answered Bray's proposals by appointing him commissary of Maryland in April, 1696.<sup>35</sup> While preparing for his post, Bray was employed under Compton to investigate methods of sending missionaries into Maryland and other provinces. Missionaries sent by the Church were to be furnished with libraries chosen by Bray.<sup>36</sup> Unable to secure assistance from Parliament, Bray conceived of a society for propagating Anglicanism in England and its colonies.<sup>37</sup> In 1697, Bray presented a plan for a chartered organization to the bishop of London. The organization would be composed of prominent clergy and laity residing in London. But his proposal was not well received. Bray then laid it aside, and waited for his 1699 departure date.<sup>38</sup>

As his departure neared, Bray's friends began to worry that his sojourn to Maryland might stop the projects he had begun in London. On 8 March 1699, Bray met with four of

<sup>35</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," pp. 11-12.

<sup>36</sup> Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 11.

See also Ibid. p. 10 and Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 3.

<sup>37</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 4.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.; Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 13.

these friends--Lord Guilford, Sir Humphrey Mackworth. M.P., Justice Hook, and Colonel Maynard--and formed the SPCK.<sup>39</sup> The following month John Chamberlayne was elected the organization's secretary; later he occupied the same post in the SPG. During the next several months, many eminent Anglican clergy became members and corresponding members. These members were selected from Wales, Ireland, and various overseas territories. The SPCK, moreover, received advice from societies on the continent engaged in similar reforming efforts.<sup>40</sup>

Much of the SPCK's work during the eighteenth century revolved around its initial four resolves: to fight against the growth of sects, in particular Quaker; to promote the formation of charity schools and distribute literature; to ensure apprentices received religious instructions; and to support Bray's proposal for the American colonies. Shortly thereafter the SPCK engaged in other projects, including the persecution of profaneness and the founding of libraries in England and the colonies. The SPCK also launched a program to reform Newgate and other prisons in and around London.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> These men contributed financial support to the SPCK. Guilford, Mackworth, and Hook, in addition, contributed to the SPG. The voluntary contributions provided by such men were used to supplement support requested from the Crown. See Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 16; Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 86; Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 16

<sup>41</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," pp. 13-14.

Although Bray stayed in Maryland for only one year, he returned to London wiser in colonial affairs and strengthened in his determination to launch yet another missionary enterprise. His colonial experience had not only confirmed the limited influence of the Anglican Church, but also showed the almost limitless possibilities for expansion among thousands of colonists deprived of organized religion. Once again Bray campaigned before Church officials for a voluntary missionary association. But this time his audience was more sympathetic. His mission at Maryland had aroused the interest of Church officials. When the Convocation of the Church met on 13 March 1701, the lower house appointed a committee to construct a plan for promoting Anglicanism in the colonies. Two days later the committee began to meet, and within three weeks Bray petitioned for a charter. The petition noted the increasing population of the American provinces, the lack of religious instruction, and the inability of many areas to maintain orthodox clergy. The SPCK advanced £20 to secure the charter's passage, and Archbishop Tenison received William III's assent in June, 1701. <sup>42</sup>

Founding the SPG was an innovative undertaking for Bray and his associates. Like other state churches in Protestant countries, the Church of England believed that the government bore responsibility for the religious life of its colonists. But the British government evidenced only a

<sup>42</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 4-6.

sporadic and marginal interest in promoting religion in its colonies. And the Church of England did not possess the resources to create its own independent organization. The SPG's formation, however, enabled the Church of England to propagate Anglicanism overseas without being subject to these constraints. The SPG was a private organization with a membership drawn from key officials within the Anglican Church. Though not connected technically to the Church of England, the Society's members gave the organization "a quasi-official status." 43

The SPG functioned as an organ of England's imperially-minded church. Bray's private society was the answer to a now imperially-minded Anglican church. On the SPG's seal was the designation "in Partibus Transmarinis," or "in transoceanic districts." These districts were in North America and the West Indies. The formation of the SPG, and likewise the SPCK, heralded the expansion impulses of the Church. From London SPG officers embarked on a mission to send clergy and books from the Chesapeake Bay to the Savannah Rivers. As such, North American waterways became, in the words of John Woolverton, "the roads to the Anglican City of God." Depicted on the Society's seal was a heroic-sized clergyman with an open Bible in his hand standing on a man-of-war. The cleric was looking toward a group of inhabitants, running to meet him. Above the minister was

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43 Nelson, "Anglican Missions," pp. 15-16.

the SPG's motto, "Transiens Adiuvanos," or "helping him across."<sup>44</sup>

The SPG's purpose was misunderstood until the latter half of the twentieth century. Numerous historians had focused on the Society's attempts to Christianize blacks and Indians. Although a goal of the SPG, this was not its main purpose. In 1962, John Kendall Nelson stated that America's twentieth-century concerns about racial relations and minority groups have influenced interpretations of the SPG's colonial missionary efforts.<sup>45</sup> Even a cursory examination of the Society's charter, however, reveals that it was concerned primarily with providing a maintenance for Anglican clergy in England's overseas territories. During the Society's first anniversary sermon, in 1702, Dean Richard Willis reaffirmed this priority: "The design is in the first place, to settle the State of Religion...among our own People there...and then to proceed in the best Methods they can towards Conversion of the Natives."<sup>46</sup> Through its parish ministry and its charity schools, the SPG employed Anglicanism to strengthen ties between England and her economically profitable colonies.<sup>47</sup>

Only once did the Society reevaluate its primary aim. The excitement of enlarging its missionary effort among the

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, pp. 85-6.

<sup>45</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," 16.

<sup>46</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 7; Nelson, "Anglican Missions," 17.

<sup>47</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 86.

Six Nations of New York, attended by a visit of Iroquois sachems to England, resulted in the Society's resolving that its goal did "chiefly and principally relate to conversion of heathens and infidels...."<sup>48</sup> Another look at the charter, however, quickly convinced SPG leaders that this was not the its primary goal. Before proceeding any further, the Society returned to its original intentions.<sup>49</sup>

The Society's charter incorporated ninety-four members, more than half of whom were prominent Anglican clergy.<sup>50</sup> All of the SPCK's founding members and many of its active members were also in the list of original SPG members. By 1720, the Society's membership swelled to nearly 300, and during the nineteenth century it reached approximately 6,000.<sup>51</sup>

The SPG was a sectarian organization that drew its members almost exclusively from communicant Anglicans. No possibility existed for cooperation with dissenting sects, for the underlying spirit of the Society's foreign missions

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<sup>48</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 18. See also Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 69.

<sup>49</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 18.

<sup>50</sup> Original members included the Archbishops of Canterbury (SPG president) and York; the Bishops of London, Worcester, Ely, Rochester, Gloucester, Chichester, Chester, Bath and Wells, and Bangor; the Deans of St. Paul's, Westminster, and Canterbury; the Archdeacons of London, Colchester, and Durham. For a complete list, see Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 939.

<sup>51</sup> 19 February 1719 to 17 February 1720, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Abstracts of the Proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, p. 54; Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 940. Hereafter, the proceedings collection will be referred to as SPG Abstracts,



arose from a desire to halt the spread of non-conformity. Churchmen believed that the Anglican Church could eventually encompass former dissenters, reclaimed through persuasion. This dream of an Ecclesia Anglicana prevented Churchmen from accepting the membership of non-conformists.<sup>52</sup> The only non-Anglicans accepted for membership were several leading ecclesiastics on the continent elected to encourage the "fraternal Correspondence" between the SPG and the Reformed Churches.<sup>53</sup>

Although the Society was exclusionary regarding non-Anglicans, it was inclusionary regarding the religious differences within the Episcopal church. Such cleavages "were fundamental and deeply felt" during the eighteenth century, constantly disrupting ecclesiastical tranquillity. Yet the SPG transcended such differences and provided a neutral meeting place for all Anglicans. Latitudinarians and High Churchmen worked side by side in SPG offices and on committees. And the Society itself endorsed neither churchmanship.<sup>54</sup>

The SPG's membership included a variety of influential people, drawn from both the clergy and laity. Many SPG bishops likewise occupied the ecclesiastical bench of the House of Lords. Augmenting this clerical element was a host of political, legal, commercial, and military members. Both

<sup>52</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 19. See also SPG Abstracts 21 February 1752 to 16 February 1753, p. 37.

<sup>53</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 939.

<sup>54</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 20.

clerics and laymen regularly attended meetings, and each group was willing to assist the Society in its endeavors. For example, lawyers willingly offered advice if litigations loomed ahead; and merchants from London, New York, Barbados, and Amsterdam contributed funds and their own financial skills.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to its influential membership, the SPG possessed a sound corporate structure. Presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, auditors, and treasurers were elected yearly from the Society's membership.<sup>56</sup> Every week or two the Standing Committee met to consider the Society's affairs and form proposals that were either adopted or rejected at monthly membership meetings.<sup>57</sup> The minutes, proceedings, and correspondences were transcribed by secretaries into folio journals.<sup>58</sup>

As a corporation, the Society was entitled "to buy and sell property, to receive gifts and bequests" not exceeding £2,000 annually, and "to collect fees and offertories."<sup>59</sup> These powers gave the SPG full recognition as a legal entity. Moreover, the charter required yearly financial reports to the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Keeper of the

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<sup>55</sup> Calam, Parsons and Pedagogues, pp. 5-6.

<sup>56</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 934.

<sup>57</sup> Kemp, Support of the Schools in Colonial New York, p.

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<sup>58</sup> The Standing Committees considered bylaws and standing orders, finances, translations, maps and charts, real estate, overseas news, and colonial acts of assembly.

Calam, Parsons and Pedagogues, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 16; Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 933.

Seal of England, the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.<sup>60</sup>

But a sound corporate structure was not a guarantee of financial success. The Society was plagued continually by financial problems. Part of these problems stemmed from the enormous responsibility that the SPG had undertaken. The Society intended originally to be an advisory body to the bishop of London for the American mission. But the SPG quickly assumed many of the bishop of London's responsibilities, including the appointment, maintenance, and supervision of missionaries. Such tasks were enormous for a voluntary organization. This is evidenced by the SPG's maintenance record. Between the formation of the SPG and its departure from the colonies in 1783, the organization had given at least partial maintenance to 329 clergy, and eighty-two teachers, and eighteen catechists had received at least a partial maintenance.<sup>61</sup> All of this occurred outside of the self-sustaining colonies of Maryland and Virginia.<sup>62</sup>

Fulfilling these responsibilities required extensive funds. One steady source of revenue came from membership fees. Upon admission to the SPG, members paid an initial membership fee and pledged to pay a specified sum yearly. These amounts varied according to a person's income and

<sup>60</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 935.

<sup>61</sup> Calam, Parsons and Pedagogues. p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 89.

willingness to contribute. Not many members equalled Archbishop Tenison's annual fifty pound fee; many contributed only a guinea.<sup>63</sup> Annual subscriptions brought in sums ranging from £500 to £950.<sup>64</sup>

Funds were also derived from unsolicited donations. These contributions ranged from a sixpence to General Christopher Codrington's generous present of two Barbados sugar plantations and half of the Island of Barbuda.<sup>65</sup> More common benefactions, however, ranged between one and five pounds. From 1717 to the end of the century, the annual median for benefactions was £2,000.<sup>66</sup>

Benefaction uncertainty was also indicative of the SPG's financial problems. The Society did not possess an adequate source of annual income to meet its growing obligations. Yearly deficits were common for the SPG throughout the colonial period. To meet these deficits, the Society resorted to two different courses of action. The first one "involved the postponement, curtailment, or retrenchment of its activities."<sup>67</sup> The second option involved petitioning the Crown for public collections, which occurred six times during the eighteenth century. By these means the SPG collected £3060 (1711), £3,887 (1714), £3,727

<sup>63</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 24.

<sup>64</sup> Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 30.

<sup>65</sup> SPG Abstracts, 17 February 1709/10 to 21 February 1710/11, p. 45; Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 26.

<sup>66</sup> Kemp, Support of the Schools in Colonial New York, p. 30.

<sup>67</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 28.

(1718), £15,278 (1741), £16,786 (1751), and £19,372 (1779).<sup>68</sup> In addition to meeting the Society's deficits, public collection funds were also invested, thereby providing another source of steady income. By 1780, these investments increased the general fund by more than £21,000.<sup>69</sup>

Of equal significance to the daily affairs of the Society was the spirit of daily activities required of its missionaries. There was no question that SPG missionaries were "pledged to unquestioning obedience and willing to assent to self-sacrificial endeavors" toward the spread of Anglicanism. Thomas Jefferson's reference to the Society's ministers as "Anglican Jesuits" was unwittingly accurate. Bray's order of "good Solders of Jesus Christ" was the Anglican response to Catholic missionaries.<sup>70</sup>

The SPG believed in the power of education. The Society's missionaries all possessed university degrees; some, like Robert Jenney, even possessed a doctor of divinity degree. Yet religious education for the Society's missionaries did not end with certification. Obtaining religious knowledge was a lifelong process. SPG missionaries were expected to steep themselves in religious works. This process was first begun upon their departure

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. pp. 28-9; Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 30.

<sup>69</sup> Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 30.

For a yearly breakdown of the Society's income and expenditures see Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 830-32.

<sup>70</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 89.

for the colonies when the Society gave clergy ten pounds worth of books and five pounds worth of tracts for their libraries. Upon request, additional books and anniversary sermons were sent. Missionaries studied this literature and were instructed to lend it to their parishioners. Clergy were also expected to keep abreast of church doctrine and liturgy.

But missionaries' obligations only began with personal edification. Parish ministry demanded rigorous work. Because colonial parishes often contained multiple churches spread a great distance apart, missionaries had to distribute their time amongst them. Missionaries also travelled periodically to the remote regions of their parishes to perform divine services and administer sacraments. And they were expected to hold catechetical instruction for their parishioners once or twice a week. Clerical responsibilities additionally included monitoring their parishioners' behavior and preaching against vice.<sup>71</sup>

The Society expected its missionaries to be exemplary Christians. In their work, clergy were asked to demonstrate an "Apostolical Zeal," tempered by "Prudence, Humility, Meekness, and Patience." In missionaries' personal life, they were advised to be "circumspect and unblameable, giving no Offense either in Word or Deed." Ministers' daily conversations were to be "grave and edifying," continually demonstrating the proper methods of a Christian life. At no

<sup>71</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 838-9.

times were missionaries to visit "Publick Houses," pursue idle pastimes, eat or drink in excess, interfere in politics, or use pretentious titles. Frugality, simple dress, and dignified behavior were demanded of all SPG missionaries. To insure that missionaries adhered to these rules, the Society advised them to examine their consciences regularly and to "always keep in their View the great design of their undertaking." This undertaking was to promote the Glory of God, to propagate the Gospel, and to save the souls of Christians and "heathens."<sup>72</sup>

By examining the SPG's yearly anniversary sermons, insight into the organization's "undertaking" can be assessed. These sermons not only assessed the state of religion in the colonies, but also set forth the Society's goals. In some ways, the anniversary sermons functioned as a tool for Society propaganda. Attached to the yearly Abstracts of the Society's proceedings, anniversary sermons were distributed throughout England and the colonies. As such, the sermons kept the public informed of SPG activities and offered missionaries guidelines for their work.

Throughout the eighteenth century, anniversary sermons focused on several recurrent themes. Perhaps the most important concerned establishing Anglicanism as the dominant religion of the white population. But more than a zeal for Anglicanism motivated the authors who penned the SPG's

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 3: 838; Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, pp. 33-5.

anniversary sermons. Speaking in 1704, Bishop Gilbert Burnet stressed the reciprocal relationship existing between England and her colonies: the mother country derived wealth from America and in return was obligated to care for her spiritual welfare by advancing Anglicanism.<sup>73</sup> In 1728, Bishop Henry Egerton reiterated this materialistic rendering of religious duty. Propagating the Episcopal Church, according to Egerton, was "a just debt..." The Anglican Church was "oblig'd" to assume this "debt" because of "the Benefits which in the Business of our Trade" England "reap[ed]" from its overseas territories.<sup>74</sup> So interconnected were trade and religion to Bishop Martin Benson that in 1740 he noted England could not prosper unless the colonies' spiritual welfare was secured.<sup>75</sup>

Yet duty and property were not the only reasons why clergy believed the Church should be supported in the colonies. In the same 1740 sermon, Benson argued that loyalty to Britain depended on fidelity to Anglicanism.<sup>76</sup> The following year Archbishop Thomas Secker, elaborating on the necessity of loyalty and religion, stated that it was the Church's duty to bring all into her fold as a method of guaranteeing "civil Unity."<sup>77</sup> In the middle of the Great

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<sup>73</sup> Frank J. Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism in Colonial New York (The Church Historical Society: Philadelphia, 1940), p. 17.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 25. See also Bishop James Johnson's 1758 sermon for advancement of this same idea, Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 35.



War for Empire, the appeal for a common religion once again emerged. In 1759, Bishop Anthony Ellis noted that if the colonies were united under one religion they would not only be more loyal to England, but also more willing to defend themselves.<sup>78</sup>

Although concerned primarily with establishing Anglicanism among the white population, the SPG also shared a desire to convert "heathens" and "infidels" who resided in the colonies. Often considered inferior specimens, blacks were generally characterized in anniversary sermons as "ignorant," "wretched," and downtrodden."<sup>79</sup> Few clergy recognized blacks as humans equal to themselves. One who did, however, was Bishop William Fleetwood. In 1711, he argued that blacks were not inferior to whites, that they were capable of working for wages, and that low prices for tropical products should not justify slavery. This sermon is significant, for it was widely distributed throughout the eighteenth century. As such, the sermon probably influenced SPG missionaries who launched programs for Christianizing blacks.

Whether or not individual clergy believed that blacks were inferior, anniversary sermons all support the Society's conversion efforts. Referring to the Codrington Estates, Fleetwood stated in the sermon quoted above that if all other blacks were infidels, "yet yours alone must be

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

Christians."<sup>80</sup> In an argument similar to ones propounded for the conversion of whites, Bishop Thomas Herring stated in 1738 that both black and Indian converts were needed, for each one that the SPG gained was "a Friend to our Country and Government, as well as to our Religion."<sup>81</sup>

But conversion did not necessitate emancipation. Throughout the eighteenth century, anniversary sermons addressed masters' resistance toward slave conversion, which equated baptism with temporal freedom. The SPG's goal, however, was only conversion. This was apparent from the very beginning. In 1706, Bishop John Williams stated that Christianized slaves would be "a security" to their masters. Hinting that conversion was a means of social control, Williams noted that slaves who embraced Christianity would no longer be apt to do mischief.<sup>82</sup> In addition to tractability, Christianization was perceived to offer other benefits. Bishop Isaac Maddox preached in 1733 that Christianity alleviated slaves' distress, "by furnishing their Minds, with good Principles."<sup>83</sup>

Christianity, thus, was perceived as a palliative for slavery. Many clergy did not support the slave trade, but

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 26. See also Bishop Thomas Herring's 1735 sermon for similar beliefs. Bishop Samuel Lisle also elaborated on this idea in 1748 by stating that blacks and Indians would be won over by others and attack English settlements if conversion efforts did not increase. See Ibid., p. 30, footnote 62.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

it was seldom attacked. Archbishop Thomas Secker in 1741 stated that it was the duty of mankind to "abide in the Condition wherein he is called, with great Indifference of Mind concerning outward circumstances."<sup>84</sup> Some clergy, moreover, did not even acknowledge the rigors of slavery. Bishop Robert Drummond stated in his 1754 anniversary sermon that black slaves laboring in the English colonies "were very little, if anything, worse in their outward condition from their own country." In fact, slaves' new condition might be an improvement if their masters performed their Christian duties towards them.<sup>85</sup>

In the SPG's mind duty included, first and foremost, the conversion of all "heathens" and "infidels." The North American Indian was no exception. Described almost yearly in anniversary sermons as "wild and barbarous," Indians were early distinguished from blacks by their perceived intellectual inferiority. Referring to SPG missionary efforts, Herring stated in 1738 that Indians were so backward they had to be first instructed in the rudiments of reason and in natural religion before they were able to embrace Christianity.<sup>86</sup>

Lack of intelligence, however, was not the major problem that clergy believed hindered widespread conversion. The Indians' primitive state was not only distasteful to

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

Anglicans, but it was considered a major obstacle affecting conversion efforts. Some clergy went even so far as to insist that Indians had to be first "civilized" before Christianization attempts could begin. In 1744, Dr. Philip Bearcroft, secretary of the Society, stated in his sermon that it was useless to discuss religion with the "wild Indians" bordering the colonies "in their wild native state." Before missionary attempts were launched these Indians "must be reduced from their barbarity...and be made men, that is, rational, considerate creatures."<sup>87</sup> Echoing similar sentiments, Drummond stated ten years later that the "savages" had to be reduced to "gentle and just manners in a settled society, before we can hope to win any number of them to Christianity."<sup>88</sup>

Methods best suited to civilize Indians varied. Drummond believed missionaries should learn Indian languages and introduce the amenities of a civil (that is, European) lifestyle.<sup>89</sup> Bishop Frederick Cornwallis stated in 1756 that Indians could best be civilized by "free intercourse and gentle treatment." If Indians saw and participated in the good effects of Christian honesty and justice, they would be reduced from their wild state and more willing to embrace Christianity.<sup>90</sup>

87 Ibid., p. 32.

88 Ibid., p. 33.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid., p. 34.

Yet these perceived obstacles did not stop the SPG's missionary efforts, for more than pagan infidelity was at stake. In New York, French Jesuits had been sent to the Six Nations prior to the Society's arrival and had made inroads with many of the tribes. The triumph of Protestantism, therefore, also depended on reclaiming Indians who had converted to Catholicism. The theme of anti-Catholicism, constantly preached at anniversary sermons, was aimed at preventing the spread of Catholicism among Indians. Bishop William Dawes reminded his listeners in 1709 that, as Protestants, Anglicans were obligated "to prevent Infidels from being made a Prey to the Church of Rome, that most unsound and corrupt part of the Christian Church."<sup>91</sup> The Catholic threat was not only religious, but it was also political. In the battle for North America, "flag" and "faith" were inextricably connected.<sup>92</sup> Converts, thus, were both saved from the grips of Rome and more likely to adhere to British policies.

Indeed, the SPG's desire to spread Anglicanism was multi-faceted. No less than the survival of British hegemony was at stake. The Society's leaders and missionaries were aware of the urgency of their mission.

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<sup>91</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 17. The SPG was also afraid Catholicism would spread to the white population. In 1756, for example, Cornwallis stated in his sermon that unless the Society increased its efforts among the colonists, "Papists would win them away." See Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism. p. 34.

<sup>92</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 99.

From its headquarters in London, the Society listened to its missionaries' reports and advised them how to proceed in their parish work. In the following chapters the Society's work in New York and South Carolina will be examined.

## Chapter II

### New York: The Quest for Converts

New York and South Carolina were placed under the Society's jurisdiction. However, New York's role was more prominent. For most of the colonial period, more missionaries and schoolmasters labored in New York than in any other colony. That New York would command such attention from the beginning. The Society's first appointments, in 1701, were directed to New York. Six of the Society's trustees were appointed there, doubling the number of trustees. Seventy years later, fifteen more were appointed throughout the colony.

Population statistics offer striking evidence of the dominance of New York. The 1698 census revealed the colony's population at nearly twenty thousand.<sup>1</sup> Although the most populated middle colony by 1700, New York had significantly less inhabitants than Virginia and was comparable in size to Connecticut and Maryland. But from the beginning, it was clear that the middle colonies were

1 Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 240.  
 2 Evans & Greene and Virginia, D. Harris, *Anglican Missions in the Middle Colonies: A Study of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in North America, 1700-1750* (New York: 1932), p. 75. See also, "Anglican Missions," p. 240.

## II

New York and South Carolina each played a central role in the SPG's eighteenth century operations. Of the two, however, New York's role was more significant. Throughout most of the colonial period, more missionaries and schoolmasters labored in New York than in any other colony. That New York would command such attention was evident from the beginning. The Society's first two colonial appointments, in 1702, were directed to New York. By 1706, six of the Society's fourteen missionaries were stationed there, doubling the number of missions in any other colony. Seventy years later, fifteen posts were established throughout the colony.<sup>1</sup>

Population statistics offer minimal insight into the dominance of New York. The 1698 census tabulated the colony's population at nearly twenty thousand.<sup>2</sup> Although the most populated middle colony by 1700, New York possessed significantly less inhabitants than Virginia and was comparable in size to Connecticut and Maryland. But from the beginning, it was clear that the middle colonies would

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<sup>1</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, American Population before the Federal Census of 1790 (New York, 1932), p. 92; Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 252.



play a crucial role in Anglican development. Support for Anglican clergy was not needed in the populous colonies of Virginia and Maryland, where the Church of England was established and financially secure. Nor did the SPG want to launch its mission in the densely populated, dissenter-dominated northern provinces of Massachusetts and Connecticut before the organization had first achieved success in other colonies.<sup>3</sup> As such, only the middle colonies offered the SPG a heterogeneous population in which Anglicanism could compete freely with other sects.

Anglicanism itself, however, was weak in New York. By 1683, the only Anglican services in the province were conducted by a chaplain stationed to the garrison in New York City. At that time, the colony contained fifteen Dutch Reformed, thirteen Congregational, four French Reformed, and two Lutheran churches. An examination of the religious composition of New York City in 1687 reveals the diversity of New York's inhabitants. Governor Thomas Dongan reported that there were Dutch and French Calvinists, Dutch Lutherans, Congregationalists, Quakers, Sabbatarians, Antisabbatarians, Anabaptists, Independents, Catholics, Jews, and a few Anglicans.<sup>4</sup> Anglicans were also very scarce in the countryside. Caleb Heathcote noted that

<sup>3</sup> This interpretation is advanced by Nelson. See Nelson, "Anglican Missions," pp. 252-3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 253-4.

during the 1690s there were "scarcely six" in Westchester county who were "so much as inclined to the Church."<sup>5</sup>

This weakness persisted despite the passage of the 1693 Ministry Act. That act created six parishes which were filled by Anglican appointments, though the legislation itself did not establish the Episcopal Church in these or any other areas.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the dubious circumstances surrounding the act's passage suggests that it was a surreptitious attempt to impose Anglicanism on the populace.

The act originated from a Presbyterian congregation's desire to raise funds to complete its church. Lewis Morris, who witnessed the event, recalled that Governor Benjamin Fletcher conferred with James Graham, speaker of the Assembly, who was in charge of drafting legislation. Lewis noted that Graham, a fellow Anglican, worded the act so "that it would not do well for the Dissenters, & but lamely for the Church, though it would with the help of Governor." A stronger bill establishing the Church of England was not even considered, Morris explained, for the Assembly would have "seen through the Artifice being most of them Dissenters & all [would] have been lost."<sup>7</sup> But the bill

<sup>5</sup> Robert Bolton, History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the County of Westchester from its Foundation A.D. 1693 to A.D. 1852 (New York: 1855), p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> The parishes of Jamaica, Hempstead, Staten Island, Westchester, Rye, and New York City were established under the Ministry Act of 1693.

<sup>7</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 254. E[dmund] B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 11 vols. (Albany, 1853-67), 5: 321. Specifically, the act stated that "a good, sufficient

served its purposes. New York governors could appoint Anglican clerics in each of the six new parishes created by the act. These parishes, in turn, were obligated to support such ministers by an annual tax assessed on all freeholders.<sup>8</sup>

Anglicans initially gained very little from the Ministry Act.<sup>9</sup> Only three of the twelve vestrymen chosen in New York City in 1694, for example, were Anglicans. And the following year, the vestry possessed only one Anglican member. This pattern was repeated in each parish represented by the act. In 1695, for instance, there were no Anglican vestrymen in the parish of Rye.<sup>10</sup> This was not surprising since vestries were chosen by the freeholders of each parish. For dissenters, vestries composed of their own people insured that the popular will would be heeded; for

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Protestant minister" should be established, called, and inducted in the seven parishes created by the bill. Anglicans argued that the terms inserted in the bill, such as "induction," "Churchwardens," and "vestrymen," proved the act established the Church of England.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Baird, History of Rye, 1660-1879 (New York: 1871), p. 289.

<sup>9</sup> By 1711, Morris believed that the Ministry Act had hindered the acceptance of the English church: "there is not comparison in our Numbers and they [the dissenters] can on the Death of the Incumbents call persons of their own persuasion in every place but the City of New York...if by force the Salary is taken from them, and paid to the Ministers of the Church it may be a means of subsisting those Ministers, but they won't make any converts among a people who think themselves very much injured." O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to New York, 5: 322-23; Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 255; Ibid., n. 9, p. 255.

<sup>10</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 255.

Anglican clerics, struggling to gain converts, such vestries were a continual source of conflict.

For seven years dissenters did not challenge the Ministry Act. Why should they when only one Anglican cleric was officiating in the province? Conflict arose only later when Anglican clerics began entering the colony. As will be seen, New York governors did not hesitate to appoint such clerics to the colonies' churches. How a dissenter-controlled congregation felt about such an appointment was not deemed important. The royal will ruled with impunity. The SPG's founding therefore was significant for both Anglicans and dissenters, particularly in the parishes included in the Ministry Act.

Within the Ministry Act lay the potential for Anglican expansion. Its importance in directing the SPG's activities should not be underestimated. New York was the only middle colony which offered some legal foundation for local support of the Church of England. No such offer could be expected from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, for the political life in those colonies was largely controlled by the Quakers. This was substantially different from the Dutch-Reformed-Presbyterian composition of New York.

Establishing Anglican hegemony in New York was a calculated risk for Society officials. Acceptance of Anglicanism could not be legislated, but, as a royal colony, New York Anglicans could exert sufficient influence to implement the Ministry Act. The combined power of a royal

governor, sworn to nurture and protect the Church of England, with eminent Anglicans serving on the council and in the court system was ultimately decisive.<sup>11</sup> Adherents to the Church of England comprised a politically and socially influential network of families. New York, thus, illustrates how a small minority of inhabitants sought to control the religious life of a heterogeneous population.<sup>12</sup>

How SPG missionaries reacted to the tempestuous climate of New York was influenced by their assurance of government support and assistance, and their fervent belief that Anglicanism was "the only pure Church in the World."<sup>13</sup> What difficulties New York missionaries encountered and how successful they were in responding to them is the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

New York was not a fertile territory to plant the seeds of Anglicanism. Early missions were established in areas where Presbyterianism and Quakerism had flourished for

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<sup>11</sup> The secret instructions given to Governor Cornbury (Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon) on 29 January 1702/3 (or 1701/02) elucidate why royal governors so readily used their influence to defend the church of England and insure Anglicans were appointed in parishes included in the Ministry Act. Governors were not only obligated to enforce the use of The Book of Common Prayer, but also were not to appoint any minister to a benefice without certification from the Bishop of London of his conformity to the doctrine and discipline of the church of England. See Hugh Hastings, ed., Ecclesiastical Records State of New York, 6 vols. (Albany, 1901-06), 3: 1487.

<sup>12</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 260.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Pritchard to the Secretary, Rye, 1 November 1704, SPG Papers in the Lambeth Palace Library: Calendar and Indexes, William Wilson Manross, preparer, 25 vols., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974) 13: 93. Hereafter, this collection will be cited as SPG Papers.

generations. And inhabitants not espousing either creed generally professed no religion at all, although they were still hostile to the Church of England. This did not deter SPG missionaries. Convinced of the superiority of their own religion, several missionaries believed initially that converts could be easily made once potential parishioners were exposed to Anglican doctrine and practice. Reporting in his mission in 1705, Thoroughgood Moore wrote that the "poor deluded people in these parts" only "despise & oppose" the Church of England "because they know not what it is."<sup>14</sup> This was confirmed by missionaries John Thomas and William Urquhart of Long Island who wrote in the same year that "Their ignorance of and blind prepossession are the greatest cause of their enmity." Thomas and Urquhart each sought to correct misconceptions about Anglicanism and thereby show that criticisms against the church were unfair.<sup>15</sup> But such corrections might have been difficult for missionaries to make palatable to their congregations. To worsen matters, missionaries did not understand why their enlightened congregations failed to embrace Anglicanism readily. Thomas Pritchard, stationed in the parish of Rye, complained in 1704 that he had to battle against ignorance, obstinacy, and stupidity. His parishioners had been tainted by the "Damnable & Dangerous" doctrine of dissent. Such

<sup>14</sup> Thoroughgood Moore to Secretary, New York, 13 November 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 159.

<sup>15</sup> John Thomas and William Urquhart to Secretary, New York, 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 161.

beliefs had been taught to "poor unwary & Deluded Souls" while they were still at an impressionable age.<sup>16</sup>

Why Pritchard and other missionaries did not condemn people for being dissenters is easily determined. Anglicans were scarce in New York. Thus, the realities of these frontier parishes dictated that missionaries treat all people as potential converts. Although missionaries were assured of the providential triumph of Anglicanism, congregations could only be filled through enticement. Coercion was impossible. But equanimity was not easy to maintain in the face of relentless opposition. "This sturdy and Obstinate Crew," wrote Thomas in 1705, endeavour...to crush us in ye Embryo." To conquer such opposition, according to Thomas, required patience, stoicism, and Christian understanding.<sup>17</sup>

Even though such survival tactics were unquestionably useful, they could not battle prejudice and therefore alone could do little to gain converts. However, since missionaries believed that opposition against Anglicanism stemmed from ignorance, they thought converts could be gained through education. Books thus became the missionaries' primary weapon to "warr against" dissent.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Pritchard to the Secretary, Mamaroneck, 6 June 1704, SPG Papers, 13: 50.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas to the Secretary, Hempstead, 27 June 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 125.

<sup>18</sup> George Muirson to the Secretary, Rye, 21 November 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 173.

As early as April, 1704, James Honeyman, missionary at Jamaica, Long Island, asked the SPG for tracts against Quakerism and other dissenting religions.<sup>19</sup> Six months later a similar request was repeated at a convention of New York clergy. In an address to SPG officials, missionaries requested that books dealing with controversy and devotional subjects be sent for distribution among their congregations. Such literature, missionaries noted, would be "most conducive to the Ends of our Mission."<sup>20</sup> These books and small tracts offered arguments against dissenting religions, answered criticism against Anglicanism, and asserted the superiority of the Church of England.

It is impossible to determine how many converts were actually influenced by these tracts, but their impact, or their perceived impact, must have been significant since they were often requested by missionaries throughout the colonial period. James Wetmore, missionary to Rye, illustrates the significance of such tracts. In 1734, he wrote that the Congregationalists of his parish had attempted "to amuse and enslave" his congregation by industriously spreading "scurrilous pamphlets." Although containing little argument, these works were laden with "bold, audacious calumnies" against the Church of England.

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<sup>19</sup> James Honeyman to the Secretary, Jamaica, 15 April 1704, SPG Papers, 13: 46.

<sup>20</sup> Address of convened clergy to the bishop of London, archbishop of Canterbury, and [to the] SPG, New York, 17 October 1704, SPG Papers, 13: 52.



But the attempt was in vain, for the Society's tracts had served as an "antidote [to] their poison."<sup>21</sup>

To reach potential converts effectively, SPG tracts were distributed free of charge throughout New York parishes. In addition to offering arguments against dissenting denominations, these pamphlets examined a variety of religious topics, including reasonableness, free will, spirituality, practical godliness, and moral behavior.<sup>22</sup> Although missionaries were advised only to give tracts to people who would "make right use of them," it is probable that any who seemed inclined towards the Church of England received such literature.<sup>23</sup> Even those who lived too far away to attend divine services regularly received SPG pamphlets, for ministers frequently included this literature when they visited the remote regions of their parishes.<sup>24</sup> As a result, Anglican doctrine was transmitted throughout New York.

Educational tracts were not the only means missionaries used to gain converts. In order to reach the heterogeneous population of New York, the Society translated its liturgy into French, Dutch, and German. Translations of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer into French date from at least

<sup>21</sup> Bolton, History of Westchester, p. 264.

<sup>22</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> Caleb Heathcote to the Secretary, Manor of Scarsdale, 18 June 1707, SPG Papers, 14: 28. SPG Abstracts continually informed the public that religious tracts were distributed to all who would receive benefit from such instruction.

<sup>24</sup> John Bartow to the Secretary, Westchester, 10 October 1704, SPG Papers, 13: 80.

1702, and copies of these books were sent to New York City and New Rochelle.<sup>25</sup> From 1708 to 1710, similar Dutch translations were sent to Albany, Staten Island, and New York City.<sup>26</sup> In 1715, the Book of Common Prayer was translated into German under the supervision of the bishop of London and the Reverend J.J. Caesar, chaplain to the King of Prussia. These books were sent to the Palatines settled along the Hudson River.<sup>27</sup>

Adults were not the only ones singled out for the Society's attention. Hundreds of children received religious instruction in the Society's catechism classes. Missionaries welcomed children from all denominations in the hope of gaining converts, although classes appear to have been attended primarily by children from Anglican families. Significant numbers of children converts were only reported in Albany, where the only resident minister was Thomas Barclay, a SPG missionary. In 1710, he reported catechizing approximately sixty children, most of whom were Dutch.<sup>28</sup> One year later his catechumens increased to over eighty

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<sup>25</sup> Elias Neau to the Secretary, New York City, 27 February 1708-9, SPG Papers, 14: 137; Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 819.

<sup>26</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 819. A list of Dutch translations sent to Thomas Barclay, stationed in Albany, illustrates the scope of these works. In 1710, he received a folio Bible, New Testament, copies of the Book of Common Prayer, and Psalters. In addition, he received translations of the Anglican mass in Danish. See Thomas Barclay to the Secretary, Albany, 7 December, 1710, SPG Papers, 14: 219.

<sup>27</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 813.

<sup>28</sup> Barclay to the Secretary, Albany, 7 December 1710, SPG Papers, 14: 219.

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Catechetical lectures were an essential part of Anglican ministry, for the SPG believed that meaningful faith could only be nurtured through knowledge. According to John Lewis, author of The Church Catechism Explained, catechetical instruction not only provided a foundation for future growth, but the absence of it left the mind "like a Ship without Ballast and can keep no Course, but rolls to

<sup>31</sup> Barclay to the Secretary, Albany, 7 December 1710, SPG Papers, 14: 219.

<sup>32</sup> Barclay to the Secretary, Albany, 12 June 1711, SPG Papers, 14: 260. Barclay informed the Secretary that all of the Dutch were sending their children to him for instruction.

<sup>33</sup> SPG Abstracts, 15 February 1750/1 to 21 February 1752, p. 40.

and fro with every wind of Doctrine...."<sup>34</sup> Thus, even though Anglicans believed in the superiority of their religion, they felt catechetical instruction prevented later apostasy.

Children, converts, and others ignorant of the liturgy were usually publicly examined on Sundays, either in the morning or evening, after divine services. Although class size was infrequently reported, the average from those who did report it was approximately thirty-five, one third of whom were generally slaves.<sup>35</sup> Catechumens were taught Anglican doctrine through a series of questions and answers, which they memorized in order to qualify themselves for the sacraments of baptism, communion, and confirmation. The questions and responses were arranged in a series of doctrinal tenets, usually supported by biblical proofs, that gradually progressed from natural to revealed religion. In addition to a rudimentary exegesis on the sacraments, catechetical lectures also included a section analyzing the ten commandments and several basic Christian prayers.

<sup>34</sup> John Lewis, The Church Catechism Explained, 37th Edition, 1800, reprinted in Evans American Imprints, preface. SPG missionaries often supplemented their catechetical instruction with this text.

<sup>35</sup> This figure was derived from missionaries' reports to the Society. See Pritchard to the Secretary, Rye, 18 June 1704, SPG Papers, 13: 51; SPG Abstracts 15 February 1739/40 to 20 February 1740/41, p. 71; SPG Abstracts 15 February 1739/40 to 16 February 1749, p. 44; SPG Abstracts 19 February 1768 to 17 February 1769, p. 26; SPG Abstracts 16 February 1770 to 15 February 1771.

But catechism offered more than religious instruction. Moral conduct was also intertwined within theological issues. Catechumens, for example, were informed that as baptized Christian they were bound to renounce all sin, particularly malice, cruelty, envy, and pride. All worldly pursuits for honor and glory were to be abandoned if they hoped to gain access into heaven. A good Christian thus was able to live righteously, for he had renounced the world and received God into his soul.<sup>36</sup>

Children also received educational instruction in the Society's schools.<sup>37</sup> Although SPG schools were relatively crude, usually only offering instruction in reading, writing, and basic arithmetic, they liberally doused their scholars with Anglican doctrine. Requests from schoolmasters reveal the Society generously donated church catechisms in English, Dutch, and French. To facilitate religious instruction, expositions in the church catechism were frequently included. Bibles and testaments provided scholars with supervised religious study, while the Book of Common Prayer and psalters acquainted young minds with Anglican liturgy.<sup>38</sup> And at least at one SPG school, in New

<sup>36</sup> Lewis, Catechism Explained, 2: 5.

<sup>37</sup> The SPG supported eight schools in New York at various times during the eighteenth century. Schools were established in the following places: Hempstead, Oyster Bay, Staten Island, Rye, Westchester, New York City, Johnstown, and among the Mohawks.

<sup>38</sup> For a list of requests, see William Huddleston to John Postlewaite, New York 9 October, 1706, SPG Papers, 13: 229; Huddleston to the Secretary, New York, 18 November, 1707, SPG Papers, 14: 53; Secretary to Joseph Cleator, Petty

York City, scholars attended divine services on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy days during the 1760s.<sup>39</sup>

Schools, with their narrow curriculum and emphasis on religious instruction, were directed primarily at children of the poor. Because the Society supplemented the income its schoolmasters, children were taught for minimal charges, or even in some cases for free.<sup>40</sup> Middle class dissenting families tended to avoid the Society's schools. They did not want to be identified with pauperism, and, more importantly, did not want to expose their children to Anglican education.<sup>41</sup> Evidence suggests that these children were sent to the English and Latin schools common in larger cities.<sup>42</sup>

Although the Society's schools did not appeal to the middle class, many children from poorer families readily attended them. In spite of incomplete information, SPG schools appear to have accommodated hundreds of scholars. For example, from 1707 to 1710, Joseph Cleator, schoolmaster at Rye, taught 174 children, one third of whom attended his night school.<sup>43</sup> In 1770, Edward Wall reported that he had

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France, Westminster, 24 January 1709/10, SPG Papers, 14: 199; Secretary to Cleator, Petty France, Westminster, 24 May 1711, SPG Papers, 14: 241.

<sup>39</sup> SPG Abstracts 15 February 1765 to 21 February 1766.

<sup>40</sup> The Society's school in New York City taught poor children free of charge from 1709/10 to 1776.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Kammen, Colonial New York: A History, (New York: 1976), p. 250.

<sup>42</sup> Heathcote to the Secretary, New York, 23 October 1704, SPG Papers, 13: 87.

<sup>43</sup> Cleator to the Secretary, Rye, 4 June 1709, SPG Papers, 14: 185.

England.<sup>43</sup> Similar results were also reported in Rye. Caleb Heathcote informed the Society in 1707 that people of all faiths "most willing[ly] Commit their Children to his [Joseph Cleator's] care."<sup>44</sup> Four years later, missionary Aeneas Mackenzie was proud to announce that the English, Dutch, and French of Staten Island permitted their children to be instructed in the church catechism at the Society's school.<sup>45</sup>

Trying to convert people, whether through education or educational literature, was difficult. Although children might be tempted by persuasive schoolmasters, adults had to be convinced that Anglicanism was superior to their own faith before they would convert. To effect such change required more than distributing literature. It demanded that missionaries meet with their potential parishioners, listen to their complaints, then try to implement suggestions without sacrificing Anglican integrity.

How many obstacles missionaries encountered depended on how entrenched dissenting and other faiths were in their parishes. The absence of a settled Congregational minister at Rye made Pritchard's stay relatively easy upon his

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<sup>43</sup> William Vesey to the Secretary, New York, 21 November, 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 81.

<sup>44</sup> Heathcote to the Secretary, Manor of Scarsdale, 18 June 1707, SPG Papers, 14: 28

<sup>45</sup> Only the Quakers refused to send their children to the Society's school. See Aeneas Mackenzie to the Secretary, Richmond (Staten Island), 4 May 1711, SPG Papers, 13: 87.

arrival in 1704.<sup>46</sup> Without concerted opposition from this sect, Pritchard was able to meet freely with his congregation and answer their objections against the Church of England.<sup>47</sup> Conversion attempts were more difficult on Long Island, however, where dissenting religions were firmly established and regularly supplied by clerics. In 1704, Urquhart reported to the Society that he had disputed with Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Quakers of Jamaica, Long Island.<sup>48</sup> In 1705, Thomas informed the Society that in order to get converts at Hempstead, Long Island, he was forced to soften the Anglican liturgy by "adding a word or two," for parishioners had complained that it "grate[d] upon tender consciences."<sup>49</sup> Bartow's ministry at Westchester contained similar difficulties. In 1707, he reported that his work had been "very onerous and difficult" because of frequent disputations with Quakers and other dissenting denominations.<sup>50</sup>

Disputations with other denominations, however, were not at the core of conversion difficulties. Opposition to

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<sup>46</sup> Although Rye had been originally settled by Puritans from New England in 1650, there had not been a resident Congregational minister there since 1693. By 1704, only the Quakers possessed an established ministry; however, none of the early missionaries reported open conflict with this sect. Bolton, History of Westchester, p. 137.

<sup>47</sup> Pritchard to the Secretary, Rye, 1 November 1704, SPG Papers, 13: 93.

<sup>48</sup> Urquhart to the Secretary, Jamaica, 2 November 1704, SPG Papers, 13: 95.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas to the Secretary, Hempstead, 23 August 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 33.

<sup>50</sup> Bolton, History of Westchester, p. 18.



SPG missionaries stemmed from the privileges they received as a result of the Ministry Act. The rights of other denominations were subordinated to the preferences given Anglican clerics. Royal governors were very willing to insure that SPG missionaries received the benefits of a national established religion. Many dissenters, therefore, felt, as Bartow observed in 1703, that the Church of England was "pouring in on them."<sup>51</sup>

Opposition to the Church of England was reported by missionaries in four out of the six parishes created by the Ministry Act. Missionaries in the parishes of Westchester, Rye, Hempstead, and Jamaica, Long Island all initially reported varying degrees of opposition. Missionaries in New York City and Staten Island did not report resistance to their ministries, although it still might have existed on a limited scale. Opposition to Anglicanism manifested itself in numerous forms, but in general it followed a basic pattern. Numerically superior dissenting groups made missionaries as uncomfortable as possible, especially during the initial years of SPG operation.

Missionaries' behavior often aggravated potentially volatile religious situations. Knowing they would receive government support, some missionaries began their ministry by seizing what they felt to be rightfully theirs. Bartow's early experience at Jamaica exemplifies missionaries'

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<sup>51</sup> Bartow to the Secretary, Westchester, 25 May 1703, 13: 27. Nelson.

disregard for existing dissenting religions, and the government's policy of forcing the Church of England onto the populace.

The first SPG missionary in New York, Patrick Gordon, arrived in Jamaica, Long Island, in 1702. Prior to his induction, however, he was stricken by a "violent fever" and subsequently died. While awaiting a replacement, Governor Cornbury (Edward Hyde, third earl of Clarendon) encouraged SPG missionaries to preach there periodically. Cornbury was determined to counter the influence of the Presbyterian cleric John Hubbard who had recently settled in Jamaica and who had been permitted to use the meetinghouse, parsonage, and glebe. Under such circumstances, the periodic visit of Anglican priests could be inflammatory.<sup>52</sup>

In July, 1703, Bartow arrived in Jamaica, temporarily leaving his congregation in Westchester unattended. Upon arriving, Bartow received a letter from Hubbard inquiring if he planned on preaching the next day. Bartow said yes. The following day, however, Bartow went into the meetinghouse as the church bell was tolling and found that Hubbard had already begun services. Armed with an order from Cornbury to preach there, Bartow immediately walked to a front pew and waited for Hubbard to stop. Hubbard refused to be intimidated and continued the service while Bartow sat quietly.

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<sup>52</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 271.

This passivity, however, was not a sign of resignation. Bartow believed that he alone possessed the right to officiate at Jamaica. He was determined to beat the Presbyterian at his own game. Thus, before the last bell had tolled for afternoon services, Bartow had already begun divine service. Finding Bartow officiating in the meetinghouse, Hubbard went to a nearby orchard and sent word back to the church that he would serve outside. Much commotion ensued as almost half of the congregation left the church. After services Bartow locked the door of the meetinghouse and placed the key into the hands of the sheriff. As soon as Bartow left the sheriff's office, the dissenters entered and demanded the key. But the sheriff refused. The dissenters then retaliated by breaking a church window and taking a pew cushion for Hubbard.<sup>53</sup>

Shortly thereafter Bartow informed Cornbury of the disturbance, who promised to rectify the damage done to Bartow and the Church of England. After an investigation into the "Riot" at Jamaica, Cornbury met with Hubbard and informed him that he was forbidden to preach at the parish's meetinghouse under penalty of prosecution. The building, Cornbury stated, had been built by public taxation and therefore belonged to the Church of England. Although the Presbyterian was subsequently pardoned by Cornbury upon a promise of "future quietness and peace," Hubbard had learned a lesson later to be impressed on subsequent dissenters: the

<sup>53</sup> Bolton, History of Westchester, pp. 16-17.

supremacy of the Church of England would be defended by the government, thereby giving missionaries the endurance to withstand all opposition.<sup>54</sup>

Not long after the Jamaica incident, Cornbury asked Bartow to preach to a Presbyterian congregation at Eastchester, a town included in the parish of Westchester. Although Bartow gave advance notice of his arrival, he once again found that the town's Presbyterian minister was officiating during the missionary's appointed time. Now a veteran at such tactics, Bartow secured the meetinghouse for the afternoon service and preached before the Presbyterian congregations. For the next year Bartow alternated officiating between Eastchester and Westchester.<sup>55</sup> In 1704, his work paid off, for part of the congregation converted to the Church of England. During the same year, moreover, the Presbyterian minister also talked of leaving, which he did the following year.<sup>56</sup> Bartow's aggressive tactics thus yielded part of the congregation to the Church of England, but it also alienated many more.

It has already been noted the governor's support of the Church of England enabled missionaries such as Bartow to take bold measures in order to create Anglican congregations from the populations composed primarily of dissenters. No

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 17; Ecclesiastical Records on New York, 3: 1531.

<sup>55</sup> Bolton, History of Westchester, p. 17.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 31; Bartow to the Secretary, Westchester, 26 May 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 123.

wonder missionaries throughout the province praised Cornbury. He was even called a "father" whose "contenance and protection" was never wanting.<sup>57</sup>

Although the Church was supported by all of New York's governors, Cornbury most vigorously styled himself as the champion of Anglicanism. To him the Church was not a sectarian institution but the established Church of England and therefore of all Britain's colonies.<sup>58</sup> He never flinched at assisting the Church, even at the expense of inciting opposition towards it. This may be seen by his refusal to acknowledge the rights of dissenting sects to choose and support their own minister under the 1693 Ministry Act. This is particularly evident in Cornbury's treatment of Jamaica. In 1702, the churchwardens and vestry called Hubbard to Jamaica. Two years later Cornbury denied the rights of the vestry and churchwardens to call a dissenting minister, and therefore inducted Urquhart in Hubbard's place.<sup>59</sup> Shortly after Urquhart's induction, Cornbury forcibly seized the parsonage and meeting house for Hubbard, stating that it was the property of the Church of England.<sup>60</sup>

This action fueled further animosity towards the Church of England. By 1711, Presbyterians in Jamaica were still

<sup>57</sup> Urquhart and Thomas to the Society, Jamaica, 4 July 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 120.

<sup>58</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 269.

<sup>59</sup> O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to New York, Statement Respecting the Church at Jamaica, 5: 328.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Lewis Morris to John Chamberlayne, 5: 321.

upset over the seizure of the parsonage and meetinghouse. These buildings, they noted, had been built by private contributions and not by public taxations, as Cornbury asserted. They felt that Cornbury's unjust seizure, later upheld by Governor Robert Hunter, denied the Presbyterian congregation lawful access to their own buildings. This complaint was presented to the Society, which subsequently investigated the seizure but did not take any action.<sup>61</sup>

The incidences at Jamaica were not isolated; they were part of a growing pattern of opposition and confrontation against the Church of England. At the center of this conflict was the Ministry Act of 1693. As already noted, this act insured that Protestant ministers were inducted in six New York parishes; however, New York governors interpreted the statute to apply solely to Anglican clerics. All taxable inhabitants in each parish, regardless of their religion, were obligated to contribute towards the maintenance of SPG missionaries. This tax was opposed in four out of the six parishes created by the act.

Once again, the government's support of the Church of England probably encouraged missionaries to take aggressive action to ensure that the Ministry Act was enforced. Not surprisingly, the first record of such action was recorded at Jamaica. Denied the right to call a dissenting minister

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<sup>61</sup> Account of the Church in Jamaica by George Ross, Jamaica, 26 July 1711, SPG Papers, 14: 261; Ibid., Secretary to Governor Robert Hunter, Petty France, Westminster, 8 June 1711, SPG Papers, 14: 253.

to their parish, the people of Jamaica retaliated by refusing to tax the inhabitants for the support of an Anglican ministry. Cornbury summoned the churchwardens and vestry of Jamaica to appear before himself and the council in February, 1702.<sup>62</sup> Two years later the church officers and justices of the peace had still not complied. Cornbury was once again forced to act. He issued a second order to the church officers of Jamaica, commanding them to immediately assess a tax on the inhabitants for the support of the Church of England.<sup>63</sup> This command, like the others, was ignored. In 1705, Cornbury fined church officers of Jamaica for noncompliance of the Ministry Act.<sup>64</sup>

This pattern of noncompliance was repeated throughout the ministry of Thomas Poyer, who succeeded Uquhart at Jamaica in 1709. Shortly after Poyer's arrival, he met with Hunter to complain about the church officers' refusal to pay his quarter's allowance. Like Cornbury, Governor Hunter also believed that the Ministry Act established the Church of England; but unlike his predecessor Hunter felt that the governor's power to enforce the act was limited. Therefore, instead of issuing commands for compliance to the act, Hunter called the churchwardens to his office. The

<sup>62</sup> Ecclesiastical Records, Order to Summon the Church Officers of Jamaica before Lord Cornbury, New York, 25 February 1702, 3, 1518.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., To Fine The Church Wardens, Etc., For Refusing To Levy Said Tax, To Support An Anglican Church At Jamaica, Long Island, 31 March 1705, 3: 1585

<sup>64</sup> O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to New York, Hunter to Chamberlayne, New York, 25 February 1711-12, 5: 314.

churchwardens informed the Governor that they had withheld Poyer's salary because of their own insufficient funds, because they had not received an order from the vestry to pay the missionary, and because they did not believe Poyer was qualified according to the act. Dismissing these reasons as mere excuses, Hunter informed the churchwardens that he would order Poyer to take them to court and would finance the litigation himself.

Poyer did not, however, immediately press suit. He was dissatisfied that Hunter refused to take stronger action against the dissenters as Cornbury had done. Moreover, Poyer was not sure if such actions would meet with the approval of the Society.<sup>65</sup> In 1714, the Society, after a thorough investigation, advised Poyer to begin suite. In that same year the local justices recognized Poyer as the rightful incumbent. Collections, however, continued to be opposed by the majority of Jamaicans, although Poyer appears to have received at least partial payment until his death in 1731.<sup>66</sup>

Opposition against church rates existed in other parishes, although not as intense nor protracted as in Jamaica. As early as 1703, Bartow reported the people in his parish were dissatisfied with the Ministry Act.

Inhabitants at Eastchester were threatening to form a

<sup>65</sup> O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to New York, Thomas Poyer to Hunter, Jamaica, 30 January 1711-12, 5: 327.

<sup>66</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 300.



separate parish; people at New Rochelle felt the act was unfair, for they were already supporting their own minister. Neither parish, however, appears to have initiated any action. Cornbury effectively halted proceedings in both parishes, although there is no existing documentation showing how this was accomplished.<sup>67</sup> Although formal opposition had been curtailed by the government, the Ministry Act was still a matter of dispute during the early years of Bartow's mission. In 1706, he noted that many parishioners refused to contribute to his maintenance, although he hesitated to prosecute for fear of bringing "Oduim to the Church."<sup>68</sup>

Conflict between dissenters and the Church of England continued for the first decade of the eighteenth century in those parishes in which the Ministry Act had mandated taxpayer support.<sup>69</sup> The SPG's policy of confrontation and retaliation only exacerbated conditions between the Anglican and dissenting churches. In other parishes not included under the Ministry Act, the Church of England was well supported by its parishioners. But it is unlikely that the SPG converted many dissenters. Such conversions, always reported in missionaries' correspondences, rarely appeared throughout the century. The number of dissenters in the

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>68</sup> Bartow to the Secretary, Westchester, 14 August 1706, *SPG Papers*, 13: 46.

<sup>69</sup> After 1710, the government adopted a policy of moderation toward dissenters. As a result, opposition to the Church of England waned.

colony, moreover, increased as the eighteenth century progressed.<sup>70</sup> The SPG's success, therefore, was rooted in its ability to supply clerics to Anglican populations, not in conversion.

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<sup>70</sup> Kammen, Colonial New York, p. 222.



## III

Shortly after his arrival in South Carolina, in 1706, SPG missionary Francis Le Jau felt obliged to "undeceive the world" about the colony. The Society should not hesitate to send its missionaries, Le Jau informed its secretary, for in "gentility, politeness and a handsome way of living" South Carolina surpassed all that he had seen.<sup>1</sup> This enthusiasm was nowhere evident five years later, however, when Le Jau cautioned the SPG about sending new missionaries to the province. Whomever the Society would send, he wrote, must be willing to endure "great hardships and crosses."<sup>2</sup> The people of South Carolina were ambitious "to rule and command their ministers," and even he had experienced "some pretty rough usage."<sup>3</sup>

Le Jau was a member of the first contingent of missionaries dispatched to South Carolina. They came to a small but heterogeneous colony where frontier conditions had hindered the development of organized religion. This changed in 1704 and 1706 when religious imperialism and political opportunism merged to establish Anglicanism as the colony's state religion. As constructed under both

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<sup>1</sup> Le Jau to the Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 2 Dec 1706, SPG Papers, 16: 142.

<sup>2</sup> Le Jau to the Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina 12 April 1711, Ibid., 17: 36.

<sup>3</sup> Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 10 July 1711, Ibid., 17: 46.

establishment acts, the Church of England was a lay-controlled institution. The SPG and its missionaries labored under this institution, sending more clerics to South Carolina than any other colony except New York.

In the early 1700s, South Carolina possessed between 5,000 and 6,000 white inhabitants. Of that number, approximately half were dissenters. Presbyterians, both English and Scotch, comprised the largest segment of the dissenter population with nearly 2,000 members. Comprising several hundred, French Huguenots were the second-largest dissenting group. A small number of Quakers, Anabaptists, and New England Congregationalists also lived in the colony. South Carolina's largest non-dissenting group were Anglicans. With approximately 1,800 members, Anglicans were often migrants from England and Barbados, with the latter constituting the majority.<sup>4</sup>

For both dissenting and non-dissenting groups, economic opportunity constituted the leading reason behind the migration to South Carolina.<sup>5</sup> But dissenting groups were also influenced by the proprietors' guarantee of religious freedom. Beginning as early as 1666, South Carolina's proprietors published a series of promotional pamphlets,

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<sup>4</sup> Sirmans, South Carolina Political History, p. 75; Nelson "Anglican Missions," p. 198. A small, but undetermined, number of Catholics and Jews also resided in the province.

<sup>5</sup> This was even true for the French Huguenots, who had been persecuted and exiled for their religious beliefs. Richard M. Golden, The Huguenot Connection: The Edict of Nantes, its Revocation, and Early French Migration to South Carolina, (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), p. 68.

distributed throughout the British Empire and in various European countries. Prospective settlers were invited to Carolina where they were promised "full and complete liberty of conscience." No religion was to be mocked or profaned; no person was to be derided or questioned about his religious beliefs.<sup>6</sup>

In 1669, these principles were incorporated into the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina. Although proclaiming the Church of England to be Carolina's state church, the Constitutions granted a degree of religious toleration exceeded only by that of Rhode Island. Colonists were simply required to believe in "a God" and to worship the deity publicly and respectfully. Any seven persons who joined together, stated their religious beliefs, and formed a church were permitted to worship as they desired.<sup>7</sup> Economic opportunity was granted to all freemen; and political opportunity awaited all who met various property requirements for voting and office holding.<sup>8</sup>

While religious toleration encouraged population heterogeneity, few clergy were apparently interested in South Carolina. The founders of the Presbyterian and Baptist churches both arrived in the colony by

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<sup>6</sup> Alexander S. Salley, Jr., ed., Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650-1708 (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> Indians were even granted religious freedom.

<sup>8</sup> Sirmans, South Carolina Political History, pp. 13-14.

happenstance.<sup>9</sup> No cleric accompanied the first Huguenot migration to the colony.<sup>10</sup> And the first Anglican minister the colonists attempted to recruit for the colony, during the 1670s, declined the position.<sup>11</sup> By the 1690s, there were perhaps five ministers in the colony.<sup>12</sup>

Of course, South Carolina had little to offer clergy. In 1701, only North Carolina possessed fewer inhabitants.<sup>13</sup> This underpopulated frontier region possessed only one town during the eighteenth century, Charles Town, where most of the colony's inhabitants lived.<sup>14</sup> South Carolina was also an unhealthy province: it was one where "fever and ague" and other diseases not only seasoned new inhabitants, but continued to afflict colonists throughout the colonial period.<sup>15</sup> Lastly, South Carolina's geographical location afforded its inhabitants little protection. To the west, South Carolinians faced potential danger from the French in

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<sup>9</sup> For example, the minister who founded the Presbyterian church in South Carolina was the victim of a shipwreck; the first Baptist minister who came to the colony was an exile from New England. Edward McCrady, The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1897), pp. 335, 700.

<sup>10</sup> Golden, Huguenot Connection, p. 130.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-2.

<sup>12</sup> Golden, Huguenot Connection, p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> Greene and Harrington, American Population before the Federal Census, pp. 4, 156, 172.

<sup>14</sup> The colony's second town was not established after 1710. McCrady, History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, p. 493

<sup>15</sup> "Fever and ague" was a contemporary phrase for malaria. For additional information on illness in South Carolina see Wood, Black Majority, pp. 63-91.

Louisiana; to the south, the colony bordered Florida until the 1730s, when Georgia was founded.

South Carolina's small population, its lack of urban life, and location all hindered the development of organized religion. Of the various religious groups, however, the Church of England possessed the best opportunity to succeed. Anglicans comprised the largest segment of the colony's white population. This population was concentrated in one county, Berkeley, where many of the South Carolina's most affluent and politically powerful individuals resided. Finally, the colony's proprietors had promised to advance Anglicanism. Under South Carolina's charter, the proprietors were to build "churches, chapels, and oratories" for worship and they were to secure Anglican ministers for the province.<sup>16</sup>

But Anglicanism also grew slowly, for it could not escape many of the problems that hindered the growth of organized religion. The inability to attract clergy, in fact, was perhaps more severe for Anglicans. The American colonies were dependent on Great Britain for ordained Anglican clergy. But few Anglican clerics desired colonial posts. Despite the efforts of the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, only a portion of colonial posts were filled during seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup> And these posts were located

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<sup>16</sup> McCrady, History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, pp. 696-7; 66-7.

<sup>17</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 208.



primarily in Virginia and Maryland, where the Church of England was also established.<sup>18</sup> South Carolina could not compete with the more affluent and populous colonies. Nor did it compete well against any colony. Of the 120 ministers between 1690 and 1700 who selected colonial posts, only two listed South Carolina as their destination.<sup>19</sup>

The colony's proprietors also did little to attract clergy or to fulfill their other responsibilities to advance Anglicanism. They built no institutions for religious worship. And the proprietors were only slightly better at recruiting Anglican ministers. After their initial attempt in the 1670s, the proprietors did not recruit another Anglican cleric until the 1690s, when they procured two. This sudden interest came at a time when the proprietors' hegemony in the province was being challenged in Britain and in South Carolina.<sup>20</sup>

Anglican religious development came primarily from South Carolinians themselves. In the 1680s, South Carolina's Anglicans built the colony's first church, St. Philip's, on donated land.<sup>21</sup> Later, land was donated for a

<sup>18</sup> John Clement, "Clergymen Licensed Overseas by the Bishops of London, 1696-1710 and 1715-1716," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 16 (1947): 320. Between 1690 and 1700, Virginia and Maryland received 42.5 percent of Anglican priests who departed from Great Britain for the colonies. Barbados was the third-highest colony, ten percent. See Ibid., pp. 322-46.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 322-346.

<sup>20</sup> McCrady, History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, p. 301.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-2, 334, 410-11.

parsonage and glebe. By 1700, the parsonage was built and the colony's Anglicans had spearheaded an act to maintain the church and to provide its rector with a £150 annual salary as well as various amenities.<sup>22</sup>

Given the many problems confronting Anglicans, the SPG's formation should have marked the beginning of the Church of England's expansion in South Carolina. In 1701, however, the Society received only one request for a missionary. Thomas Nairne, the colony's Indian agent, and Robert Stevens, a fellow Anglican, asked the SPG to send a cleric to minister to the Yamassee tribe.<sup>23</sup> The Society responded, dispatching Samuel Thomas in 1702, but did not receive additional requests. For nearly four years, Thomas labored alone as the Society's only missionary in South Carolina.

But Thomas did not minister to the Yamassee. Shortly after his arrival, Thomas visited the home of the colony's governor, Sir Nathaniel Johnson.<sup>24</sup> Johnson informed the missionary that current developments within the colony had rendered his mission impossible.<sup>25</sup> Johnson then offered Thomas an alternative post among the colony's white and slave population. Agreeing, Thomas spent the next three

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 334.

<sup>23</sup> Crane, *Southern Frontier*, p. 145.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Thomas to Dr. John Woodward, Carolina, 10 March 1703/04, *SPG Papers*, 16: 81-2.

<sup>25</sup> South Carolina had recently been invaded by the Spanish. At Thomas' arrival, the colony was preparing a retaliatory expedition and were utilizing the Yamassee in the assault. Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years*, 1: 12.

years living in the governor's residence, serving as his chaplain, and tending to three congregations located along the Cooper River.<sup>26</sup>

During this time, Thomas wrote to the Society about the need for Anglican clerics in the province. Thomas stressed the religiosity of South Carolinian Anglicans and noted that his work had effected a reformation of manners.<sup>27</sup> The inhabitants of Goose Creek particularly impressed Thomas, describing them as "ye best and most numerous congregation in all Carolina...." Preaching there in 1704, at the inhabitants' request, Thomas noted that the service was so well attended that many were forced to stand outside the church door to hear him.<sup>28</sup> In addition to stressing the religiosity of South Carolinians, Thomas warned the SPG how detrimental the clerical shortage had been to Anglicans. Denied the benefit of a resident minister, some of his parishioners had forsaken Anglicanism. But through his constant ministrations, Thomas hoped that some of them could be reclaimed.<sup>29</sup>

Though not insensitive to Thomas's pleas, the Society needed evidence that its ministrations were wanted. Other

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas to Woodward, Carolina, 10 March 1703/04, SPG Papers, 16: 81-2.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas to Woodward, Carolina, 10 March 1703/04, Ibid., 16: 82

<sup>28</sup> Thomas to Treasurer, Carolina, 3 May 1704, Ibid., 16: 83. Goose Creek was not one of the parishes where Thomas usually preached.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas to Woodward, Carolina, 10 March 1703/04, Ibid., 16: 82.

colonies provided this evidence, petitioning the SPG for clerics. Except for Thomas's assurances that missionaries were desired, the Society received neither petitions nor offers of financial support from colonists. Even Thomas's own congregations had not pledged themselves to the missionary.<sup>30</sup>

There are many plausible explanations for this apparent religious indifference. It is possible that South Carolina Anglicans were simply not interested in the Society's missionaries. Irreligiosity has traditionally been employed to characterize the colony's inhabitants, and it cannot be discounted as a factor.<sup>31</sup> But it is easy to label the colony as irreligious and, in doing so, ignore other factors that may have engendered irreligiously or given a false appearance of it. Frontier conditions and proprietary neglect, for example, created an environment hostile to the development of organized religion. Religious ignorance was one result; religious apathy was another. Both traits were reported by early SPG missionaries.<sup>32</sup>

Whatever factors hindered Anglican development, this changed during the early 1700s in the drive for

<sup>30</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 213.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Carl Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 1952. For an alternative interpretation, see Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt. "Church Adherence in the Eighteenth-Century British American Colonies," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d. ser., 39 (April, 1982): 245-86.

<sup>32</sup> William Dun to Secretary, Colleton County, South Carolina, 24 Nov 1707, SPG Papers, 16: 182-3.

establishment, spearheaded by the colony's "topping men."<sup>33</sup> These men comprised a group of politically prominent Anglicans, many of whom lived in the Goose Creek area. Religion was important to these men. So too was political power. Both interests merged in 1700 when this group formed a Church Party to promote establishment. In 1704, Governor Johnson, head of the Church Party, engineered a political coup that gave Anglicans a majority in the House of Commons.<sup>34</sup> In the same year two pivotal acts passed that attempted to insure Church Party rule. The first eliminated dissenters from the assembly. The so-called Exclusion Act required all assemblymen to have either taken communion within the Church of England during the past year or to swear not to have taken it in any other religion for two years.<sup>35</sup> The second was the Church Act of 1704. Establishing the Church of England in the province, the act provided the organizational and financial structure to insure Anglican advancement throughout South Carolina.<sup>36</sup>

For the Church Act to succeed, however, the colony needed Anglican ministers. Turning to Samuel Thomas, the government of South Carolina commissioned the missionary to

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<sup>33</sup> The name "topping men" was used by several South Carolina missionaries to designate the dominant local Anglican politicians.

<sup>34</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, pp. 165-6; Weir, Colonial South Carolina, pp. 76-7; Sirmans, South Carolina Political History, p. 87.

<sup>35</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," pp. 201-2.

<sup>36</sup> For information the church act's features, see Ver Steeg, Southern Mosaic, p. 47.

procure five ministers for the province, one for each of the parishes established under the act.<sup>37</sup> In 1705, Thomas journeyed to England where he presented a memorial on the state of religion in South Carolina to the Society. In that memorial, Thomas argued that Anglicanism's future was dependent on SPG intervention. Dissenting clergy were infiltrating the colony, and Anglicans, without other recourse, might soon apostatize if the SPG did not send clerics to the colony. Thomas praised the Church Act for exemplifying the government's "zeal and affection for the Church of England," but warned that the legislation alone would not advance Anglicanism.<sup>38</sup> South Carolina was "but an Infant Colony" with limited financial resources. For clerics to leave a comfortable post in England for the wilderness of South Carolina, they would need additional incentives. And so, Thomas urged that the SPG send its missionaries to South Carolina and supplement their income until the colony could pass additional legislation to augment clerical salaries.<sup>39</sup>

Thomas's memorial spurred the Society into action.

Though much of the information presented was not new, the

<sup>37</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 13.

<sup>38</sup> Samuel Thomas, 1706, SPG Papers, 17: 84. That "zeal" was rooted in the act's passage, which, Thomas argued, was difficult both because of the colony's small treasury and its large dissenter population. Thomas did not mention, however, that the church act was passed after dissenters had been excluded from the Commons House of Assembly by the Exclusion Act.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 84-6.

memorial carried the sanction of South Carolina's government. That sanction and the Church Act itself provided the SPG with all the evidence it needed. By January, 1706, the Society had reappointed Thomas and assigned four additional missionaries to the colony. All were guaranteed support for three years.<sup>40</sup>

Shortly after committing itself to South Carolina, however, the Society regretted its decision. Upon closer examination of the Church Act the Society discovered that ecclesiastical powers had been usurped. Particularly offensive was a clause that authorized the appointment of twenty lay commissioners whose power included removing clergy. Denouncing the clause for rendering clergy "too much subjected to the Pleasures of the People," the SPG retaliated immediately.<sup>41</sup> To cut off the supply of clerics, the Society issued an order in February, 1706, that additional missionaries would not be appointed to South Carolina until ecclesiastical jurisdiction was resumed and the offensive clause removed from the act. Though the Society decided not to revoke its recent appointments, it ruled that missionaries were to serve only one year if the legislation was not revised.<sup>42</sup> The SPG then referred the

<sup>40</sup> Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 22 April 1708, SPG Papers, 16: 205.

<sup>41</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 13.

<sup>42</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 217

matter to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London for further action.<sup>43</sup>

Opposing the principle of lay rule exemplified in the creation of the commissioners' office, the Society learned about the consequences of such power in the ouster of Edward Marston. The rector at St. Philip's in Charles Town, Marston was removed from his office after he had denounced the church and exclusion acts. In February, 1706, two letters defending Marston were sent from South Carolina, and each received the Society's attention. Marston defended his behavior by arguing that he had only opposed the church act because it violated the "Canons and Constitutions" of the Church of England, citing specifically the creation of the lay commission.<sup>44</sup> Robert Stevens, a fellow Anglican, informed the SPG that Marston was a man of impeccable character, whose only flaw was to "encourage...virtue without respect of persons."<sup>45</sup> Armed with these accounts, the Society believed that Marston's ouster was unjustified and launched an investigation into it.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 13.

<sup>44</sup> Edward Marston to Secretary, Charles Town, South Carolina, 25 February 1705/06, SPG Papers, 16: 104.

<sup>45</sup> Robert Stevens to the Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 21 February 1705/06, Ibid., 16: 102.

<sup>46</sup> Though Marston was removed because of his opposition to the church and exclusion acts, he was not an innocent victim of South Carolina politics. Marston possessed an argumentative disposition that caused the cleric numerous problems in South Carolina and elsewhere. While in England, for example, Marston was a Non-juror imprisoned once imprisoned for railing against the government. McCrady, History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, p. 421. For information on the Society's investigation, see



While the Society was investigating Marston's ouster, South Carolina dissenters began their own protest against the church and exclusion acts. Their agent, Joseph Boone, used Marston's ouster to attack the church act in its most vulnerable area--the lay commission. Sensitive to the lay commission clause and to Marston's ouster, the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, helped Boone to advance his case before the House of Lords.<sup>47</sup> The Lords were also receptive to Boone's complaints against the exclusion act, for they had rejected an occasional conformity bill in Parliament. That bill, like South Carolina's exclusion act, sought to make conformity to the Church of England a criterion for office holding.<sup>48</sup>

In March, 1706, the House of Lords presented a memorial to Queen Anne asking that both acts be rejected. The lay commissioners' power to remove clergy, the Lords noted, was "not consonant to Reason, Repugnant to the Laws of the Realm, and destructive to the Constitutions of the Church of England." The exclusion act was denounced as an example of "arbitrary oppression."<sup>49</sup> Three months later, Queen Anne voided both acts.

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SPG Papers, 16: 110-111. These letters pertain to the charges Thomas and Stevens brought against Thomas.

<sup>47</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," pp. 202-3.

<sup>48</sup> McCrady, History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, pp. 426-8.

<sup>49</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 166. For additional discussion on why the exclusion act was repealed, see Ver Steeg, Southern Mosaic, pp. 44-6.

Fearing that additional dissenter opposition would block Anglican establishment in the province, South Carolina's government worked quickly to formulate a new church act. On 6 November 1706, the church act passed the House of Commons, laying the foundation for Anglican expansion throughout South Carolina. The act divided the colony into ten parishes, provided salaries for Anglican ministers, and allocated funds for churches, parsonages, and glebes. Financial support for the Church of England was obtained from a tax on hides and furs. If these sources were insufficient, the act also enabled a tax to be assessed on individual families within each parish.<sup>50</sup>

The act included three concessions to the clergy. The first protected ministers' private property. Specifically, the act specified that ministers were to retain their parsonages, glebes, and slaves as long as such property had been given to them by either the SPG or their parishioners.<sup>51</sup> This clause was undoubtedly formulated with Marston's case in mind.<sup>52</sup> The other two concessions increased clergy's influence over parish affairs. Under the new act, clergy were eligible to vote in the election of church warden and were entitled to sit in on vestry meetings.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Church Act of 1706, 30 Nov 1706, SPG Papers, 16: 121.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Marston to Secretary, Charles Town, South Carolina, 25 Feb 1705/06, SPG Papers, 16: 104.

<sup>53</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, pp. 166-7.

But the office of lay commissioners remained under the act. Though no longer able to discipline clergy or deprive them of income, lay commissioners still possessed considerable power.<sup>54</sup> Their responsibilities included allocating funds for church and parsonage construction, licensing Anglican ministers, assigning them to parishes, and settling disputed elections of clergy. Under the act, the next most powerful group was the vestry, which oversaw the maintenance and repair of religious buildings.<sup>55</sup>

The 1706 act, in fact, reaffirmed the primacy of South Carolina's laity to control its religious life. This is evidenced particularly by the popular election of clergy. All Anglican freeholders, taxpayers, or those attending the Church of England who met other qualifications voted in the popular election of clergy. The election was held after a trial period for each Anglican minister. During the trial period, the clergy received no salary from the provincial government, for they were not deemed qualified under the 1706 act.<sup>56</sup>

The popular election of ministers would later offend to the Society. But the SPG initially expressed satisfaction with the new act.<sup>57</sup> With the removal clause no longer an

<sup>54</sup> There was, however, one effort to reinstitute this power. See Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, 13 June 1710, SPG Papers, 16: 267.

<sup>55</sup> Church Act, 30 November 1706, Ibid., 16: 121-2.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>57</sup> Secretary to Governor and Council, Petty France, Westminster, Ibid., 16: 156.

issue, the Society had achieved its goal. Upon closer examination, however, the Society observed the clause authorizing the popular election of ministers and objected to it. The act not yet ratified, the SPG could have pressed for its elimination as the organization had done with the removal clause. This time, however, the Society choose to compromise. In 1707, the SPG ordered that henceforth South Carolina congregations were to petition for missionaries and agree to accept whomever would be sent.<sup>58</sup>

The imperialistic, expansionistic nature of the SPG undoubtedly influenced its decision to compromise with South Carolina. The Church of England had no power over religious policy in the colonies. The SPG, as its missionary branch, operated with limited financial resources to make the Church of England's dream of Ecclesia Anglicana possible. Establishment offered the Church of England both the power to influence a colony's religious development and the financial support to expand Anglicanism to a degree not otherwise attainable. Dissenter agitation may have additionally affected the Society's decision to compromise. In London, the dissenter's agent was once again protesting

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<sup>58</sup> Secretary to Governor Johnson, Petty France, Westminster, 2 December 1707, Ibid., 16: 190. Some congregations did petition after this, but, in practice, the Society also tended to send missionaries upon the recommendations of its commissaries and South Carolina's governors and members of council. Nelson, "Anglican Missions," pp. 218-19. For an example of one such petition, see Wardens and vestry of Christ Church Parish to the Society, South Carolina, 21 September 1711, SPG Papers, 17: 62-3.

establishment, this time agitating for the new act's repeal. In South Carolina, dissenters were vehemently protesting the new legislation. So seriously were both protests taken by South Carolina's government that it wrote several letters to the Society pleading it signify approval of the new act.<sup>59</sup>

The SPG did not protest the new act, nor, despite dissenter-opposition, was it overturned by Parliament.<sup>60</sup> The 1706 act, with some minor additions, became the basis for Anglican establishment in South Carolina until the Revolutionary War. Even more importantly, the act enabled the Church of England to gain many adherents, especially at the beginning of the century. With the financial and organizational support achieved under the act, the Society was able to spread Anglicanism and bring organized religion to the colony. Even though Anglicans never achieved a majority in the province, the 1706 act nevertheless established the Church of England as an influential religion in the South Carolina.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Governor and Council to the Society, Charles Town, South Carolina, 13 February 1707/08, *Ibid.*, 16: 197-9.

<sup>60</sup> Dissenter opposition to Anglican establishment continued for several years after the 1706 act was approved. Though not able to effect major changes in the 1706 legislation, dissenters were able to remove some of the benefits accorded Anglican ministers and the Church of England under the new act. See, for example, Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 13 June 1710, *Ibid.*, 16: 266-7.

<sup>61</sup> Part of this influence resulted from the secular power of Anglicanism in South Carolina. Churchwardens, for example, were responsible for holding elections for members of the Commons House. Churchwardens and vestrymen, moreover, dispensed poor relief. See Weir, *Colonial South Carolina*, p. 221.

The 1706 act itself and its implementation included various compromises for the Society and the Church of England. But the popular election of clergy, which so worried SPG officials, was an inconvenience rather than an obstacle. Only one missionary, Ebenezer Taylor, had difficulty getting elected.<sup>62</sup> A former Presbyterian minister in South Carolina, Taylor possessed a disputatious personality. Within four years of his 1712 election, Taylor had not only alienated his congregation over questions of lay control, but also fellow SPG missionaries, who desired his removal to North Carolina.<sup>63</sup> For other missionaries, election problems centered on gathering together the colony's lay commissioners. Only these men were empowered to arrange congregational elections, and they often moved slowly. Elections generally took several months to be arranged, and missionaries were responsible for contacting each commissioner.<sup>64</sup>

Though inconveniencing clergy, popular elections may have actually aided the Society's conversion efforts. Because clergy were subject to popular election, they were less likely to be disputatious and more willing to adopt

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<sup>62</sup> Frank J. Klingberg, Carolina Chronicle: The Papers of Commissary Gideon Johnston, 1707-1716 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1946), pp. 112-13.

<sup>63</sup> Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 224. For Taylor's alienation from his congregation and his fellow missionaries, see Klingberg, Carolina Chronicle, pp. 153, 157, 160, 161, 162, 164-5.

<sup>64</sup> Klingberg, Carolina Chronicle, p. 60.

behavior that pleased their congregations.<sup>65</sup> Though popular elections empowered South Carolina's laity, moreover, it is unlikely colonists abused this privilege. This is suggested by the various problems surrounding Taylor's ministry, the only missionary almost rejected by his congregation.<sup>66</sup>

But lay authority did cause other problems, however, many of which were interconnected with providing clergy with housing and other necessities. Though these problems may have been rooted in the colony's own economic conditions, missionaries complained frequently that their material needs were not being met. Le Jau, for instance, waited for nearly four years until his house was completed. Throughout the time, the missionary asserted that senseless quarrelling within his congregation was obstructing his parsonage's completion. Le Jau also informed the Society, in 1710, that his glebe lands had been reduced. Though allocated two hundred acres, Le Jau only received 125, which he accepted without protest "for peace sake."<sup>67</sup> That same year, another Anglican cleric, James Gignillant, resigned from his parish because of poverty.<sup>68</sup> Shortly thereafter, he married an affluent, elderly widow.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See Ibid., pp. 59-60.

<sup>66</sup> Another Anglican cleric, though not a missionary, also alienated his congregation. As in Taylor's instance, however, the minister had engaged in confrontational, abusive behavior that caused him problems with the Society. See references to John Maitland in Ibid., pp. 49-51, 80-1.

<sup>67</sup> Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, 13 June 1710, SPG Papers, 16: 267.

<sup>68</sup> James Gignillant to Secretary, 1711, Ibid., 17: 106. Before resigning, however, Gignillant had attempted to

Of course, missionaries received a salary from the provincial government under the 1706 act. But such funds were insufficient to support missionaries, especially those with families.<sup>70</sup> To live comfortably, clerics depended upon voluntary subscriptions from their parishioners. Such subscriptions, when paid at all, were meager early in the century. This was true of both Anglican and dissenter-dominated parishes.<sup>71</sup> And missionaries, afraid of alienating their parishioners, were invariably hesitant to press for subscriptions.<sup>72</sup>

The 1706 act entailed other compromises for the SPG and the Church of England. These compromises yielded converts,

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procure a salary from the SPG, but was refused. Though not dissatisfied with his work, the Society itself was in the midst of its own financial problems. See Secretary to Gignillant, Petty France, Westminster 20 Febraury, 1710/11, Ibid., 17: 26.

<sup>69</sup> Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, 10 July 1711, Ibid., 17: 46. Alexander Wood was another missionary who experienced severe poverty. See Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, 12 April 1711, Ibid., 17: 36-7.

<sup>70</sup> Under the 1706 act, missionaries were paid in local currency, greatly devalued at the beginning of the century. Manufactured goods in South Carolina, moreover, were sold at an inflated price. The inflated price of goods caused one missionary, William Dunn, to request that over half of his salary be purchased from a list of goods he had submitted to the Society. William Dun to Secretary, Charles Town, 21 April, 1707, Ibid., 16: 151.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, Robert Maule to Secretary, South Carolina, 21 July 1708, Ibid., SPG Papers, 16: 210; and Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, 13 March 1707/08, Ibid., 16: 203.

<sup>72</sup> Despite such difficulties, a few missionaries were able to become large landholders and amass some wealth as the century progressed. Upon his death in 1717, for example, Le Jau bequeathed over two hundred acres to his son and two of his daughters had married into prominent Anglican families. Nelson, "Anglican Missions," p. 223.



however, and enabled Anglicanism to prosper. The conversion of two Huguenot parishes, St. Dennis, Orange Quarter, and St. James, Santee, under the 1706 act was one such compromise. Significant differences separated French Calvinism from Anglicanism. In permitting the two Huguenot parishes to convert to Anglicanism, the Church of England ignored the theological differences between the two religions and accepted instead an outward conformity. Required to use the Book of Common Prayer as evidence of conformity to the Church of England, French Huguenots were permitted to maintain their theological distinctions.<sup>73</sup> And French Huguenots were given latitude to reject certain Anglican practices, such as making the sign of the cross.

Anglicans also eased dissenters' transition to the Church of England. Though little specific information exists, missionaries reportedly engaged in various practices that compromised Anglican rubrics and canons. Much of this information was reported by Commissary Gideon Johnston, a high churchman who disliked such practices. One Anglican cleric, Johnston stated, delivered his sermons extemporaneously "and in all points conformable to the usual Methods of Dissenters." His parishioners so admired the cleric's methods, particularly the Presbyterians of his congregation, that he quickly gained a large following. Johnston also reported baptismal practices that missionaries adopted to please their parishioners. Some Anglican

<sup>73</sup> Nelson, Anglican Missions, 207.

ministers, he was informed, had baptized children without making the sign of the cross or requiring godparents as witnesses.<sup>74</sup>

Such concessions probably did not disturb many SPG missionaries.<sup>75</sup> Popular within the Church of England itself, Latitudinarianism also dominated colonial Anglican religious thought.<sup>76</sup> And in South Carolina, latitudinarian attitudes prevailed among both Anglicans and dissenters. In 1728, for instance, South Carolina missionary Brian Hunt described his congregation as "true blue Protestants of the modern Stamp, or Latitudinarian in Protestantism" who did "not imagine much real difference in Principle 'twixt Churchmen & Dissenters of all Denominations."<sup>77</sup>

Frontier conditions probably encouraged latitudinarian attitudes. SPG missionaries were often the first resident clergy in their parishes, laboring in mixed congregations.

<sup>74</sup> Klingberg, Carolina Chronicle, pp. 49, 56-7. For additional information on practices SPG missionaries adopted to please their parishioners, see Woolverton, Anglican Missions, n. 46, p. 274 and S. Charles Bolton, "South Carolina and the Reverend Doctor Francis Le Jau: Southern Society and the Conscience of an Anglican Missionary," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 40 (1971): 69.

<sup>75</sup> In 1707, for example, Le Jau criticized a Presbyterian pamphlet not for its statements on religion, but rather for its stand on moral, economic, and political issues. See Bolton, "South Carolina and Francis Le Jau," 68.

<sup>76</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 44.

<sup>77</sup> Bonomi and Eistenstadt, "Church Adherence," 247. See also Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 159. As the eighteenth century progressed, moreover, the tendency to minimize religious distinctions increased among South Carolina's inhabitants. Weir, Colonial South Carolina, p. 221.

With South Carolina's religious and ethnic heterogeneity, moreover, latitudinarianism was also a necessity. Even only Commissary Johnston, reported that missionaries could not strictly adhere to Anglican practices because of the colony's religious diversity.<sup>78</sup>

But the Society also employed other tactics to convert dissenters that did not compromise the rubrics and canons of Anglicanism. In 1710, Johnston proposed a plan to the Society designed to "strike at the root of the Schism..." In a probable reference to theological disputation, the commissary noted that the "shortest way" with dissenters was to "attack" their ministers and thereby discredit them. Such congregations, now without a minister, would then be tended to by Anglican ones. Once exposed to Anglicanism, the commissary asserted, conversion would soon follow. If, however, Anglican "attack[s]" persuaded dissenting ministers to convert, Johnston continued, the Church of England would still benefit. As the leaders of their flocks, these ministers would use their influence to persuade their congregations to join Anglicanism.<sup>79</sup>

Johnston's plan was not merely speculative. Even before the commissary wrote to the SPG about it, he had already made overtures to the four dissenting clergy who resided in South Carolina. And, in 1711, Johnston convinced one of these ministers to convert. That minister was

<sup>78</sup> Klingberg, Carolina Chronicle, p. 55.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 53-4.

Taylor, already discussed, who was elected rector of an Anglican congregation one year after converting.<sup>80</sup> The only dissenter minister Johnston secured, Taylor's failure as an Anglican rector may have convinced Johnston not to try again.

But Johnston's "shortest way" with dissenters was not typical of Anglican conversion strategy. As in other colonies, missionaries in South Carolina focused their efforts on removing prejudices against Anglicanism and cultivating dissenters' goodwill. To achieve these ends, the SPG utilized its traditional tactics. Tracts designed to educate dissenters on Anglicanism were distributed throughout the province.<sup>81</sup> Missionaries also preached Anglican doctrine from their pulpits and were always ready to answer dissenters' questions. Missionaries also avoided disputation. Though willing to dispute doctrine with dissenting clergy and laymen, missionaries rarely engaged in such behavior.

For SPG clerics, the reasonableness and superiority of Anglicanism would be evident to dissenters once they had been exposed to it.<sup>82</sup> As such, missionaries believed that they were teachers first, defenders second. This conversion methodology is exemplified in Le Jau's correspondence to the Society. Writing in the early 1700s,

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-7, 112-13.

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, Robert Maule to Secretary, Charles Town, 28 November 1707, SPG Papers, 16: 186-7.

<sup>82</sup> Bolton, "South Carolina and Francis Le Jau," 68.

Le Jau noted that those who possessed "a true desire to serve God and be saved" attended his church. Avoiding "matters of controversy," Le Jau sought instead to "Edify" dissenters on Anglican doctrine and "give satisfaction to their doubts...."<sup>83</sup>

That the Society relied on persuasion rather than disputation undoubtedly encouraged dissenters to convert at the beginning of the century when few nonconformist ministers resided in the colony. The popular election of clergy and other methods of lay control may have also encouraged conversion and perhaps eased dissenters' acceptance of Anglicanism. The Church of England in South Carolina was built on a series of compromises for the Society, some inconvenient, others painful. But such compromises not only yielded converts for Anglicans, but also enabled the Church of England to grow in South Carolina.

This growth can be seen in a 1724 survey of Anglicanism. The survey was the most extensive one during the eighteenth century, and it provides an evaluation for the Society's early efforts in South Carolina. Examining the eight parishes then present in the colony, the survey reported that in each one over thirty percent of the inhabitants attended Anglican services. In two of the three

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<sup>83</sup> Le Jau to Philip Stubs, Goose Creek, 23 Sept, 1707, SPG Papers, 16: 178; Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, 15 April 1707, Ibid, 16: 148; Le Jau to Secretary, St James, Goose Creek, 20 October 1709, 16: 151.

parishes in which Anglicans possessed a majority population, attendance exceeded eighty percent. All totalled, over sixty percent of the colony's inhabitants regularly worshipped in Anglican churches.<sup>84</sup> This was the largest percentage reported in any colony, north or south.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Bonomi and Eistenstadt, "Church Adherence," 256-7.

<sup>85</sup> For the entire survey, see *Ibid.*, 276-83.

### Chapter IV

#### The Conversion of Indians and Slaves

Christianity is a universalist, proselytizing religion.<sup>1</sup> The Propagation of the Gospel's early founding, their efforts were expressed by Samuel Purchas, a Puritan cleric and chronicler who succeeded Richard Hakluyt as advocate of English overseas expansion. Regarding the New World peoples and, perhaps, seeking justification for their existence, Purchas wrote that the blacks Negro, duskie Liasia, ash-colored Indians, and colored American, should with the white Europeans be united under the great Shepherds. The universalism of Purchas' vision was also stressed by the Church, and the SPG, whose missionary efforts were directed to bring all the peoples of the world into the Christian fold. But for the SPG, the "great Shepherds" was Anglicanism, the "great Shepherds" was the Church of England.

The SPG tempered Purchas's mandate to convert and balance other-worldly and this-worldly concerns. The world's concerns focused on biblical and native religious practices.

1 Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: American Imperialism Toward the Pacific, 1520-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 31.  
 2 Woclive, *Colonial Anglicanism*, p. 67

## IV

Christianity is a "universalist, proselytizing religion."<sup>1</sup> Almost one hundred years before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel's (SPG) founding, these tenets were expressed by Samuel Purchas, a Puritan cleric and chronicler who succeeded Richard Hakluyt in advancing English overseas exploration. Examining the diversity of peoples and, perhaps, seeking justification for their existence, Purchas stated that "the blacke Negro, duskie Libyan, ash-colored Indian, olive-colored American, should with the Whiter European become one sheep-fold, under one great Sheeperd..."<sup>2</sup> The universalism of Purchas' vision was also shared by the Anglican Church, and the SPG, as its missionary organ, was given a mandate to bring all the peoples of the British colonies into "one sheep-fold." But for the SPG, the "sheep-fold" was Anglicanism; its "great Sheeperd," the British crown.

The SPG tempered Christianity's mandate to convert by balancing other-worldly with this-worldly concerns. Other-worldly concerns focused on eradicating native religions--

<sup>1</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism, p. 67.



or, to the Society, heathenism. Heathenism provided a counter to Christianity, a challenge to its universality, and a mandate to convert.<sup>3</sup> This-worldly concerns centered on native behavior. Rooted in Christian theology lay a code of behavior that dictated cultural and sexual mores. These strictures often required blacks and Indians to forsake their own customs. In addition, Christian concepts such as obedience and loyalty were defined according to the roles each group assumed in eighteenth-century colonial society.

The roles each group occupied affected not only the content of conversion, but also its context. For the SPG to adopt a program, certain advantages were expected to accrue to the white population. This does not mean that the SPG always acted according to colonists' wishes. Nevertheless, the Society always believed its policies benefitted whites. This willingness to disregard colonists' wishes is best demonstrated in the SPG's program for slave conversion. Despite white opposition to Christianization, the Society encouraged all its missionaries to convert the slaves residing within each parish. For the SPG, Christianity redeemed slaves from heathenism and produced better servants. Christian slaves were more obedient and productive, according to the Society, and therefore their conversion should be desired by their masters.

Exacting an influence equally as great was the British Empire. The welfare and protection of the colonies required

<sup>3</sup> Jordan, White Over Black, p. 21.

Indian allies. Society missionaries donned the diplomatic mantles of crown servant and benefactor as they advanced Indian-white relations through the organization's conversion programs. The motivations for converting Indians were similar to converting slaves--to save Indians' souls and to secure Indians' allegiance to the crown. Such allegiance was needed, for colonial frontiers bristled with danger. During the eighteenth century--when Britain, France, and, to a lesser extent Spain, warred for continental hegemony--colonial governments courted Indian tribes as military allies. Securing military allies also established trade relations. Although secondary to defense, trade relations boosted colonial economies and, by extension, Britain's.

Perhaps the best way to understand the role of each group in colonial affairs is to compare how the SPG perceived each group and what conversion policies were accordingly adopted. New York and South Carolina provide a distinctive vantage point for such a comparison. Both were frontier regions vulnerable to foreign attack, and the defense of each was essential for the British Empire's survival. From the late seventeenth century until 1763, New York was a center for imperial rivalry in the colonial wars and skirmishes between Britain and France.<sup>4</sup> As Britain's southernmost colony until the founding of Georgia in 1733, South Carolina defended its southern border against Spanish

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<sup>4</sup> New York was neutral, however, during Queen Anne's War, 1701-13.

Florida and its western one against the French in the Louisiana territory. Indian allies were vital for South Carolina also, but in pattern different from New York's. Both colonies, moreover, were active in the colonial Indian trade.

Both colonies should also be studied because of their large slave populations.<sup>5</sup> As such, a useful analysis of the Society's policy for blacks may be ascertained. In South Carolina, slaves outnumbered whites by 1708, and remained the majority population throughout the colonial period.<sup>6</sup> Though possessing fewer slaves than South Carolina, New York had the highest number of the northern provinces.<sup>7</sup> This was true especially for New York City where one-sixth of the population were black slaves.<sup>8</sup> And, though slave numbers alone did not mandate conversion programs, the Church of England's prominent position in each colony did encourage them. Anglicanism was established in four counties in New York and was the official church of South Carolina.

<sup>5</sup> Although Indian bondsmen were present in both colonies, especially in South Carolina, the chapter will use the generic term "slave" to denote enslaved blacks. Indian slaves will be referred to explicitly as such.

<sup>6</sup> Peter H. Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina: From 1670 through the Stono Rebellion (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), p. 143. For an account of South Carolina's slave population, see Ibid., especially ch. 5, "'More Like Negro Country.'"

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Zilversmit, The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> Kammen, Colonial New York, p. 284.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the SPG's program for Indian and black conversion began in New York and South Carolina. Although all missionaries were expected to convert Indians and blacks, the Society chose these colonies for special conversion programs. New York and South Carolina were the only colonies to receive missionaries assigned to Indian conversion exclusively. The SPG also founded and maintained religious, or "catechizing," schools for slave conversion in each province. To understand the Society's Indian and black programs, therefore, is to examine their implementation in New York and South Carolina.

Most clerics in each colony believed that Indians and blacks were able to be converted. Christian universalism, predicated upon spiritual equality, demanded that all peoples be considered suitable subjects for conversion. Between the concept and the application of this universalism, however, stood the individual missionary and his own encounters with Indians and blacks. For the missionary, conversion was a personal experience. Each group, and every individual within it, had to prove both the capacity to convert and worthiness to be converted.

The Indians demonstrated their capacity to convert in various ways. The most obvious proof was whether a tribe had previously been converted to Christianity. Beginning in the 1650s, Jesuits from New France periodically sent priests in the Indian territory around Albany; at the end of the century, moreover, the Dutch Reformed Church also launched a

small conversion effort in this region. Both churches sought the allegiance of the Iroquois Confederacy. Composed of six tribes--the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora--the Confederacy constituted one of the most formidable Indian military forces in North America during the seventeenth century and remained a key ally and trading partner in the eighteenth.<sup>9</sup>

Christianized Indians in South Carolina were migrants from Spanish Florida. Converted by the Catholic Church, these Indians came to South Carolina at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. Previously exposed to Catholicism and settling in South Carolina in the 1680s, the Yamasee were most frequently mentioned in SPG correspondence as Indians who should be converted to Anglicanism. Similar to the Iroquois, the Yamasee were central to colonial defense and trade; however, unlike the Iroquois, the Yamasee's importance ended abruptly in 1715, when the tribe led a pan-Indian attack in retaliation against the colony's numerous trade abuses. For the Yamasee and Iroquois tribes, the SPG was to replace Catholic with Episcopal doctrine. The goal was to prove to the Indians that Catholicism was in error and to convince them to recant it.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The Tuscarora tribe joined the Confederacy in 1722. Contemporaries also referred to the Iroquois Confederacy as the Five Nations until 1722 and the Six Nations afterwards.

<sup>10</sup> For Le Jau's work with Catholic Indians who had been enslaved, see Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro pp. 16, 18.

Indian religion was also evidence that a tribe could be converted. Regardless of how an individual missionary felt about native religions, they were still belief systems that offered explanations for concepts such as creation and death.<sup>11</sup> When encountering native religions, missionaries analyzed these beliefs, compared them to Christian ones, and extracted common patterns. Such patterns could then form a base for explaining Christian concepts in a theology understandable to Indians. In assessing tribal beliefs, missionaries employed questioning and observation. Since missionaries were untrained in native beliefs and usually depended on interpreters, their assessments of tribal religion were often inaccurate.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, these assessments informed their opinion of native religion and, by implication, of Indians themselves.

The untrained eye of one South Carolina missionary, Francis Le Jau, detected a common ancestry between an Indian tribe and "ancient Judaism." This assessment may have been influenced by Christian universalism: if all peoples shared

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of Indian beliefs, see James Axtell, The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 15-16. For a discussion of how Indians reacted to the differences between native religions and Christianity, see James P. Ronda, "'We Are Well As We Are': An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 34 (1977): 66-82.

<sup>12</sup> That Indians even possessed religious beliefs probably surprised many clerics. See Robert Varnod's comments about Indian religions that appear in Frank J. Klingberg, "The Indian Frontier in South Carolina as Seen by the S.P.G. Missionary," The Journal of Southern History, 5 (1939): 495.

a common descent, evidence of this ancestry was ascertainable through cultural beliefs. Equally important, some tribal practices ostensibly resembled western religious beliefs and customs. For Le Jau, such similarities affirmed that at least one tribe shared its descent with Christianity. In 1710, the missionary recounted to the SPG a tribal dance he had witnessed that excluded women. When Le Jau asked a male Indian why women were excluded, he replied that the dance commemorated "a time wherein Man was made alone and there was no woman." The Indian, placing his hand at his chest, then explained that God made woman from man. Seeking clarification, Le Jau's wife asked the Indian if he meant man's rib. "Yes," the Indian replied.<sup>13</sup> In future visits to an unspecified number of tribes, Le Jau discovered that some Indians possessed a story of a universal flood and practiced circumcision.<sup>14</sup> These incidences convinced the missionary that various tribes could become Christians.

Francis Varnod, also of South Carolina, recorded similar observations about Indian religion. But, unlike Le Jau, Varnod did not believe that Indian religion and Christianity shared a common ancestry. Rather, Varnod

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<sup>13</sup> Klingberg, "Indian Frontier," 482. See also Gerald Goodwin, "Christianity, Civilization, and the Savage: The Anglican Mission to the American Indian," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 42 (June 1973): 99.

<sup>14</sup> Goodwin, "Christianity, Civilization, and the Savage," 99.

characterized Indian religions as "natural," though he believed they shared general elements with western faiths.<sup>15</sup> Varnod regarded these similarities useful. And he found them impressive. One Indian prayer, spoken by a tribal chieftain each morning, so moved Varnod that he noted it "deserved to be printed in gold letters":

Thou chief King of all things let this thy day be a prosperous one to me, and favour me with the Continuance of my being, for I thank thee who regardest me.<sup>16</sup>

Varnod and Le Jau each discerned similarities within native religions that rendered a tribe more likely to accept Christianity. But Indian religions were not monolithic, nor were missionaries' responses uniform. Tribal religions, while a starting point, mattered less than Indian culture and the willingness to accept a missionary. Examining another tribe in 1709, for instance, Le Jau noted that he could not detect the presence of any native religion. No matter, he stated, for the tribe agreed with the missionary about "the duty of praying, and doing good, & eschewing the evil practice of murdering each other...." This rendered the tribe's "souls fit materials which...[might] easily be

<sup>15</sup> Varnod's observations about Indian religions were almost identical to Le Jau's. See Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro in South Carolina, p. 56.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



polished."<sup>17</sup> Another tribe's rejection of Christianity targeted it for scathing condemnations. South Carolina missionary Brian Hunt wrote of his unsuccessful attempt to convert a band of Ittiwans residing in his parish. Perhaps attempting to justify his own failure, Hunt characterized the tribe as lazy, stubborn, and doltish, for they were incapable of understanding Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

Some SPG officials later in the century echoed Hunt's sentiments as Indians proved to be more difficult to convert than blacks.<sup>19</sup> But, though missionaries often claimed blacks were easier to convert than Indians, slave religion and culture were typically not examined. Missionaries instead cited blacks' willingness to learn as evidence of their capacity to convert. These observations were expressed by terms such as blacks' "great forwardness" to accept Christianity.

One missionary who did report on slave religion was Francis Varnod, previously cited for his observations on Indian culture. In 1724, he explained that African religions possessed concepts of "a God," of "a Devil," of temptation, and of punishment. The African deity governed human destiny and chose what role each member of his creation would occupy. That some of his people were

<sup>17</sup> Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 20 October 1709, SPG Papers, 16: 252.

<sup>18</sup> Klingberg, "Colonial Frontier," 496.

<sup>19</sup> Such reasoning may have been behind the mid-century drive to "reduce" the Mohawk tribe described on p. 15.

bondsmen, Varnod recalled a black slave declaring, was God's will alone. The missionary continued by explaining why blacks sinned. According to the same slave, "a Devil" enticed blacks "to do mischief" but later "betray[ed]" them to their masters, who meted out punishment. What may have impressed Varnod most, however, was slaves' awareness of hypocrisy, a trait he assumed did not exist in African religions. A fourteen-year-old male slave, Varnod noted, was chastised by his mistress before going to services. The boy retorted that she could "curse and go to church...."<sup>20</sup>

But Varnod did not stop to question if African religions shared common elements with Christianity. No missionary in South Carolina or New York, in fact, wrote to the Society about why blacks embraced Christianity with the "great forwardness" already noted. Some missionaries did look at blacks' responses to Christianity--how they enjoyed psalm singing, for example--but did not ask why slaves reacted so favorably.<sup>21</sup> Even when blacks offered their own interpretation of Christian tenets and Biblical writings, missionaries did not wonder how blacks were able to comprehend the intricacies of a new religion and quickly apply it to their own status as slaves.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro, p. 56.

<sup>21</sup> Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 252.

<sup>22</sup> Slaves' willingness to interpret Biblical readings so disturbed Le Jau, however, that he cautioned against indiscriminately teaching bondsmen to read. Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro in South Carolina, pp. 16-17.

Numerous factors suggest why missionaries failed to examine slaves' religious beliefs. First, missionaries did not usually analyze any native religion--black or Indian. The examples cited, thus, are more revealing for their insight into a particular missionary's mind rather than an explanation of the eighteenth-century Episcopal mind. Missionaries were too busy with the myriad responsibilities of their pastoral cures--of which native instruction assumed only one facet--to record cultural variations within their parishes.

Second, even if missionaries had enough time, it is doubtful that native and African religions would have been examined. The several missionaries in New York and South Carolina assigned exclusively to these groups were not interested in tribal beliefs--unless they resulted in actions that violated Christian doctrine and behavioral precepts. Then, as will be seen, clerics scrupulously reported the practices of blacks and Indians.

Third, the Society itself did not encourage such observations. Although missionaries' conversion activities included slaves as well as free blacks and Indians, the SPG did not require accounts of native religions. The Society instead expected missionaries to disclose conversion activities.<sup>23</sup> If the missionary investigated further, the

<sup>23</sup> Twice yearly missionaries submitted a record of these activities in a Notitia Parochialis. A sample Notitia Parochialis appears in Two Hundred Years, III, p. 840.

SPG was willing to listen and comment upon black and Indian religions, but nothing more.

To be eligible for conversion, blacks and Indians were required to memorize Christian doctrine, presented in the form of catechetical lectures, and to conform to Christian morality. How each group responded to the former requirement, however, was typically less important to missionaries than how Indians and blacks adhered to the latter.<sup>24</sup> Sexual behavior, especially among slaves, was one of the most frequently reported cultural practices that missionaries condemned. Christianity demanded monogamy and sexual exclusivity. Changing sexual partners, abandoning a spouse for another partner, engaging in premarital or extramarital relations were all were considered grave sins.

Monogamy and matrimony for slaves presented the SPG with an additional problem. As property, married slaves could be separated from each other by the sale of a spouse. Various missionaries grappled with this problem. Le Jau, who repeatedly denounced slave cohabitation, offered a modest solution for married couples. Circumventing the possibility of couples' being sold, he wrote in 1710 that

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<sup>24</sup> Le Jau was particularly concerned about slave behavior. He required testimonials from slaves' owners, kept bondmen on trial, sometimes for two years, and prohibited slaves from dancing or attending other "merry meetings" on Sunday. It was a policy the Society approved of. See, for example, the following sources: Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 15 November 1708, SPG Papers, 16: 234; Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 20 October 1709, Ibid., 16: 251-2; Secretary to Le Jau, Petty France, Westminster, 25 July 1709, Ibid., 16: 248.

married slaves should promise not to depart without their masters' consent. Le Jau believed that this method would benefit "many," particularly in the future.<sup>25</sup> This requirement thus might have been a strategy to compel masters to keep married couples together. Two missionaries in New York, however, were confounded by the problem of matrimony and slavery. In separate letters written in 1725, John Bartow and Robert Jenney stated that slavery presented an insoluble dilemma: masters could not be forced to keep married couples together; couples, once parted, almost invariably committed adultery. So discouraged was each missionary by these problems that neither promoted slave conversion within his parish.<sup>26</sup> Bartow, moreover, expressed doubt that slaves could be monogamous at all. Slaves, he noted, "marry after their heathen way and divorce and take others as often as they please...."<sup>27</sup>

Of primary importance to missionaries in New York were Indians' drinking habits. Excessive alcohol consumption was a persistent theme throughout the New York mission, and a behavior that missionaries continually sought to reform.

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<sup>25</sup> Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro in South Carolina, p. 70. See also Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 15 September 1708, SPG Papers, 16: 225.

<sup>26</sup> Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, pp. 154-5, 157. Bartow's and Jenney's letters were probably written in response to a baptismal rate for slaves. These letters, moreover, may have been written after they had conferred with each other. The letters' contents are almost identical and were written within five days of one another. For extracts of the correspondences, see Ibid., pp. 154-5, 155-

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

Drinking was opposed for numerous reasons, from its detrimental affect on Indian health to the possibility that it undermined colonial trade.<sup>28</sup> But appearing most frequently were complaints that alcohol consumption disrupted tribal life and provoked sinful behavior. In 1752, for example, missionary John Oglivie, then assigned to the Mohawk tribe, reported that drinking periodically drove Indians "quite mad." It caused them to "burn their Huts, and threaten the Lives even of their Wives and Children...."<sup>29</sup>

Of course, traditional rituals that violated Christian precepts were also deemed sinful and morally wrong.<sup>30</sup> Except for such practices, however, Indian culture itself was not generally perceived as incompatible with Christianity. This stands in contrast to other Protestant missionary organizations during the colonial era which believed that before Indians could become Christians they had to first discard their native culture.<sup>31</sup> Later known as the concept of "reduction," this idea required Indians to remodel themselves after European, or specifically English, culture. Changes required for "reduction" stripped Indians

<sup>28</sup> Health and commerce issues are discussed, respectively, in SPG Abstracts, 21 February 1752 to 16 February 1753, p. 48 and Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 26-7.

<sup>29</sup> SPG Abstracts, 21 February 1752 to 16 February 1753, p. 48.

<sup>30</sup> For examples of these rituals, see Axtell, The Invasion Within, pp. 262-3.

<sup>31</sup> Goodwin, "Christianity, Civilization, and the Savage," 93.

of every vestige of their indigenous cultures. "Reduced" Indians ideally had adopted European names, dressed in European clothing, and lived in European-style agricultural communities.<sup>32</sup>

The SPG did not "reduce" its Indian converts at any time during the eighteenth century. But it would be misleading to conclude that the Society espoused cultural relativism. In common with all colonial missionary organizations, the Society believed in the superiority of European civilization. Nor was the Society necessarily opposed to the "reduction" concept. This idea became popular during the Seven Years War. France was continually more successful than the SPG in Indian conversion. Once Anglican clergy recognized that France would be eliminated as a competitor for Indian converts, the Society began to reevaluate its own efforts. The Society hoped that Anglicanism could reap Indian converts in the wake of France's departure. Equally as important, the SPG believed that the Crown would incorporate Indian conversion into its imperial policy as part of its effort to extend dominion over North American Indians.<sup>33</sup>

More than a religion and a behavioral code for Indians and blacks, Christianity was also to utilize these groups in service of the white population. To serve their masters

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 93-4. Axtell, The Invasion Within, pp. 135-6, 178.

<sup>33</sup> Goodwin, "Christianity, Civilization, and the Savage," 104.

better, and thus produce more goods for colonial economies, slaves were to learn obedience. A multi-faceted concept, obedience included serving from neither force nor fear but rather from a Christian sense of duty. South Carolina missionary Robert Maule noted in 1707, for example, that converted slaves would serve "their masters out of a Principle of Conscience...." This would render behavior "more true and faithful[,] for Christian slaves possessed only their owners' interest at heart.<sup>34</sup>

According to an Abstract report of 1713 through 1714, Christianity also prevented slaves from imbibing "evil Impressions" or rebelling "against their Superiors."<sup>35</sup> This reference undoubtedly pointed to the more specific goal of preventing slave insurrections. The SPG and its missionaries believed Christianity taught values that discouraged slave discontent. Christianized blacks, the Society argued, accepted their role as bondsmen in God's kingdom.<sup>36</sup> Bishop Thomas Secker expressed this idea of one's "calling" in his 1741 anniversary sermon. Dismissing the idea that Christianity implied a temporal equality,

<sup>34</sup> Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro in South Carolina, p. 29. See also Le Jau's comment in Edgar Legare Pennington, "The Reverend Francis Le Jau's Work Among Indians and Negro Slaves" The Journal of Southern History 1(1935): 456.

<sup>35</sup> SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1713 to 18 February 1714, p. 61.

<sup>36</sup> Not surprising, the Society employed slave contentment, incorporated in the idea of "calling" as a reason why masters and mistresses should convert their slaves. See Denzil T. Clifton, "Anglicanism and Negro Slavery in Colonial America," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 39 (1970): 57.



Secker asserted the religion taught "every Man [to] abide in the Condition wherein he is called with great Indifference of Mind concerning outward circumstances."<sup>37</sup>

For Indians, Christianity was a method to secure their loyalty to the British government. In the words of Bishop Secker "every single Indian, whom we make a Christian, we make a friend and ally at the same time."<sup>38</sup> Indians performed two main functions for the British government in general and for the colonies in particular. First, Indians were needed for defense. In New York and South Carolina this defense was often rooted in imperial policy. Throughout much of the eighteenth century, New York and South Carolina were vulnerable to foreign attack. Second, Indian allies were needed for trade. In New York the trade was beaver, while in South Carolina it was deer skin and Indian slaves.

That the SPG regarded Indian and blacks as important conversion subjects is indisputable. But such an acknowledgement does not mean that the Society expended its best efforts to convert them. From its inception, the SPG was an organization whose primary goal was to convert the white population. Indian and black conversion was always a secondary consideration, except for a brief period in 1710.<sup>39</sup> When evaluating the plans and programs for

<sup>37</sup> Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 30.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>39</sup> See Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 8.

conversion, therefore, the Society's primary goal must always be considered. This goal would be an important factor defining and limiting Society efforts.

The SPG's program for Indian and black conversion consisted of general tactics, utilized by all missionaries. For Indian conversion, however, it is difficult to ascertain any plan at all. Instructions given to missionaries in 1756, for example, mentioned only that "as far as Circumstance render[ed] it practicable" clerics should marshall their "best Endeavours" to convert Indians.<sup>40</sup> But what constituted such "Endeavours" is conspicuously absent from these instructions. Obviously, missionaries were expected to visit and converse with neighboring tribes. As has been seen, several missionaries in South Carolina did just this, examining Indians' religious and cultural beliefs. But most missionaries ignored this aspect of their pastoral responsibilities. They did not possess the time, funds, or ability to minister effectively to Indians. Tribes were not usually near white settlements, and some Indians were mobile for at least part of the year. To be effective, moreover, missionaries had either to learn Indian languages or employ an interpreter. For most missionaries,

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<sup>40</sup> SPG Abstracts, 21 February 1755 to 20 February 1756, pp. 45-6; Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 81.

the difficulties inherent in Indian conversion were too great to even attempt the task.<sup>41</sup>

Since so few missionaries undertook Indian conversion, any generalization derived from their reports must be used with caution. The type of information gathered and the efforts used to establish a rapport with neighboring tribes, moreover, further restrict conclusions yielded from clerics' observations. Just as Anglican clerics tended to ignore Indian culture, so too were Indian responses usually ignored except when recording, in the broadest terms, whether a tribe or accepted or rejected a missionary's overtures. Attending to the white population first, missionaries contacted neighboring tribes sporadically and discouraged easily. After contacting a tribe, many missionaries wrote about their experience but did not provide additional information that can be used to evaluate tribal response. Information such as how many times a missionary approached a tribe and what exchanges occurred, for example, were not usually recorded.

What factors that influenced Indian acceptance, therefore, can only be gleaned from missionaries who established a rapport with neighboring tribes. One of the few missionaries to do so was Francis Le Jau. That cleric regularly visited neighboring tribes, observed their

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<sup>41</sup> Prejudice may have also been a factor, but missionaries' correspondences generally do not reveal this. Rather, missionaries tended to ignore Indian conversion.

religious rituals, and engaged in theological debates.<sup>42</sup> He also kept informed about the current state of Indian affairs, ranging from their relationship with the white population to the arrival of new tribes within his parish.<sup>43</sup> To better understand tribal culture, moreover, Le Jau questioned Indian traders and recorded these observations in a journal.<sup>44</sup> These efforts earned Le Jau the respect of at least two tribes, the Yamasee and the Apalache. In 1708, representatives from each tribe journeyed to Le Jau's house to request his services.<sup>45</sup>

But earning respect was only a prerequisite for conversion. Conversion itself could not always be separated from Indians' experiences with the white population. As such, missionaries approaching Indian tribes entered a dynamic that they could neither control nor ignore. That dynamic was rooted in each colony's Indian policies as well as Indians' encounters with individual whites. In South Carolina's early years, this dynamic centered on the colony's trade in deer skin and Indian slaves. Cheating Indians in trading transactions, encouraging Indians to

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 15 November 1708, SPG Papers, 16: 233.

<sup>43</sup> Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, South Carolina, 18 February 1708/09, SPG Papers, 16: 240.

<sup>44</sup> Le Jau also conversed with Indian traders, many of whom resided within his parish. Klingberg, "Indian Frontier," 491.

<sup>45</sup> The Yamasee wanted Le Jau to perform baptisms. The Apalache requested that missionary reside among the tribe. Ibid., 489. See also Le Jau to Secretary, Goose Creek, 18 February 1708/09, SPG Papers, 16: 240.

accumulate huge debts then enslaving them when they could not be paid, and encouraging tribes to war upon each other to procure captives later sold into slavery were the colony's worst abuses. Many Indians were enslaved during the colony's first two generations; an even greater number of tribes were either annihilated or survived only as fragments.<sup>46</sup> Abuses were not as severe in New York, where the Indian slave trade was not a factor. Nevertheless, trading abuses were common, especially after the 1720s when the center of the beaver trade moved from Albany to Oswego.<sup>47</sup> Other problems in both colonies included land encroachment and fraud.<sup>48</sup>

Missionaries recognized these abuses and denounced them. From South Carolina came a flurry of letters on the Indian trade, particularly the colony's traffic in slaves. Traders, wrote Le Jau in 1708, used Indians as "pawns" to war senselessly upon each other and committed numerous other "Enormities and Injustices" against tribes.<sup>49</sup> Though not as frequent, concerns were equally as great in New York where

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<sup>46</sup> Weir, Colonial South Carolina, pp. 26-7. From 1703 until 1708, Indian slaves increased in South Carolina from 350 to 1,400. This increase, unusually high even for South Carolina, contributed to the Indian wars of the next decade. The numbers reported at both periods, moreover, only suggest how many Indians were enslaved. South Carolina exported many Indians, especially to New England, New York, and the West Indies. Wood, Black Majority, 143-4.

<sup>47</sup> Norton, Fur Trade, p. 29. Regulation at Oswego was hindered because of its remoteness.

<sup>48</sup> SPG Abstracts, 21 February 1752 to 16 February 1753, p.

48; John W. Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, , p. 72;

<sup>49</sup> Pennington, "The Reverend Francis Le Jau's Work," 446, 450.

William Andrews remarked in 1715 that whites' "base examples and wicked practices" made "the name x<sup>t</sup>ns Odious" to Indians.<sup>50</sup> To these and other missionaries, no obstacle loomed more formidable to Indian conversion than colonists' behavior.<sup>51</sup> In almost every instance, missionaries assumed that once Indians' problems were addressed, conversion would follow.

While correctly observing that conversion activities could not be separated from Indians' contact with whites, missionaries failed to consider that Indians also valued their own religions just as fervently as the Society valued Anglicanism. As long as native religions satisfied the emotional and intellectual needs of their adherents, Indians had no reason to apostatize. Even when these religions were challenged by changes occurring from European contact, Indians typically chose their own faiths rather than Christianity.<sup>52</sup> Indians' espoused a "two roads" view of religion. To Indians religion was neither exclusive nor universal; religion instead was a cultural or tribal manifestation.<sup>53</sup> Missionaries invariably failed to

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<sup>50</sup> John W. Lydecker, The Faithful Mohawks (Port Washington, New York: I. J. Friedman, 1968), p. 46.

<sup>51</sup> Indians also frequently complained that as long as whites failed to adhere to Christian precepts, there was no reason to convert. See, for example, George Muirson to Secretary, Rye, New York, 9 January 1708/09, SPG Papers, 14: 83.

<sup>52</sup> This phrase is used by James P. Ronda in "'We Are Well As We Are.'" For a discussion of Indians' "two roads" philosophy, see Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

understand Indians' perceptions of religion. As such, clerics only looked to external factors affecting conversion while ignoring the vitality of Indian religion itself. This outward vision may have also caused missionaries to misinterpret why Indians rejected Christianity.<sup>54</sup>

In evaluating the Society's program, however, these issues were perhaps less important than the fact that missionaries did not approach Indians. Unless assigned specifically to the Mohawk mission, clergy in New York rarely attempted Indian conversion; several missionaries in South Carolina were interested in native Christianization, but after the Yamasee War much of this activity ceased.<sup>55</sup> Encouraging rather than requiring Indian conversion enabled missionaries to avoid this task. Nor were they equipped to undertake it.

While Indian conversion was couched in equivocal terms, the Society expected its missionaries to marshal their best efforts toward black proselytization.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>56</sup> The Society noted during the early 1740s that it considered black conversion "one great Branch of their Duty"

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<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Andrews' response to why his efforts were being rejected in Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, pp. 46-7.

<sup>55</sup> After the Yamasee War, most clerics reported that few free Indians remained near white settlements. Klingberg, "Indian Frontier," 495.

<sup>56</sup> Missionaries were held accountable if they reported a low conversion rate for blacks. This was not true for Indians. See, for example, Bartow's and Jenney's explanation of their own record in slave conversion in Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, pp. 154-5, 157. It should also be noted, however, that this accountability was

and had always instructed its missionaries to devote their labors toward achieving this end.<sup>57</sup> This statement is consistent with the specific procedures missionaries followed in their efforts to promote conversion. Such techniques were based on persuading masters and mistresses that their Christian duty entailed slaves' religious instruction.<sup>58</sup> To persuade slave owners to permit conversion, SPG missionaries were required, upon beginning their parish work, to distribute pastoral letters and anniversary sermons advocating slave conversion. Masters and mistresses were also exhorted during Sunday services, and missionaries themselves were required to convert their own slaves as an example for their parishioners.<sup>59</sup>

These methods were designed to work within the institution of slavery. The SPG did not advocate

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not consistently enforced. In 1709/10, for instance, SPG secretary John Chamberlayne told New York missionary John Thomas that he should not worry about converting the "Heathen"; his main responsibility was to administer to the white population. See, Secretary to John Thomas, Petty France, Westminster, 19 Jan 1709/10, c., SPG Papers, 14: 197.

<sup>57</sup> SPG Abstracts, 15 February 1739/40 to 20 February 1740/41, pp. 80-1.

<sup>58</sup> Clifton, "Anglicanism and Negro Slavery," 57; Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro in South Carolina, p. 27. According to the Society, the following literature was widely distributed to encourage slave conversion: Bishop William Fleetwood's 1710/11 anniversary sermon, A Plea for Humanitarianism for the Negro in the Institution of Slavery, and the 1727 pastoral letters of Bishop Edmund Gipson, Three Addresses on the Instruction of the Negroes. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 8.

<sup>59</sup> For specific examples, see Elias Neau to Secretary, New York, 15 November 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 166. SPG Abstracts, 16 February 1727 to 21 February 1728, p. 34. Ibid., 21 February 1723 to 19 February 1724, p. 47.



clandestine activities. Nor did the Society challenge slavery's legitimacy. Despite missionaries' attempts to work within the slave system, whites presented clergy with numerous reasons against conversion efforts. Some argued that it was futile to convert slaves, for they were unable to become Christians. Others believed that slaves were too busy for religious instruction.<sup>60</sup> But most reasons centered on behavioral changes that slaveowners believed accompanied conversion.

Unless perceived as increasing slave productivity or otherwise producing more obedient servants, behavioral changes were opposed by white slaveowners. Such opposition was rooted in the belief that any steps toward equality, such as those implied by Christianization, undermined slave obedience and the system of fear that sustained it. Increasing the self-confidence of slaves undermined their subservience, which owners pointed out when opposing conversion efforts. Robert Jenney noted in 1725 that his New York parishioners complained how conversion only encouraged slaves to develop "better notions of themselves than is consistent with slavery and their duty to their masters."<sup>61</sup> Typical of slaveowners' concerns, a similar observation was also reported in 1712 at a meeting of New York clergy. Addressing their main obstacle to conversion,

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<sup>60</sup> For a complete list of slaveowners' objections to Christianity, see Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro, pp. 6-

<sup>61</sup> Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 156.

missionaries noted that masters believed Christianity made bondsmen more "cunning" and prone to "Wickedness...."<sup>62</sup>

Of all the behavior deemed "cunning" and wicked, none was more dreaded by whites than their slaves' demands for freedom. It has already been seen how the official SPG stand dismissed such beliefs, arguing that, if anything, slavery engendered content in one's calling. Missionaries also used similar arguments to persuade masters to convert their slaves. In a 1707 appeal, Robert Maule told his South Carolina congregation that baptism did not appreciably change "the outward circumstances" of bondsmen. Conversion exemplified only masters "compassion" and "charity" for their slaves' eternal salvation.<sup>63</sup> Employing a different tactic in 1710, Le Jau attempted to assuage owners' fears by constructing an oath for slaves prior to their baptism. That oath required slaves to swear before "God" and the parish that baptism was desired only for their soul's salvation, not as an artifice for repudiating lifetime servitude.<sup>64</sup>

As Le Jau's behavior suggests, missionaries did not dismiss slaveowners' concerns that Christianization could have untoward effects. And a few missionaries voiced similar concerns themselves. In 1725, for instance, John

<sup>62</sup> SPG Abstracts, 20 February 1712 to 19 February 1713, p.

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<sup>63</sup> Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro, p. 29.

<sup>64</sup> Le Jau to Secretary, St. James, Goose Creek, 20 October 1709, SPG Papers, 16: 252.

Bartow condemned his slave for using the Book of Common Prayer to marry fellow bondsmen. This "desecration," the missionary declared, established incontrovertibly that slaves were "ambitious of being free...."<sup>65</sup> For many clerics, however, it was apathy rather than freedom at the heart slaveowner opposition. "If the Masters were but good Christians themselves," wrote Taylor of South Carolina in 1713, they "would but concur" on the necessity of slave conversion.<sup>66</sup> And yet this was not the case. For Neau, the pulse of apathy beat in slaveowners' "love of pleasures and perishing goods...."<sup>67</sup> But whether apathy, materialism, or hedonism undergirded owners' opposition to conversion, the result was increased tensions between missionaries and their congregations, whose discontent ranged from "murmurings" to "anger."<sup>68</sup>

Though exhorting the unwilling elicited discontent instead of piety, missionaries answered the concerns of parishioners already amenable toward slave conversion. To allay worries that slaves' duties left no time for catechetical instruction, missionaries offered evening and Sunday classes.<sup>69</sup> To affirm master hegemony over slaves as

<sup>65</sup> Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 155.

<sup>66</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 15-16.

<sup>67</sup> Neau to Secretary, New York, 3 October 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 136.

<sup>68</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 15-16. Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro, p. 17. See also Le Jau to Secretary, St. James, Goose Creek, 18 February 1708/09, SPG Papers, 16: 240.

<sup>69</sup> Sunday classes, in particular, were offered by almost every missionary in New York and South Carolina. See, for

property, missionaries obtained permission to baptize bondsmen.<sup>70</sup> To counter charges that Christianity provoked undesired behavioral changes, such as fostering independence, missionaries asserted that Christianity engendered obedience. And to mollify concerns that baptism necessitated emancipation, missionaries not only endorsed, but also in New York lobbied for, legislation repudiating the presumed relationship between spiritual equality and servitude. These acts were passed in 1706 and 1712 in New York and South Carolina, respectively.<sup>71</sup>

None of these methods persuaded the majority of whites to convert their bondsmen.<sup>72</sup> During the 1720s, for instance, Brian Hunt stated that of the 1,400 slaves residing in his parish, only one had been baptized.<sup>73</sup> In

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example, SPG Abstracts, 17 February 1748 to 16 February 1749, p. 44.

<sup>70</sup> Le Jau appears to have been particularly careful in this regard. He not only required owners' permission, but also their testimony that their slaves were worthy of baptism. See Le Jau to Secretary, St. James Goose Creek, 20 October 1709, SPG Papers, 16: 251-2.

<sup>71</sup> Printed Copies of Acts passed by the 7th session of the General Assembly of New York, beginning 17 September 1706, Ibid., 13: 221. Edward McCrady, The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1897), p. 51.

<sup>72</sup> Some missionaries believed that only an act mandating conversion would suffice; in accordance with this view, the Society attempted to pass law in Parliament to achieve this end. Nothing, however, resulted from this effort. Clifton, "Anglicanism and Negro Slavery," 64. SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1713 to 18 February 1714, p. 61.

<sup>73</sup> SPG Abstracts 21 February 1723 to 19 February 1724, pp. 40-41. Approximately five years later, the owner of the one slave had apparently moved, for Hunt reported in 1728 that of the 1,500 bondsmen in his parish none had been baptized. Wood, Black Majority, p. 142.

New York, more conversions were reported, but the total number of slaves baptized was also insignificant. Each cleric generally reported between five and ten baptisms per year, though at times the number could exceed twenty.<sup>74</sup>

These figures were also affected by bondsmen who chose not to convert.<sup>75</sup> African religions were alive in colonial America. The numbers of African-born blacks imported into the colonies during the eighteenth century insured that indigenous beliefs remained strong in the slave community. Imbuing its members with a sense of ethnicity and solidarity, such beliefs in turn functioned to deter blacks from converting.<sup>76</sup> South Carolina missionary James Gignillat wrote in 1710, for example, that blacks preparing for baptism were derided by their fellow slaves.<sup>77</sup> In addition to African religions unifying the slave community was the principle behind conversion itself. Slaves who converted did more than reject their own religions; they embraced the faith of their enslavers.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, SPG Abstracts 15 February 1750/51 to 21 February 1752, p. 39. Ibid., 21 February 1772 to 19 February 1773, p. 28.

<sup>75</sup> Scattered reports about slaves rejecting conversion appeared in each colony; however, most clerics believed that slaves desired conversion. For examples of slave opposition to conversion, see Bolton, History of Westchester, pp. 39-40.

<sup>76</sup> Gary B. Nash, Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 202.

<sup>77</sup> Wood, Black Majority, p. 189

<sup>78</sup> This interpretation is advanced by Wood, Ibid., p. 188.

In both colonies some blacks did, of course, choose to convert. But this decision was not a capitulation. While masters who permitted conversion were undoubtedly influenced by missionaries' promise that Christianity engendered obedience, slaves found strength in the religion. This strength was rooted in the equality that baptism rendered all persons before God.<sup>79</sup> And it was derived from Biblical stories of salvation and deliverance. Slaves interpreted these stories to accord with their own plight. God's deliverance of the Hebrews in the Old Testament, for example, provided blacks with hope that they too would be freed from slavery within their lifetimes. Divine justice, moreover, was adapted to the slave worldview. For slaves, divine justice was double-edged. While they were rewarded for their sufferings, their masters were punished.<sup>80</sup>

In addition to requiring all missionaries to establish programs for slave conversion, the SPG established schools in New York City and Charles Town explicitly for this purpose. Both schools grew from the vision of two individuals concerned about slaves' spirituality. In New York that person was Elias Neau. A Huguenot imprisoned for his religious beliefs by French authorities in the 1690s, Neau emerged from his ordeal with his faith revitalized. He was desirous to advance Protestantism among people whose

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<sup>79</sup> Nash, Red, White, and Black, p. 203

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 206. John W. Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 133.

religious education he felt had been ignored.<sup>81</sup> At first his vision focused on the religious needs of New York City's white population. Writing in 1701 to the Society for Christian Knowledge, Neau asked the organization if it would establish a charity school.<sup>82</sup> This attempt failing, Neau wrote to the SPG two years later about the multitude of unconverted slaves in the city "kept after the same manners as horses...."<sup>83</sup> Instead of offering a post for the city's black slaves, however, the Society responded by soliciting Neau as a catechist for New York City's Indian slaves. Though Neau declined this post, citing ignorance of Indian languages, the Society countered by offering him a catechist position for the city's blacks, Indians, and white children.<sup>84</sup> Neau served in that post until his death in 1722, and the school remained open until 1770.

The Charles Town black school was conceived by Commissary Alexander Garden who, after attempting for several years to obtain an act to mandate slave conversion, developed a plan that would bypass the political process.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Sheldon S. Cohen, "Elias Neau, Instructor to New York Slaves," New York Historical Society Quarterly LV (January 1971): 12. For an account of Neau's imprisonment and release, see Ibid., 8-12.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>83</sup> Neau to John Hodges, New York, 10 July 1703, SPG Papers, 13: 29. Neau volunteered to be a catechist in the same letter. Ibid., 34

<sup>84</sup> Neau received his license to catechize these groups in 1704. Shortly after accepting the post as catechist, moreover, Neau converted to the Church of England. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 64.

<sup>85</sup> Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro, p. 105.

Presented to the SPG in 1740, Garden's original proposal asked the organization to establish two schools in South Carolina for slave instruction, one in Charles Town and another at an unspecified location. Each school was to be manned by two young "Home-born" slaves, who had been purchased by the Society and educated as catechists.<sup>86</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Society approved Garden's proposal and purchased two adolescent male slaves. But the plan did not unfold as Garden anticipated. Although the Charles Town school opened in 1743, the second school never materialized. Only one of the SPG's bondsmen became a catechist, while the other was never deemed sufficiently qualified to teach on his own.<sup>87</sup> In 1750, the latter slave was sold, at Garden's request, though a new one was not purchased to replace him.<sup>88</sup> The Charles Town school operated until 1764.

Established in an environment that feared slave insurrection and Christianization, each school provided an arena to advance the Society's programs and to test its beliefs. Promoting slave literacy provided the SPG with such an opportunity. Because the SPG believed that

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 104, 106. Garden wanted slaves purchased between the ages of 12 and 16 for catechists. Their educational preparation included learning how to read, studying the Book of Common Prayer, memorizing the Anglican catechism, and understanding "the chief Principles of Christianity." Ibid., pp. 106. SPG Abstracts, 15 February 1839/40 to 20 February 1740/41, p. 82.

<sup>87</sup> Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro, pp. 112, 114.

<sup>88</sup> Garden wanted the Society to purchase a replacement, but this never happened. Ibid., pp. 114, 116.



Christianity engendered slave obedience and contentment, its schools were not afraid to incorporate literacy skills into their curriculum.<sup>89</sup> But promoting slave literacy was more than controversial. In South Carolina, it was also illegal. Enacted in response to the Stono Rebellion, the colony's 1740 slave code prohibited slaves from learning how to write as a safeguard against future insurrections.<sup>90</sup> Instead of revising its curriculum, however, the Society pressed for, and received, an exemption. Teaching slaves to read thus became an important part of the Charles Town school.<sup>91</sup>

In New York, the Society's convictions were tested twice, each time in response to slaveowners' beliefs that Christianization was incompatible with slavery. The 1706

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<sup>89</sup> Reading and writing were taught as an aid to conversion, not as an end in themselves. In fact, these skills were not required for conversion; rather, slaves were expected to memorize the Anglican catechism and give an account of their faith. Nevertheless many missionaries believed that knowing how to read enhanced the conversion process and engendered slave religiosity. Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, p. 248.

<sup>90</sup> Wood, Black Majority, p. 324. M. Eugene Sirmans, Colonial South Carolina: A Political History, 1663-1763 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), p. 210. The code stated that all slave education contributed to the likelihood of revolts. Clifton, "Anglicanism and Negro Slavery," 65.

Weir also argues that the code was enacted to ameliorate abuses of the slave system, abuses which contributed to the Stono Rebellion. Weir, Colonial South Carolina, pp. 194-5.

<sup>91</sup> Weir, Colonial South Carolina, p. 194; Sirmans, South Carolina Political History, p. 142. Less than two years after the school opened, Gardener was thus able to report his catechumen's progress, each of whom were taught reading as part of their catechetical instruction. Of the approximately sixty slaves attending the school, he stated, "18 of them read the Testament very well, 20 are in the Psalter, and the rest in the Spelling-Book and Alphabet...." SPG Abstracts, 17 February 1743 to 15 February 1744, p. 52.

act repudiating the relationship between baptism and emancipation, already mentioned, resulted from antagonism against the Society's school. Six years later controversy arose again when approximately two dozen slaves attempted to revolt against their masters. Known as the "Negro Plot" of 1712, the insurrectionists killed nine and injured seven whites before being apprehended. Though only two insurrectionists from the school were implicated, and one later exonerated, public anger once again descended on the New York school and threatened its closure.<sup>92</sup> Aided by many government officials within the province, the school remained open, and the Society, along with its missionaries, defended Neau's work.<sup>93</sup> Reiterating the organization's position on slave conversion, SPG secretary John Chamberlayne informed Neau that "It is to be hoped people will conceive better things than to believe that Christianity makes men worse...."<sup>94</sup>

Why more slaves were not involved in the conspiracy cannot be known because crucial pieces of information are missing.<sup>95</sup> Given the differences between slaves' and missionaries' perceptions of Christianity, however, Chamberlayne's explanation is not convincing. It assumes

<sup>92</sup> Cohen, "Elias Neau," 21.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 22. Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, pp. 132-5. Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, pp. 240-1.

<sup>94</sup> Abstract 15 February 1711/12 to 20 February 1712/13, p. 66.; Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, pp. 133-4.

<sup>95</sup> It would be necessary to determine, for example, how many slaves attending the school were aware of the plot.

that, once converted, bondsmen would reject plans for insurrections because they would perceive the behavior as wrong. This assumption was as erroneous as the belief that once slaves were exposed to Christianity they would readily embrace it. As early as 1707, Neau observed that not all slaves were interested in conversion.<sup>96</sup> Garden's school, moreover, focused on educating young slaves because, the Commissary argued, religious education for blacks "must at first ascend from Children to Parents, or from Young to Old."<sup>97</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that slaves who attended the Society's schools did so from their own desire. To coerce attendance would have only invited friction between slaves and their masters.<sup>98</sup> This desire helps to explain why missionaries generally praised their catechumens' progress. Writing in 1740, the New York City catechist Richard Charlton boasted that his pupils' religious knowledge "might make many of those, who have had a more happy Means of Instruction, ashamed," if they presided at the school's examinations; still pleased five year later,

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<sup>96</sup> Neau imputed blame to slaves' character, calling it "desperately Corrupted...." Neau to Secretary, New York, 24 July 1707, vol. 14, SPG Papers, 34. In 1711, Neau again talked about slaves' unwilling to accept Christianity. See Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 131.

<sup>97</sup> Weir, Colonial South Carolina, pp. 185-6.

<sup>98</sup> Rather than slaveowners' fear that Christianization would necessitate emancipation, Weir argues that masters were often indifferent to missionaries' efforts because coercing conversion would have introduced unnecessary tensions between the two groups. Weir, Colonial South Carolina, p. 185.

Charlton predicted that his catechumens' "constant Attendance, and their apparent earnest Attention when instructed, give the agreeable Prospect of a great Harvest."<sup>99</sup> Commissary Garden was equally satisfied with his catechumens' progress when he declared in 1742 that his school was "a very great success."<sup>100</sup>

If measured by numbers alone, few historians today would consider the Charles Town or the New York school a "very great success." Though the schools' conversion rates surpassed those of individual missionaries, most slaves in both towns remained unconverted. For the Society, however, mass conversion was not an achievable goal, even if it had been universally desired by the slave population. The SPG had no authority to compel conversion. Nor was the Society able to overcome slaveowners' opposition to conversion, though, as has been seen, the organization also refused to succumb to it. Given these constraints, the SPG was satisfied with converting a small number of slaves in each city.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>99</sup> SPG Abstracts, 15 February 1739/40 to 20 February 1740/41, p. 72. Ibid., 21 February 1745 to 20 February 1746, p. 46.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 17 February 1743 to 15 February 1744, p. 52.

<sup>101</sup> Attendance at the Charles Town school was generally around fifty students per year, though the numbers could reach as high as seventy; attendance at the New York school varied widely, especially at the beginning of the century when controversy surrounded it. Nevertheless, from the 1730s until 1760 attendance was generally between thirty and sixty; during the 1760s through the 1770s, moreover, over a hundred pupils were present each year. For attendance information, see SPG Abstracts. Klingberg, Anglican

In both New York and South Carolina the Society implemented specific programs for Indian conversion. In 1702, as the Society began its work in the colonies, South Carolina received the first missionary assigned exclusively to Indian conversion, Samuel Thomas. Thomas's mission was to convert the Yamasee. That tribe was an important military ally of South Carolina's government and a prodigious supplier of deer skins and Indian slaves.<sup>102</sup>

The SPG's plan for Thomas is uncertain, except for £10 the Society allocated "to be laid out in stuffs for the use of the wild Indians."<sup>103</sup> The Yamasee had formerly been instructed in Catholicism by Spanish missionaries in Florida, and were presented as a tribe willing to embrace Anglicanism.<sup>104</sup> But Thomas possessed no previous experience with Indian conversion, and he was not supplied with an interpreter. Nor is it clear whether he was to live with the tribe, or, more likely, in a nearby settlement.

What the Society's records reveal, however, is Thomas's unwillingness to be an Indian missionary. When he arrived at Goose Creek, an area near the trail to the Yamasee tribe, he met with South Carolina's governor Nathaniel Johnson.<sup>105</sup>

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Humanitarianism, ch. 4. Kemp, Support of Schools in Colonial New York, ch. 11.

<sup>102</sup> Haan, "The 'Trade Do's not Flourish as Formerly'": 344.

<sup>103</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 12.

<sup>104</sup> Indian agent Captain Thomas Nairne and Reverend Robert Stevens requested that a missionary be sent to the Yamasee. Verner W. Crane, The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1929), p. 145.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas' decision to settle at Goose Creek, rather than administer to the Yamasee, resulted in a series of angry

After enjoying the governor's hospitality for a short time, Thomas wrote a letter to the Society explaining why the Yamasee had not been approached. In that letter, Thomas stated that the Yamasee were preparing to go to war against the Spanish in Florida. As such, the tribe was "not at leisure" to receive him, nor did he believe it was now "safe to venture among them."<sup>106</sup> Questioning whether the Yamasee were interested in conversion, Thomas noted that the tribe had rebelled against Spanish rule "because they would not be Christians."<sup>107</sup> Instead of ministering to an unwilling and perhaps incapable tribe, Thomas informed the SPG, the governor had appointed him to Goose Creek to convert the black and Indian slaves of that parish.<sup>108</sup>

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letters from Nairne and Stevens to the Society, the latter defending the missionary. For this correspondence, see Pennington, "The Reverend Francis Le Jau," 450. Robert Stevens to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Goose Creek, 21 February 1705/06, SPG Papers, 16: 102. Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro, pp. 8-9. Idem., "Southern Frontier," 486-7. Crane, Southern Frontier, pp. 145-6.

<sup>106</sup> Secretary to Robert Stevens, Petty France, Westminster, SPG Papers, 16: 161. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 12. Crane, Southern Frontier, p. 145.

<sup>107</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 12. Crane, Southern Frontier, p. 145

<sup>108</sup> Secretary to Francis Le Jau, Petty France, Westminster, 25 July, 1709, c., SPG Papers, 16: 247. The Society did, however, change its rules concerning pastoral assignments. In response to Thomas' actions the Society drew up a new Standing Order that specified missionaries were to administrate where they were sent. Failure to locate at their cure, even if approved by a provincial governor, would result in the SPG withdrawing the missionaries salary pending the organization's approval of the new cure. Klingberg, Appraisal of the Negro, n. 18, p. 8.

Although the SPG accepted this explanation, letters to the Society suggest otherwise. From 1705 to 1717, the SPG received several requests that another missionary be sent to the Yamasee. Many of these letters were from Le Jau; other correspondence arrived from Commissary Gideon Johnston, Indian agent Thomas Nairne, Reverend Robert Stevens, and the Chief Justice of South Carolina, Nicholas Trott.<sup>109</sup> All of these individuals felt that the Yamasee were willing to be converted.

After Thomas's failure, the Society advanced several measures suggesting that another missionary would be sent to the Yamasee. In 1707, the Society asked Stevens, who had complained about Thomas's aborted Indian mission, if another missionary should be appointed to the Yamasee.<sup>110</sup> Later, in 1709 and 1711, new candidates for the Yamasee were considered; and, in 1710, the Society encouraged a boy, who wanted to become a missionary to the tribe, to study Indian language.<sup>111</sup> The Society also received the son of a tribal chieftain in 1713, brought to London for religious

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<sup>109</sup> Nicholas Trott to the Society, South Carolina 13 September 1717, SPG Papers, 16: 175. John Chamberlayne to Commissary Gideon Johnston, Petty France Westminster, 20 February 1710/11, Ibid., 16: 29.

<sup>110</sup> Secretary to Robert Stevens, Petty France, Westminster, 2 June 1707, SPG Papers, 16: 161.

<sup>111</sup> Secretary to Francis Le Jau, Petty France, Westminster, 25 July 1709, SPG Papers, 16: 247; Secretary to Governor and Clergy of South Carolina, Petty France, Westminster, 6 August 1711, SPG Papers, 17: 53; and Secretary to John Norris, Petty France, Westminster, 6 February 1710, Ibid., 17: 15.

instruction.<sup>112</sup> But the SPG never appointed another missionary for the Yamasee. Except for a few token acts, in fact, the Society abandoned its program for Indian conversion in South Carolina.<sup>113</sup> Indian conversion thus became the sole responsibility of missionaries appointed to white parishes.

In New York, different events unfolded. Like South Carolina, New York's Indian program began with requests from colonial officials to send missionaries to specific tribes--ones that served an important role in the provincial economy and its defense. And similar to South Carolina, these tribes had been exposed to Christianity through Catholic missionaries. Given their favorable relationship with colonial governments and their prior religious instruction, the selected Indian tribes were presented as willing, if not eager, subjects for Anglican conversion. But unlike South Carolina, New York received a steady tide of Anglican missionaries for the province's Indian tribes; indeed, New York was home to the Society's only sustained Indian conversion program.

<sup>112</sup> SPG Abstracts, 20 February 1712 to 19 February 1713. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 16-67.

<sup>113</sup> In 1710 the Society sent 50 New Testaments, written in Spanish, for the tribes and Spaniards on the Carolina border. Klingberg, "Indian Frontier," 491. And in 1713 the SPG appointed John Whitehead to assist Commissary Johnston in the Charles Town Parish. Whitehead's responsibilities included converting neighboring Indian children. SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1713 to 18 February 1714.



The origin of New York's program lies in the late 1690s and early 1700s. During that time, provincial officials dispatched a flurry of letters that warned of imminent danger: the French threatened to "debauch" the Iroquois Confederacy from its allegiance to Britain, and thus New York's buffer between itself and New France, as well as the colony's position in the fur market, might be lost.<sup>114</sup> The threat of France, of course, was not new during this time. Since the middle of the seventeenth century, the Iroquois had changed allegiances periodically between Britain and France; and member tribes had welcomed into their camps French Jesuit missionaries.<sup>115</sup> But the threat during the turn of the century appeared more ominous before provincial eyes for the Confederacy was equivocating, refusing to pledge their allegiance to either Britain or France. In 1701, provincial officials' fears became reality as the

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<sup>114</sup> Richard Coote, Lord of Bellomont, to the Lords of Trade and Plantations 4 May 1700 Documents Relative to New York, 5, 235. Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 9. Colonial William Smith to the Lords of Trade New York 10 May 1701, Documents Relative to New York, IV, 356. Robert Livingston to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 13 May 1701, Ecclesiastical History of the State of New York, 3, 1446. Idem. to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, New York, 1703, Ibid., 3, 1514.

<sup>115</sup> Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, pp. 2-3, 6-8; Kammen, Colonial New York, pp. 11-13, 115-16; and Norton, Fur Trade, p. 24. The Iroquois, however, were aligned primarily with the British throughout the period. This was especially true of the Mohawk tribe.

Iroquois signed a neutrality pact to be implemented if future confrontations occurred between the two countries.<sup>116</sup>

Royal officials in London agreed with provincial agents that religion must now be employed to more "Effectually Secure" the Iroquois' "Fidelity" to the Crown.<sup>117</sup> For two years the Society prepared their New York mission. In 1704, Thoroughgood Moore arrived in Albany. It was an inauspicious beginning. Assigned to the Mohawks, Moore attempted for one year to obtain that tribe's permission to begin his mission. Although meeting with them on several occasions, he left, disgusted, unable to obtain either an affirmation or refusal on whether he should begin his mission.<sup>118</sup> Although the Society suspended its Indian mission for several years afterwards, it was resumed in 1709 by Thomas Barclay, and continued, with sporadic interruptions, until the 1778, shortly after which the mission was resumed in Canada. This commitment to the New York Indian mission stands in contrast to the Society's program in South Carolina.

Differences between the colonies can be partially explained by events within the SPG in the early years of the

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<sup>116</sup> For the terms of this neutrality see, Peace Conference, 4 August 1701, Documents Relative to New York, 9, 722-25.

The neutrality pledge was honored for nearly half a century.

<sup>117</sup> Order of Queen in Council, 3 April 1703, SPG Papers, 13: 24.

<sup>118</sup> Thoroughgood Moore to the Society, New York, 13 November 1705, SPG Papers, 13: 122. Moore cited his nationality as the chief reason for his rejection, noting that the Iroquois possessed "an Aversion" against the British, which he attributed to the Dutch. ibid.

century. After Moore's aborted mission, the SPG became temporarily disillusioned with all Indian conversion, deciding not to reestablish programs in either New York or South Carolina.<sup>119</sup> Though permitting Barclay to reestablish the former mission in 1709, the SPG did not fully commit itself until the following year. This occurred when a contingent of New York Indians travelled to London and their expressed interest in additional missionary activity. From 1710 until 1715, the Society expressed some interest in renewing the Yamasee mission, but its plans ended abruptly during the Yamasee war. That conflict took the life of Thomas Nairne, the colony's Indian agent and its most strenuous lay advocate for Indian conversion. Within two years after the war, South Carolina's leading advocates among the clergy, Francis Le Jau and Gideon Johnston, were also dead. With the deaths of Nairne, Le Jau, and Johnson, the most persevering voices for Indian conversion in the colony were all but silenced.<sup>120</sup>

Second, Indian conversion was perceived differently by officials in New York than in South Carolina. In New York, provincial officials believed that conversion was the pivotal for maintaining its Indian allies. In South

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<sup>119</sup> Secretary to Le Jau, Petty France, Westminster, 17 May 1707, SPG Papers, 16: 158. See also Secretary to Caleb Heathcoate, Petty France Westminster, 5 June 1706, SPG Papers, 13: 210.

<sup>120</sup> Klingberg, "Indian Frontier," 494, 498-9. The only significant advocate for Indian conversion after the Yamasse War was Francis Varnod, who, during the 1720s, contemplated living among native Americans. Ibid., 494-95, 496.

Carolina, this belief does not appear to have been widely held. After Nairne's death provincial interest in Indian conversion waned. Combined with the deaths of the other conversion advocates, the Society chose to abandon its plans for Indian conversion in South Carolina. This decision was consistent with Society policy. Without requests that missionaries were desired and needed, the Society would not send its missionaries to any population group.

While imperial concerns buttressed the New York mission, however, the SPG remained an organization designed primarily to serve the needs of the white population. Instead of assigning resident missionaries to each of the Confederacy's tribes, the SPG appointed one missionary whose cure was divided between the Mohawks and the white and slave population of Albany.<sup>121</sup> Only twice during the eighteenth century, for a total of thirteen years, did the Society separate its Indian mission from the Albany cure.<sup>122</sup> For the remainder of the century, clerics left Albany several times a year for two Mohawk villages, residing at each for

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<sup>121</sup> This arrangement was further complicated because the Mohawk population was primarily divided among two villages, commonly referred to as the Lower and Upper Castle. At mid-century, the Lower Castle was estimated to be approximately 30 miles from Albany, while the Upper Castle was estimated to be seventy. Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 67; Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 84. In addition, missionaries also officiated at Fort Hunter, located adjacent to the Lower Castle.

<sup>122</sup> Resident clerics were at the mission from 1712 and 1770-76. In addition, the Mohawk mission was suspended twice from 1705 until 1709 and from 1719 to 1727. The mission was also temporarily without a SPG cleric from approximately 1746 until 1748. Pacoe, Two Hundred Years, 1: 68, 71, 73.

varying intervals.<sup>123</sup> From the mid-1730s until 1770, the Society used two methods to strengthen its mission without assigning resident missionaries or separating the cure. One method employed Mohawks as catechists or prayer readers; the other utilized whites as lay catechists.<sup>124</sup> In addition, from 1750 until 1777, the Society contracted the services of a German Episcopal cleric, John Jacob Oel, who periodically ministered to the tribe during missionaries' absences.<sup>125</sup>

From the Mohawk perspective, the Society's program must have appeared frustrating and confusing. Allies to the British government, the Mohawks undoubtedly expected that country's spiritual ministrations to be comparable to the ones the French government offered their own Indian confederates.<sup>126</sup> The French Jesuits' program was based on full-time missionaries, whose attendance as a resident spiritual leader both exemplified the Catholic commitment to proselytization and provided a continual source of religious instruction and worship for Indian tribes. This commitment

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<sup>123</sup> No pattern exists on the cure's division. Some missionaries reported allocating equal time to Albany and the Mohawks; others spent most of their time at Albany. For examples of this disparity, see SPG Abstracts, 20 February 1729 to 19 February 1730, p. 91, and Ibid., 24 February 1758 to 23 February 1759, pp. 61-2.

<sup>124</sup> Mohawk sachems and their families were often appointed as readers or catechists.

<sup>125</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, 3: 856. Originally a cleric to the Palatines, Oel began ministering to the Mohawks as early as 1736, though the extent and frequency of his work was not reported. Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 74; n. 138, p. 78.

<sup>126</sup> For examples of Mohawk dissatisfaction, see Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, pp. 22-3, 98.

was only too familiar for the Mohawk tribe. Not only had late seventeenth-century Jesuit efforts resulted in significant migrations of Iroquois to New France, but these Indians still maintained contact with their New York brethren through periodic visitations.<sup>127</sup> Continuing their efforts into the eighteenth century, Jesuits established varying degrees of rapport with Iroquois tribes. As such, the Jesuits provided the Mohawks with additional information about French conversion strategies.<sup>128</sup>

That the Jesuits provided material aid for their proselytes may have further weakened the mission in Mohawk eyes. Material aid was one reason why Indians discarded their native religions for Christianity, and, though not typically sufficient in itself, was particularly attractive to the Iroquois.<sup>129</sup> They did not receive material aid from the New York government, nor were such enticements part of

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<sup>127</sup> Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 47; Axtell, The Invasion Within, p. 255. Iroquois who had left the Confederacy were known as Cughnawagas or "Praying Indians."

<sup>128</sup> The French were particularly active among the Onondaga and Seneca, where Jesuits were reported on several occasions. Axtell, The Invasion Within, 257; Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 61; n. 53, p. 61; Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, pp. 68, 70-1, 98. Jesuit contact with the Mohawks may have occurred prior to 1712, but after that date the author could find only one additional reference. Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, pp. 59, 80; Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, pp. 28, 67.

<sup>129</sup> Improved trade, land protection, military security and political advantages were other factors Christianization typically promised Indians. Yet, though important, most Indians converted because Christianity fulfilled Indians' intellectual and emotional needs and offered superior answers to the realities of tribal life after white contact. Axtell, The Invasion Within, pp. 285-6.

imperial policy. New York officials relied instead on the trade advantages that its military allies received.<sup>130</sup> And consistent with government policy, the SPG also did not render material aid, even though some missionaries recognized how this failure helped to undermine Society efforts. It was well known, stated Society missionary William Andrews in 1715, that the French were "Extream[ly]" kind to their Indians...." Such kindness, the missionary believed, yielded more than gratitude; it discouraged further Iroquois migrations to New France and encouraged Mohawk acceptance of his own ministrations. Of the latter, Andrews wrote that approximately twenty young Mohawks attended catechetical instruction because he was "constant in giving them Victuals and other things or else wee should have very few."<sup>131</sup>

That Society policy affected the mission is indisputable. The Iroquois migrations that so worried Andrews were mentioned again by John Oglivie at mid-century. Though neither reported the number of migrants, both attributed the defections to the Jesuit promise of material gain.<sup>132</sup> SPG decisions to appoint catechists and lay

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<sup>130</sup> Unlike their competitors in New France, New Yorker traders had an inexpensive supply of liquor, from the West Indies, and were able to purchase goods Indians desired at low prices. Norton, Fur Trade, p. 6.

<sup>131</sup> Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, pp. 48, 46.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 48, 68; SPG Abstracts, 16 February 1749 to 15 February 1750, p. 47.

Though information on Mohawk population is incomplete, the following indicates that the number of migrants might have been significant. In 1712/13, Andrews reported 360

readers also resulted typically from Mohawk complaints to intensify efforts.<sup>133</sup> But, while affecting the mission, Society policy did not undermine it. This may be demonstrated by Mohawk efforts to secure Anglican clerics.<sup>134</sup> Resuming the mission in 1712, for instance, occurred after a contingent of five sachems, at least half of whom were Mohawks, had travelled to London two years previously and met with Queen Anne.<sup>135</sup> After affirming their allegiance, the sachems concluded that if the queen would send missionaries they would "find a most hearty Welcome."<sup>136</sup> From the late 1760s until 1770, likewise,

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Mohawks at the Lower Castle and 180 at two additional villages; in 1750, Oglivie listed 204 for the Lower Castle and 214, a decline from his former 500 member Mohawk congregation. Oglivie attributed the decrease primarily to Mohawks who had "over to the French Interest, and settled in their Territories." Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, pp. 40, 68. SPG Abstracts, 16 February 1749 to 15 February 1750, p. 47. For an additional population citations, see Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 37.

<sup>133</sup> See, for example, the following references citing Mohawk requests for schoolmaster appointments at mid-century for both villages. Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, pp. 66, 69, 83, and SPG Abstracts, 20 February 1756 to 18 February 1757, pp. 47-8.

<sup>134</sup> This is not the only indicator that Mohawks accepted Anglican clerics. Other examples exist in missionaries' letters of Mohawk attachment, or examples of sachems welcoming missionaries and promising to utilize their best efforts to insure tribal acceptance. SPG Abstracts 17 February 1775 to 16 February 1776, p. 43. Ibid., 16 February 1749 to 15 February 1750, p. 47.

<sup>135</sup> At least three sachems were Mohawks, one was a Mahican. The other's identity is not known, for he died during the voyage to London. However, it is likely that this sachem, was also a Mohawk. Nash, Red, White, and Black p. 247. See also Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 61.

<sup>136</sup> Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 28. See also the following references to Mohawk requests for missionaries and the Society's 1712 appointment of William Andrews. SPG Abstracts 16 February 1710 to 15 February 1711/12, p. 38.



Mohawks once again agitated for Anglican clerics, when the SPG was temporarily unable to fill its Indian post.<sup>137</sup> And in 1775, when mounting tensions between Britain and the colonies threatened the mission's survival, Mohawk sachem Little Abraham voiced the tribe's concerns that their cleric might "be torn away from them." Speaking before a group of commissioners for Indian affairs, Little Abraham warned that if their minister was removed, a "great disturbance" would result, for the tribe would perceive the incident "as taking away one from their body."<sup>138</sup>

Conversion is another indicator that the Society's ministrations were accepted, and, by the early 1740s, the tribe had been converted, except for "two or three[,] " who had not been baptized.<sup>139</sup> But it is misleading to employ conversion as the criterion for success. How the Mohawks perceived Christianity, as a religion and as a set of societal mores, was not necessarily comparable to Society beliefs. For instance, William Andrews wrote in 1715 that Mohawk parents willingly brought their children for baptism, but later permitted their offspring to relapse into native

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Ibid., SPG Abstracts, 15 February 1711/12 to 20 February 1712/13, pp. 61-2. Klingberg, Anglican Humanitarianism, p. 47.

<sup>137</sup> Sir William Johnson to Dr. Daniel Burton, New York, 23 December 1767, Johnson Papers, 6: 28-9. Rev Charles Inglis to Dr. Daniel Burton, New York, 15 June 1770, Ibid., 7: 746.

<sup>138</sup> Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 143.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

practices, convinced that the sacrament insured entry into "Heaven."<sup>140</sup>

The concept of sin was another chasm separating missionaries from their Mohawk converts. As an individual's action against God, sin had no counterpart in Indian religion. Though missionaries were typically able to instill the idea of sin into their converts, there was no guarantee that Indians would necessarily accept, or always understand, its this-worldly consequences as meted out by Society clerics.<sup>141</sup> John Stuart wrote in 1772, for example, that it was "extremely difficult to act a conscientious Part" when administering communion at one Mohawk village where all desired the sacrament--regardless of their behavior. To admit those known as "notorious Drunkards & vicious in their Behaviour," he stated, would bring "Scandal to Religion" and displease tribesmen who abstained; but to enforce standards created "Dispair" among those thus barred, thereby compelled to "commit worse crimes as before" because they were rendered "Persons unfit for Society." Without a satisfactory resolution, Stuart admitted only "sober" Mohawks and excluded the "notorious vicious[,]" though the latter action, he asserted, jeopardized his own welfare.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 50. Axtell, The Invasion Within, p. 261. Andrews also noted that some Mohawks also felt it obligatory to receive communion once. Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>142</sup> Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 131.

As an isolated incident, Stuart's letter suggests that cultural sanctions against drinking were present by the early 1770s for the Mohawk tribe. Whether these sanctions occurred from the behavior being perceived as sinful, however, is less certain. For, as the century progressed, alcoholism rose among the Iroquois, with leading sachems supporting a prohibition on rum sales during the late 1760s.<sup>143</sup> That Mohawks were divided on the issue of alcohol consumption, therefore, may have emerged more from alcohol's detrimental affect on tribal life than from missionary admonishments that drinking was sinful.<sup>144</sup> Indeed, as Stuart himself admitted in the same letter, the religious knowledge of Mohawks who drank was comparable to those who abstained.<sup>145</sup>

Stuart's letter, however, was not isolated; rather it formed a pattern characterizing the entire Mohawk mission. Though the SPG was able to convince most, if not all, of the tribe to accept Anglicanism, the organization remained unable to effect other long-term behavioral changes.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Norton, Fur Trade, pp. 32, 208. This effort failed, however, and only once, for a brief period during the Great War for Empire, was alcohol regulated in New York. Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>144</sup> For the division of the Iroquois into those who supported and opposed rum sales, see Norton, Fur Trade, pp. 33-4.

<sup>145</sup> Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 131.

<sup>146</sup> John Oglivie attributed this failure to the divided cure. In the early 1750s, for example, he wrote that Mohawks resumed drinking as soon as he left their villages, thereby nullifying whatever reform he had effected. SPG Abstracts 15 February 1750/51 to 21 February 1752, p. 40.

Most of these changes centered on drinking patterns and its associated behavior. Other changes may have included periodic resumption of native practices that contradicted Christian precepts.<sup>147</sup> This inability to effect long-term changes explains why, at mid-century, the Society contemplated "reducing" the Mohawk tribe.<sup>148</sup> And it suggests that the Mohawk mission was a failure if evaluated by the Society's twin criteria of conversion and reformation.

The Society also made scattered attempts to convert other Iroquois tribes. Most of these efforts were focused on the Oneidas, the Iroquois tribe located nearest to the Mohawks. In the teens, Andrews described the Oneidas as "willing People[,]" yet the SPG never appointed a missionary to them.<sup>149</sup> For a brief period in the teens the SPG contemplated sending a missionary to the Onondagas, after the organization had been informed the province was about to build a fort in the tribe's territory. When the Onondagas

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<sup>147</sup> In the early 1740s, for instance, Henry Barclay announced he had achieved "a great reformation" in the tribe's alcohol consumption. In 1750, four years after Barclay's departure, Oglivie lamented that the tribe had "degenerated into Drunkards...." Pascoe, 1: 72. SPG Abstracts 16 February 1749 to 15 February 1750, p. 50. For an example of the Mohawks resuming their tribal customs, see Axtell, The Invasion Within, pp. 262-3.

<sup>148</sup> Though disappointment undergirded the "reduction" drive, its impetus was probably Anglican-sectarian rivalry. This interpretation is advanced by Goodwin in "Christianity, Civilization, and the Savage."

<sup>149</sup> SPG Abstracts 19 February 1713 to 18 February 1714, p. 59. These efforts resulted in occasional baptisms among the Oneidas.

later refused the fort, the Society also abandoned its plans.<sup>150</sup> As such, the Iroquois mission constituted only the Mohawks, with occasional forays into other confederacy tribes.

Confident in the superiority of Christianity over native faiths and desirous to spread this religion to the Indians and blacks of North America, the SPG concentrated much of its energies on the colonies of New York and South Carolina. To achieve this end, the Society developed several strategies. First, the organization wanted its missionaries to advance slave and Indian conversion within each colony. Second, the SPG established catechetical schools for slave Christianization. And third, the Society launched programs to convert the Yamasees of South Carolina and the Mohawks of New York. Despite these efforts, however, the Society converted few blacks and Indians in either colony. The organization's Indian program was affected by the SPG's own lack of commitment, most evident in South Carolina after an aborted mission to the Yamasees. The Society's slave program was hindered by master opposition in both colonies. And Indians and blacks rejected the Society's overtures. Members in both groups

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 16 February 1710 to 15 February 1711/12 p. 38. Ibid., 19 February 1711/12 to 20 February 1712/13, p. 62. Ibid., 19 February 1713 to 18 February 1714, p. 58, Ibid. 20 February 1712 to 19 February 1713, p. 50. Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks, p. 43. The Oneidas were also to be included in this plan after a missionary had been appointed to the Onondagas. SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1713 to 14 February 1714, p. 58.

still valued their own religions and thus had no reason to convert.

## Chapter V

### Conclusion

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, founded in 1701, was rooted in seventeenth-century English piety and the theology of divine benevolence, invigorated by the revival of the theology of divine benevolence, which like evidenced a new fervor in promoting Christianity within Britain and its colonies. The Society was established by the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, and an Anglican clergyman, Thomas Bray. In the 1670s, Compton strengthened the Bishop of London's ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the colonies. During the 1690s, Bray spearheaded a drive to reform the SPC. Established in 1701, the SPC was the official Anglican missionary organization. Its goal was to promote Anglicanism throughout the colonies and in Britain's overseas territories.

From the beginning, the Society's agenda was aggressive and comprehensive. In addition to serving the needs of fellow Anglicans, the SPC wanted to bring the Church of England to all who resided within the colonies. As such, British dissenters were singled out for conversion, but so too were Protestants from other countries, such as French Huguenots and German Palatines. Indians and blacks, both slave and free, were likewise targeted for conversion.

## V

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel's founding exemplified a revival within the Church of England, rooted in seventeenth and eighteenth benevolence. Invigorated by pietism and the theology of divine benevolence, churchman and layman alike evidenced a new fervor to promote Anglicanism within Britain and its colonies. The movement to establish Anglicanism within the colonies was led by the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, and an Anglican cleric, Thomas Bray. In the 1670s, Compton strengthened the Bishop of London's ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the provinces. During the 1690s, Bray spearheaded a drive to form the SPG. Established in 1701, the SPG was the Church of England's missionary organization. Its goal was to promote Anglicanism throughout the colonies and in Britain's overseas territories.

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The SPG never abandoned its goal to create an Anglican society within Britain's provinces. But circumstances dictated another course of action, one more modest and selective. Saddled with financial burdens throughout the eighteenth century, the Society focused its activities in two provinces, New York and South Carolina, where the Church of England was established. Establishment eased the financial burdens inherent in creating and maintaining a missionary program. And establishment provided a legal foundation for the Church of England that enabled SPG missionaries to serve in even dissenter-controlled parishes.

Pragmatic considerations also affected the SPG's decision to focus its efforts on the white population. With insufficient financial resources and a clerical shortage, the Society was unable to launch a major program to convert the Indians of North America. Nor were Crown and provincial governments willing to assist the SPG, except for a few nominal gestures. Slave conversion was likewise affected by resource constraints. Restricting the Society's activities further, and perhaps more significantly, was white opposition to slave Christianization. Unlike Indian conversion, which required missionaries to live among native Americans and learn their languages, slaves could be brought to Society missionaries and many spoke English or a variant of it.

In addition to pragmatic concerns, the Society believed that the white population held the key to the conversion of

Indians and blacks. The behavior and attitudes of this group, the SPG argued, were the primary obstacles to Indian and black conversion. The Society accordingly argued that little could be done until the white population itself had been reformed. Missionaries were thus encouraged to concentrate their energies on colonists as a necessary prerequisite to the Christianization of Indians and blacks. Converting the peoples of New York and South Carolina to Anglicanism was an ambitious undertaking for the Society. Not only were these colonies pivotal to the Society's North American efforts, but each one possessed its own dynamics that directed the organization's activities. For the SPG's efforts with the white population, these dynamics were affected by two factors: the state of organized religion and the characteristics of Anglican establishment. These factors varied in New York and South Carolina, thereby directing the Society's work in each colony. The SPG's work among Indians and blacks was affected by the role each group occupied in colonial society. Equally important were Indians' and blacks' own attitudes toward conversion attempts.

In the early 1700s, the Society began its efforts among the white population of New York and South Carolina. Though each possessed an ethnically and religiously diverse population, the state of organized religion varied between the colonies. In New York, except for Anglicanism, organized religion was thriving. As early as 1683, over

thirty churches existed in New York City alone. But in South Carolina, institutionalized religion was virtually absent. Outside of Charles Town, there were only one or two churches and perhaps as many itinerant ministers.

The absence of organized religion in South Carolina may have eased missionaries' efforts to gain converts. In New York, missionaries were forced to compete against dissenting ministers for parishioners. But in South Carolina the SPG was able to offer organized religion to a people formerly without it. Several early missionaries in South Carolina, for example, reported that they were the first clergy to reside in their respective parishes. These and other missionaries generally reported mixed congregations who worshipped together without conflict. This was not true in New York. In the opening years of the century, missionaries in that province often spoke of parishioner conflict and invariably wrote about dissenters' prejudice against the Church of England. So severe was animosity against the Church of England in one parish that it persisted from the early 1700s through the 1730s.

The presence of organized religion in New York may have fueled dissenters' animosities against the Church of England. During the colonial period competition among religious organizations tended to strengthen denominational loyalties. Latitudinarianism, conversely, dominated colonists' attitudes on the frontier and in other areas without organized religion. This tendency to minimize

religious distinctions gave missionaries in South Carolina an advantage over their counterparts in New York. And such attitudes help to explain why opposition to Anglicanism was less severe in South Carolina than in New York.

The characteristics of Anglican establishment in each colony, moreover, offer additional insight. Though dissenters in both colonies protested the Church of England's establishment, only in New York did such opposition escalate into a pervasive and prolonged antagonism against Anglicanism. Such antagonism resulted from the ambiguous wording of the 1693 Ministry Act. The legislation should have specified that Anglican ministers only could be appointed to the parishes created by the Ministry Act. But instead the legislation stated that "good, sufficient" Protestant ministers were to serve in the newly-created parishes. This wording sparked protest against the Church of England when New York's governors appointed SPG missionaries to the dissenter-controlled parishes created under the act.

In South Carolina, the Church of England was established unequivocally under the 1704 and 1706 church acts. Dissenters opposed the principles of establishment, specifically arguing that it violated the colony's policy of religious toleration. As established in South Carolina, however, Anglicanism was a lay-controlled institution. Such control circumscribed the Church of England's activities in the colonies. Dissenters thus possessed more control over

Anglicanism than their counterparts in South Carolina. The popular election of clergy, in particular, may have actually helped Anglicanism to obtain converts. Though opposed by the SPG, the popular election of clergy enabled parishioners to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Anglican clerics. Anglican clerics, in turn, were compelled to adopt behavior that pleased their congregations.

In New York, no such compulsion existed. Though missionaries' willingness to accommodate their parishioners varied, the Church of England was a powerful institution in the hands of New York's governors. Governor Cornbury (Edward Hyde, third earl of Clarendon) was particularly vigorous in defending the rights of Anglican clergy to supply parishes created under the Ministry Act. And he encouraged aggressive behavior from missionaries whose authority to supply such parishes was being challenged.

The SPG, however, gained little from its institutional strength in New York. Such strength, in fact, undermined conversion efforts. But the institutional control evidenced in South Carolina also had its limits. So too did the colony's need for organized religion. Although both factors enabled the Society to convert more dissenters from the beginning of the century through the 1720s, Anglicans never constituted a majority in the province.

The Society's work in New York and South Carolina included the conversion of Indians and blacks. From the beginning of its mission, the SPG believed that the

Christianization of both groups was an important part of its mission. It is not surprising that the first missionary sent to the colonies, in 1702, was assigned the specific task of Indian conversion. Christian universalism undergirded the drive to convert Indians and blacks. Yet the Society believed that the white population would benefit from the conversion of these groups. This dual emphasis dictated the nature of the Society's work and established the boundaries for Indian and black conversion.

The Society's plan for Indian and black conversion was based on the premise that both groups would renounce their indigenous religions once they had been exposed to Christianity. As such, the Society and its missionaries expressed little interest in indigenous faiths. The only exceptions occurred when such faiths either were similar to Christianity or else violated Christian precepts. But even in these instances, the Society remained concerned primarily with the willingness of Indians and blacks to renounce their own faiths and convert to Anglicanism.

All blacks residing within missionaries' parishes were eligible for conversion. In addition, the Society opened two schools for slave conversion, located in New York City and in Charles Town. Because the SPG did not advocate clandestine activities, all efforts were based on working within the slave system. As such, missionaries were required to persuade slaveowners that conversion was a Christian duty and that it would not undermine their secular

interest. The latter argument was especially important. Most whites believed that Christianization, especially the act of baptism, implied a temporal equality incompatible with slavery. To alleviate such fears, Society missionaries denied that baptism necessitated freedom, arguing instead that Christianity engendered slave obedience. In New York, moreover, missionaries spearheaded a 1712 drive for legislation that repudiated any presumed relationship between baptism and emancipation.

In addition to converting slaves, missionaries were also encouraged to approach the free Indians within each parish. Both conversion efforts were considered part of missionaries' regular pastoral duties, though not as important as work among the white and slave population. As in slave conversion, Indian conversion was more than a Christian duty. Indian Christianization was also a method to secure natives' allegiance to the Crown and to forge trade alliances. Such secular advantages resulted in two specific programs for Indian conversion. In the early 1700s, these programs were launched in South Carolina and in New York to convert the Yamasee and Mohawk tribes, respectively.

Few Indians were actually converted by SPG missionaries. Missionaries possessed neither the time nor the necessary skills to undertake Indian conversion. Had the Society undertaken a major conversion program, however, it is unlikely that many Indians would have chosen to become

Christians. The SPG was incorrect in presuming that Indians would renounce their indigenous faiths once they had been exposed to Christianity. Indians valued their own native religions just as fervently as Society missionaries valued Anglicanism. As long as Indian religions continued to satisfy their adherents' needs, there was no reason to renounce them. That Indians preferred their own religions to Christianity, however, was incomprehensible to the Society.

But the Society did achieve some success in its only sustained Indian program--the Mohawk mission. By the 1730s, missionaries reported that almost the entire tribe, comprising approximately 500 members, had converted to Christianity. The success, however, was a qualified one. Throughout the century, the tribe's behavior was a constant disappointment for missionaries. Though willing to accept Christianity, most Mohawks engaged in behavior that missionaries deemed sinful. This behavior ranged from the periodic resumption of tribal practices that contradicted Christian precepts to engaging in excessive drinking. At the root of such behavior were differing perceptions of religion. For native Americans, religion itself was an inclusive concept. As such, the Mohawk tribe had no difficulty accepting Christianity while still retaining some of their native beliefs and mores. For Europeans, Christianity was the only true religion. Christianity was a universal, exclusive concept that regulated all humanity.



The Society was also unsuccessful in its slave conversion program. Most whites remained unconvinced that conversion was a Christian duty and would increase the slaves' willingness to serve. Conversions were rarely reported, though missionaries in New York were ultimately more successful than their counterparts in South Carolina. Only in the New York City school were a substantial number of slaves converted, estimated at over a thousand during a sixty-year period.

As in Indian conversion, moreover, it is questionable that the Society achieved any success at all. Not only were African religions, like Indian, inclusive, but slaves derived strength from Christianity. Christian stories of deliverance, for example, engendered a spirit of solidarity within slave quarters. Such solidarity was based in slaves' desire for freedom rather than their acceptance of servitude. Unaware that slaves offered their own interpretations of Christianity, however, missionaries praised blacks for their enthusiasm toward Anglicanism.

The Society did not unite the peoples of New York and South Carolina under the banner of Anglicanism. Dissenter religions remained strong in both provinces. Few Indians were willing to convert to Christianity, though the Society's efforts were also nominal. And most slaves remained unconverted, for the SPG was unable overcome owners' fears that Christianization was not in their best interests.

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