"How This Shall Be Brought About"

The Development of the SSPCK's American Policy

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Reflecting broader trends in the study of colonial British America, historians have increasingly recognised the transatlantic nature of Protestant mission work. Both homeland and colonial participants shared a common worldview and goal when it came to the conversion of Native Americans. However, historians frequently present a bifurcated process: British-based mission boards and agencies provided funding and broad parameters, while colonial agents, ministers, and officials dictated the ways in which the missionaries themselves operated. In general, this is an accurate reflection of the reality of the Atlantic world, given the communication times and the normal inability of British sponsors to visit any work in progress. These limitations often led to a disconnect between goals laid out in Britain and practices on the ground in the colonies.[1] An exception to this practice can be found in the early attempts of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) to establish a mission presence in New England.

Because the Society's American efforts were sparked by a conditional bequest, it was compelled to have a substantial interest in the way its missionaries conducted their daily work in America. The Society is most well-known to historians through its missionaries Azariah Horton and David and John Brainerd. The Society's efforts to support three missionaries in New England in the 1730s are glossed over in most works (including the Society's own 1795 official account). However, by reading the history of these efforts from the perspective of Edinburgh, rather than that of Boston, it becomes apparent that this first phase of the SSPCK's work proved to be a valuable learning experience. As a result of this experience, the Society initiated new policies with respect to its American missionaries; policies which differed from those of other mission groups.[2]

The SSPCK and the Origins of the American Mission

The formation of missionary organisations such as the SSPCK was due in large part to the belief on the part of many Britons that Protestantism was an essential component of the developing concept of British nationalism. Proponents of this thinking believed that the conversion of peoples to the Protestant faith would bring them not only spiritual salvation but would also win their political loyalty, as well as lead

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to an expansion of trade, and the spread of a British civilisation.[3] The use of Protestantism to buttress claims to political loyalty went back to the early decades of the English reformation. Protestantism had been a key part of efforts to pacify Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while Parliamentary forces established an aggressive preaching program in parts of Wales in the 1640s and 1650s designed to both civilise and proselytise the Welsh people.[4]

The commitment to Protestantism as an integral part of British character was given fresh vigour in the wake of the Glorious Revolution and was reinforced by the Act of Settlement in 1701, the accession of George I in 1714, and the Jacobite rising of 1716. Although the Anglican Church was, ostensibly, the focus of British Protestantism, by the eighteenth century, the growing geographical and cultural diversity of the British Empire, as well as the increasing importance of commerce to the British treasury, meant that most varieties of Protestantism were accepted as co-defenders of the realm against the Catholic threat. The Toleration Act of 1689 granted certain freedoms to all Protestant dissenters that were denied to Catholics. Presbyterians in Scotland, and all manner of Protestant dissenters in the American colonies were considered co-religionists, allies in the struggle against international Romanism.[5]

The Scottish highlands were recognised as one region which needed to be brought under the authority of nationalism and Protestantism. As historian Christopher A. Whatley has observed, Protestantism was an "increasingly important factor contributing to the sense of national identity and personal self-worth in eighteenth-century Scotland" and played an integral role in "strengthening the British union".[6] While Catholicism was a principal target of the Church of Scotland, kirk leaders also wanted to eradicate non-juring Episcopalianism, folk religion, and the remnants of Norse and Celtic superstitions.[7] This was easier said than done as the kirk found it difficult to recruit ministers to serve in the highlands while the goal of a 1696 Scottish Parliament bill to place a school in every parish was not achieved.[8]

In order to accomplish the goal of Christianising and civilising the highlands, the Church of Scotland enlisted the aid of some of the voluntary societies which were appearing with increasing regularity in Britain during the eighteenth century.[9] Although some assistance for the work in the highlands came from England, it was the formation of the SSPCK, something strongly supported by the kirk, which was the catalyst for a more intensive effort to bring the highlands into the national orbit.[10] Founded in 1701 and granted a royal patent in 1709, the Society targeted the highlands and islands of Scotland, a region which the Society's official history later described as those "dreary and dark regions" of the country which "present[ed] a melancholy and afflicting picture of accumulated human wretchedness".[11]

The SSPCK's public concerns echoed those of Scottish Protestants in general. In 1714, the Society's founders reflected on the "Ignorance, Atheism, Popery and Impiety" in the highlands as well as asserting that many highlanders were "bred in Principles of Tyranny, depend upon the Pope as Head of the Church, upon a Popish Pretender, bred up in the Arbitrary Maxims of *France*" and had the "French Court as the main Support of their Expectations" and the "Native Irish as their best Correspondents and Allies". Furthermore, since many highlanders found they could "live (tho' but meanly) without Labour" they "waste[d] their time in Idleness, whereby they are render'd uncapable of being imploy'd in Husbandry, Fishery,

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Manufactures, Handicrafts, Navigation, or of bearing Arms by Land or Sea".[12]

To overcome all this, the highlanders needed to be taught the "true Christian religion, good Morals, and an Industrious Way of Living". The results of such instruction would be "a competent Maintainance for themselves and Families, a share of the Liberties and Priviledges of other Natives, and of the well-grounded Hopes and Expectations of true Christians". Such changes would cause "great Advantages [to] accrue to the Government and Country, vast Tracts of Land in the Highlands, which lye useless, might be cultivated, and the Fisheries in Lakes, Bays and Seas, which are neglected might be improv'd, and a Nursery of Seamen bred for Ships of Trade and War, and also of Men to serve by Land when Occasion requires it".[13]

With these lofty goals, the Society attracted a significant number of men from the upper echelons of Scottish, particularly Edinburgh, society. It worked in a complementary rather than competitive fashion with respect to the Church of Scotland and, at least through the 1780s, was also a close ally of government institutions. In practical terms, the Society carried out its mission by funding the establishment of schools with resident schoolmasters in highland parishes, a technique which had been utilised by Scottish Protestants since the time of John Knox. As historian Margaret Connell Szasz has observed, the schoolmasters were the "cultural shock troops for the society".[14] Although highlanders often greeted the Society's efforts with suspicion, by 1758 it could claim 176 schools in the region.[15]

While many Protestants—both in Scotland and in England—recognised the importance of welding the highlanders to Britain, other regions of the British empire also drew attention from men determined to forge a concept of national unity. As more of Britain's wealth and strength came from its burgeoning colonial empire, so it was necessary to bind those regions, and any of their "uncivilised" inhabitants, into Britain's realm and, again, Protestantism was essential to this undertaking. Because the Anglican Church was the state church, the government provided a great deal of financial support to the church's work in the colonies. Following its formation in 1701, much of this aid was channelled to the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in the American colonies. As historian Boyd Stanley Schlenther has noted, SPG ministers saw themselves as the "ecclesiastical arm of eighteenth-century imperialism".[16]

However, circumstances worked against the Anglican Church and the SPG being the only vehicles for using religion to strengthen the ties of empire. Since the imperial focus was on trade, and the French and Spanish enemies were specifically presented as Catholic, any Protestant group was seen as an ally in efforts to extend and strengthen the empire.[17] As one such group, the SSPCK had recognised, at least theoretically, the importance of overseas mission work and had included a nod in this direction in its original patent when it had declared its intent to spread "Christian knowledge" into the "Popish and Infidel parts of the world". At their first meeting several months later, the members had elaborated on this pledge by deciding to "give encouragement to ministers to preach the Gospel" among "Heathen Nations".[18]

However, as the Society's eighteenth-century historian conceded, although "this humane view had never been lost sight of" it had not been pursued owing to the "narrowness of their funds".[19] This financial restriction was alleviated somewhat in the late 1720s by a provision in the will of English dissenter Dr. Daniel Williams

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(1643? - 1716). Williams bequeathed to the Society his Catsworth estates for the purpose of using the rents thereof to support three men "in Foreign Infidel Countries" in order to "bring them to the Knowledge of Christ Jesus".[20] Since the executors of Williams's estate were in London, in November, 1728 the Society established a board of correspondents there for the purpose of negotiating the transfer of the property named in the will.[21] Eventually, this board took on coordination of the Society's work in America. It would pay missionaries from funds held in London and forward the Society's instructions to America. When it came to policy, however, decisions were made in Edinburgh. There the SSPCK was effectively run by a Committee (also referred to as a Board of Directors) of fifteen men who met, at the least, on a monthly basis. The Committee was charged with running the regular business of the Society and reporting to the General Meeting (whose numbers were limited to one hundred) on a quarterly basis. Extra meetings could be called if circumstances warranted.[22]

London and Edinburgh, 1730

One of the first pieces of news regarding Williams's will which the London correspondents sent to Edinburgh in 1730 informed the Society that it was not to have possession of the rental property until the "end of one year *after* they have sent three qualified ministers" to foreign missions.[23] This meant the SSPCK would have to be the sole source of support for the missionaries for the initial twelve months. However, the correspondents had more cold water to throw on the Society's zeal. They believed that the annual rent total, which was around £56, was too small to support three American missionaries, and suggested that the Society needed to add £21 per year to the bequest (i.e. seven pounds per missionary) for the plan to be feasible. But, they noted, even the increased amount would be too small if the missionaries came from Scotland.[24]

The London correspondents suggested the Society consider the possibilities of recruiting in New England since that region was "the nearest to the Church of Scotland in religious matters".[25] In particular they believed that, since Harvard produced a "good number of students in divinity," three men could be found from there to go to the Indians. Employing New Englanders would have the added benefit, they argued, of encouraging "some good people in New England [to] contribute to their support". This would mean that the Society would only have to supplant the bequeathed money for two or three years, in the estimation of the London correspondents.[26] However, coupled with the earlier estimate of the extra funds required, the Society was now faced with expenses in the order of £90 before the work would become, hopefully, self-sustaining.

As the Society grappled with these financial ramifications, they discovered that the decision to establish a board of correspondents in the heart of Britain's communication nexus with its American colonies had borne unexpected fruit. Among the men recruited to represent the SSPCK's interests in London was Alexander Dundas, member of a well-connected Scottish merchant family, and who quickly made a key contribution to the Society's American plans. On his own initiative, he sought out Jonathan Belcher, newly appointed governor of Massachusetts and, in 1730, readying himself to depart to his post. Since the 1690s, colonial governors

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had been objects of lobbying by London groups with interests in America. By the 1730s, this activity was at its peak with many groups—merchants, ethnic groups, religious interests—having a recognisable location, such as a coffee-shop, where they would conduct their business. While the SSPCK was a new player in America, Dundas, presumably, was not, and knew how to reach the men that mattered.[27]

Dundas's decision to approach Belcher turned out to be both astute and serendipitous. Unlike the majority of colonial governors, Belcher was an American native, born in Massachusetts, and did not look on the appointment as a mere stepping stone to a position back in London. Because of this, he was more sensitive to the importance of British based groups, and could even be quite blatant about his desire to curry favour. Belcher proved to be an immediate and enthusiastic supporter of the Society's plans. He went so far as to suggest the Society take on the services of Boston ministers Edwards Wigglesworth, Joseph Sewall, and Benjamin Colman, as well as a number of lay leaders, to serve as their Massachusetts committee.[28] At the Society's general meeting in August 1730, they "reasoned at great length" upon these issues before they "unanimously agreed" to confer upon Governor Belcher, the Boston ministers, and others, acting as the Society's correspondents in New England, the right to "pitch upon well qualified and faithful persons" an unspecified salary for their first year's service.[29]

Boston and Edinburgh, 1731-33

While eighteenth-century New England ministers were as willing as their seventeenth-century predecessors to engage in rhetorical battles over the nature of true religion, in the face of the threat from Catholic New France, they were also more than willing to form alliances with other Protestants. Many New England ministers, including Benjamin Colman, were strong believers in what historian Thomas Kidd has identified as the Protestant Interest. Like their counterparts in Britain, New England ministers who held to this view believed strongly that Britain—and its increasingly far-flung empire—were the last real defenders of Protestantism. While Britons may have feared threats from across the channel and from the highlands of Scotland, New Englanders feared the nearby Catholics of New France and their Indian allies. Absent the protection of the ocean, invasion by hostile Catholics seemed even more real to British Americans than it usually did to the residents of the home islands.[30] As Aaron Burr would warn his congregation in 1755, a "distressing scene" was in the offing if the French should "send a Fleet, with a large Army of well-disciplined Troops" at the same time that the "*savage Natives*...join them in falling on our *Frontiers*".[31]

In order to prevent such nightmares from coming true, Protestant ministers, colonial officials, and officials in Britain agreed that the conversion of Native Americans was essential for the preservation of the British colonies in North America. Although New England ministers, including Benjamin Colman, had on occasion to warn off SPG ministers who attempted to win converts from among British colonists, the common goal of preserving the colonies as defenders of Protestantism, meant that Congregationalists such as Colman were usually on good terms with the low-church Anglicans who made up the bulk of the SPG's supporters. Furthermore, the desire to convert Native Americans led to a substantial

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degree of cooperation between various mission groups including the SPG, the SSPCK, and the New England Company (NEC).[32]

However, since the goal of conversion was a political as well as a religious one, political concerns often dictated the way in which mission work was established. SPG members learned that emphasising the geopolitical advantages of Indian conversion also opened financial doors, which led to their earliest efforts being focused on the Mohawk Indians. Whatever spiritual concerns may have been present, the English were desperate to shore up their Indian support among groups west of the Hudson River. The Mohawks, as the easternmost group of the Iroquois Confederacy were of particular strategic importance. The SPG missionaries operated out of Fort Hunter but this limited access to the Mohawks and the first few men had little success.[33] In a similar blending of the political and religious the NEC assisted the government of Massachusetts in sending a number of missionaries into what is now Maine in an effort to counteract the work of the French Jesuits who lived and worked among the Indians in the region.[34]

Since the SSPCK's American policy had been passed, at least in a *de facto* fashion, to Jonathan Belcher, Benjamin Colman, and others in New England, it was only natural that they would see the employment of SSPCK missionaries as an opportunity to advance their own politico-religious policies for peripheral areas of New England settlement. At the same time, Belcher also saw an opportunity to solve another problem in the religious life of New England: the lack of regular ministerial presence in the colony's frontier forts. By crafting this solution, Belcher also opened the door for the missionaries to be compensated as employees of the colony.

As the Massachusetts committee sought out men to work as missionaries, they convinced the SSPCK to increase the salaries offered to potential recruits as well as winning an agreement to advance the first missionary "one half of their years salary".[35] Fortunately, the Society was to learn that there were also some financial benefits to their involvement with the Massachusetts' power structure. Once actual candidates had come forward, Belcher had taken the opportunity to use some of his political capital. Addressing the Massachusetts Assembly, he asked them to "do what may be reasonably expected...for encouraging this pious design".[36] However, Belcher's request to the Assembly also appealed to the political interests of the colony: when making his appeal, Belcher explained to the assembly that the missionaries were to be assigned to Forts Dummer, Richmond, and George, where they could "for the present serve as Chaplains to those Garrisons, as well as Instructors to the Indians; and this would also answer the Petitions I have receiv'd from the several Officers and Soldiers that the Worship of God may be upheld among them".[37] The Assembly responded with alacrity, voting to each man a salary of £100 p.a. for five years with a further £100 bonus if they should complete the five year term.[38]

However, even colonial cooperation and largesse carried a *quid pro quo*. In a January, 1731 letter, Belcher asked that Benjamin Colman and Samuel Sewall have "the degree of Doctor in Divinity conferred upon them" and, "if it can be got done, that their diplomas be from the University of Glasgow".[39] Then, in 1732 after the Massachusetts Assembly had voted for salaries for the missionaries, Belcher's son, then in Britain was granted membership of the SSPCK. Belcher himself used this event as a means to correspond with the Earl of Islay, a patron of the Society, taking the opportunity to inform the Earl of his own efforts to obtain the higher

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payments. Given the financial compensation agreed to by the Massachusetts assembly, the Society may well have thought these favours to be worth the price. Nor could the Society have been disappointed in their colleagues in Massachusetts with Belcher and Colman in particular becoming strong supporters of the SSPCK's work. It was also clear, however, that policy was now largely being dictated by Boston rather than Edinburgh.[40]

In January 1733, the SSPCK learned that, more than four years after the establishment of the London correspondents' board, and almost sixteen years after Williams's will had been made public, they finally had three missionaries operating in "infidel foreign countries". The three were Joseph Seccombe at the blockhouse on George's River, Ebenezer Hinsdale (son-in-law of the Reverend John Williams of Deerfield fame) at Fort Dummer on the Connecticut River, and Stephen Parker at Fort Richmond "in the eastern country".[41] While the Society expressed its gratitude to Belcher and the correspondents for recruiting the three men and for winning the additional money from the Massachusetts Assembly, it also sounded a cautionary note by asking them to "take care that the forsaid three ministers being chaplains in the above forts do not divert them from their work as missionaries". The SSPCK also requested the correspondents keep close tabs on the men and, should one of them be dismissed, resign, or perish, a replacement should be found quickly since the bequest was only payable while three men were employed.[42]

The SSPCK's concern over the role of their missionaries was probably rooted in their experiences in the highlands. Although it proved difficult to recruit men to serve in the region, the SSPCK knew that it was those very resident missionaries who were the ones bringing about reform.[43] Although the Society was concerned about the dual role required of the men, one should avoid the temptation to simply see Belcher and the Assembly as using the Society's generosity to embark on their own pet projects. Rather, their actions reflected the long-standing English and British approaches to the conversion of Native Americans. Whatever problems the Society saw in Scotland, the people they were trying to educate there largely lived in long-established villages. In contrast, Native Americans rarely lived full-time in permanent settlements, frequently travelling to hunt game and conduct trade and other business. So much of English, and British, policy to "civilise" the Indians and win them to the side of Britannia required that Native Americans adopt the sedentary lifestyle of Britons.[44] Belcher himself emphasised this during a treaty signing at Deerfield in 1735, declaring to one Indian group that he was "glad you are come near to the Fort to live" and urged them to "diligently attend on the instructions of Mr. Hinsdale your minister".[45] Thus using the men as chaplains did not, in and of itself, mean an abrogation of their ability to preach to the Indians since it reflected the hope that more Indians would choose to settle down to fixed lifestyles in close proximity to the colonial forts.

And the early days of their work held a certain promise that there would be some success. In January, 1733, Ebenezer Hinsdale sat down at Fort Dummer to pen his first report to the New England correspondents. Although the seasonal nature of Indian hunting meant he had had to wait some time before beginning his mission, he had since laboured diligently to "ingratiate" himself with them by "maintaining an ernest concern to them for their welfare". One man had spent some time discussing the merits of the bible with Hinsdale and, while conceding that it "might be

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sent for a rule to the white people", it was not applicable to Indians since they had "never [heard] of it before the English came among them" and because they were unable to read it. Hinsdale countered that the book had first been given to some peoples but was now being made available to others. The man gave Hinsdale "some slight encouragement" that he would return in the spring to learn more.[46]

Hinsdale also provided an account of the attempts of some of the local Indians to have their children baptised. While the Indians had thought this could be done immediately, Hinsdale averred that there were "certain qualifications necessary in those that offered up infants to baptism" and that they must first be "instructed in the principles of religion". Hinsdale believed that this message had been well understood but, at the time he expected one mother to come to him for instruction, he discovered that she had "gone into the woods with the others" which was "contrary to my expectations". Nonetheless, there were a number of other parents who appeared desirous that their children be baptised and soon came to him for instruction.[47]

In August 1733, the Society received letters from Belcher and Benjamin Colman along with copies of letters from Seccombe and Parker. Obviously, Colman had recognised the Society's concerns about the work being conducted by their missionaries, and he emphasised that Seccombe and Parker were in "daily converse with the Indians that frequent their several stations, and also travel to others at greater distance, being sometimes invited to pray and keep Sabbath with them". The missionaries were also "taking great pains to learn the Indian language". However, the correspondents reported that the work was being opposed by Catholic friars and priests who were also attempting to make converts in the region. To counter this, the correspondents asked the Society to allow the missionaries a further three or four pounds annually so they could buy for the Indians "cloathing, eatables, and now and then a Bible" since this was how the "popish missionaries win them".[48] Accordingly, the Society directed their London correspondents to send off parcels of toys to each of the missionaries for distribution to the Indians.[49] The first year of the SSPCK's American project seemed to hold out great promise that success among the Indians was at hand.

London, Edinburgh, and Boston, 1735-37

By late 1735, the Society could be forgiven for believing that it was in a good position with respect to the demands of the trustees of Williams's estate. Although there had been an initial hitch in the certificates of service sent from New England, this had been cleared up. In October, the Society had fortuitously acquired and commissioned a fourth missionary, John McLeod, who set off for the new colony of Georgia to serve as both pastor to a group of Highland Scots emigrating to the southern region of Georgia and as a missionary to local Indians.[50]

Despite this optimism, the finalisation of the deed to Catsworth Farm dragged on and on. In fact, the Society's account books do not list the estate as one of their securities until 1739, although that probably indicates the conveyance was completed sometime in 1738. Much of the delay was concerned with largely technical issues concerning repairs, exact terms, and dates.[51] However, although not directly addressed in the Society's minutes, their own actions, as well as comments from

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other sources, make it clear that the issue of the men acting primarily as chaplains was presenting a problem.

In particular, London philanthropist Thomas Coram had warned the SSPCK of the concerns harboured by Williams's trustees. Coram had learned of the work in New England from a copy of the *Boston Weekly Newsletter* sent to him by his sister and had supported the work almost immediately by sending a small parcel of books to each man.[52] Coram received letters of thanks from Parker and Seccombe.[53] He continued to arrange for gifts to be sent to the missionaries for several years and, in return, received, at least from Seccombe, reports on the work. In September 1735, Coram advised Colman that he was attempting to raise funds in order to buy "proper books" that would equip "those young Davids on the borders to beat down the Old Goliaths French Jesuits".[54]

But Coram was more than just a long-distance cheerleader. He had lived in Massachusetts for a number of years and, while attempting to establish a ship-building business near Taunton, had spent time talking with Native Americans in the region. Like SPG founder Thomas Bray, Coram understood that effective mission work required ministers to have regular contact with Indians, something that meant they needed to live with, or in close proximity to, Native Americans. In addition to providing more regular contact with those to whom they had been sent, it also prevented missionaries being sidetracked by other projects.[55] In his letter to Colman already referenced, Coram warned the New England minister that Williams's trustees "would not readily come into settling" the bequest on the SSPCK because the trustees had been told that the New Englanders had "settled the 3 missionaries as Chaplains to your garrisons rather than for regaining the perverted Indians out of the pollutions of the F[rench] Jesuits".[56]

Certainly the long drawn out process of getting the property transferred would suggest that Williams's trustees had reservations beyond getting the correct certification. A little over a year after Coram's letter to Colman, the London correspondents advised the Society that the transfer had been delayed yet again since the conveyance drawn up was "defective" because of the failure of a lawyer for the trustees to "peruse a certain writing lately examined". There is nothing in the records that provides any further information about this "certain writing" or what may have been "defective". It may well have simply been a legal requirement. But, it could also have been a reference to the belief that having chaplain-missionaries stationed in the government forts, was not a true fulfilment of Williams's will.[57]

This idea is reinforced by notations in the Society's own records indicating that concern was mounting regarding the stationing of the three men at military forts. At the November, 1736 meeting, the directors reported on the contents of the first detailed journals from the three missionaries, noting that the men were "painful and diligent in entertaining Christian conference with the poor ignorant Indians". Nonetheless, the directors were pessimistic about the chances for substantial success among the Indians since it was "only the trading part of the Indians that chiefly report to the forts & truckhouses", and these Indians made "but short stay there". During this time the Indians were "so busy about their trade, and so often intoxicated with drink, that little can be expected from the short and transient instructions offered to them in these circumstances".[58]

Not only was this contrary to the interpretation of the will made by the trustees

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and their lawyers, by now it was also contrary to the way the Society wanted their missionaries to operate. Mirroring their approach to the work in the Scottish highlands, the Society wanted their missionaries to target local language and culture which were seen as impediments to the spread of the gospel and of British civilisation. The formal commissions sent to New England noted that, in addition to preaching the gospel and catechising the Indians, missionaries were also to "keep a school for teaching the foresaid heathens to read the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and other good and pious books, writing, and arithmetick, and to understand and speak the English language and to direct them how to pray".[59] All of this would be difficult, if not impossible, if the men continued to reside at a fort, making only brief forays to Indian villages.

In light of the growing concerns, the Society's directors suggested that efforts should be made to relocate one or two of the three men. Their preference was to move them to the "most populous towns or villages of the natives, where a school house may be set up for their being there instructed, in a more easy, extensive & stated manner".[60] In June 1737, the Society received a letter from Jonathan Belcher defending the general lack of success by noting that the men were "one hundred and fifty miles eastward of Boston, amongst a people generally drowned in drunkenness, & poisoned with Romish errors and anti-Christian idolatry".[61] Understandably, for a group of men who spent their charitable time rescuing a similar group of people in the highlands, such an argument was not taken as a definitive excuse. The General Meeting decided to delay a decision on relocation but to press Belcher to respond to the plan. As it turned out, the decision to compel a relocation, designed to increase the effectiveness of the work, in fact, precipitated the end of the first phase of the Society's work in New England.

At their meeting in November 1737, the Society received word that the Correspondents in New England "had dismissed the Societys missionarys, in respect of their unsuccessfulness in their work, and their declining to live and inhabite among the Indians".[62] There appears to be no surviving record detailing the discussions in Massachusetts over relocation, nor why the men refused to move among the Indians. It may have been simply that they were unwilling to live away from colonial society, but there may also have had a financial component. Presumably if the men were to leave the forts they would no longer serve as chaplains and would probably forfeit most, if not all, of the salary offered by the legislature. Since they would be losing approximately half of their support (taking into account the currency differences between Britain and Massachusetts) they may well have been unwilling to accept this substantial drop in salary.[63]

Edinburgh and New York, 1738-43

Thus, by early 1738 the Society could count only one missionary, John McLeod in Georgia. And McLeod's situation even that early in his work did not appear stable. In fact, for most of his three or so years in the colony, McLeod's correspondence to the Society traced a series of difficulties and disputes, culminating with the death of many of the Scots during Oglethorpe's catastrophic failure near St. Augustine in June 1740.[64] From the Society's perspective, even if McLeod stayed on in Georgia, they were still short two missionaries to keep in compliance with the terms of the

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will, which required them to support three missionaries in order to retain the Catsworth property.

There was no lack of applicants seeking to participate in the Society's work in the American colonies. Among these were a group of highlanders about to migrate from Kildusklane in Argyleshire, as well as requests from various people noting the severe shortage of qualified ministers in South Carolina. However, without exception, all these petitions were for men to minister to Scottish or Scotch-Irish congregations either *en route* to, or already in, America, and so the Society responded to these various requests with little more than a cautious wait and see attitude.[65] Then in early 1740 a letter from the minister of New York's First Presbyterian Church, Ebenezer Pemberton, proposing that the Society sponsor mission work in the Susquehanna Valley, presented an opportunity for the SSPCK to reestablish control over the parameters of their work in America.

Pemberton, along with Philadelphia minister Jonathan Dickinson, had first written to the Society in 1738, informing them of the "dark and perishing circumstances of great numbers of people" in parts of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Although the two referred to new colonists who were "almost in a state of heathenism through want of gospel ordinances," they also observed that there were "nations of Indians" which "continue in paganism". To minister to these needy groups, Pemberton and Dickinson asked the Society to "encourage one or two qualified ministers as itinerant preachers among these ungospelized places".[66] The proposal was referred to the committee who, at the next general meeting proposed sending encouragement to Pemberton and Dickinson to pursue the plan.

Pemberton's response reached the Society in early 1740. He and John Sergeant, the New England Company's successful missionary among the Mohicans at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, proposed establishing a new work in the Susquehanna River valley for a man who would "reside among the Indians frequently" and who would "catechize and teach them to read and preach among them," and learn their language until "he shall be able to preach to them in their own language". Clearly ministers on both sides of the Atlantic had been taking notes. No more would the SSPCK missionaries attempt to hold down two jobs and communicate through interpreters. The General Meeting encouraged Pemberton and his colleagues to attempt to bring these plans to fruition.[67]

The response from New York was most comprehensive and thoughtfully laid out, part of the rethinking of Indian missions in the first part of the eighteenth century which led to new approaches.[68] Pemberton and Dickinson suggested a Committee of Correspondence that included, among others, themselves, Sergeant, Aaron Burr, and Gilbert and William Tennent: a virtual who's who of middle colony evangelical Presbyterians. They proposed employing two missionaries, probably to be "sent among a large tribe of Indians on Susquehanna River upon the borders of the province of Pennsylvania" each with a salary of forty pounds. The Society enthusiastically endorsed this plan and ordered letters of commission to be sent to New York for all the individuals involved. Among the men employed under this scheme were Azariah Horton and David and John Brainerd.[69] This second group of SSPCK missionaries was maintained by the Society under different terms—terms which were a response to the failure of the Society's first efforts.

When it came to compensation, the Society had a better grasp of the financial

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needs of men working for them in America. Whereas the first three missionaries had originally been awarded a salary of £20, each of the next group of men were to receive £40 each. The total paid out substantially exceeded the rents on the Catsworth property. That is, although the bequest by Williams had been the catalyst that moved the SSPCK into American missions, it was no longer the sole sustaining factor. The Society was willing to use money from its general funds to support the work.[70]

The Society also made structural changes in the way it conducted its American mission. The Society had learned that its missionaries could not fulfil two careers. Part of the reason for this was that, in so doing, they were not in compliance with the terms of Doctor Williams's will. But, more than this, men who were employed as chaplains or in similar roles, simply had limited contact with Indians and were unable to perform the kind of work that was at the heart of the Society's overall mission. Hence the Society's decision that future missionaries in American must *live among the Indians*. An important corollary to this is that, although future work in the colonies may have had the support of government leaders both at home and abroad, at no point in the future did the Society tie its American work, financially or otherwise, to ruling bodies in any of the colonies or in Britain. In so separating itself, the Society was stepping away from the trend among British interest groups, including mission societies, which were demonstrating an increasing desire to ingratiate themselves with colonial governors in order to win political support for their goals.[71]

SPG missionaries, for example, remained closely connected to government efforts and often attempted to serve colonial and Indian congregations at the same time. The SPG work among the Mohawk did little more than sputter through the 1770s and the handful of men who worked with these Indians usually lived in Fort Hunter and were employed both as Indian missionaries and as ministers in Albany. In fact, none of the more than three hundred SPG ministers who worked in the American colonies in the eighteenth century lived with their Indian audiences.[72] Although moving beyond the period covered by this article, royal appeals and various acts of Parliament brought substantial amounts of money into the coffers of the SPG well into the nineteenth century.[73]

While the NEC was not quite as beholden to official connections as the SPG, it too maintained ties to the political establishment. Their mission at Stockbridge, in western Massachusetts, had been founded in part as a defensive post on New England's northwestern borders. While the original missionary, John Sergeant, focused on caring for a growing Indian congregation, he encouraged the establishment of a colonial village in the same region. Unfortunately, many of those who settled in the region were more interested in land speculation than in Indian conversions and a series of bitter disputes followed which watered down the efforts of Sergeant and his successors.[74] Other NEC missionaries operating in New England through the 1750s served Indian villages on a part-time basis while retaining their work—and salary—with a colonial congregation.[75]

The next cadre of SSPCK American missionaries presented a contrast to these models. In late 1741, Azariah Horton began to work among the Montauk Indians on Long Island on behalf of the Society. Horton remained among the Montauk, with only modest success, until 1752 when he accepted a call to the church in Madison,

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New Jersey where he remained until 1776. Horton died the following year at the age of 62.[76] In March, 1743, David Brainerd arrived in Kaunaumeek, New York although he would later move to Pennsylvania and, finally, to New Jersey. Brainerd was the shining example of success for the SSPCK for much of its existence, with his work leading to the formation of an Indian congregation in New Jersey.[77] For almost a decade, the relative success of both of these men would exceed the Society's expectations and establish the SSPCK as an effective foreign mission organisation. Both were paid directly out of the Society's accounts while the Catsworth property was listed simply as a security with no attempt being made to equate the income from one with the expense of the other. Brainerd even had the luxury of a full-time schoolmaster to help him with the instruction of his Indian converts.

Most importantly, there was no attempt to have either of the men pursue dual careers either as full-time ministers to colonial congregations or as agents of colonial governments.[78] This was demonstrated during the one period in time when the lives of the two intersected. In early 1743, David Brainerd, who had already agreed to serve the Society as a missionary, was sent by the Society's correspondents in New York to serve a six week term as a supply minister in Easthampton, Long Island. During his time there, he made several visits to observe Horton's work among the nearby Montauk Indians. The separation of tasks is crystal clear. Although Horton was already in Montauk, there was no suggestion that he should supply, even on a short-term basis, the vacant pulpit at Easthampton. His work was among the Indians only. At the same time, although Brainerd had already been recruited to work for the Society, his salary from them did not commence until March 15, 1743, that is, about two weeks after he left Easthampton.[79] During the six weeks he was in that town, his salary was presumably being paid by the local church. Clearly, for the SSPCK, there were ministers and there were missionaries, and never again, the twain should meet.

Rather than work with colonial officials as the first three SSPCK missionaries had done, Brainerd and his brother John actually engaged in a series of legal battles with New Jersey leaders over possession of the land on which their Indian mission was located. Part of a broader battle between proprietary supporters who claimed ownership based on royal grants and settlers advocating rights based on purchase from the Indians, the Brainerd-led mission work at Cranberry was threatened by men allied with the New Jersey political leadership. Their number included Robert Hunter Morris, son of Governor Lewis Morris and later Chief Justice of the colony. Although Morris and his allies would eventually seize the land, they did so in opposition to SSPCK missionaries rather than as their supporters.[80]

By the mid-1740s, SSPCK missionaries were men recruited in the colonies, paid a decent salary, who worked solely as missionaries to the Indians, and who were not subject to the desires and policies of colonial governors. By 1746, David Brainerd and Horton were ministers. But they were ministers to congregations of Indians, preaching to them almost exclusively in order to bring the blessings of civilisation to a people the Society believed were lost in darkness; just as their peers in the highlands of Scotland were doing. At a time when groups with transatlantic interests were increasingly seeking imperial support, and when operations in America were increasingly autonomous from Britain, the SSPCK resisted both trends in order to fashion a relatively successful colonial work.

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GMM III: *General Meeting Minutes,* Volume III, Jan 1 1736 - Nov 15 1759

DMM II: *Directors' Meeting Minutes,* Volume II, April 13 1727 - Jan 13 1732

DMM III: *Directors' Meeting Minutes,* Volume III, Feb 3 1732 - December 1740

DMM IV: *Directors' Meeting Minutes,* Volume IV, Jan 1741 - Aug 1750

Inventories: Inventories of Securities, Titles, Deeds, etc; four volumes 1709-1778

General Ledger: SSPCK General Ledger, 1709 - October 1779

Stock Ledger: SSPCK Stock Ledger, April 1724 - November 1776

Other abbreviations used:

Belcher Papers: Papers of Jonathan Belcher, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Sixth Series, Volume 6.

Proc. MHS: Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society

MA: Massachusetts Archives

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Notes

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1 See, for example, Calam, *Parson and Pedagogues,* 20-61, 85; Kellaway, *New England Company,* 166-82; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission,* 207-12, 223, 224. This disconnect is also measured by the absence of any analysis of the impact of debates in Britain on colonial practices. This does not reflect a shortcoming of the work of historians but rather a recognition of the limited means available to British groups.

2 Although the 1795 history devoted about a page to describing the events leading up to the appointment of the three men, their actual work was summarised thus: "These missionaries were maintained by the SOCIETY till the year 1737, when they were dismissed, on account of their want of success, and of their declining to live among the Indians." Hunter, *Brief History,* 30, 31.

3 Colley, *Britons,* 11-54; Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise,* 122, 123; Schlenther, "Religious Faith and Commercial Empire", 130, 131; Greene, "Empire and Identity", 214, 215.

4 Canny, "Marginal Kingdom", 35-39, 55-62; Hill, "Propagating the Gospel".

5 Colley, *Britons,* 18-20, 46; Kidd, *Protestant Interest,* 37-40; Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise,* 122; Schlenther, "Religious Faith and Commercial Empire", 135-49; Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism,* 86, 87.

6 Whatley, *Scottish Society,* 167.

7 Whatley, *Scottish Society,* 186; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement,* 54-60, 90; Brown, *Religion and Society,* 85.

8 MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement,* 17, 18, 225, 226; Reed, *Georgian Triumph,* 28, 29; Robb, "Popular Religion", 27, 28.

9 Bullock, *Voluntary Religious Societies,* provides an overview of many of these organisations.

10 Robb, "Popular Religion", 28.

11 Hunter, *Brief History,* 6, 19.

12 *Account of the Rise, Constitution and Management [1714],* 6, 7.

13 *Account of the Rise, Constitution and Management [1714],* 7.

14 Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans,* 80.

15 Hunter, *Brief History,* 13, 14, 16, 19; Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland,* 86; Reed, *Georgian Triumph,* 28; Brown, *Social History of Religion,* 98; Camic, *Experience and Enlightenment,* 28; Devine, *The Scottish Nation,* 91-95. The preceding discussion,

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obviously, constitutes only a thumbnail sketch of a more complex process.

16 *Elites, Enterprise,* 123, 151, 152; Schlenther, "Religious Empire and Commercial Faith", 130, 131; Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism,* 86.

17 Schlenther, "Religious Empire and Commercial Faith", 130, 131, 135-40, 145, 146.

18 "Appendix No. 1 First Patent", 1 (separate pagination) in Hunter, *Brief History*; Hunter, *Brief History,* 21. The racial and culture connections drawn by the Society between highlanders and Native Americans have been more fully explored in Meek, "Scottish Highlanders".

19 Hunter, *Brief History,* 30.

20 *Last Will and Testament of the Late Reverend Daniel Williams,* 16-19. Williams also left the Society £100, his second such cash gift.

21 GMM, II: 85. On the Scotland-London connection in general, Richards, "Scotland and the Uses of the Atlantic Empire", in Bailyn and Morgan (eds.), *Strangers Within the Realm,* 67-114. The long delay between Williams's death and the SSPCK initiating its plans was largely due to a legal challenge to the will; see *DNB* XXI: 388.

22 *Account of the Rise, Constitution and Management [1714],* 26, 27.

23 GMM, II: 199, emphasis added. One is puzzled by the surprise expressed by both the Society and the London committee. By this time, the will had been available for about thirteen years and the terms attached to the bequest seem to be fairly clear. See *True Copy of the Last Will,* 17. The lawyers acting on behalf of Williams's executors also precluded the Society settling the funds on men already serving among the Indians, which meant the SSPCK could not support John Sergeant when they became aware of his work several years later. See GMM II: 212.

24 GMM, II: 199, 200.

25 GMM, II: 198.

26 GMM, II: 144, 198.

27 GMM, II: 200; Olson, *Making the Empire Work,* 76, 77, 94-125. See also, Price, "Who Cared About the Colonies?" in Bailyn and Morgan (eds), *Strangers Within the Realm,* 395-436; Colley, *Britons,* 64; Hancock, *Citizens of the World,* 86-90.

28 Olson, *Making the Empire Work,* 130-3; Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics,* 88, 89; GMM, II: 200-201.

29 GMM, II: 201.

30 Kidd, *Protestant Interest,* 43-45, 91-93.

31 Burr, *Discourse Delivered,* 40.

32 Kidd, *Protestant Interest,* 37-40, 43-47, 99-101, 118-20, 133-35; Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism,* 87, 90, 92-98, 100-104; Greene, "Empire and Identity", 214. 215; Axtell, *Invasion Within,* 247-54.

33 Anderson, "Anglican Mission Among the Mohawk", 235-39; Axtell, *Invasion Within,* 254-60; Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism,* 100-104, 125.

34 Kellaway, *New England Company,* 257-60; Axtell, *Invasion Within,* 247-54.

35 GMM, II: 225, 256, 257, 291. The SSPCK was able to convince the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to fund some of these additional charges.

36 *New England Weekly Journal,* June 5, 1732.

37 *New England Weekly Journal,* June 5, 1732.

38 *New England Courant,* July 3, 1732.

39 GMM, II: 256, 257.

40 "Belcher to the Earl of Islay, September 19, 1732", *Belcher Papers,* 188, 189; Kidd, *Protestant Interest,* 42-50.

41 "Belcher to Giles, February 25, 1732" and "Belcher to Kellogg, October 7, 1732", *Belcher Papers,* 102, 103, 191, 192; GMM, II: 340, 341.

42 GMM, II: 340, 341.

43 Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans,* 79-81.

44 Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions,* 99, 127, 128; Axtell, *Invasion Within,* 137-42, 148-60.

45 "Indian Treaty at Deerfield Massachusetts", *Coll. Maine H.S.* IV, 123-44, at 141.

46 "Hinsdell [sic] to Commissioners, January 26, 1733", *MA* 52: 420.

47 "Hinsdell [sic] to Commissioners, January 26, 1733", *MA* 52: 420.

48 GMM, II: 373, 374.

49 GMM, II: 396.

50 On the issue of the certificates of service, GMM, II: 396, 412, 427-29. The discussion of McLeod can be found at GMM, II: 451-53, 460, 461, GMM, III: 5. Although there are some similarities between McLeod's case and that of the three men in Massachusetts, the circumstances are substantially different. Thus, for the sake of clarity, I am omitting a detailed explanation and analysis of McLeod from this article.

51 NAS, "Inventories", SSPCK RG GD 95, II: 38-42; GMM, II: 412, 427-29, III: 22, 35; DMM, II: 255.

52 "Thomas Coram to Benjamin Colman, April

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30, 1734", *Proc. MHS,* 56: 21.

53 "Coram to Colman, February 13, 1735", *Proc. MHS,* 56: 24-26.

54 "Coram to Colman, September 23, 1735", *Proc. MHS,* 56: 27-30.

55 Wagner, "Spreading the Word", 66-68, 74; O'Connor, *Three Centuries of Missions,* 20-22.

56 "Coram to Colman, September 23, 1735", *Proc. MHS,* 56: 27-30.

57 GMM, III: 40.

58 GMM, III: 36, 37.

59 *Abridgment of the Statutes and Rules*, 44-47; GMM, II: 206-209.

60 GMM, III: 36.

61 GMM, III: 52.

62 GMM, III: 57, 58.

63 Again, there are no direct statements to this effect, but future actions by two of the three suggest it is possible. Only Seccombe remained in the ministry, pastoring at Kingston, New Hampshire for twenty-three years. Ebenezer Hinsdale's later life indicated more material goals. By 1740, he was tending a family business at Deerfield while working part-time as a surveyor in the vicinity of Fort Dummer. Later in life, he was a proprietor in a number of New Hampshire town settlements. Stephen Parker settled in Boston as a dry-goods merchant but died in 1744 aged only thirty-seven. See *Sibley's Harvard Graduates,* 8: 141-48, 246, 247, 9: 87-96.

64 References to McLeod's correspondence and his difficulties are scattered through the Society's records. The raid on St. Augustine was an early action in the War of Jenkin's Ear which became part of King George's War. About half of the raiding force had been recruited from the Scots at Darien, where McLeod ministered. Surprised in their encampment, the raiders were cut to pieces. Of the sixty-seven Darien Scotsmen in the force, fifty-one were killed or captured. See Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia,* 77-81.

65 GMM, III: 111, 112, 115-17, 157, 158, 272, 273, 284; DMM, III: 459, 477, 478; DMM, I: 56, 106.

66 GMM, III: 86, 87.

67 GMM, III: 123-25.

68 Szasz, *Indian Education,* 173-93; Axtell, *Invasion Within,* 186-99; Kellaway, *New England Company,* 228-67.

69 GMM, III: 156, 157.

70 *Stock Ledger,* 10, 11 for Catsworth rents, c.f. *General Ledger,* 237 for David Brainerd's salary.

71 Olson, *Making the Empire Work,* 108, 109. Although the SSPCK work in the colonies detached itself from its ties to officialdom, it continued to work closely with a number of governmental bodies in the highlands. See MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement,* 249-54.

72 Goodwin, "Christianity, Civilization and the Savage", 102, 103; Anderson, "Anglican Mission", 235-39; Axtell, *Invasion Within,* 258-63; Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions,* 135, 136. There was one other SPG missionary in the north – John Checkley who worked with various Indian and colonial groups in Rhode Island. It is not clear who funded his work or how connected it was to any established church or administration. See Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism,* 130, 131.

73 O'Connor, *Three Centuries,* 58, 59; Shaw, "Supporting a Colonial Bishop", 293-95.

74 Kellaway, *New England Company,* 270-75; Axtell, *Invasion Within,* 196-204.

75 Kellaway, *New England Company,* 254-57.

76 On Horton, see Dexter, *Biographical Sketches,* I: 536, 537, and Strong and Török, "Taking the Middle Way".

77 On David Brainerd, see Edwards, *Life of Brainerd;* Pointer, "Poor Indians"; Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions,* 152-55.

78 Brainerd often preached in colonial settlements while he was in Pennsylvania and New Jersey; he did not serve any of these locales as a full-time pastor.

79 *General Ledger,* 237.

80 The Brainerd brothers' struggle with the New Jersey authorities is described at length in my forthcoming *The Lives of David Brainerd* (Oxford University Press).

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