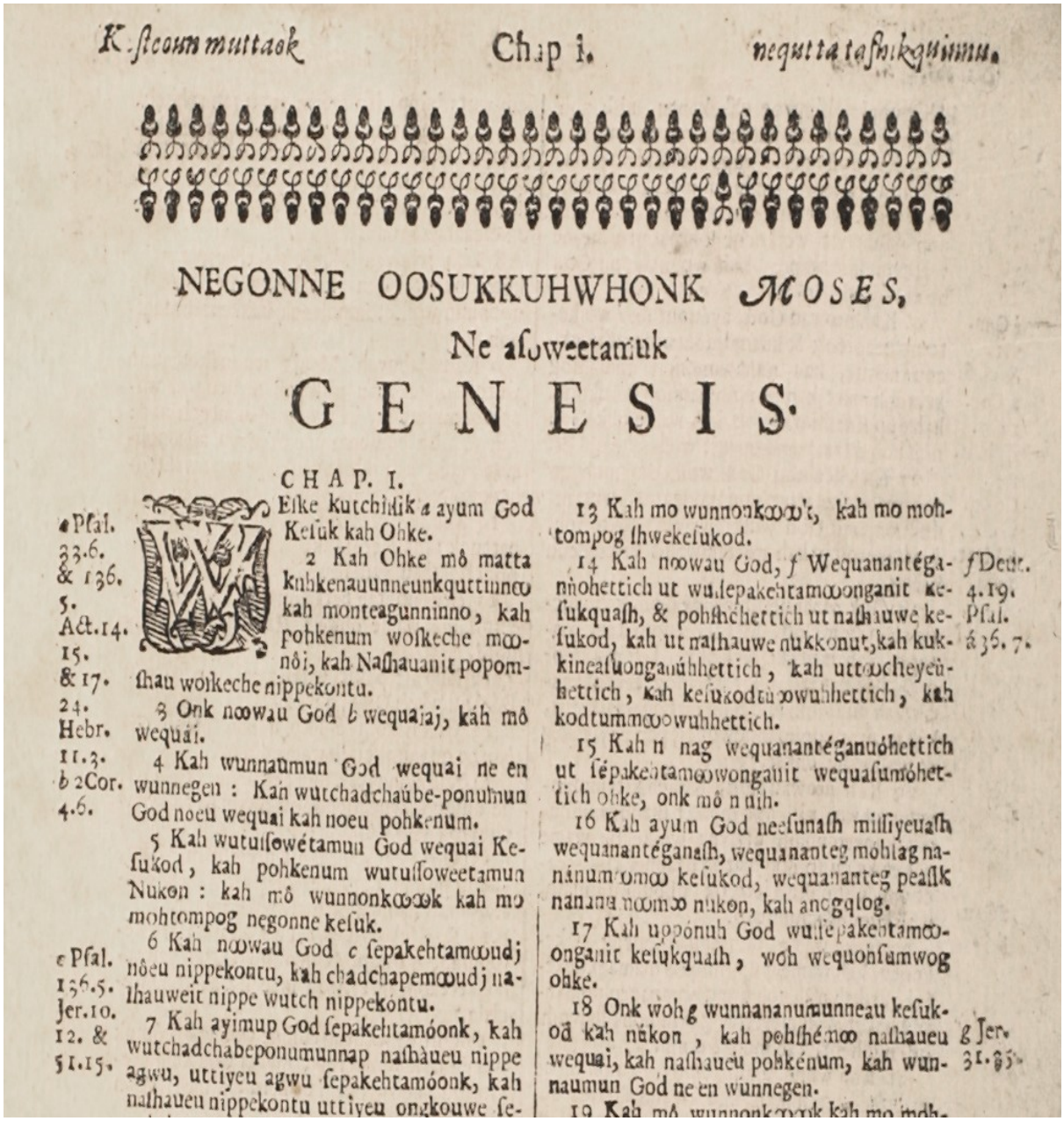
Christianity, Conversion and Colonialism among the Eastern Algonquian of Southern New England, 1643-c.1700

By Daniel Watts



K. ſteoun muttaok Chap i. negutta taſhikquinnu.

NEGONNE OOSUKKUHWHONK *MOSES*,

Ne aſoweetamuk

GENESIS.

CHAP. I.

a Pſal. 33.6. & 136. 5. Act.14. 15. & 17. 24. Hebr. 11.3. b 2Cor. 4.6.

WEiſke kutchiſik a ayum God Keſuk kah Ohke.

2 Kah Ohke mò matta kuhkenauunneunkquttinnoo kah monteagunninno, kah pohkenum woſkeche moonòi, kah Naſhauanit popomſhau woſkeche nippekontu.

3 Onk noowau God b wequaiaj, káh mò wequái.

4 Kah wunnaùmun God wequai ne en wunnegen: Kah wutchadchaùbe-ponumun God noeu wequai kah noeu pohkenum.

5 Kah wutuſſowétamun God wequai Keſukod, kah pohkenum wutuſſoweetamun Nukon: kah mò wunnonkoook kah mo mohtompog negonne keſuk.

c Pſal. 136.5. Jer.10. 12. & 51.15.

6 Kah noowau God c ſepakehtamoodj nòeu nippekontu, kah chadchapemoodj naſhauweit nippe wutch nippekontu.

7 Kah ayimup God ſepakehtamóonk, kah wutchadchabeponumunnap naſhàueu nippe agwu, uttiyeu agwu ſepakehtamóonk, kah naſhaueu nippekontu uttiyeu ongkouwe ſe-

13 Kah mo wunnonkoow'k, kah mo mohtompog ſhwekeſukod.

14 Kah noowau God, f Wequanantéganòhettich ut wuſepakehtamoonganit keſukquaſh, & pohſhchettich ut naſhauwe keſukod, kah ut naſhauwe nukkonut, kah kukkineaſuongaùhhettich, kah uttoocheyeùhettich, kah keſukodtuxowuhhettich, kah kodtummoowuhhettich. f Deut. 4.19. Pſal. 136. 7.

15 Kah n nag wequanantéganuóhettich ut ſepakehtamoowonganit wequaſumóhettich ohke, onk mò n nih.

16 Kah ayum God neeſunaſh miſſiyeuaſh wequanantéganaſh, wequananteg mohiag nanánum omoo keſukod, wequananteg peaſik nanana noomoo nukon, kah anoggiog.

17 Kah uppónuh God wuſepakehtamoonganit keſukquaſh, woh wequohſumwog ohke.

18 Onk woh g wunnananumunneau keſukoò kah nùkon, kah pohſhémoo naſhaueu wequai, kah naſhaueu pohkénum, kah wunnaumun God ne en wunnegen. g Jer. 31.35.

19 Kah mò wunnonkoook kah mo mohtompog

Figure 1: A Copy of the Book of Genesis written in the Massachusett language, the Bible was translated into Massachusett by John Eliot for over a decade, finally completed in 1663.

To

Salters and Michael

And

Dr. Jessica Vance Roitman, PhD

For putting up with my dammed foolishness

Contents

1.

“Who hath despised the day of Small things”

Introduction to the New England Missions[1]

1.1 Abstract

During the middle and late seventeenth century, especially the years between 1643 and 1675, the region of Southern New England saw an intense period of missionizing of its native Indian or 'Algonquian' population. This took place following two decades of English settlement on the region's coastal areas which had seen, due to the usual factors of war, disease, land grabbing, and migration, the decimation of that Indian population or its reduction to near dependence on the settlers. Despite initial intentions, little was done to bring the native population into the Protestant religion of the English until the 1640s. However, starting from that period a set of Puritan Congregationalist missionaries began preaching to the indigenous and set up special built towns, schools and institutions to facilitate the cultural conversion of the indigenous. Two figures were particularly crucial in this process, John Eliot (1604?-1690) of Massachusetts Bay Colony[2] and Thomas Mayhew Junior (1620?-1657) on the island of Martha's Vineyard[3]. These men were similar in background, education and ideology as New England Puritans. Despite this, they both differed in missionary approach and ended with different results, partly due to circumstances but also partly due to their own efforts.

Here it will be argued, contrary to arguments put forward by many historians in the past that a widespread cultural and religious conversion of many Algonquians did take place in these years in Southern New England, and was not simply an adaptation to changed economic circumstances nor a superficial gloss onto a more 'real' native religious structure. Thus what will not be argued is that there was a shift from an essentialist 'traditional religion' to an equally essentialist 'Christianity'. Rather what this thesis puts forward is that what emerged in this period was a new cultural formation – what is to be termed Algonquian Christian Culture (ACC) – that adopted many of the practices and ideas of the English missionaries yet maintained a distinct form of faith and identity that was both 'Christian' and 'Indian'. This is in contrast to the view of many historians, and indeed, the missionaries themselves, that this would be an oxymoron. For these reasons this thesis takes a thematic approach looking at a) how religious and cultural ideas were initially transferred from missionaries to the Algonquians (Chapter 3) and b) the type of social practices (in terms of law, economy, and specifically religious practices) that came about from this conversion and how they

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1 A quote from Zachariah 4:10 it was regularly used in missionary correspondence by both Eliot and Experience Mayhew and features as a quote on the front page of *New England's First Fruits* the first of the so called 'Eliot tracts' dealing with the missions see Anon, *New England's First Fruits* (London, 1643)

2 Henceforth 'Eliot' and 'Massachusetts Bay' (or 'The Mainland')

3 Henceforth 'Mayhew' and 'Martha's Vineyard' (or 'The Vineyard' or 'The Island'); other figures of the Mayhew family will also be discussed and will be referred to using their full names

were enforced (Chapter 4). In this, the work intends to probe the reasons why certain social and religious practices and beliefs became part of ACC, while others did not. This conversion was not a complete transformation. This format makes this thesis somewhat loose chronologically, with occasional forays into the very late seventeenth and even the eighteenth centuries. However, the impact of war in the region, especially the conflict known as King Philip's War, serves as a very radical break in the history of the missions and Algonquian Christian culture (Chapter 5), especially on the mainland where it eventually led to its practical disappearance, and for this reason this work mainly sticks to the parameters of the period, 1643 to 1675.

1.2 Confessions and Conversions

On August 13th 1652, somewhere in Massachusetts Bay colony an unusual and hitherto unheard of spectacle took place in front of an audience of senior colonial church elders. Fifteen Algonquian Indians and followers of John Eliot trouped out one by one to read out pre-prepared confessions proclaiming their new faith. They claimed to be Christians. These were a small proportion, and probably the best prepared, of the hundreds of Algonquians John Eliot, missionary and minister, had preached to since he started his evangelical efforts six years previous. It is unclear whether he thought that rather small number of would be confessors satisfactory. For these confessions were very important to Eliot. They were the necessary and final step in the path to establish a formal church among his charges, an establishment of great religious significance in Congregationalist Massachusetts Bay. Church membership was highly restricted and only for those adjudged to have true faith. All these fifteen individuals had to do was convince the panel of elders that they had had a religious experience in which they had been transformed from Indians to Christians endowed with great religious knowledge and spiritual understanding. The judges were to "examine those they [the judges] receive, not only about their persuasion, but also whether they have attained unto a work of grace upon their souls", as the Puritan divine Cotton Mather put it[4]. That is to say, the one confessing had to show the deep emotion his religious experience had had on him and if deemed successfully persuasive, he was accepted as a member of a Congregationalist church. These were the first of several formal confessions held for Algonquians across Southern New England in the 1650s for this purpose. At this one in 1652, Eliot thought his charges nervous[5].

Those that attended to these confessions had gone through years of catechism, weekly preaching, and, if fortunate and somewhat more unevenly, schooling in the basics of the Christian faith. Given these tools and their minister's prodding they now had to present a narrative of redemption and forgiveness to a discerning audience. These narratives varied in length. Those in attendance in 1652 would have heard short ones, which when transcribed stretched to no more than a few pages at length if that. By the end of the decade, however, an Algonquian confession had greatly increased in length to seven, eight or even ten or more pages. As they grew in length they also grew in

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Cotton Mather, *The Life of the Renowed John Eliot: A Person justly famous in the Church of God* (Boston 16 91), 67

5
John Eliot & Thomas Mayhew Junior, *Tears of Repentance Or, a Further Narrative of the Progress of the Gos pel amongst the Indians in New England* (London, 1653), 3

sophistication and complexity. In her discussion of English Puritan confession narratives, literary scholar Patricia Caldwell singles out a few set patterns of the recital. They contained some "basic literary techniques – a heavy reliance on scripture, a certain amount of objective self-examination and orderly arrangement"[6]. These performances began with a presentation of "a creature in bondage to sin, enthralled by ignorance and folly… and even worse, by…[his/her] own fallen nature"[7]. Algonquian narratives were made of similar stuff, a story beginning in ignorance, following onto struggle before entering into revelation full of *sturm und* drang and emotional transformation though they were not without their differences. They were less literary, unsurprisingly given that Algonquians had only recently come across the written word and there was nothing yet in their own language although they were given to quoting certain Biblical texts, in particular the books of Genesis, Matthew and Psalms, perhaps because this is what they regularly heard preached to them. There was another difference, a discussion of their past non-English life.

In the confessions all the speakers are in unison in condemnation of their previous life and culture before Christianity arrived. In this telling the 'Indian' life was a condemnable mixture of paganism, laziness, lustfulness, ignorance, shamanism, Sabbath breaking and other perceived immoralities. Some spoke of being born Indian as like being born into a particularly sin or suffering from a genetic defect. One such statement came from Anthony who stated "I confesse, that in Mothers belly I was defiled in sin: my father and mother prayed to many gods, and I heard them when they do so; and I did so too, because my parents did so" and so when young enjoyed "as dancing and Pawwaug [powwowing (i.e. Shamanism)]: and when they did so, they prayed to many gods, as Beasts, Birds, Earth, Sea, Trees, &c. After I was born, I did all such things"[8]. Wutásakómpanin put it more bluntly when he said "Our Parents knew not God, nor the ways of life; we Indians are all sinners, and did all sins, afore we heard of God"[9]. The Pre-Christian was a spiritual wasteland of nothing but desire and aimlessness. Monotunkquanit recited that before God "I lived for nothing, for no end or purpose; but I always did wilde [i.e. 'sinful'] actions"[10]. The past was impure as one put it: "Before I heard of God, and before the English came into this Country, many evil things my heart did work, many thoughts I had in my heart; I wished for riches, I wished to be a witch, I wished to be a sachem [i.e. a chief]; and many such other evils were in my heart"[11]. The man who said this, named Waban, would later

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6 Patricia Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983), 7

7 Ibid, 8

8
John Eliot, *A further account of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England* (London, 16 60), 9

9 Ibid, 27

10 Ibid, 24

11 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 7

achieve great eminence in his community for his role in aiding Christian missionaries so his desire for riches and power is somewhat ironic (perhaps a self-referential joke?).

Into this dramatic recital of memory would appear at some point ministers, Christianity and praying which entered and changed the Indian world from savage paganism to biblical civility through the power of Christ and his word. Several Algonquians recorded how hearing preaching moved them emotionally and against their old world. Nishohkou recalled how hearing "Who ever breaks the least of Gods Commandements [sic], and teach men so to do, shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven" made him burst into tears; tears being a very common expression of emotion in these confessions[12]. Nookau felt that "when the English would instruct me, I then thought my ways evil"[13]. Owussumag told how hearing of heaven and hell lead him to begin to pray[14]. What followed was an internal battle between the temptations and sloth of Indian life as against the 'truth' as represented by the word of God. Those confessing Algonquians insisted that they wanted to believe but their heart was not always in it, and so they sinned. In his confession, Nishohkou remembered "I heard it was a good way to come to the Meetings, and hear the word of God, and I desired to do it; but in this also I sinned, because I did not truly hear: yea, sometimes I thought it no great matter if I heard not, and cared not to come to hear, and still I so sinned"[15]. John Speen spoke that "At first when I prayed, my prayer was vain, and only I prayed with my mouth" and he only kept the Sabbath out of obligation[16]. His mouth was not his soul. Others talked, ashamedly, of not following regulations and 'running away' and disobeying what they were slowly coming to believe or at least accept or of following regulations solely out of copying others[17]. Of those, one said typically "But my desires [to learn] were small, and I soon lost it, because I did not desire to beleeve"[18].

In this cosmology, neither the mouth nor one's actions were one's soul, what was being tested was one's faith not one's deeds, this was put simply by one Algonquian named Ephraim "I pray but

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12 Eliot, *Further Progress*,
6-7; There are numerous examples of tears as emotional realization trope in the confessions indee d one of the books containing them is called *Tears of Repentance*

13 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 40

14 Ibid, 44

15 Ibid, 34

16 Eliot, *Further Progress*, 17

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See for example, Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 33-35, 43-44; Eliot, *Further Progress*, 10-11 , 20-21

18 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 43

outwardly with my mouth, not with my heart; I cannot of my self obtain pardon of my sins”[19]. As was often in the history of the New England missions, Indians showed awareness of the distinction between attitude and action. As their narratives headed towards their desire for forgiveness, their recognition of their sins and errors, as well as those sins and errors mounted up until God’s grace entered their heart and they became more proper Christians and desired what Christians received, such as church membership. John Speen ended one of his confessions noting “I desire to be washed from all my filthy sins, and to be baptized, as a sign of it. I am as a dead man in my soul, and desire to live”[20]. Monotunkquanit came to this same conclusion “now I desire to forsake all my sins, and now I desire dayly to quench lusts, and wash off filth, and cast out all my sins, by the blood of Jesus Christ, and this I do by believing in Jesus Christ”[21]. In the Puritan cosmology, sin was never expected to end until the finality of death, the struggle against it would continue endlessly until that moment[22]. It could only be kept out with the strength of God, as in the narrative of Nishohkou, who likewise reported that he wished to be “wished and baptized” but believed he would sin again “as the dog returneth to his own vomit”[23]. To be granted a formal church was a sign of forgiveness and was to consolidate emotional and spiritual strength and defend one’s self from a tumultuous inner world

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The overall impression of these narratives is not terribly convincing. All those confessing invoked practically the same narrative without great deviation. All repeat the same dichotomy between their ‘wilde life’ of the Indian world and the parts of scripture and the words of the minister which slowly transform their souls over time. The universe of the confessions is one mostly in a sociological vacuum, just these men and the word of God, which eventually triumphs over the deepest parts of their selves, no context and no other causes are necessary. Nor is there much scepticism in this universe, those confessing recognize the Christian truth very quickly, only their hearts deny it. Although the fact that there were inconsistencies in practices the early days of the Algonquian religious community is likely, there is little room for ambiguity here, one is either saved or one is not, one is a proper Christian, which is what these men hoped to be recognized as at the end, or one is tainted with sin, including that of Indian-ness.

In this they were merely mimicking the views of John Eliot, nearly all English missionaries and the colonial establishment which had, most reluctantly, invested in Christian missions to the Indians in and around their territory. Possibly an awareness of the theatrical nature of these performances, or perhaps a lack of good interpreters, was why it took until 1659 for any confession to be deemed good

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19 Ibid, 45

20 Eliot, *Further Progress*, 20

21 Ibid, 26

22 See Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative*, 15-16

23 Eliot, *Further Progress*, 43

enough to establish a church. For these English ecclesiastical authorities, and John Eliot in particular, what they were looking for as evidence was the authenticity of the confessions that those reciting it really and honesty believed in the Christmas message. Therefore any deviation of that message could only be interpreted as a sign of weakness or incomplete conversion. This attitude was not just restricted to confessing, it was inherent in English commentary on the missions. It was assumed that the English had come to liberate Indians from their own dark ignorance and as the common phrase then went, 'reduce them to civility'[24]. In other words, raise them up to the standards of more civilized people such as the English.

This was not only in religion but in all matters. Culture, order and government had to be developed among them to English standards to overcome their 'wild' ways. Any sign among them, therefore, of any pre-Christian or 'Indian' practice was seen as 'backsliding' or as an example of missionary failure, anything short of perfection in practicing the Sabbath, prayer or the rituals of Christian life was seen as weakness, and was, as the confessions show, meant to be understood as such by the missionary's charges. Given these high expectations – and their eventual results – unsurprisingly the missions' were eventually written off by contemporaries as admirable failures for a host of reasons not least the relative cultural tolerance of Eliot on some matters (especially language) or that the racial or cultural gap was too large, 'the Indian' perhaps being unsuited to a Christian life. Here little interest was given to what Christianity meant for the Indians.

This is a chain of argument that has been, unwittingly for the most part, copied by modern historians of the missions. For the likes of Francis Jennings[25], Neil Salisbury[26], and James Axtell[27] the missions, like Puritan evangelicalism to the Indians as a whole, was a complete failure doomed from the start and mired in the most limiting ethnocentrism. In this vision of events, John Eliot is little more than an evangelical bully who forces his charges to live according to structures of life for which they are

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For a discussion about the language behind the idea of "reducing to civility" which can not, for sp ace reasons, be covered here, see James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Co lonial North America* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1985), Ch.7

25
Francis Jennings, "Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians" in *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Su mmer, 1971), pp. 197-212

26
Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The "Praying Indians" of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot" in *WMQ* , Third Series, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jan, 1974), pp.27-54

27 James Axtell, *The Invasion Within;*
James Axtell, "Preachers, Priests, and Pagans: Catholic and Protestant Missions in Colonial North A merica" in *New Dimensions in Ethnohistory Papers of the Second Laurier Conference on Ethnohisto ry and Ethnology at Huron College*, May 11-13 1983 (Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, 1991), ed. Barry Gough, and Laird Christie, pp.67-78

completely unsuited, destroying native culture in the process and attempting to replace it with a vision rooted in biblical and Puritan fanaticism. As sources, the confessions were dismissed as narratively clichéd and "lack[ing]… intellectual content"[28] while the rest of the missionary literature was looked at as little more than a propaganda for what was really a money making exercise. For these historians there was simply too big a cultural divide to bridge between the two worlds of English and Indian. For Salisbury and Axtell in particular, writing in a somewhat primitivist vein, the discipline that Eliot required of his converts – the staunchest Puritanism - was too much and too overbearing compared to the freedoms to which they were accustomed with their quasi-nomadic lifestyle[29]. They simply could not cope with the formalized style of life which Eliot was trying to force upon them ranging from the rigidities of English religion to formal education and law to patterns of labour and the monetary economy. The two peoples were incompatible.

In a 1988 essay on this topic, "*Were Indian Converts Bona Fide?*" James Axtell continued in this fashion putting doubt on whether any supposed Indian convert acted in good faith and noted that those more predisposed to Christianity were precisely those whose world had been most destroyed by English colonialism[30]. Following more explicitly in this direction were Robert Naeher and Harold W. Van Lonkhuysen, for whom Algonquian Christianity was a small minority faith that became a new identity for some to replace their old identity, which had been swept away by disease and dispossession[31]. They do not dispute the influence of differences of power and culture but did not see these as incompatible with Christianization. While this marked a shift away from historical accounts which focused on the missionaries and their beliefs and standards towards to what indigenous people made of the materials given to them they still tended to view the missions as something which 'happened to' the Algonquians rather than seeing the Algonquians as participants in this. Rather they saw it as a process of 'acculturation' – as Eliot would have wanted – and not active transformation. They did not unpack Algonquian Christianity and try to see what it meant to its participants beyond vague statements of 'cultural survival' and 'identity'.

These works tended to focus entirely on the missionary endeavours of John Eliot, feted as 'Apostle to the Indians' by contemporary and later English and Anglo-American commentators, perhaps not surprisingly because he had left a great paper trail for historians to explore. This had come at the expense of other missionaries, including Thomas Mayhew Junior who preached on Martha's

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28 Salisbury, *Red Puritans*, 49; also see Jennings, *Goals and Functions*, 209

29 Salisbury, *Red Puritans*, passim; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, Ch.7 and 9, passim

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James Axtell, "Were Indian Conversions Bona Fide?" in *After Columbus Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1988), pp.100-121

31
Robert James Naeher, "Dialogue in the Wilderness: John Eliot and the Indian Exploration of Puritanism as a Source of Meaning, Comfort, and Ethnic Survival" in *NEQ*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (Sept, 1989), pp.346-368; Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen, "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, M assachusetts, 1646-1730" in *NEQ*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Sept, 1990), pp.396-428

Vineyard in the same period as Eliot. Mayhew was rediscovered as an historical figure by William S. Simmons and James Ronda in the 1970s and immediately problematized many of the prevailing narratives on the missions[32]. This was as both these historians portrayed the rapid spreading of Christianity on the island in a period of just a few decades which formed a deeply rooted religious community, one which still exists to this day. Nor could that usual villain, colonialism, be held responsible. While the Algonquians of Martha's Vineyard were deeply impacted, like all Native Americans, by the coming of the Europeans, its impact there was much more benign than in other places especially in the first few decades. Indeed, as we shall see, this benignity may have been in part behind the rise of Christianity on the island and thus making it difficult to attribute Algonquian Christianity on the island as solely a response to the horrors of conquest. What sort of Christianity it was though is another question.

Even in Massachusetts Bay the record is full of references to 'Praying Indians' (as Algonquian Christians were known) listening to sermons, praying, keeping the Sabbath, and acting out the tenants of their faith in life and trying to understand the world from what they perceived to be a Christian point of view. This also co-existed with the expression of missionary frustrations of their lack of knowledge, worries over the authenticity of their new faith, a sense that Praying Indians would never be Christian enough because they were too Indian, and the occasional disappointments that mar the relations between a missionary and his neophytes. All these things co-existed. Even in the confessions, as clichéd and stylized as they are, there are ambiguities and not necessarily Puritan subtexts. Waban admitted that an inspiration to start praying was the fear that the English would kill him otherwise[33]. Others stated that they started praying or following the Sabbath not out of a sense of religious obligation but due to social pressure and possible social status[34] . There were hints of conflict within the community – hints that appear nowhere else in the historical record[35]. Therefore should the confession narratives be seen as part of a strategy of the Algonquians to integrate themselves within the colonial authorities in return for some material benefits, as some have suggested[36]? Perhaps, however, an alternative would be question to concept of conversion in this context.

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William S. Simmons, "Conversion from Indian to Puritan" in *NEQ*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Jun, 1979), pp.197-218; Ja mes P. Ronda, "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard" in *WMQ*, Third Series, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul, 1981), pp.369-394

33 Eliot, *Further Progress*, 31

34 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 28; Eliot, *Further Progress*, 10-11, 63, 65-66

35
Eliot, *A Further Accompt of the Progresse of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England* (Lond on, 1659), p.18; Eliot, *Further Progress*, 39-40, 59

Until recently, within the historiography of the missions, the notion of conversion was unproblematized. As was previously mentioned, it followed the intellectual assumptions of Eliot and his contemporaries that conversion was a dramatic change in how an individual saw the world and what (s) he believed in leading to a transformation in one's inner self. Religious practices that were not explicitly Christian nor explicitly 'pagan' or animist were deemed 'syncretic', an in-between category indicating just that: a mixture. It assumes that one is converting from one particular coherent, holistic worldview to another. In the Anthropological literature this view was given by Raymond Firth in his essay *Conversion from Paganism to Christianity* where he gave a framework for the concept of conversion as applied to a more macro level, defining it on three levels as:

1. A change in the system of general cosmological beliefs, and/or a change in the system of symbols in which those beliefs are expressed
2. A change in the system of social actions related to such beliefs and symbols
3. A change in the system of persons operating and controlling the symbols and benefitting from the actions[37]

This is conversion as imagined in the confessions and while the scientific language would have been unusual, there is little there that would have startled Eliot, Mayhew, or the seventeenth century. Indeed the third definition supposes conversion as a sociological process leading to changes to power and influence in society, where those who dominate the new symbols become social leaders, as Eliot and Mayhew would have wanted and expected (and indeed, what did happen).

This assumes, however, that symbol systems can be adopted by people without any changes to the meanings of the symbols in the process; as if the Indians were just copying the missionaries. This is simply false. Even in the confessions there was individual variation of what each symbol meant and meant to them personally. For although Praying Indians may have adopted many Puritan cultural patterns, their meanings and what they understood by them were not necessarily the same. For a start they understood that they needed to reject their own Indian-ness and traditions to become a Christian and these were, obviously, not the same beliefs as those that were held by English Christians. Being a convert itself indicated something different in the Algonquian context. It meant rejecting one's own tradition and society, casting one's self against many of one's compatriots which led, as we shall see, to eventual conflict. Yet non-Christian practices continued to survive, infuriating contemporary English commentators who saw them as syncretic and thus not proper. Importantly, those who maintained non-Christian practices did not see any contradiction between them and their newly found Christian religion. The notion that the whole range of symbols and ideas one converts to belong to indivisible 'systems', such as 'Christianity' and 'Paganism', breaks down when trying understand the 'syncretic' from the point of view of the believer who engages in supposed syncretic

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This is a common argument in the literature perhaps most straightly argued by Elise Brenner in Eli se M. Brenner, "To Pray or to be Prey: That is the Question Strategies for Cultural Autonomy of M assachusetts Praying Town Indians" in *Ethnohistory*, Vol.27, No.2 (Spring, 1980), pp.135-152, esp. 1 38-139, for whom conversion can be seen in a rational choice framework where what mattered fo r the Algonquians was what "they could gain by the deal"

37 Raymond Firth, "Conversion from Paganism to Christianity" in *RAIN*, No. 14 (May-Jun, 1976), 5

practices. Yet, for commentators at the time and down into the present, the presence of traces of non-Christian beliefs and practices puts into question the whole idea of the 'Praying Indian'[38].

The Anthropologist Joel Robbins has described this model as 'Crypto-Religion', wherein missionaries "...often do significantly transform the lives of those at whom they are directed. Even as missionization has such effects, however, this genre of argument has it that missionaries rarely touch the core of people's religious lives, which remain bastions of tradition and critical energy that can be put in service of resistance to the emerging colonial or postcolonial orders which Christianity represents"[39]. That is Christianity changes only the topsoil of native religion, leaving an indigenous bedrock ready to show itself again when needs be. Robbins' studies on the Urapmin in Papua New Guinea suggest an alternative to such cultural essentialism. During his period of studying the Urapmin Robbins had seen them convert *en masse* to Evangelical Protestantism. In this context he discusses two entities which had existed in the old Urapmin pre-Christian religion: The Ancestors who were worshipped, and the nature spirits who owned the land and all its resources and whose taboos had to be followed to obtain its bounty.

This was all to change following the coming of Christianity to the Urapmin. After widespread conversion, the ancestors disappeared along with the nature spirits' taboo. What did not disappear were the nature spirits themselves despite the preaching of missionaries against them. The nature spirits became the cause of illness which could heal by a prayer session held by a holy woman who could contact the Holy Spirit and heal individuals. This could be held as an example of syncretism, of a half-formed Christianity that was not completed. Yet Robbins rejects this dependence on overarching concepts and instead looks at each belief individually without necessarily making a reference to the greater whole. There is therefore no evidence to see in this practice the meeting of 'two worlds'; rather it is something that makes sense to its participants and must be understood on its own terms. On this basis, Robbins argues that the Ancestors and the taboos disappeared as they could not reconciled with Christianity but that the nature spirits could be accommodated within their new set of beliefs[40].

What the Urapmin did was to develop new frameworks of belief associated with Christianity and to eventually reject those older frameworks which were in conflict to their new beliefs. However, this cultural borrowing was not indiscriminate. Rather each individual belief was chosen to be integrated into the new belief system or rejected following an internal logic which while not obvious to outsiders was most certainly perceived by those who converted. Following a similar argument to Robbins is Historian Michael McNally in his *The Practice of Native Christianity*, who described American Indian Christianity as having a 'hybrid' nature. Rejecting the view of much of the historiography that held that Native Christianity had "be[en] understood largely as an outcome of history rather than as a part and parcel of it, a derivative of missionary intentions" he proposes

38 Salisbury, *Red Puritans*, 49-50, 54

39 Joel Robbins, "Crypto-Religion and the Study of Cultural Mixtures: Anthropology, Value, and the Nature of Sy ncretism" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, June 2011, Vol. 79, No. 2, 411

40 See Ibid, 416-418 for the Urapmin

instead to see the various forms of Native Christianity as sites of cultural mixing and creativity where practices and beliefs were adopted according to their cultural logic, circumstances and what made 'sense' at the time leading to something not half-native and half-Christian but both Christian and Native simultaneously[41]. Native Christianity therefore can be seen not in terms of acculturation to English mores but in adaptations to given situations brought about by the coming of colonialism[42].

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Considering this conversion can be reconsidered not as a straightforward linear process from a starting point to a finishing point that is clearly defined – converting from one religion to another as a singular event - it should be considered an historical process in which prior beliefs, ideas, and practices get attached to something new. In the case of Southern New England, what emerged was what I have termed Algonquian Christian culture (ACC). Something that was newly Christian yet Algonquian simultaneously, despite the efforts of some missionaries and the scepticism of some commentators. It was a patchwork brought about by events, the impact of the missions, and native interpretation of preachers, traditional native beliefs and habits as well as circumstance. In it there is no reason to assume that the widespread adoption of one practice, for example the Sabbath, led to the adoption of another, such as English law, or the rejection of different, for instance, beliefs about prayer or worship. A connection between various aspects would need to be demonstrated rather than assumed. For this reason, this thesis is written so that practices and beliefs that can be analysed in such a manner with, for instance, prayer, ritual, the Sabbath, law and economic behaviour to be dealt with in separate sections as this work will try to uncover the particular cultural variation and changes that the Algonquians went through in this period and look for the reasoning behind these changes. Only then after each particular aspect, behaviour or belief is looked at, can ACC be put back together and describe what Algonquian Christian Culture really *was*.

It is important here not to downplay the importance of power relations or of colonialism. Rather what I am arguing is to perceive Algonquians as actors within their own religious history. In our attempts to do so, we will have to go beyond the aforementioned problems of treating Culture as a holistic entity and the tendency in the historiography to downplay and ignore subcultures and tensions within groups. Works focusing on American Indians in particular tend to pay too much attention to a generic 'Indian' culture and not focus on the heterogeneity within that society. For instance, tensions based on class, status and ideology within American Indian society have tended to be overlooked. What is attempted here is a model which can look at cultural differences and exchange without treating societies as monistic wholes which can safely ignore other group and individual differences. It also allows for a narrative which admits to the importance of cultural differences.

It is with all this in mind that another look can be taken at the confessions. What cannot be assumed is that there is a necessary contradiction between material aspirations like those noted earlier and

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Michael D. McNally, "The Practice of Native American Christianity" in *Church History*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Dec, 2000), 843

42 ibid, passim

religious ones. For those confessing and those adjudicating they were not completely divorced as motivations. Neither can the structural incoherence and mechanistic plots of the confessions lead to dismissing them outright as unreliable or fictional; rather a closer reading reveals, despite their flaws, people who had clearly had learnt a lot and were trying to apply their own understandings to their lives; For instance, the use of metaphors of sacrifice and of baptism show intellectual adaptation to ideas which seem to have no pre-Algonquian equivalent. One confessant even modelled himself ton Noah stating "Again, God smelt a sweet savour in Noahs sacrifice, & so when we offer such worship to God as is cleane, and pure, and sacrifice as Abraham did, then God accepts our sacrifice… God hath chastised us of late with such raines, as if he would drown us… and spoiled a great deale of hay, and threatens to kill our cattel, and for this we fast and pray this day; now if we offer a spirituall sacrifice, clean and pure as Noah did, then God will smell a savour of rest in us… And then he will withhold the rain"[43]. Not only does he allude constantly to a biblical story, but he relates the story to his own experience of drought.

Earlier, the desire of Monotunkquanit, Robin Speen and Nishohkou for baptism was shown. It was described in the language of washing, not just literally but of washing the self, washing it from spiritual impurities. This was an elaborate metaphor and not one that could be immediately grasped. Speen also connected his knowledge to what he had learnt, blaming his sins for the death of three children[44]. This is religious recitation, as expected, connected to personal experience and Robin Speen was not alone. Anthony had an accident at work in which he badly damaged his head and claimed to see in the event God's anger[45]. These should not be seen as entirely negative. Asked why he loved God, Totherswamp replied "Because he giveth me all outward blessings, as food, clothing, children, all gifts of strength, speech, hearing; especially that he giveth us a minister to teach us, and giveth us Government"[46]. In this world wealth and benefits were forthcoming to those who fought against their instincts. The material and the spiritual mixed with tales of personal experience embedded in metaphors learnt from preaching and stories. It would be very surprising if they perfectly understood all that they were saying as a Puritan would, yet they clearly did understand enough to give recitations that by the 1660s were considered good enough to form a church.

1.3 The Middle Ground

So far little attention has been drawn to the backdrop against which these events occurring. The particular period and place of this study – Southern New England in the mid seventeenth century – was a place in flux. English settlers had arrived in the region in 1620 and set about transforming the land both intentionally and unintentionally into a 'Neo-Europe', in the words of Alfred Crosby[47]. Like the missionary would try to change the ideology of the Americas, the new world would was transformed to become more like the old world in several aspects: economically, ecologically, and

43 Eliot, *Further Accompt*, 11

44 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 30

45 Eliot, *Further Progress*, 49

46 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 5

epidemiologically as well as in terms of personnel as disease took its toll on the native population and the migration of English men and women grew in pace. English settlers mostly desired to create a world of private property, individual plots for farming with their own European livestock, and patriarchal households with large families trading in a monetary economy that stretched over the ocean. All this led to the chopping of forest and the hunting of fish and game on a scale never seen before in the region. All this came in conflict with the way the indigenous population used land and resources. Yet by the 1640s even in the confines of Southern New England this process was far from complete, with indigenous social structures surviving and in communication with those of the settlers. The worlds of native and newcomers was not as rigidly defined as it would later be and on the boundaries were somewhat porous as both had to live next to each other. The English were not yet totally hegemonic and the natives not yet vanished into oblivion or irrelevance. On the frontier regions, where John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew Junior worked, the clash and conflict between the two peoples was particularly acute. In his study of the late colonial Great Lakes region, the historian Richard White has described such liminal spaces as belonging to a middle ground:

> "The middle ground is the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages… On the middle ground diverse peoples adjust their differences through what amounts to a process of creative, and often expedient, misunderstandings. People try to persuade others who are different from themselves by appealing to what they perceive to be the values and practices of those others. They often misinterpret and distort both the values and the practices of those they deal with, but from these misunderstandings arise new meanings and through them new practices – the shared meanings and practices of the middle ground" [48]

For both sets of people the nature of the encounters in the middle ground and living in such an undefined space must have been a confusing experience. Missionization was one way in which the middle ground could be more comprehensible, by making the Algonquians more like English. Another was trade and the cash economy, which was also promoted by the missionaries. This will be discussed more in Chapter 4. But for here it will be noted that was the normal in American Indian-Anglo-American exchange attempts to make the Algonquians as part of the English economy or as an adjoining yet self-sufficient economy failed. What happened instead was that the survivors of violence and disease were subordinated into the English economy and forced to survive either on meagre amounts of land, often of low quality or as a racialized and indebted proletariat, in jobs such as whaling, military service, and agricultural labour in the most marginal elements of the economy. They became indentured *en masse* if not on some rare cases actual slaves.

This process of complete marginalization and neglect come to full fruition after King Philip's War (1675-1676) which finally closed the Middle Ground and opened up the era of English hegemony over the region. In Massachusetts Bay it almost led to the extinction of the Algonquian population

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Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge Universit y Press, Cambridge, 2004 [1986]), passim

48
Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (C ambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), x

there and would eventually set into motion the disappearance of the Christian community there, a process complete by the late of eighteenth century. Martha's Vineyard was less affected but was completely marginalized, yet its Christian community managed to survive and has one church to this day. In the end, the forces that mounted against the Algonquians were simply too powerful for them to overcome, whether Christianized or not. There is little they could have done against the overwhelming coalition of disease, more technologically advanced and sophisticated opponents, and the disappearance of their lifestyle.

The importance of this for our study is that this was the context in which Algonquian Christian culture grew in and was formed in. To focus only on the exchange of ideas between missionary and native would be to obscure all issues of power and inequality and give a misleading impression of how elements and parts of ACC came to be formed, not only from the ideas of individuals and how they were exchanged but from the necessities of their circumstances. Not all of ACC can be understood as accumulation of individual intentions and beliefs, whether missionary or native. For now one example will suffice. In Massachusetts Bay, where over time Eliot's charges would be concentrated in set areas of land (see Chapter 4) it became increasing difficult to hold prayer meetings in one particular place as the numbers of followers of Eliot increased. Rather meetings began over time to be held at fishing and hunting grounds and places for gathering chestnuts (part of the Algonquian diet)[49]. This could be interpreted as a reversion to a traditional pattern, but, if so, why did it only develop late in mission history and after the Algonquian agricultural economy, set up by Eliot, began to decline and there was a reversion back to hunting? A more plausible theory is that this was a new practice, with only superficial resemblance to the old, brought about the needs of the moment and by makeshift reactions to economic problems. In the history of Eliot's mission land use changed over time and perhaps this is a reason behind some changes in religious practice. The environment and the economy cannot be ignored in the development of ACC practices.

In addition there was a role for chance events and contingency. The rise of ACC, as shall be demonstrated, was connected to differing contingent events from disease, to bad weather, to the success of English 'healing' methods. There was a role for chance in the way events unfolded. This is another factor which needs to be considered when discussing ACC. In this study all together four factors can be identified:

1) The environment, indicating here the specific economic and ecological circumstances actors found themselves in;
2) The inputs of English culture generally and the Missionaries specifically, both what they communicated and their strategies and use of power to communicate their messages;
3) The flow of events, contingency, circumstances, etc.;
4) The inputs of the Algonquians themselves, their own cultural background and their own assumptions, ideas and practices, both as individuals and as belonging to wider cultural group.

In the case of the praying places, the environment was the lack of land and the economic situation, the input of the missionaries was the idea of praying itself and the meanings attached to it; while the

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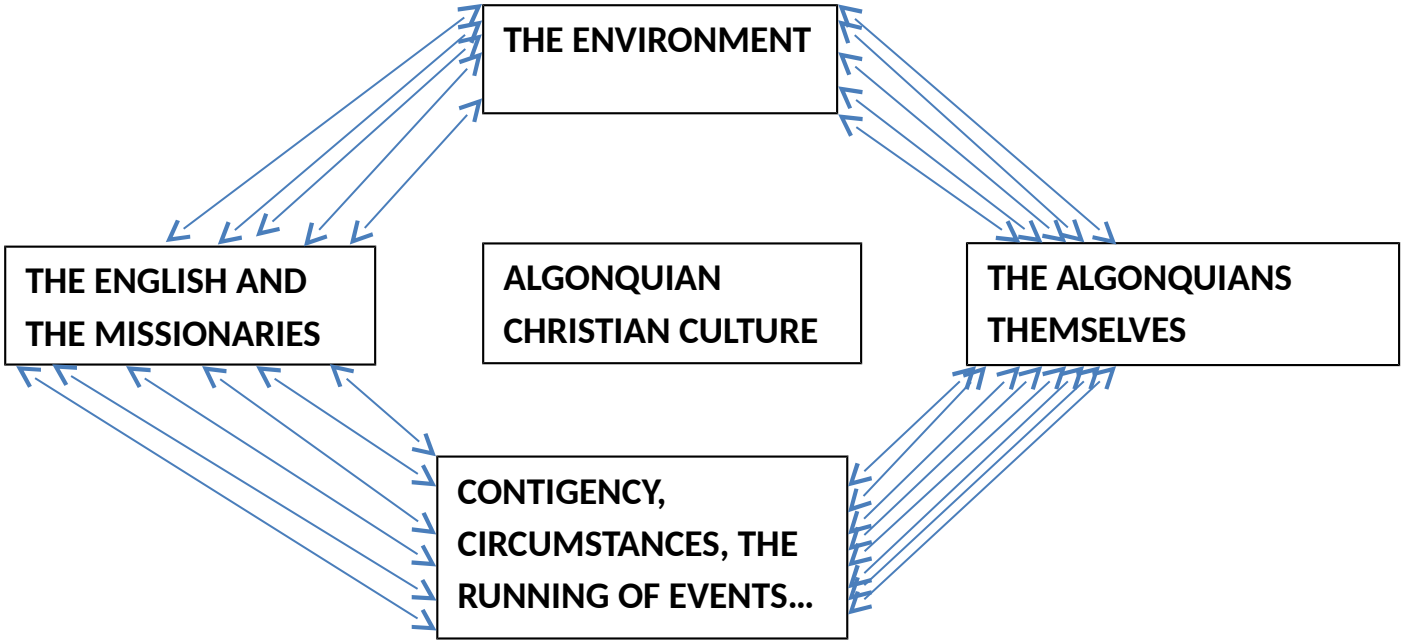
49
John Eliot, Letter to Robert Boyle in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st Series, Vol. 3, 185

Algonquians themselves decided where to pray possibly bringing some of their own old cultural ideas about the land to it. The nature of events in this refers to the fact they were in that particular place and circumstances – here gathering food and game – made a virtue out of using such places as praying places. The role therefore of these four factors in creating ACC was crucial and is expressed in the diagram below.



Here ACC is in the middle surrounded by four causal variables which act in concert with each other leading to a new creation – Algonquian Christian Culture. As the ACC model implies, the use of factors applied differently for each particular belief and practice. For each element the interplay of the causal factors would have been different. One could not analyse the confessions and the praying places with the exact same type of causes. No significance should be placed on the position of the four factors in the diagram and while the boxes are equal in size this should not be understood that this means that each cause is of equal importance. The weight that should be given to each factor and each factor's overall importance shall be discussed in the conclusion for before that can be done a lot of empirical data will need to be discussed.

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When speaking of The Middle Ground – the space between two peoples – Richard White noted that "something new could appear"[50]. In this specific middle ground of Southern New England new religious formations did appear. But before that can be looked at in depth, the exact lay of the land in Southern New England on the eve of the missions, the vital context, shall have to be looked at.

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50 White, *The Middle Ground*, ix

2.

The New England Setting

In his discussion of the European writers and intellectuals on the Early Modern Americas as a whole, the literary theorist Stephen Greenblatt has noted "a recurrent failure to comprehend the resistant cultural otherness of New World peoples" and a tendency to understand all indigenous societies

purely in European and ethnocentric terms[51]. As this chapter will demonstrate, this was as true for Southern New England as it was elsewhere. Communications between the two peoples were rooted in difficulty, misunderstandings, mistranslations, and a lack of cultural imagination. It was into these world of assumptions that the missionaries entered, both as part of that world yet with slightly different ideas. Here the prelude to the missions will be discussed putting both the society of the Algonquians (Ch. 2.1) and the settlers (Ch. 2.2) in context. What happened when these two peoples collided and the formation of a middle ground will then be discussed (Ch. 2.3 and Ch. 2.4.) before then looking at the two missionaries in question and what they brought to the field (Ch. 2.5 and Ch. 2.6).

2.1 Pre-Contact Native Society

Contrary to the imaginations of those Europeans described by Greenblatt, the indigenous peoples of Southern New England were not a tabula rasa to be imposed with ideas from abroad but rather had their own culture, their traditions and ideas, which they brought to the exchange between native and missionary. They are referred to as Algonquians throughout this text after the language family they all belonged to, a family which stretched across the East coast of North America[52]. As well as often speaking very similar and related languages, all of these Algonquians practised slash-and-burn agriculture with maize, beans and squash as the main crops and shared similar social customs and rituals including 'religious' ones. In their farming practices they were, by burning and reshaping the forests, already active participants in creating their environment while being shaped by it simultaneously. This being shaped is best shown in their patterns of life and in their seasonal movements, planting and farming in spring and summer and then moving around the rest of the year to prime hunting or fishing sites in a consistent annual cycle. This made the accumulation of goods difficult and undesirable, as they would constantly need to be carried around with the village. While the notion of ownership was not unknown, in terms of possession of goods it was from a practical point of view very different to the settled agriculturalist and town dwellers of the English.

For Algonquians the primary locus of life was the autonomous village in which they lived. These were centred on hunting bands, with each village designated by band membership. These bands were connected by a collection of family lineages and allegiances and not by 'tribe', a term with very little applicability to the Southern New English society of the period. For instance, village members did not necessarily have to speak the same language nor is there much evidence they identified with the tribal terms later attached to them by Europeans[53]. In these societies, individuals defined themselves in terms of their lineage and then their village, which they could freely move out of if they wanted to and move to live in another. Here 'village' should be understood not as a fixed place of residence – as

51
Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford, 1991), 95, 102-103; For an example of this that dates to the very end of the seventeenth century see Matthew Mayhew, *A Brief Narrative of the Success which the Gospel hath had, among the Indians of Martha's Vineyard (and the places adjacent) in New England* (Boston, 1694), 7-11 and its discussions of Indigenous government

52
See Ives Goddard, "Eastern Algonquian Languages", in *The Handbook of North American Indians vol.15: Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Smithsonian Institute, Washington, 1978), 70-74

mentioned above they were quasi-nomadic – but a unit of settlement that stretched over a limited territory usually marked by a river or other drainage system that contained all resources sufficient for the subsistence of the said hunting band[54].

Within the band, there was a gendered division of labour with men hunting and women taking the game home, preparing it, setting up camp, doing most of the fishing, foraging, doing most of the child rearing in addition to planting, maintaining and harvesting the crops. These women grew several types of indigenous crops which provided c.90% of the daily calorie intake of the entire Algonquian diet, which was of such abundance it may well have equalled that of mid-twentieth century United States[55]. Land was held in common and was distributed to women for their personal use by the Chief or Sachem with parties of 50 or more (of both sexes) clearing the land by fire with the produce eventually shared among the community[56].

The Sachem (or Sagamore) was the head of the village and band. This position has been described as a "loosely hereditary" - usually but not always held by a male - based on powerful lineages[57]. Each Sachem had nominally at least, wide ranging powers over marriage, laws, agreements, land, forming alliances, organizing defence and managing the resources of his village for which he made decisions in consultation with his chief men and counsellors[58]. These men had a distinct social status and lived in what was considered to be luxury in comparison to their followers. The latter made such luxury possible by paying their rulers tribute in return for their protection (including protection from the Sachems themselves). Sachems though were not all that similar to English monarchs despite the confusion of contemporary writers. Their power was not permanent nor fixed but depended on the use of persuasion over their band. If a band member did not like his sachem he could vote with his

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Bert Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Early Period" in *The Handbook of North A merican Indians Vol.15: Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Smithsonian Institute, Washington, 1978), 167-169; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence Indians, Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxf ord University Press, New York, 1982), 48, 78

54 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 42; Salwen, *Indians of Southern New England*, 164-165

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Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 40; see M.K. Bennett, "The Food Economy of the New England Indians, 1 605-75" in *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol.63, No.5 (Oct, 1955), pp.369-397 esp. 39 for the calorie issue bu t for some criticism see William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New En gland* (Hill and Wang, New York, 1983), 178n-180n; for the issue of abundance see 22-23

56 Salwen, *Indians of Southern New England*, 163; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 13

57 Quoted in Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen, *A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians*, 400

58
Laura A. Leibman, 'Introduction' in *Experience Mayhew's Indian Converts: A Cultural Edition*, ed. Leibman, La ura Arnold (University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 2008), 51-52

feet and move to another band with a different sachem[59]. Outside of their band, powerful Sachems could emerge through the use of inter-band alliances – extremely important as marriage was exogamous – and trade agreements and reciprocity with the food surpluses which were already widely traded across New England[60].

Forms of social reciprocity were located in rituals which coincided with the major events of the seasons such as the planting cycle which saw the redistribution of wealth or sacrifices of material possessions to the Gods[61]**.** Algonquian religion itself was based on the idea of divine revelation acting as a constant agent in the world and mystic knowledge was based on dreams and visions whose central myth was that of Manit or Manitou, a type of spiritual substance inherent in the world but strongest in things deemed extraordinary like weather, topography and certain animals like bears and wolves but could appear in any form, for which dream analysis was needed to understand the spiritual 'meaning' of such things[62]. Algonquians were illiterate; like all North American Indians at this time and so their beliefs and knowledge were recorded only orally. There was thus no equivalent to biblical theology with its syllogism and argument; although they did share some beliefs with the newcomers such as the existence of an afterlife and the immorality of the soul although differently imagined for both peoples[63]**.** What was not fully shared were attitudes to morality with premarital chastity seen as of little value and polygyny practised – albeit rarely - amongst the more powerful. However, adultery was prohibited and female activity was certainly perceived as domestic with their 'modesty' strictly watched over and preserved[64].

The exact ethnic and linguistic divisions within this group are unclear. In 1674 Daniel Gookin, a close ally of John Eliot and one of our many primary sources for Indian life in Southern New England, noted five main groupings: The Pequots, The Narragansett, The Pawkunnawkuts (now most commonly Wampanoag or sometimes Pokanoket), The Massachusett and The Pawtuckets (or Penacooks)[65]. These groups were based on loose concentrations in specific parts of Southern New England albeit their exact geography remains somewhat vague (see Figure 2). These divisions were clearly not

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59 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 42-43

60 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 48-49; Leibman, 'Introduction', 46

61 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 35-36; 44

62 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 37-39; David J. Silverman, "Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation: Creating Wampanoag Christianity in Seventeenth Century Martha's Vineyard" in *WMQ*, Third Series, Vol.62, No.2 (Apr, 2005), 148

63For attitudes to the afterlife see James P. Ronda, ""We Are Well as We Are": An Indian Critique of Seventeenth Century Christian Missions" in *WMQ*, Third Series, Vol.34, No.1 (Jan, 1977), 69-70; There are various discussions of the Algonquian 'soul' for one see Silverman, *Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation*, 150

64 Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, p.169; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 39-40

connected to language as the Massachusett, Wampanoag and Pawtuckets all spoke the main language of the region, known as 'Massachusett' although perhaps in differing dialects. Within the region linguistic differences seem to have been small with few discreet languages and more of a spectrum of dialects which gradually grew with distance. The further one travelled, the more these dialects grew gradually less and less intelligible to each other but generally were sufficiently similar not to be a major barrier to communication between native speakers[66]. Throughout the text the language of Algonquians of the region is referred to as 'Massachusett'. Equally uncertain is how old these peoples were, they may even have been the creation of the centralization of power in hands of some leading Sachems due to the influence of the fur trade with Europeans on the coast[67].

Later records allow for an approximate albeit highly imperfect estimate of the population. What these reveal is that in 1615, five years before the arrival of English settlers, the Algonquian population was at a level to which it would never rise again. These estimates put a total c.126,000 to c.144,000 in the region as a whole in that year with c.24,000 belonging to the 'Massachusett' and c.3,500 living on Martha's Vineyard. This may not even have been the peak, as even before then, due to the impact of trade, disease and dependency on trade goods (thus weakening self-sufficiency) may well have hit the region already. This is not recorded in the historical records for this area but is noted for other nearby regions[68]. 1615 was a high point as the following year a great cataclysm hit communities from South-West Maine to Cape Cod. This was a great epidemic, of still unknown disease(s?) of almost certain European origin which lasted for four years among completely unprepared populations. Whatever the nature of epidemic, it was on 'virgin soil' and so was in territories where the people had no history or background of immunity to it. In certain places, especially among the Massachusett and mainland Wampanoag of the Massachusetts coast, death rates went up to 90% and population losses inland, while not so drastic, were still significant[69]. Needless to say, this utterly shattered the power structures and societies of the region and it was into this environment that the Puritans and their followers arrived on board the *Mayflower* just one year later.

2.2 The Coming of the Newcomers

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Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England of their several nations, numbers, custom s, manners, religion and government, before the English Planted there* (Boston, 1792 [1674]), 7-9; Salwen, *In dians of Southern New England*, 169-174

66 See Goddard, "*Eastern Algonquian Languages*"

67 Salwen, *Indians of Southern New England*, 168

68
Salwen, *Indians of Southern New England*, 166; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 19; Salisbury, *Manit ou and Providence*, 57-58

69 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 103-105

Unlike previous European travellers who had reached New England, the English Nonconformists who arrived on Plymouth Rock in 1620 intended not only to stay but also to find what they could not find at home in the Old World – freedom of worship (variously and often inconsistently defined), economic security and self-sufficiency in their own private land based on patriarchal families trading with others in a market economy. At first they arrived on a ship of just one hundred souls but grew rapidly in the 1620s and 1630s. They carried across the Atlantic not solely themselves but their livestock, pathogens and various (and sometimes conflicting) social and religious ideas with them. At Plymouth Colony (see figure 2), after great initial difficulty, they found an environment well adapted to these needs. This was an environment abundant in land and resources for themselves and their animals, a fact greatly assisted by the disappearance of large parts of the indigenous population. It was from this position they could turn New England from, to quote a seventeenth century Massachusetts Bay historian writing in 1653 looking back at the colonists successes, a "remote, rocky, barren, bushy, wild-woody wilderness" into "a second England for fertilness"[70]. Thanks to greater resources and a relative absence of disease (compared to their more urbanized and densely populated homeland), they managed to live longer, have healthier lives and produce more children in this second England[71].

The "… barren, bushy, wild-woody wilderness" of the settler imagination included its Algonquian inhabitants who even by the middle of the 1620s were beginning to be equal in numbers with the newcomers in the area around the Massachusetts and Plymouth coast[72]. Population numbers increased with the formation of a second colony – slightly to the north of Plymouth – in 1629 named Massachusetts Bay and headed by the staunch Puritan, John Endicott. The following year c.1000 planters arrived creating the city of Boston in the process. Soon afterwards Massachusetts Bay became the more dominant of the two colonies and the fastest growing with already in 1638, less than a decade after its founding, c.11,000 inhabitants[73].These settlers included a large number of religious dissidents who history has bestowed with the name 'Puritans'. While not always in agreement and regularly in conflict, these radical Calvinist sects shared a few key features, not solely the general Protestant emphasis on literacy, education, the importance of biblical knowledge, non-hierarchical formal church structures and opposition to worship (or existence) of supposed intermediaries such as saints or icons in favour of direct worship of God, but also a strong predestinatarian theology which imagined that Puritan converts belonged to an elite group selected by God with whom this elect or the 'saints' had a personal relationship through prayer and study of His word. For this Elect the effort to maintain godliness was always a battle against Satan and the temptations he gave the world. This cosmology has been described by Williams Simmons:

> "They [Puritans] saw the world as an arena where forces of light and holiness, represented by Protestant saints, fought against armies of sin and darkness, represented by devils that motivated

70 Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 5

71 Ibid, 24

72 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 153

73 Ibid, 164, 216

> aristocracies and priesthoods, and infiltrated the Christian community through immoral and undisciplined persons"[74].

Although such an austere faith was not always representative of the majority of settlers – who tended to be far more lax in their faith - this was the ethos which informed the government of the two colonies and became a prism in which cultural differences with the native population were perceived. This was especially the case for their shamans, known as powwows, who were believed to have special visionary powers. This alternative society just across their frontiers was thus seen as totally degenerate (if not perhaps a little attractive for that). Daniel Gookin spoke for many when he described Algonquian men as "much addicted to idleness" and "naturally much addicted to lying and speaking untruth" and endless are the quotes from the multi-authored missionary tracts of the 1640s and 1650s describing them as "the dregs of mankind and the saddest spectacles of misery of meere man upon earth", or having a "barbarous course of life and poverty", or just were 'poor, naked, [and] ignorant' and lacked 'civil order' which they clearly so needed[75].

This image of the Indian was, as Neal Salisbury observed, "the complete inversion" of the world the Puritans desired and wished to create in New England[76]. Yet it would be anachronistic to uncomplicatedly tie the Puritan economic 'rationalism' to their cultural or spiritual ideals. For both Algonquians and Puritans, while having differing conceptions of what we would define as religion, saw a world where 'God' or spirit was believed to be in all things and where rituals and worship were held to cause things, like the weather or other natural phenomenon, to happen due to the divine's intervention on Earth. Both believed and feared in witchcraft and held magic to be a real capability. For instance, the 1694 descriptions of (by then defunct) Algonquian religious practices by Matthew Mayhew, son of Thomas Mayhew Junior, shows very clearly that he did not reject the indigenous religion because it was untrue, rather he believed that its' magic and that of the powwows' had to be rejected for its demonic overtones. This opinion was only unusual in that M. Mayhew had lived among Algonquians all his life and would have been more sympathetic than most[77]. This equation of powwowing as the most despicable, evil and anti-Christian element of native life was a trope common to nearly all Puritan writers on the subject. Unsurprisingly therefore targeting powwowing was a particular objective of the missionaries. Yet despite this equation, many could simultaneously

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74
William S. Simmons, "Cultural Bias in the New England Puritans' Perception of Indians" in *WMQ*, Third Series, Vol.38, No.3 (Jan, 1981), 56

75
Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 9; Thomas Shepard(?) quoted in [Thomas Shepard?], *The Day Breaking if not the Sun Rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New England* (London, 1647), 18; John Eliot in Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England* (London, 1649), 10; Joseph Caryl in John Eliot, *A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England* (London, 1655), 'To The Reader', 3(unnumbered)

76 Salisbury, *Manitou & Providence*, 11

77 See M.Mayhew, *Brief Narrative*, 13, 44-45

express ideas of admiration at the simple life of 'the Indian' and hoped for their separation from the corruption of English life with its own (more familiar) vices[78].

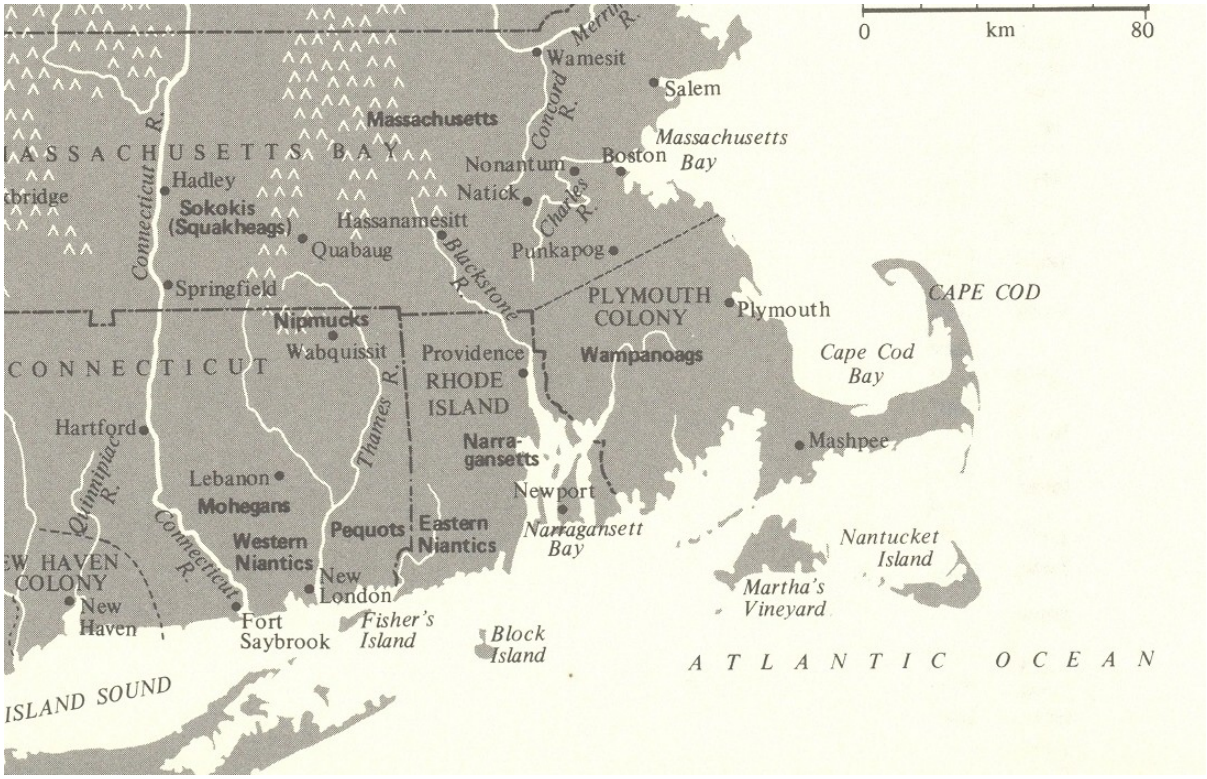
The contradictions in this were multiple. Sachems were perceived to be tyrants, yet it was also held to be incredible how Algonquian society didn't fall apart given the 'freedom' these people were given[79]. The most blunt and remarkable of these statements came in the 1643 anonymously written missionary tract *New England's First Fruits* whose writer managed to write about his fear of the Indians "And if there should be such [evil] intentions [on behalf of the Indians] and that they all should combine together against us with all their strength that they can raise, we see no probable ground at all to feare any hurt from them, they being naked men, and the number of them that be amongst us not considerable" while expressing two pages later his fear that unless they should convert to Christianity "these poore Indians will certainly rise against us, and with great boldnesse condemn us in the great day of our accompts, when many of us here under great light shall see men come from the East and from the West and sit down in the Kingdome of God, and our selves cast out"[80]. In short, whatever he was, 'the Indian' was alien and confusing. So as the reference to conversion to Christianity suggests, had to be turned into something comprehensible (assuming he had to be put up with at all), safe and by extension, English similar to the "remote, rocky, barren, bushy, wild-woody wilderness" of New England in 1620.

Figure 2: Map showing the key sites involved in this work including are Massachusetts Bay to the North, Plymouth Colony to the South East and below Plymouth, Martha's Vineyard; also included in bold are the tribal name of each Algonquian grouping and the name of English cities and towns in the region. This includes praying towns where praying Indians lived such as Natick and Hassanamesitt. Map taken from Axtell, *The Invasion Within*

78 For Further Discussion, see Simmons, *Cultural Bias*, especially 62-65

79
For general discussion see Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 143-147; for an example of attitudes to Sac hems see M.Mayhew, *Brief Narrative*, 7-11

80 Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 136; Anon, *New England's First Fruits*, 8-10



2.3 The Moving of the Frontier, 1620-1643

Before the missionaries arrived on the scene, however, the ground of English-Algonquian relations had already been laid by over twenty years of contact and exchange. Relations had been established and had changed and shifted as the situation had demanded but always, for both sides, with certain assumptions in mind. The reference to ground is quite literal, for it was land that was most desired and fought over with both groups using it in different ways which were, over a mutually shared area, detrimental to each other. The Algonquians held land in common and practised slash-and-burn, the English sought their own holdings held in private over large acreages which were to be divided by fences. As the English authorities had great power and the ability to enforce laws over 'their' territories they had the greater ability to reshape the land according to their expectations, not unlike what they would do later to native souls. For instance, in Massachusetts Bay laws were established against Algonquians who wished to stop pigs, those other transatlantic newcomers, from eating their corn[81]. In this way and others, the increasing presence of European livestock threatened the land, as Algonquians had long used it and they had no idea how to deal with this unusual threat. Furthermore, the nature of the growing settler population and their land use necessitated that the settlers further expand into the interior. They also engaged in intensive rates of fishing, logging, and hunting which also necessitated the ending of their old practice of open field agriculture and saw their traditional means of subsistence erode and over time disappear[82].

This expansionist logic was justified by the legal doctrine of *Vacuum domicilum* which stated that any English settler had the right to take land which was not being used in a manner considered proper,

81 Salisbury, *Manitou & Providence*, 147

82 Ibid, 87, 13

that is, not used in a way sufficiently and culturally familiar to pass as a private farm. As American Indians elsewhere, Algonquians found themselves signing treaties, for various reasons, handing over 'their' land to certain settlers not fully understanding what those documents meant or what this acceptance of English law signified. Among the settlers, there was a preference for insularity and the familiar that led to shunning contact with the unfamiliar whenever possible. This was the case even if the unfamiliar was shown to be beneficial, as they did by returning to growing English wheat over the native and more abundant maize as soon as it was possible[83].

This insularity that fed into a type of cultural chauvinism could also be seen in language. For many Puritan commentators, the local languages were yet another example of the inferiority and barbarity of Indian life. Difficult to learn, very few English settles ever learnt to speak an Algonquian language. Communication had to be done through interpreters or through broken English or trade jargons. Inability to communicate or share their ideas, in these circumstances, could make Indians easier to exploit. Those circumstances led to a shift in power to more westward bands that suffered less from the 'great epidemic' of 1616-1619 and took advantage of the ensuing power vacuum. This made the remains of these coastal bands go over to these strange foreigners and seek protection with them. As early as 1621, agreements were 'signed' featuring clauses that the Indian did not comprehend due to lack of familiarity with written contacts. A regular clause was to exchange land for protection and thus many bands signed away land into foreign 'ownership', which was another new concept. This was to be repeated over and over again in American history, in Southern New England as elsewhere.

In addition to land and protection (all, in this case, going one direction) other items and things were traded. There had long been exchanges between Europeans and Natives in the region. The first exchanges were partly utilitarian or an extension of the fur trade, with fur traded for items of European manufacturing such as cloth and metal tools and other goods which rarely had much value for the Europeans. The arrival of settlers in the region increased this exchange, albeit not hugely, and made new goods – types of foodstuffs and types of European manufacturing – available. One of the most important of these early trade goods was alcohol. Native North Americans in the sixteenth century were unaccustomed to alcohol and lacked natural tolerance. It quickly became a major addictive substance throughout Algonquian bands and the historical record is full of tales of abuse and addiction. When English writers listed those sins that 'the Indian' gravely committed alcohol abuse was regularly the first to be added, some of whom were cogent if not ashamed of the transatlantic origin of this particular sin[84]. The results of these trades benefitted the English who gained in land, trading away only unneeded or valueless goods, while the Algonquians got increasingly pauperized and attached to alcohol. This eventually led to large numbers of Algonquians getting entangled in debt – which was near impossible to escape from – and obligation which led to

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83 Ibid, 187-189

84
For the impact of Alcohol on Indigenous lives and the reactions of English ministers to it see Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 11 and Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts, or some Account of the Lives and Dying Speeches of a considerable number of the Christianized Indians of Martha's Vineyard in New England* (London, 1727), passim

an increase in indenture and a need to sell one's labour or land. This was already widespread by the 1630s[85].

In that decade additional scourges were to diminish indigenous society further and put it into an even weaker position against the newcomers. First, in 1633 a smallpox epidemic hit Massachusetts Bay, reaching into areas that had been unaffected or only weakly affected by the previous epidemics. Practically all the people known as Pawtuckets were killed in this outbreak, among others[86]. Exact figures are not possible to find but it is believed that most of those Algonquians in the now extended area of Massachusetts Bay were killed, but it may have been the case that their population was reduced by c.97% of their 1615 total[87]. Three years later a war broke out between a group of Massachusett allied to the English and the Pequots, one of the groupings who risen to prominence due to the post-epidemic power vacuum. The war culminated with a massacre at the main Pequot village on the Mystic River where 300 to 700 women and children were killed in a pre-dawn surprise attack with their camp burnt to the ground and, afterwards, the Pequot 'tribe' formally abolished by law[88]. All this, of course, freed more land for English use.

Thus expansion continued apace. By 1646, increasingly free from the burden of competitors, c.50,000 English persons lived in the entire of New England with c.20,000 in over 40 towns in Massachusetts Bay[89]. The frontier between 'English' and 'Algonquian' worlds was never stable and was always expanding in favour of the English but could now be divided into Anglo coastal regions, now mostly safe, and the indigenous interior. Along this frontier, however, lays mixed areas of groups of weakened bands of Indians and of independent settlers lacking a stable authority to defend them. This was an area to which to which the Massachusetts Bay government would very much have liked to assert control over. This zone, more than any other, where exchange and the intermingling of goods, services, ideas, cultures, religions and other forms of life was to be found.

The very liminality of this region was a concern for the administration regardless of their ever-expansionist ambitions. The further the frontier moved westwards, the closer they all got to other Indian populations and the less that central control could be exerted over native or newcomer alike. This concern therefore was connected to an idea - widespread in official circles in the 1620s and 1630s – that the English would lose their identity and degenerate in the Americas and become like the Indians. And it was not totally unheard of for a colonist to run away and live with the natives.

85
Already by 1631 Magistrates were expressing shock at the amount of Algonquian 'servants' in Engl ish homes and this would only increase after the 1633 Smallpox epidemic and the Pequot war, see Salisbury, *Manitou & Providence*, 184, 201-202

86 Salwen, *Indians of Southern New England*, 169-170;

87 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 190-191; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 219-220

88 For the war see Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 215-225

89 Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 182, 220

One alternative was to exterminate all the Indians as they had done to the Pequots, but that wouldn't be easy and, as colonists from a civilized continent, they had a reputation to maintain, a reputation that was premised upon the idea that they were not like the Spanish who did massacre the native populations[90]. Perhaps then a program, as the aforementioned writers of *New England's First Fruits* had suggested, of conversion, of winning over the Algonquians into Christian Englishmen?

2.4 Missions and Conversion

All the violence and segregation which had been an integral part of the first twenty years of Puritan settlement had, after all, been contrary to many of its rhetorical aims and the stated ideals of its backers. Those in London who financed and supported colonial ventures had their eyes on Spain, envious of their success and contemptuous of their Roman Catholicism and its dissemination in the Americas. Rooted in the religious fervour of seventeenth century Europe these backers and financiers desired that English religion – whichever sect one that happened to be – spread and counter Catholicism in the New World. The very charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony emphasized this when it stated "whereby our said people, Inhabitants there, may be soe religiously, peaceablie, and civilly governed, as their good Life and orderlie Conversacon, maie wynn and incite the Natives of Country [of the colony], to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Saulor of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth, which in our Royall Intencon, and the Adventurers free Profession, *is the principall Ende of this Plantacion*"[91]. The formal seal of the colony (see title page) further pointed towards this imagined goal; portraying an Indian in its middle saying the words "Come over and help us" – a reference to Acts 16:9 and Paul's vision of a Macedonian begging him to come to Macedonia and help (i.e. bring the word) him. It summarized a view that the Indian was laying there in the Americas, a passive victim (presumably of Spanish tyranny) waiting to be saved[92].

But if he had been there patiently awaiting salvation, the colonial governments showed little interest in him until 1643. Attempts from financial backers and religious leaders back at home to shift policy towards a direction more in favour of the intentions of the colonial charter had been constantly ignored[93]. Indeed amongst the earliest colonial leaders a belief had emerged that all that was necessary to win over 'the Indian' to the Englishman's God was a mere demonstration of the obvious

90
See Discussion in Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Iden tity* (Random House, New York, 1998), 5-10

91
Quoted in *The Charter of Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629* accessed at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_centu ry/mass03.asp [15 July 2013] (Emphasis Mine)

92
In some of the missionary literature there are regular jibes against the Spanish and their supposed methods of conversion (deathbed baptisms, forced conversions, etc.) which demonstrates the mo del towards the English were at least, aspiring to: see Thomas Shepard, *The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking Forth Upon the Indians in New England* (London, 1648), 18; Henry Whitfield, *Stre ngth out of Weakness: Or a Glorious Manifestation of the Further Progress of the Gospel among t he Indians in New England* (London, 1652 [New York, 1865]), 'To The Reader', 5(unnumbered)

moral superiority and godliness of the English. This was of such a quantity, it was thought, that any passing indigene looking upon those people would simply and instantly realize the errors of his ways and become a sudden and devout Puritan imbued with a sufficiently English spirit. This happened to be a wonderfully convenient belief as it required, had it been accurate, the spending of no money or resources whatsoever. It was convenient given the widespread hostility amongst most of the ordinary settlers to even the slightest compromise with the natives. Therefore reaching into the treasury for 'the Indian' was something the colonial administrations were loath to do but would certainly be required in any program of missionary activity.

So it was that after two decades very little headway had been made by the English colonies in its supposed principal goal. As for the Algonquians themselves, while they certainly did not switch over to Christianity *en masse*, there had been some expressions of, at least, interest. Records exist of conversions having actually been made during the 1633 smallpox epidemic although many of these may have been deathbed conversions of the desperate, confused and/or manipulated. However, with their deaths their surviving children were left under the authority of English parents, some of whom were conscientious in their duty to bring their adopted children up as literate Christians[94]. Yet mainstream indifference towards missions remained and would continue until a settlers' dispute in the early 1640s, known as the Gortonist controversy, would bring the respective failures of the colony in its supposed duties to the natives to the attention of London and Parliament.

The controversy was named for Samuel Gorton, a religious dissident who had formed a small independent settlement on Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. This settlement, ungoverned and, worse still, containing an openly mixed population of English and Algonquians, worried the authorities who desired the valuable land it lay on. After having concocted a scheme with some native allies and a group of would-be settlers, Massachusetts Bay invaded the territory and arrested all the 'squatters', including Gorton, not without significant violence in the process. The colony's authorities had, much to their detriment, overlooked Gorton's significant contacts in London. After a year in jail and having pulled some strings on the other side of the Atlantic, all the 'squatters' were released and allowed to return to Narragansett Bay. Having arrived back they claimed protection under the law of England and signed agreements with local Algonquian sachems who submitted to them in return for protection from Massachusetts Bay[95].

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93 See Salisbury, *Manitou & Providence*, 134-136

94
Neal Salisbury, "Religious Encounters in a Colonial Context: New England and New France in the Seventeent h Century" in *AIQ*, Vol.16, No.4, Special Issue: Shamans and Preachers, Colour Symbolism and Commercial E vangelism: Reflections on Early Mid-Atlantic Religious Encounter in Light of the Columbian Quincentennial (A utumn, 1992),
502; Jill Lepore, "Dead Men Tell No Tales: John Sassamon and the Fatal Consequences of Literacy" in *Americ an Quarterly*, Vol.46, No.4 (Dec, 1994), 488; Also Anon, *New England's First Fruits*, 2-4

95 See Francis Jennings, *Goals and Functions*,
202 for an overall account; also Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 136-137

Gorton had been successful in persuading men of influence partly due to the level of the criticism the colony was receiving in London who saw in it poor returns both financially and in terms of converted souls. Later attempts by Massachusetts Bay to win back the Narragansett settlement from Gorton and his followers foundered and in 1646, two years after they had been released from jail, London once again ordered that Gorton be left alone. In response, the colony sent its leading diplomat, Edward Winslow, to London to fight their case. Winslow, who had been one of the few men of power in Massachusetts Bay to have a taken an interest in native conversion, was to use an intellectual sleight of hand by claiming that Gorton and his followers were damaging the prospects of the missions in the colony[96]. To make this seem reasonable, the colonial government finally took action and in either September or October 1646 John Eliot, then minister at the town of Roxbury and student of the Massachusett language, was sent out to preach his first sermon to Algonquians, the first in a long career.

Those Algonquians to whom Eliot preached were part of a group that had, a few years earlier, submitted to English authority. For at approximately the same time Gorton was seeking support amongst Algonquians in Narragansett Bay, in March 1644 five more northerly sachems had handed over their powers, and thus their followers and their lands, to the colonial administration. It is unclear how voluntary this was, for the members of these bands were almost certainly the bedraggled remnants of the previous decades' cataclysm for the local population, they were close to famine and already dependant on the English for subsistence[97]. Included as part of the submission agreement, which also included the exchange of five red coats, a free dinner, and a "potfull of wine", was that these sachems pledged their willingness to be instructed in Christianity and were given a brief instruction in the ten commandments which they claimed to understand (although may have been conforming to a formula)[98]. A two year gap with no preaching followed.

This gap can be explained as the period between the release of Gorton and the successes of Winslow in London. By 1646, the diplomat had spent enough time in Parliament and amongst diplomats to achieve, through some rather subtle dissimulation, his aim of a national fundraiser organized by Parliament for missions in New England and the creation of a body, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England or, as it became known, the New England Company[99]. This body would (up until 1684) funnel money to the Commissioners of the United Colonies, the body of the combined leadership of the New England colonies, to spend on missions while the corporation would publish missionary tracts and try to raise money at home, mainly through wealthy and interested benefactors[100]. In this thesis, these bodies will be referred as the New England Company (or the Company) and the Commissioners respectively. Following Winslow's lead and Eliot's first preaching,

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96 On Winslow's Prior Interest in Conversion see Salisbury, *Manitou & Providence*, 135-138; Jennings, *Goals and Functions*, 203, 207

97 Jennings, *Goals and Functions*, 202; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 161-162

98 Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 138-139

99 Jennings, *Goals and Functions*, 209; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 72; Also Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 'Dedicatory'

laws were passed in November 1646 prohibiting Algonquian religious practices under pain of fines and purchased land "for the incuragement of the Indians to live in an orderly way amongst us" or, in short, a reservation for the new would-be converts with a carrot for Algonquians to listen to Eliot; they would still have title to the land but without listening, they would risk losing it[101]. Thus Massachusetts Bay had managed to achieve several goals; a missionary movement had finally been set up, with access to funds without the need for the colony to spend any money at all.

2.5 John Eliot and Massachusetts Bay

At the start of his mission in late 1646 John Eliot was hardly a neophyte to the culture of the Algonquians. Indeed, almost uniquely amongst settler preachers, he had made an effort to learn about their lives and culture. He had learnt local dialects of Massachusett and gained knowledge of Algonquian ways of life through a servant (slave?), a Pequot war captive. Therefore he was the best prepared there was when the Massachusetts Bay Colony General Court required his assistance to become a missionary. He was born in Hertfordshire and educated in Cambridge, where he fell under the influence of radical Puritan theology. Finding the environment in England hostile to one of such views he became part of the 'great migration' to Massachusetts in the 1630s. Upon arrival he became minister to the English at the town of Roxbury, then a small village, now an inner suburb of Boston. Like his secondary role as missionary, he was to hold this position until his death in 1690. His undertakings to the Algonquians have earned him the somewhat ironic sobriquet "the Apostle to the Indians" after Las Casas, an intellectual influence on Eliot in matters regarding the treatment of American Indians, despite the latter's Catholicism[102].

Indeed he was, in fact, a Protestant and Congregationalist of a most radical hue. Throughout his career his work was inspired by the belief, albeit one which varied in specifics and intensity at various periods, in the immanence of the End Times. A sign of this immanence was the equally immanent, as clarified by Eliot's interpretation of scripture, coming of American Indians into Christianity, a task which he tried with great exertion to bring about[103]. Thus his ambitions for them stretched far beyond the learning of religious and theological doctrine. Thanks to the laws passed by the colonial administration and fixated on the idea that they needed to live in strong, settled communities far from their traditional lives, he had his charges moved into several purpose-built towns in the period 1646 to 1675. These towns eventually numbered fourteen in total across Eastern and Central

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Records of this are included in George Parker Winship, *The New England Company of 1649 and John Eliot: T he Ledger for the Years 1650-1660 and The Record Book of Meetings between 1656 and 1686 of the Corpor ation for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England* (Burt Franklin, New York, 1967[1920]), passim

101 Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 139; Jennings, *Goals and Functions*, 206

102 Lepore, *The Name of War*, 160-162

103
For a thorough examination of Eliot's millennial beliefs see Richard W. Cogley, "John Eliot and the Millenniu m" in *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol.1, No.2 (Summer, 1991), pp.227-250

Massachusetts, starting with Natick, the most important of them, in 1651. These tended to be placed in the difficult to control frontier zones like outposts and were therefore used to spread new cultural ideas into wild and difficult regions. Inhabitants of these towns became known as 'Praying Indians' due perhaps to their strong and visible devotion to prayer. By 1674 across New England there were approximately 1,100 'Praying Indians' in those fourteen above mentioned settlements, which predictably enough became known as 'Praying towns'[104].

These were centres of Anglicization and domestication, where they could be taught new ways of life, skills and knowledge and isolated from the rest of the world, defended from enemies (whether Indian or English) and kept away from bad moral influences (likewise). It was where information on the new faith could be reliably and constantly transmitted. This was conversion akin to the idea of Firth, discussed earlier, of not just trying to change the system of symbols and ideas which one used in one's daily life but a sociological change with the missionary directing it all. Eliot himself preached in these towns for over 40 years, at least at every second Sabbath and was recognized as indefatigable to his efforts to make the Algonquians understand the word[105]. Following the construction of Natick in 1651, his chief obsession, which lasted over a decade and was the work of many assistants, was producing a translation of the Bible into the Massachusett language. This was eventually published in full in 1663, the first Bible published in the New World, the first in an indigenous American language and the first for which an entirely new orthographic system had to be invented[106]. He also had several English Puritan and religious tracts translated into Massachusett, now our major source of knowledge of the language[107].

The printing of these books, in addition to the (relatively) greater economic security and management in the praying towns, had created a market of native readers for these texts. For those

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104 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 55

105
Eliot is described as "indefatigable in his endeavours for them [the Indians]" in 1671 in John W. Ford, *Some Correspondences Between The Governor and Treasurers of the New England Company in London and the Co mmissioners of the United Colonies in America The Missionaries of the Company and Others between the ye ars 1657 and 1712 to which are added the Journals of the Rev. Experience Mayhew in 1713 and 1714* (Burt Franklin, New York, 1970 [1896]), 36; Eliot's own very similar attitude at the same time can be seen in John Eliot, Letter to William Ashhurst in *The Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Vol.17 (1880), 25 0

106
Edward G. Gray, *New World Babel: Languages and Nations in Early America* (Princeton University Press, Prin eceton, 1999), p.56; Ives Goddard & Kathleen Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusett*, Vol. 1 (The Americ an Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1988), xxi

107
For Eliot's linguistic achievements see Stephen A. Guice, "Early New England Missionary Linguistics" in *Paper s in the History of Linguistics: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the History of the Langu age Sciences*, *Princeton*, 19-23 *August 1984*, ed. Hans Aarsleff, Louis G. Kelly & Hans-Josef Niederehe (John B enjamins Publishing Company, Philadelphia, 1987), esp. 223-224; 228-229

readers or would be readers, their old cultural world had already disintegrated before them. They were the survivors of the onslaughts of pathogens and settlers. Yet despite the attempts of Eliot to anglicize them culturally, they were never trusted by the English settlers who now outnumbered them, the majority of whom wished that they would simply disappear and their land, now secured by government title, become available. These issues came to a head with the eruption of King Philip's War in 1675, a general conflict between the remaining anti-English (and anti-Christian) indigenous forces and the colonial administrations. It saw a great outburst of anti-Indian violence in the colonies and eventually the destruction of all but four of the fourteen then existing praying towns. The mission never recovered from this blow and over a long period of time, lasting a few generations, the praying Indian communities inspired by Eliot in Massachusetts Bay gradually eroded away, as did the Algonquian population of the colony generally. By the time of the American Revolution they had effectively disappeared. In the 1680s, just before his death, a sense of failure seems to have haunted Eliot who was aware that neither his work nor his millennial dreams had come to what he imagined[108].

2.6 The Mayhews and Martha's Vineyard

At approximately the same moment at which Massachusetts Bay first planned to remove Samuel Gorton from Rhode Island, and independently of any action of Eliot, Winslow or any other player in the controversy described above, a group of no more than 20 Puritan settlers embarked on founding a new colony on the island of Martha's Vineyard just off the coast of Plymouth Colony. They were led by an ex-merchant and former member of the Massachusetts Bay General Court, Thomas Mayhew senior. He had in the previous year bought the patent rights for the settlement of the island and those of the neighbouring Island of Nantucket and the Elizabeth Islands chain. Upon arrival on the Vineyard, he assumed the position of governor of this new independent colony, a position he would hold until his death[109]. The situation he, and his followers, faced vis-à-vis the indigenous population was very different to that of the mainland. While in Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay the Native population was diminishing and was being overwhelmed by Anglo settlement, the population of the island had, due to its isolation, suffered very little up till then from disease or conflict. Therefore its numbers, between 1,500 to 3,000 persons, overwhelmed that of the newly arrived English settlers on their island colony[110]. These indigenes were spread across the island and their pre-contact social structure and religious beliefs – which were little different to those of the mainland Algonquians - had remained mostly intact. Given this situation, Thomas Mayhew Senior could not, even if he wanted to (and there are reasons to think otherwise), subdue the native population by force. A less hostile *modus vivendi*, therefore, would have to be reached.

Into this situation was cast Thomas Mayhew Junior, the governor's son. Like John Eliot he held a position as an English minister as well as being a missionary, in his case at the first town the settlers established on the island at Edgartown. Not long after this appointment, within the first year or so of

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108 See for Eliot, *Letters to Robert Boyle*, 178, 181, 182

109
Although a dated (and frequently racist) work in many ways, for Thomas Mayhew Senior's life there is nothi ng other than Lloyd C.M. Hare, *Thomas Mayhew Patriarch to the Indians (1592-1682)* (AMS Press, New York, 1969[1932]), see 27-32 for the background to settlement

settlement, he met, after one of his church meetings, a native named Hiacoomes. Hiacoomes was an Algonquian described as being of 'mean descent and unpromising Countenance', who it seems was somewhat of a social outcast in his group and took an unusual interest in the exotic newcomers to the island[111]. Quickly they established a relationship due to which Hiacoomes developed an interest in Christianity and the English language, while Mayhew began to learn Massachusett. Together they began to openly preach this new religion despite opposition, sometimes violent, from other islanders. This coincided with two great plagues which swept the island's native population in 1643 and then 1646 and may have reduced the population by about half[112]. Hiacoomes and his family, however, remained unscathed. Both he along with Thomas Mayhew Junior used this fact to win over and convert the sachems of the East side of the island, where Edgartown was based, into the faith arguing that Hiacoomes' freedom from illness was a sign of the healing power of Puritanism. Therefore, like Eliot, Mayhew succeeded following a demographic disaster.

This led very quickly to the development of what has been described as "the most profound social conversion to occur anywhere in New England" with Mayhew Junior being "the most effective Puritan missionary to the Indians" achieved with nearly no bloodshed[113]. Already by 1651 199 men, women and children on the Eastern side of the Vineyard had repented their sins at church meeting and "professed themselves to be worshippers of… God". Later by 1674, the religion had spread to the whole island with only one out of between 240 to 300 families not a so-called 'praying' Christian one and Mayhew's mission was spreading beyond the island into neighbourhood locations like Nantucket[114]. This was achieved despite the English settlers being outnumbered by natives, something which would remain to be the case until the 1720s, and the lack of any strong English central authority to enforce religious practices. Indeed in the Vineyard it was the Islanders themselves who learnt how to impose and spread such practices[115]. English authority was, in these early years, weak and based on the personality of Thomas Mayhew senior who protected his son but

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110
The sources for this number come from the 1720s; Experience Mayhew, 'Appendix: The Present of Condition of the Indians on Martha's Vineyard, Extracted from an account of Mr. Experience Mayhew, newly publishe d from whence the present condition of the rest may be apprehended' (1720) in *Experience Mayhew's India n Converts: A Cultural Edition*, ed. Leibman, Laura Arnold (University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 2008) , 383 gives the low number; Thomas Prince, *Some Account of those English Ministers who have successively presided over the work of Gospelizing the Indians on Martha's Vineyard, and the adjacent islands* (London, 1 727), 299 gives the higher one. For general population information see Ronda, *Generations of Faith*, 370

111 Quoted in Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 1

112 Silverman, *Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation*, 152

113 Simmons, *Cultural Bias*, 69

114 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, p.45; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 65

115 Ronda, *Generations of Faith*, 370

also, and perhaps crucially, was neither totally hostile to native interests nor willing to allow settlers to erode the protected rights of sachems; for which the elder Mayhew got a negative reputation among some settlers[116]. Furthermore, unlike Eliot, the Mayhew family did not crack down on traditional practices and rituals as long as they were not perceived as overtly anti-Christian; the harvest festival, for example, continued on the island well after its conversion[117]. This was a more conciliatory approach.

This is not to say that Mayhew differed radically from Eliot in terms of core beliefs. Although he was not quite such an outspoken millennialist, both he and Eliot did share the typical attitudes of the New England clergy towards religion, culture, and the nature of American Indian life[118]. Thus, like on the mainland, on Martha's Vineyard there did emerge weekly preaching sessions, schools, literacy, and attacks on many traditional practices that were seen as unchristian (mainly powwowing) and, through contact with the English, trade, debt, a market economy and eventually a stronger 'work ethic'. Mayhew, like Eliot, also wrote Massachusett language materials for publication, although not to the same extent. He also lacked resources but his case was more extreme than Eliot's. He only had weak governmental support behind him and was not considered a priority by the commissioners or the New England Company, who focused far more of their attention on John Eliot's work; in both cases though the two missionaries primarily worked on their own with little direct outside assistance. It was in an attempt to raise more funds to continue and strengthen his work that in 1657 Thomas Mayhew Junior travelled to England bringing across either one or two young, devout Islanders as a demonstration of his successes. On their return the ship they were travelling on vanished at sea and with it Thomas Mayhew Junior. From then on until 1901, when a monument was erected, a local legend had it that whenever an Algonquian passed the spot at which Mayhew left to England a stone was left in his place to commemorate his accomplishments[119].

That this custom managed to survive for so long just underlines the extent to which the tradition he created survived his death. After 1657, Thomas Mayhew Senior took over the missionary duties of his son. Afterwards, following the elder Mayhew's death in 1681, a missionary family and lineage

116 Prince, *Some Account*, p.294-295; M. Mayhew, *Brief Narrative*, 33-38

117
Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth Century Eastern Massachusetts* (University of N ebraska Press, Lincoln, 1996), 18

118
See David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Harv ard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1990), 6 for the conformity and educational similarity of the clergy

119
Simmons, *Conversion from Indian to Puritan*, 214; 'DAR restores historic Mayhew memorial', *The Martha's Vi neyard Times* (June 12, 2008) accessed at http://www.mvtimes.com/2008/06/12/news/mayhew-memorial.ph p
[27 November 2013]; According to the leading Puritan divine Cotton Mather marking the passing a notewor thy person's grave was a common Algonquian custom see
Mather, *The Life of the Renowned John Eliot*, 'The Dedication', 4(Unnumbered)

emerged that preached to the island's native population until the death of the younger Thomas' great-grandson, Zachariah, in 1806. Yet long before then, it was the Algonquian population themselves who had become leaders of their own religious practices and missionary activity on the island. As early as 1653 there is a record for one Vineyard native attempting to bring others on the mainland into the Christian fold. By a decade later there were several involved in this task, spreading the message to their brethren[120]. There was by the time of King Philip's War (1675-1676) a strong formal church in place which, with the paternalistic assistance of the elderly Thomas Mayhew, managed to keep the island population out of that conflict. The church though was no saviour for the problems of debt, disease, alcoholism and indenture that grew in the eighteenth century and which gnawed away at their land rights, their language, the social customs of the population, their marriage and relationship patterns and eventually the church itself. There is still a Native church on Martha's Vineyard today, the oldest such church in America[121].

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From the start both missionaries engaged in different strategies to win over potential converts. This was perhaps driven in part by necessity and the situation both men found themselves and perhaps by theories of conversion and what was necessary. Either way, both led to different paths and different outcomes. The differences between these paths were set at the very beginning and how they differed, as well as how they were similar, is the subject of the next chapter.

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120 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 'To The Corporation', 12-13(unnumbered)

121
For the protective role history of the Native Church in Vineyard History see David J. Silverman, "The Church i n New England Indian Community Life: A View from the Islands and Cape Cod" in *Reinterpreting New Engla nd Indians and the Colonial Experience*, ed. Colin G. Galloway and Neal Salisbury (Colonial Society of Massac husetts, Boston, 2003), pp.264-298

3.

Pushing “Flesh and Sinews unto these dry bones”: Prayer, Magic and the Conversion Process[122]

In proselytizing a key objective is to be able to diffuse information, especially new and complex information, clearly and comprehensibly and to do so in a manner which is convincing to those being preached to. This chapter looks at how Eliot and Mayhew, during the first few years of their missions from 1643 to 1651, attempted to achieve this as well as looking at what precisely they were diffusing in addition to, importantly, what Algonquians understood by this information. Therefore of interest in this chapter is the nature of Algonquian-Puritan interactions in the these first few years as well as putting them into a wider contextual history of Christian conversion demonstrating the reasons why Puritanism may have had an appeal to the Indians.

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On October 28, 1646 John Eliot and three other Englishmen arrived in an Algonquian village named Nonantum, west of Boston. They had come to preach. Upon arrival, they were welcomed into the wigwam of one Waban, a local whose allegiance to the English was such that the colonial government had appointed him “Chief Minister of Justice”, a role hitherto unheard of Algonquian life created by Massachusett Bay to support Waban. In this wigwam, assembled with a crowd, Eliot and his group began by praying, which was done in English, partly due to the Englishmen’s lack of comfort with Massachusett but also partly “to let them know that this dutie… was serious and sacred”[123]. Afterwards, a long sermon full of the simple Bible stories followed including instructions on the ten commandments, the coming day of judgement and the horrors of hell which were for “perswading them to repentance for several sins which they live in, and many things of the like nature”. At the end of this, Eliot asked did they understand all the supposed novelties he had presented to them to which they assented “in a multitude of voices”, how sincerely cannot now be gauged.

This session lasted for over three hours which ended with the audience being permitted to ask questions. One native recounted an episode in which a friend explained to him that praying was in vain as “Jesus Christ understood not what Indians speake in prayer, he had bin used to heare English man pray and so could well enough understand them, but Indian language in prayer hee thought hee was not acquainted with it…. and therefore could not understand them” and so inquired as whether his friend was right and God could not comprehend Indian prayers. Eliot answered in the negative

122 Quote from Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 19

123 All quotes in this section (3.1) are from the incident in [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 2-9

explaining that that was false, God was equalitarian towards all languages or as he put it “that Jesus Christ and God by him made all things, and makes all men, not onely English but Indian men… and if hee made Indian man, then hee knows all Indian prayers also”. More questions were then asked and ideas exchanged, awkwardly, through interpreters, the four men then quizzed the audience on what they had learned. Eventually they handed out some gifts – apples and tobacco – and left.

3.2 The Meeting

This was the first sermon by Eliot of which there is record and perhaps his first over all. Those listening would have heard ideas to which, while they may have heard some of it before, they were unaccustomed to. This was, therefore, at the very beginning of the conversion process by which new ideas and constructs had to be diffused and made understandable. Eliot had allowed some questions at the end, showing that he understood that any conversion process required some interaction and was not merely something that could solely be forced down their throats. In discussing this particular question, Craig White has argued that the concerns over the appropriate language of prayer meant that Eliot was dealing with a pre-existing discourse of the inferiority of ‘the Indian’ in religious practices; the man worries that God cannot comprehend his prayers because of his speech[124]. What Eliot had to do then was to refute this discourse by showing what (he held to be) God’s position was, undercutting the man’s/questioner’s concerns and providing an alternative explanation. This was a frequent missionary activity which both Eliot and Mayhew had to contend with, making the preconceived notions of Algonquians amenable to Christianization. This required making their own beliefs – no matter how complex – understandable and thus ‘Algonquianizing them’. In his studies of the Mayhews, David J. Silverman has referred to the concept of ‘religious translation’: the need to make concepts, stories and narratives from one cultural translation understandable in terms of another so that they can be seen as plausible, sensible and comprehendible[125].

Missionizing thus was an active process that involved both sides – Algonquian and English - trying to comprehend each other and learn new concepts for their own purposes. The space in which this occurred was the meeting and sermon, twice on Sabbath and perhaps on Saturday. Before 1651, when formal schooling for Algonquians was established on both Martha’s Vineyard and Natick, the Sabbath meetings were the only place where they could both regularly hear or see any Christian teaching other than the catechism. Preaching and listening to the preachers therefore became all important in shaping the incipient ACC of these communities. These were frequently the only time of the week that Eliot – and Mayhew – could preach and answer queries and teach about Puritanism given their duties within English society. Disorganized and makeshift at first, over time meetings became formalized events across Southern New England. Where these structures had been placed, a drum would sound twice on Sunday, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, and ‘Praying Indians’ of both sexes – perhaps coerced, perhaps not – would assemble at a certain agreed upon point to listen.

124
Craig White, “The Praying Indians’ Speeches as Texts of Massachusett Oral Culture” in *EAL*, Vol.38, No.3, 2003, 443

125 Silverman, *Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation*, 146

While each sermon was different there was a regular pattern. It usually began with an opening prayer, then a reading from scripture, followed by a rehearsal of a psalm (psalm singing being a popular practice) after which the minister would go around to youth and occasionally adults and catechize them with gifts of food as incentives before returning to prayer, psalm signing and finishing perhaps with a blessing[126]. This would remain the standard pattern of sermons in 'Praying Indian' Southern New England even well into the eighteenth century[127]. The teaching involved in these sermons was kept deliberately simple. In a letter of 1651 Eliot wrote "As for our method of preaching to the English by way of Doctrine, Reason, and Use, neither have I liberty of speech for that way of teaching, being very unskilfull in their language, nor have they sufficient ability of understanding to profit by it, so well as by this way"[128].

'This way' was his manner of relaying information through stories and analogies – to 'translate' the supposedly complex into the understandable. Eliot considered his earlier followers as akin to children and so they were given instruction like European children[129]. This meant initially few theological specifics and more storytelling and moral exhortation often packing in great detail. In his second session, for instance, Eliot explained that they had come to "bring you good newes from… God Almighty" maker of heaven and earth, how to be good and happy, how to go heaven but also described the punishment and torments of hell and God's anger at those who transcended those laws and that the need for repentance on the behalf of Algonquians was paramount[130]. Similarly he preached a year later on the 'miserable condition' of Algonquians without Christ[131]**.** That condition and of the need of Algonquians to repent was one of his favourite tropes in his preaching – contrasting the degenerate state of 'the Indians' with what they could become if they accepted Christ.

Techniques of preaching could be more subtle than this by trying to draw on what was known of their experience and cultural belief. Eliot liked to used simple bible stories as examples and found Noah's ark and the narrative of Ezekiel 37 9:10, in which God raised a wind to bring to life a valley full of being, had particular resonance. Noah's ark corresponded to a native flood myth while the passage from Ezekiel had the coincidence that the word of wind in Massachusett was 'Waban', also the name of the 'Chief Minister of Justice' and leading convert in Nonantum mentioned at the start of this chapter. Laura Murray has suggested that this story also had significant meaning for a people

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126 Eliot, *Letters to Boyle*, 184; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 29, 43

127 Ford, *Some Correspondence*, 84-87 & Prince, *Some Account*, 303, 306

128 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 22

129 On Eliot's Educational Philosophy see Naeher, *Dialogue in the Wilderness*, 348-350

130 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 10-11

131 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 16

who put great emphasis on maintaining dead bodies[132]. This conceptual confusion and use of allusion seems to have been effective; on the first day it was preached there was an increased demand among parents for their children to have schooling as they had "applyed [the story] to their condition"[133]. How much of this they actually understood cannot be determined. In all likelihood some ideas mapped more easily onto pre-existing beliefs, such as the connection made between Noah's ark and the flood, while some concepts even lacked an appropriate word in Massachusett, such as resurrection or salvation.

As far as the record demonstrates, their attendance at these meetings was made in silence but with active participation in rituals, prayer and psalm signing. At one point Eliot described those in attendance listening to scripture as "very attentive"[134]. On Massachusetts Bay there is only one record of an interruption or of heckling during a sermon, by a drunk who was shunned by the rest of the audience[135]. Although this may have been in keeping with a tradition of maintaining a deep silence during a long oral exposition or simply a desire not to entangle oneself with English law[136]. At the confessions a common trope was the impact of *hearing* the message, and the only place they could hear the word was at meetings. According to Totherswamp "When I first heard the Commandements, I then took up praying to God". While Ponapam remarked "… I heard, that God would pardon all that beleeve in Christ and quickly after I saw my sins to be very many; I saw that in every thing I did, I sinned & when I saw these my sins against God, I was weary of my self & angry with my self in my heart". As for Nishóhkou, upon hearing the sixteenth chapter of Genesis he came around to understanding that "the people were full of sin, lust, and all other sin, and therefore the Lord destroyed them; and I knew that I had the same sins". This was an exceptionally repetitive discourse repeated over and over again by several[137].

In regards to the effect of preaching, the scholar Ann Kibley has written "conversion was an alteration of the hearer's system of reference in response to the preacher's words, a conversion from one system of meaning to another"[138]. Conversion was a process based on hearing and the effect words could have. Ponapam and Nishóhkou's words repeated above were public performances yet they tied

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132
Laura J. Murray, "Joining Signs with Words: Missionaries, Metaphors and the Massachusett language" in *NEQ*, Vol. 74, No.1 (Mar, 2001), 74-75

133 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 48; Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 23; [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 41

134 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 30

135 Ibid, 20-21

136
Craig White cited an reflection of Roger Williams recorded in 'The Key to the Language in America' in White, *Praying Indian Speeches*, 441

137 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 5, 21, passim; Eliot, *Further Progress*, 39, passim

into an area in which there was a widespread conversion across Southern New England, a change of attitudes towards sexual relations. During the period in question, among Algonquians there was a shift away from polygyny (always rare, but not non-existent) and accepted promiscuity (always common) to patriarchal households and nuclear families. While it was not complete a process, relationship forms more acceptable to Anglo opinion did become more widespread especially among Christians. If Eliot's records are to believed, it came along with a transformation in opinion among, at least male, Algonquians.

The Eliot tracts are replete with narratives of Praying Indian men expressing repentance or melancholy about their prior sexual behaviour when hearing about what Eliot told them of what he held to be the Puritan line on the issue. It was a common theme in public confessions. To take just one instance, Monequassun was inspired by hearing "that word, who ever looks upon a Woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart; then I thought I had done all manners of sins in the sight of God…[who] knoweth all the evil thoughts of my heart"[139]. The confessions frequently invoked polygyny and promiscuity as things about their past to be recoiled from and rejected[140]. Similarly after one sermon from Eliot a question was asked "Whether any of them should go to heaven, seeing they found their hearts full of sin, and especially full of the sin of lust?" The audience reaction suggested that Eliot was mentioning what was to be deemed an ugly truth[141]. After another meeting, Eliot was once approached by a young man who because of his promiscuity "professed that hee thought God would never look upon him in love" to which he "fell… weeping and lamenting bitterly"[142]. This was not a unique occurrence[143].

Judging by this literature, it was easier to convince many Algonquians of the immorality of their sexual mores than almost anything else and it required only a little prompting, preaching or education to come to this opinion. It was a type of 'religious translation' in which the ideas of the missionaries were transposed in the minds of Algonquians and interpreted leading to actions of their own, here correlating in the move towards nuclear families. It was not just those sins deemed sexual that gained strong reactions. As with the questioner at the start of the chapter, the young man who approached Eliot was full of melancholic resignation, thinking he may be damned, if not full of self-loathing. This was common; for instance, one person after hearing Eliot talk of the need to repent as to avoid hell and the nature of sin "powred out many tears and shewed much affliction

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138 Murray, *Joining Sign with Words*, 78

139 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 17, also passim

140 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, passim; Eliot, *Further Progress*, passim

141 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 36

142 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 25

143 See Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 34-35

without affectation of being seene"[144].There was a constant performance of tears and crying on almost any topics. Bible stories could make Algonquians burst in tears. Praying could lead to tears. So could hearing the nature of God's law or recollecting stories of one's pre-Christian life. Thinking about deceased Praying Indians in heaven could lead to tears despite traditional taboos on thinking and talking about the dead. Most of all, what certainly lead to tears was recognition of one's sins and inadequacies[145].

3.3 The Appeal of the Other

The reason why Puritan attitudes towards sexuality were so accepted, at least theoretically, over other Puritan attitudes, which were often not so quickly accepted is obscure. Those who expressed those morose attitudes at meetings may have rather susceptible to new narratives and ideas which were contrary to the old. The evidence is sparse but there are some indications that there was a growing sense of disenchantment among some with their own situation. The cataclysms which occurred between 1620 and 1646 had a made a necessity of adapting to new circumstances with their old methods destroyed or made irrelevant in the face of disease and land-hungry settlers. Furthermore, as an oral society, the death of so many figures could have helped terminate the spreading knowledge and culture, leaving the survivors disorganized and without leadership and ideas. It may have been the case that the melancholy expressed above was a reaction to their massive loss and the change in circumstances all of which to their detriment.

A first reaction to such disaster, as it often is, was to revert and intensify traditional practices seeing laxity in keeping them as a cause of their misfortune. The 1620s saw an increase in sacrifices to harvest God Cautantowwit in Southern New England as such sacrifices were identified with groups who had sacrificed the epidemics relatively unscathed[146]. However, over time reality was not kind to this idea. By the 1630s widespread conversions, how 'authentic' or not is beside the point, had taken place in response to smallpox. These early converts could expect some material benefits like access to tools and trade goods, greater protection and at least a minor increase in toleration by settler authorities. Such material benefits were not unappreciated or turned down. Thomas Mayhew Junior was later to write that "Earthly riches, what they should get" were one of the things most desired by his converts[147]. Eliot was frequent in his claim that what his charges in the late 1640s wanted most

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144 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 10-11

145 Anon, *New England's First Fruits*, 3-4; [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 10-11,17; Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, p.6

146 Salisbury, *Manitou & Providence*, 106

147 Henry Whitfield, *The Light Appearing More and More Towards the Perfect Day or A farther Discovery of the Present State of the Indians in New England concerning the progresse of the Gospel Amongst Them* (London, 1651), 7

was to move into a town, learn to work and so gain in wealth[148]. In Massachusetts Bay in particular unprotected Algonquians far from any powerful band or ally were isolated and regularly at the edge of starvation, while converts could at least be basically assured of food as well as greater protection for their land. This was perhaps incentive enough for large numbers to at least tolerate an influx of new ideas.

This should not indicate support for a purely materialist hypothesis as motivation for conversion. While the material benefits were important and obvious, the existing records, biased as they are, leave great clarity as to the multifaceted reasons why interest in Puritanism – as opposed to those aspects of settler culture that were clearly economically beneficial – could exist amongst Algonquians. Experience and the interpretation of experience could be effective, observation of different social practices, different technologies and even different ideas of cause and effect could lead to inferences about their nature and the advantages or disadvantages of associating with those people. In 1623, a local Algonquian in Plymouth Colony happened upon a church and observed a group of English praying; praying for rain amidst a drought. Despite being a cloudless day, at one moment much to that Algonquians' astonishment it began to pour. He deduced a correlation between the praying and the rain. His amazement, and supposedly terror, was such that he started to cleave into English society and abandoned his own, eventually dying a Christian in a settler village[149]. This was not a unique incident. The imagined magical properties of prayer to bring about climate change was something that impressed many native minds[150].

What could also impress such minds was the application of English technology and power. One Wequash, having seen up close the Pequot War, inferred from doing so that the English maintained a superior power, not just technologically but also spiritually. He too came to live amongst settlers, in Connecticut, became a Christian and in the manner of such began "hating and loathing himselfe for his dearest sinnes, which were especially these two Lust and Revenge"[151]. While the man in Plymouth had seen a correlation and imagined a causal connection between the rain and the spiritual practice the English engaged in (i.e. prayer), Wequash had connected the power of armies to spiritual practices, the result for both individuals in terms what they inferred and what they thought it should lead to in terms of action was the same. Converts such as these, who came to Christianity through their own personal experiences and inferences, whatever they were, desired to orientate themselves towards English culture, straining towards turning themselves into what they imagined 'the English' to be. A strong example this would be an Algonquian man known to us as William, who decided for unstated reason to "transform himself into the English manners and practices" which included his clothing, his mode of dwellings, abandoning his friends and kin and becoming highly devout, an especially 'zealous' observer of the Sabbath it is noted[152]. For such people, none of these details were superficial nor were they much distinguished from each other: clothes, prayer, ways of living and

148 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 23; Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 7; Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 35, 37

149 Anon, *New England's First Fruits*, 2; William S. Simmons, *Conversion from Indian to Puritan*, 201

150 For a similar incident see M. Mayhew, *Brief Narrative*, 51-52

151 Anon, *New England's First Fruits*, 6-7

ways of working were all part of the same package and were adapted, by those willing, all together and not as separate elements or categories.

3.4 Questions and Answers

None of this means that adaptions of various aspects of Puritanism were all and equally adapted uncritically by every person. In Massachusetts Bay there are records of a great deal of criticism and scepticism as well as curiosity in the early interaction between Eliot and his charges. These can mainly be seen in the more than 200 questions on a wide range of topics recorded by Eliot which were made by Algonquians in special sessions at the end of meetings. Unlike those Algonquians listed in the previous section, those hearing Eliot may not necessarily have been there by choice and may not have been all that interested in conversion or English culture, yet what these lists of questions indicate is there were many people there who were probing with greater curiosity by asking sophisticated questions in attempting to understand and decipher the new knowledge they were obtaining. The scope of these questions was vast and was not restricted to areas considered religious or theological. They stretched from great confusion concerning the exact ontological nature of biblical figures from stories and metaphors recounted in sermons ("Doth the Devill dwell in us as we dwell in a house?"), to concerns over sin and being a 'proper' Christian ("What should I pray for at night, and what at morning, and what on the Sabbath day?") to more general advice seeking ideas as to how to live properly ("I finde I want wisdom, what shall I do to be wise?"; "How shall I finde happinesse?") [153]. Unfortunately, for the majority of these the answer provided was not recorded for posterity nor was the person asking the question.

These can all together be broken down into a series of themes. The most basic were those seeking clarification on something they heard, so for instance, it was asked, "What is a spirit?", "Whether the Devil or Man were made first?" or simply "What is it to believe in Christ?". Frequently these clarifications were specific responses to the confusions of metaphor and of conceptualizing new ideas. Unused to such concepts as heaven, hell, salvation, the Devil and the duality between body and soul effort on Eliot's behalf was necessary to explain these subtleties. Literal mindedness was also an issue; after one sermon, Eliot was asked where was Christ born, how far away this was, where was he now and how they could "lay hold on him"[154]. One can only wonder how he answered, with, "What meaneth hunger and thirst after righteousnesse…?" or, better, given Eliot's strong nonconformism, "What is it to eate Christ his flesh and drink his blood, what meaneth it?"

The idea of the eternal soul and its relationship with the body was a particularly bad area for misconceptions with Eliot being posed "Seeing the boody sinneth, why should the soule be punished, and what punishment shall the body have?" and, most glorious in its misunderstanding "If

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152 Ibid, 4-5

153
Unless otherwise stated all questions hereafter listed are cited from [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 23; Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 19-20; Winslow, *Glorious Progress*,.12-14, 20, 21; Whitfield, *Light-Appearing*, 25-27, 29-30

154 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, p.16

a man should be inclosed in iron a foot thick and thrown into the fire, what would become of his soule, whether could the soule come forth thence or not?" These questions on the soul and the nature of the beyond could get rather intricate and sometimes touched on classical theological problems and incongruities in biblical narratives which had been spotted by the converts. One person inquired "When such die as never heard of Christ, whether do they go?" a strong astute question in a community only recently and still superficially Christianized. Another wanted clarification on a hoary inconsistency "If God made hell in one of the six dayes, why did God make Hell before Adam had sinned?" That the intricacies of sin and the Lord's reaction to it were quite complicated must have been quickly learnt when questions as "If two men sin, one knows he has sinned but the other doesn't, does God treat both men alike?"[155] and "If I doe that which is a sinne, and do not know it is a sin, what will God say to that?" were asked. A question repeated on a few occasions was the eventual destination of a child's soul if he died before sinning, which gave Eliot once an opportunity to launch into a lecture on original sin, a favourite topic of his[156].

Such questioning indicates that this engagement was not merely abstract intellectualism but concerned directly ideas about how one should live and what was the correct way of doing things. The use of the first person singular in many questions shows how they tried to relate these ideas to their own experience and to themselves. As Robert Naeher has noted, they also comprehended the difference between attitude and action and desired to know how to bridge that gap[157]. On those concerns, Eliot was asked "When I see a good example, and know that it is right, why do I not do the same?" and "How they should know when their faith is good, and their prayers good prayers?" The gap to be bridged was that between what one imagined what one was supposed to believe and how one was to act and what one actually did and felt. Even among Algonquians there were worries that despite appearances they were not yet 'Christians' as they understood it, which fitted into Eliot's exact same concerns even down to the precise language and theology. For instance they wondered "How long it is before men believe that have the word of God made known to them?", "What is true repentance, or how shall I know when this is true?" and "When I pray every day, why is my heart so hard still, even as a stone? (I.e. why has God not yet entered my heart and turned me Christian)

In short, these questioning Algonquians were worried about the religious authenticity of *their own beliefs and actions*, recognizing that they were not legitimate for some reason even if they did not understand why nor the standard by which they were judging themselves. Some recognized that these doubts had implications for what they should believe and could believe. This is shown by the person who enquired "If a man know Gods word, but beleeve it not; and he teach others, is that good teaching? And if others beleeve that which he teacheth, is that good believing or faith?". Responding, Eliot wondered how they could tell if a man knew God's word but didn't believe it and got an answer in unison "When he doth not do in his practice answerable to that which he knoweth"[158]. They expected themselves, it seems, to both believe and know but worried about hypocrisy, perhaps indicating that it was prevalent.

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155 Ibid, 53

156 Ibid, 35-36

157 Naeher, *Dialogue in the Wilderness*, 353-354

That is speculation. What is not speculation is that the coming of Eliot and increasing Christianization meant not only pressure to have the correct beliefs and behaviour but to fully transform oneself into what was deemed the correct model right down to minutiae, like William or Wequash. In questions this is reflected by the number that focused on the 'correct' behaviour from wearing long hair (prohibited) to the duties of Sachems (when traditional power structures were under strain) to how to organize one's family and engage in sexual relations, as discussed earlier. Eliot was meant to provide answers on all these things and to play a role in which he informed Algonquians what they should do and clarifying the differences between that and what they thought they should do. On the latter topic, examples of queries include a man wondering 'what will God say' if he made his daughter marry another man whom she did not love. As elsewhere, Eliot's and God's opinions were here identical. These questions implied awareness that converts were expected to act differently from what was traditional. In one case a polygamist man wanted to know who to divorce: his first wife who maintained traditional beliefs and was sterile or his second, fertile and Christian. In another case advice was asked about a woman who had deserted her husband and committed adultery but had afterwards found Christianity and wished to return to her husband and whether he should forgive her. In both questions, there was an understanding that morality applied or could apply differently to those who were Christians[159].

Finally, Eliot's pedagogical role stretched to every topic of which there was curiosity. This could stretch from to why God had made the rainbow[160] to the creation of seas and winds and to what the sun and moon were made out of, given that "our body is made of clay". To these Eliot always had answers – biblical references – and gave public demonstrations to educate on Puritan cosmology on, for instance, the planets. Furthermore, as a representative of a strange culture with strange customs, Eliot was able to act as an explanatory tool on English culture for Algonquians. "Why do English men so eagerly kill all snakes?" one mused. One enquired aptly as to why the English called them Indians and not their own name, a question for which there is, alas, no answer. A particular bone of contention – regularly asked – was why was it that these foreigners knew more of God than they did. In a typical move for him, Eliot explained it was that they been up until recently like disobedient children who had thus forgotten the Lord but, of course, that the moment of repentance was at hand. Although there is certainly no indication that Algonquians ever thought of the English as more moral or godly than they were. One man, aware of the perfidy of the colonists and reflecting upon simply just wanted to know "Doe not Englishmen spoile their soules, to say a thing cost them more then it did? And is it not all one as to steale?"

Overall these Massachusetts Bay questions shows a people actively engaged in a discourse of Christianity probing and querying its intellectual basis. The coming of Eliot as well as the events of the previous twenty years seems to have stimulated some intellectual discussion about the nature of the world of which a new framework was made available in which these could be discussed. The level of detail in the questions shows significant fore knowledge and that attention was given to the

158 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 25

159 Last two questions from Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 49

160 Ibid, 40

sermons and stories and could not just have been responses to the catechism and early education as James Axtell has speculated[161]. Rather it was observation of the world outside, how it was changing around them and listening to what they were being instructed in which seems to have provoked at least a large number of them. Their reactions were thus dictated by these factors as they tried to make sense of Puritanism and English culture and how it fit in with or replace their own cultural frameworks.

3.5 Epidemics and Magic

John Eliot had a great deal of power – political, economic, social – over his charges yet despite this he did try and engage with them on religious matters. He wanted them to understand what was being taught to them, nor merely that they parroted the sermon and catechism. This was the objective that Puritan missionaries had set themselves, including Thomas Mayhew Junior. Yet on Martha's Vineyard he had nothing like the advantages of Eliot. He was isolated without the backing of a powerful centralized state-like body which could enforce laws and regulations over indigenous populations, which Eliot had. In Massachusetts Bay Eliot's neophytes, part of a decimated and devastated population, were meant to be there and organized by law. The situation Mayhew faced was very different. He was, in 1643, part of a miniscule minority within an Indian country affected little as of yet by disease and that numbered in the thousands. He could not force anyone to listen to him nor could be preach out in the open or do anything that might threaten indigenous authority. Yet, from the point of view of the missionaries, especially in a long term perspective, Mayhew had the most effective and successful outcome; an outcome which was dependent on his engagement and his winning over through words and deeds of the population of the island.

Essential to this was his luck in finding the figure of Hiacoomes in 1643. It was a chance meeting between him and this seemingly alienated young man who had already something of an unusual interest in English culture and religion. Mayhew took him under his wing and began educating him privately in Christianity and, by request, teaching him how to read. Very quickly he began to proclaim openly his new faith even against local hostility and showed himself a quick student and became a teacher to a small number of native students which had begun to circle around Mayhew[162]. After only two years Mayhew was confident enough to employ Hiacoomes as a preacher of the doctrines he was propounding. Hiacoomes was taught how to sell Congregationalism and how to counter arguments against it. By 1645 he was holding public sermons in which he is recorded as speaking of the Trinity, the fall of man and the doctrine of resurrection. In addition to these perhaps abstruse theological concerns, he also used the opportunity to attack what he, like other Puritan missionaries, saw as the evils of native society with powwowing especially mentioned[163].

This was a rather opportune moment for that topic. Previously sporadic and occasionally hostile contact had meant that the inhabitants of Martha Vineyard's had avoided all the major epidemics which had devastated the population of Massachusetts Bay. With the coming of settlement,

161 Axtell, *Invasion Within*, 232-235

162 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 4-5

163 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 5; E. Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 9

predictably, this did not last. In 1643 an unknown malady hit the island with force and would return two years later. As was the case on Massachusetts Bay twenty years earlier, the Vineyard population interpreted these calamities as a sign of the gods' displeasure with them having departed from their old ways and beliefs and, thus, that they needed to re-engage with them. In times of disease those afflicted traditionally turned towards the powwows. They acted as medicine men. They would bring the ill to their homes, surrounded by other band members, while the powwow would try to remove the spirit causing the malady and so cure the individual. As it happened, in a society lacking a concept of contagion, this was a very effective way of spreading disease. However, repeatedly in discussions with missionaries Algonquians would express worry that if they converted they would lose the healing abilities of the powwows. Both Eliot and Mayhew were asked, despite powwowing being illegal in Massachusetts Bay "How can we stop using the powwows?" in the face of disease[164]. The powwows were identified by both missionaries as one, if not the, chief obstacle to winning people over[165].

This was not only due to their reputed healing powers but also the fear they inspired within the population. They were socially powerful men, considered invulnerable in battle and were advisors to sachems. A powwow was believed to engage in visions of the god Chepian who endowed on them not only the ability to heal, but to kill enemies, cause lameness, impotence and other special spells and curses that only powwows could 'cure'. Yet Puritans had a counter-narrative to provide as competition to that of the powwows. For them disease was God's judgement upon the population for their sinfulness, including their engagement with powwows. The presence or otherwise of illness was a sign of morality upon both the person and the community. Therefore by converting one could not merely save oneself in the next life but in this one as well. This was the ideology both Mayhew and Hiacoomes began to propagate as the local population was being decimated by a new, mysterious illness no powwow could cure. Here they had one priceless and lucky advantage, the preacher Hiacoomes and his convert family were completely untouched by disease despite his activism and denunciations of shamanism. This was an example of the importance of chance events and luck in the conversion process.

Hiacoomes' health vis-à-vis that of the ordinary population did not go unnoticed. Looking for alternatives in the face of rampant epidemics and lowering their initial scepticism, two local sachems organized an audience with Hiacoomes and Mayhew in 1646. This meeting took place in the wigwam of Miohqsoo, the most powerful local sachem and ended with his submission to Christianity along with that of the other sachem, Towanquatick. If we are to believe the stylized account history has left to us, it culminated with Hiacoomes giving a summary of what he had been taught and he used his continued survival as the clinching argument for the superiority of Christianity leading both sachems to change their religious allegiances[166]. Regardless of what actually occurred, it meant in effect that

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164
See Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 7; Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 36-37; Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 11; also Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 14 & Axtell, *Invasion Within*, 227-230; 365-366n

165 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 7, 37

166 E. Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 77-78; Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 5-6

both Mayhew and Hiacoomes could openly preach, practice, and demonstrate their beliefs and their assumed superiority on matters medical to the rest of the Algonquian population.

This meant, like with Miohqsoo and Towanquatick, they needed to convince the population to equate their illnesses with a lack of faith and powwows as a cause not a cure. This required Mayhew to effectively take up the role of powwow and show the superiority of his own branch of healing magic. In a series of letters written between 1647 and 1652 Mayhew himself recounted his attempts at public powwowing trying to demonstrate the curing power of belief. Frequently in these stories Algonquian participants played an active role asking and seeking Mayhew for help, advice and assistance and were not merely passive actors just learning the supposed truth. One sixty year old man, sick and given up for dead by the powwows appeared to Mayhew one Sunday and asked that he be prayed for. This occurred and the man eventually recovered and his story passed around and held up as an example of the power of prayer[167].

Similarly the son of the now devout sachem Towanquatick had developed a fever and was possibly dying. His father asked the minister to pray for the boy. On this occasion prayer was not so effective but he was not willing to see this as negative evidence, Mayhew went further and asked the boy whether he wanted to go through the standard surgical procedure for his condition, forced bleeding. Despite powwow opposition to the practice, the boy consented and so the Missionary with his pen-knife bled him. The unfortunate child ultimately managed somehow to recuperate from both the operation and the sickness and so the operation was held as a success. These incidents were part of a series of continuing luck that Mayhew had in keeping 'his 'Praying Indians' away from disease. It was a luck he himself acknowledged[168]. He used public meetings to propagate these messages and to fight the powwows, whose 'condition' he put into the same bracket as the epidemics, an illness potentially cured by faith. At one meeting an ex-powwow convert was said to still be suffering from the mental and physical torments of the spirits, who were aghast at his 'abandonment' of them. He wished to know how he could remove them and was told "That if he did believe in Christ Jesus, he should have the spirit of Christ dwelling in him… the Devils in Hell and… [powwows]… on Earth, should not be able to do him any hurt"[169]. Whether the malady was purely physical or had a cultural aspect, faith was held to be cure.

The powwow mentioned above still continued to believe that the spirits were torturing him despite his apparent conversion to Christianity. That is - to say - that he identified the powwow spirits as still existing but as a malign influence over himself. The spirits were a cultural survival. Due to his experiences, whatever they were, he had come to see the symbols, ideas and deities of his former life as a powwow as negative and had by converting taken up a new ideology, that of the Puritanism to which he converted and now wished for God's power to overcome those relics of a previous past.

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167 This story and the next from Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 3-4

168
Thomas Mayhew Junior in Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 'To The Corporation', 4(Unnumbered)

169 Ibid, 6(unnumbered)

This semiotic re-location has been termed by Joel Robbins as 'ontological preservation' in which "people continue to believe in the reality and power of the spiritual beings who were at the centre of their traditional religion, but at the same time demonize them and enlist God as their ally in a struggle to defeat them"[170].

As the power of the powwows was failing, this drama was played out on Martha's Vineyard, with this shift in perspective attested to among powwows themselves. At one meeting in 1650 one powwow confessed to having become one due to the Devil – the Christian term was used – appearing to him in a dream in the image of four creatures including a very mischievous serpent who gave out cures. Here while the Devil is part of adopted Christian iconography he is still described in Algonquian imagery. Another powwow, a supposedly 'notorious' one, also that day repented proclaiming that he had also been possessed by spirits embodying nature but for that reason it was necessary "the more to be acknowledge the work of God, that he should this way, his friends, his gain, to follow the Lord, whose wayes are so despisable in the eyes of Devillish minded men". These devilish minded men presumably included those non-repentant powwows. In his testimony, which was like the other testimonials well received by the praying Indians in attendance, he also spoke of his sick wife who he had failed to cure despite powwowing and his subsequent rejection of his healing powers, not even powwowing for his sick family members because of his promises to God[171]. By doing all this, he had not come to reject the *existence* of his old magic or his relationship to the spirits, only their benevolence and effectiveness. His healing, after all, had not saved his wife. This was the position of Mayhew and Hiacoomes[172].

In addition to the two powwows above, at this same meeting no less than fifty others followed likewise in declaring their new faith[173]. The speed at which Puritanism spread across Martha's Vineyard provoked a great deal of opposition especially from those interests threatened by a rival faith. Little can be said about the opposition except that powwows, unsurprisingly, played a big part in it. However, apart from one failed assassination attempt there was very little violence[174]. Mockery was initially more common[175]. Later, as Christianity advanced, powwows did try to use their own magic, their social status, infiltration of meetings, hiring of spies and threats to prevent Mayhew and Hiacoomes for gaining further influence, but these attempts failed. Hiacoomes, in particular, faced down these threats at the public forums that were meetings. In 1649 at a 'great discourse' on the

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170 Joel Robbins, *Crypto-Religion and the Study of Cultural Mixtures*, 421

171 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 44

172 Ibid, 40-43(both conversions)

173 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 44

174 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 23

175
Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 4; Also see [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 31 & Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 26

power of the powwows, Hiacoomes tried to demonstrate his lack of fear of them by showing that he was still alive despite their opposition and magic. At another meeting a year later he interrupted a fight between two praying Indians and a powwow, who threatened to kill Hiacoomes through magic. Hiacoomes predicted this would fail as he had a superior power – his religion – over powwow magic. He survived. The eventual failure of the powwows to even harm Hiacoomes helped to discredit them in the eyes of the Algonquian public as their powers were seen as inferior to those that Hiacoomes had obtained[176].

The numbers of converts in the Edgartown region in which Mayhew and Hiacoomes preached continued to spiral upwards and by October 1652, at the very latest, only nine years after Mayhew had met Hiacoomes, ACC had become the dominant religious ideology in that region. Between that moment and one year earlier, no less than eighty three Algonquians had announced their coming into the Christian faith and accepted Christian culture, including several powwows[177]. It continued to keep growing afterwards. While the level of devotion of this public can be treated with some fair scepticism, over time the idea came to be dominant that Christianity protected them from disease. They were fortunate that, after 1646, no epidemic would again hit the island until 1690. Tellingly, to cope with sickness in that latter year, Vineyard Algonquians would pray, mediate, and if literate, read passages from the bible while native ministers would preach on how the spread of 'sin' would and did lead to the divine punishment of disease. It became their role to look after the sick[178]. While previous generations had held that the earlier epidemics were a punishment for failing to sacrifice to Cautantowwit, it was assumed in 1690 that sickness was caused by improper worship of God. Nobody called for a return to ancient ways and the epidemic brought about no crisis of faith, indeed it might have strengthened the belief of some people[179]. By then forty years had passed and ideas which had once been novel and unusual had become the matters of sensible discourse.

3.6 Prayer and the Image of the World

Raymond Firth might as well have been writing of the 'Red Puritans' of Martha's Vineyard when he wrote that the Christian converts in the Solomon Islands he studied were "very conscious of the moral implications of their change of faith. The new intellectual framework is largely taken on trust; it is a matter of faith"[180]. One faith-based narrative had replaced another. This new framework

176 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 10-11

177 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 45; Thomas Mayhew Junior in Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 'T o The Corporation', 3(unnumbered)

178 E. Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 53-54, passim; E. Mayhew, *Appendix*, 8-9

179 Silverman, *Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation*, 172, E. Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 68, also 53-54, 68, 86

180 Firth, *Conversion from Paganism to Christianity*, 7

was not though a creation of pure imagination detached from the realities of the world but rooted in a reaction to Algonquians own experiences of life and the challenges they faced; the Christian faith could be seen as more effective in facing the problems such as disease which they were increasingly having to cope with. As in the cases of Wequash and William this was based on an interpretation of their own experiences. However, unlike those cases, the source of their new interpretation is identifiable as Mayhew and his followers. Nor was the 'religion as more effective healing' trope exclusive to Martha's Vineyard. On Massachusetts Bay it also became part of the new ideology. Eliot was very concerned about Algonquian health and healing practices[181]. In this he had the advantage of the power of the law and had powwowing banned in the area under his control, albeit with occasional but sporadic later reports of returns to the practice[182].

The confessions, as discussed in Chapter One, support the view that Algonquians in Massachusetts Bay, as well as those on Martha's Vineyard, understood at least enough of this framework to perform it in public. Wutasakompavin explained, using Christ healing the leper as his basis that "Christ is the great Physitian… so let us this day cry to Christ, and worship him, and if we do it in faith then he will heal us"[183]. Waban said likewise but expanded to include diseases of the 'soul' elucidating that "we have a great many diseases and sicknesses in our souls [Gives a few examples: Sabbath breaking, Idleness, 'passions']… [for which we must] goe to Christ the Phisican… he healed mens bodies, but he can heale souls also: he is a great Physitian, therefore let all sinners goe to him"[184]. It is an infrequently reoccurring trope albeit it is not clear how fully representative this attitude was[185]. Sceptical voices were passed over in the literature. One observant woman asked Eliot at a 1647 meeting why Christian men also suffered from illness, a question to which she received no answer[186].

Equated to belief and healing power was prayer. Prayer was the outward action that brought belief from its internal state into an outward performance. Christians *prayed*. That is what they did. At meetings the public praying lasted as long as the preaching itself, and it was held that it was one of the meetings functions was to teach Indians how to pray. It was not without reason that Christianized Algonquians were identified by English onlookers as 'praying Indians'. This held for the Indians who themselves referred to Christianity as 'praying to God'[187]. This identification came early, the first Massachusett language prayer – it asked God to "Take away my stony heart" and "wash… my soul" -

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181 See for example Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 36-38

182 See for example Ibid, 25, but also see discussion on backsliding at the end of chapter 4.6

183
John Eliot, *A Further Accompt of the Progresse of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England* (London, 1659), 18

184 Ibid, 9

185 See Eliot & Mayhew, Tears of Repentance, passim, Eliot, Further Progress, passim

186 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 50

was in existence in Massachusetts Bay in 1646 and may have predated Eliot[188]. Later, in 1651, Eliot wrote of his charges understanding of prayer saying they had "exceeded my expectations"[189]. Praying was done in public, at meetings, and also as the commonly used English expression put it, 'in the family'. In 1674 Daniel Gookin, superintendent of the New England Company and thus in charge of the company's day to day business with Algonquians (he worked very close with John Eliot), reported that Praying Indians 'generally' prayed in their families every morning and evening apparently "with much affection and reverence"[190]. This was done at one's home wigwam with usually the father as head of the household leading the family in communal prayer. This became a way of passing down religious knowledge through generations and its existence is noted from an early date in both Martha's Vineyard and Massachusetts Bay[191].

As prayer became a signature activity of being Christian, there was a great deal of initial anxiety about the practice, as shown in the question discussed at the start of the chapter. In his first sermon Eliot had to demonstrate a basic technique of praying, after a question, by reciting the words "Lord make mee know Jesus Christ, for I know him not" over and over again which was later taken up by some individuals[192]. As more was learnt the earlier concerns faded while later queries gathered greater sophistication and complexity but again, as with other topics, touched on prevalent issues of authenticity, and morality. One woman wondered ""Whether do I pray when my husband prayes if I speak nothing as he doth, yet if I like what he saith, and my heart goes with it?"" or in other words, is prayer just an action of the lips or something more inward[193]. Others inquired "How shall I bring mine heart to love prayer?" – showing again awareness of the gap between attitude and action and likewise ""If a wicked man pray, whether doth he make a good prayer? Or when doth a wicked man pray a good prayer?" demonstrating a reasonably ambiguous and intellectually curious attitude to morality[194].

Prayer was thus saturated in meaning and interpretation, with Algonquian neophytes trying to understand its use and utility while Eliot and also Mayhew tried to demonstrate its 'proper' use, using questions and answers to attach narratives to it in the hope they would stick. One element that

187 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 20

188 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 29

189 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 11

190 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 29

191 E. Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, passim; Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 7, passim

192 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 4; Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, passim

193 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 9

194 Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 12-14;

did persuade was its power to change circumstances, behaviour and belief through acts of God. In this context Robert Naeher has written “The Knowledge of Christ that prayer brought altered one’s inner being and affected one’s external actions as a result”[195]. The questions above concerning wicked men and the relationship between attitude and action shows this was very much understood and expected by the praying Algonquians. Inner states and outer actions were meant to correlate. The wife of one Totherswamp spoke of this perspective noting “Before my husband did pray hee was much angry and froward [forward?], but since hee hath begun to pray hee was not angry so much, but little angry”. Praying was calming and made him less aggressive, yet tellingly not all had actually changed in action, something which worried the wife, as underlined by her next question on whether her husband could continue in his ‘unruly passions’ yet continue praying to God[196].

Prayer was thus understood as metaphysical, it was meant to have causal value in the world making positive things, miracles even, happen not just in external behaviour and but in the external world generally such as the ‘Plymouth rain’ which appeared and amazed the onlooker discussed in Chapter 3.3. No question was ever recorded on why God chose certain people and not others to be recipients of his benevolence, but it was assumed that only those with great faith could be chosen. Jonnaohquisso, a harsh magistrate on Martha’s Vineyard, claimed his praying to God for saving him one day when his canoe tipped over despite his regular heaving drinking, from which he soon turned away after his salvation[197]. The devout Jane Pomit attributed to prayer her recovery for an illness which had killed her brother[198]. In response to the kidnapping of her father, Jerusha Ohquanhut prayed continuously for a month “ordinarily with Tears, inforcing her Petitions with proper arguments taken out of the Word of God, which she was no stranger to” until the Lord provided and he was returned[199]. The ‘very pious’ Hummanequem refused the help of a powwow while his wife was “three dayes in travel [labour]” and it was the only effort of his prayers, it was said, that helped him obtain a ‘merciful deliverance’[200]. How true this effect was in an empirical sense was to them irrelevant, only that it was unquestionably believed. Having started off from sermons and preaching, a new if not completely alien theory of causation and of metaphysics had taken root in Southern New England.

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195 Naeher, *Dialogue in the Wilderness*, 357

196 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 10

197 E. Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 123-124

198 Ibid, 252

199 Ibid, 244-245

200 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 10

By the beginning of the 1650s both missions were well-established and had achieved some success, as the missionaries would have defined it. Both men in achieving this had strategies of how to deal and win over the Algonquians and these strategies came out of the way the missions operated and formed and the events which transpired. What Mayhew did would probably have been very different if it had not been for the constant presence of disease between 1643 and 1646. Certainly he could not have won as many people over as he did without it. Using the four factor model to analyse ACC by looking at the role of missionaries, the Algonquians themselves, the environment, and contingency, this clearly shows the importance of individual missionary actions in propagating ACC as well as the role of contingency, in the fact that disease spread when it did. However, the ideas could not have been as successful as they were without the willing participation of the Algonquians as active players in the process. They engaged with Eliot over questions and Mayhew over disease and at least a few at least were at least somewhat convinced. Some ideas, such as those related to sexual behaviour or prayer, spread quickly and became early parts of ACC. These beliefs would not have spread so fast if they had not been perceived to be plausible and had they not fitted in with their prior beliefs so that they could be made *conceivable* and *believable*, as in the link between magic and prayer.

One of the ways through which such new concepts were learnt was through experience and demonstration. The supposed links between prayer and the weather or faith and health, or faith and technological superiority were among those ‘shown’ to various people who would find them convincing. Other, more abstract, concepts were taught through methods of exchange such as sermons and question and answer sessions where clarification could be made as to what ‘sin’ or ‘resurrection’ was or even who was Jesus. New ideas could and did also build up and/or subvert pre-existing notions as was done with the powwows who came to be seen as Mayhew saw them (i.e. as ineffective wizards in touch with demons) and not as a key members of community, while maintaining the existence of their magic and powers at the same time. While the reasons for the appeal of other doctrines, such as the quick acceptance, at least intellectually, of the missionaries’ sexual mores is obscure. In all cases, however, Algonquians were doubtlessly bringing about these intellectual changes of their own accord. There is no evidence that they were manipulated or exploited into doing so.

In this chapter three of the main factors outlined in Chapter One were discussed. There was little mention of the environment, except recognition that Mayhew and Eliot dealt in two different situations and of the background situation Algonquians faced. So far the discussion of ACC’s growth has been focused on the intellectual and on the ideological rather than the material and economic. Yet clearly all the actors involved did not participate in a vacuum and, as shall be discussed, economic and ecological matters were vital in the development of ACC especially from the 1650s onwards. Power and the disparity of power between actors, was also very important and gathered apace in this period. This was especially the case in Massachusetts Bay where John Eliot, helped by the colonial authorities, began slowly to accumulate more and more control over his charges in an attempt to impose Puritan rectitude on the Algonquian population.

4.
"Reduce them from barbarism to civility": Creating Praying Indians[201]

Due to legal, economic and biological protections the missionaries, and especially John Eliot, had a significant advantage of power and influence over the Algonquian population which allowed them to impose or at least influence the adoption of English social customs, social structures and laws by their followers from 1651 onwards. In Massachusetts Bay, the construction of the Praying Indian centre of Natick was foremost in this process. A product of one man's vision, it was an attempt to socially engineer by brute power a change in the souls of his followers, an approach very different from that discussed in Chapter 3 and fitting more into Eliot's objectives than a more negotiation-led approach. While on Martha's Vineyard greater Anglicization continued, led not primarily by Mayhew but, rather, local notables. This was sequential with the rapid changes in the economic, social and ecological environments in which Algonquians had to operate in, many of these as a consequence of their relations with the missionaries. This chapter will discuss these changes primarily, but not exclusively, focusing, due to the nature of the available information, on Massachusetts Bay and Eliot. It will look at the changes on Algonquian cultural life across Southern New England and will end with a discussion on how these changes altered many cultural practices of the Algonquians, from consumption patterns to funerals and look at the extent to which Algonquians had Anglicized themselves.

On 8th August 1651 approximately thirty Englishmen arrived at the town of Natick to attend a religious service. Amongst its number were some of the religious and political elite of Massachusetts Bay colony including the governor, John Endicott. The purpose of the service was to mark the construction of the town and the entrances of its inhabitants into a religious covenant. The town was

201 Quoted in Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 7

new and populated entirely by Eliot's followers. They had moved or had been moved out of their previous village settlements, such as Nonantum. Upon arrival they saw a palisade fort, a footbridge, an English-style framed house, well-mowed grass, and a school with a literate, bilingual native teacher among other things. These buildings had been recently constructed by Algonquians using English tools and methods instructed to them by Eliot. It should be noted though there was not a total change in surroundings, the population as a whole continued to live and would continue to live in wigwams, which were easier to build, easier to move and better insulated than English-style houses. The meeting was like any other with multilingual prayers, psalm singing and an Eliot sermon on the need for repentance. Governor Endicott also spoke celebrating Algonquians coming into Christianity. One member of the party wrote that the audience "attend[ed] with much reverence, as if much affected therewith"[202] and Eliot observed that they were now able to distinguish between Bible verses if not yet by book, chapter or verse. The party in attendance was much impressed. Boston Pastor John Wilson wrote "among the Indians there be some great proficient in knowledge… whom Mr Eliot hath trained up". Governor Endicott was more exuberant stating "Neither can I but acknowledge the unspeakable goodness of God that gives us favour in the sight of… so large a hand of bounty, so glorious a worke" and that he had not enjoyed such a journey in a long time. He believed the coming of American natives into Christianity had been foretold by the bible, a sign of the imminent resurrection.

4.2 Reducing to Civility

This ceremony was the latest in a series of ceremonies, all designed to mark and to praise the work of Eliot amongst the Algonquians. Two months earlier another ceremony was held to mark the construction of their palisade fort. To commemorate this, a day of fasting and prayer was held, the first time the community held such an event and so had to be instructed by Eliot in how to do it. At the culmination of this Eliot and some selected Algonquian rulers came together and signed a covenant that formally handed over complete control of the town to God, and by extension, Eliot, who spoke on his behalf to Algonquians. As it went "we doe give our selves and our Children unto God to be his people, he shall rule us in all our affaires" continuing "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King". This appears to be the first public record in existence belonging to the indigenous of Southern New England although how willing they were as signatories or whether they understood the concept of signing and its consequences is not left obvious by these remaining records[203].

The covenant formally stated that they, the Algonquians of Natick, were giving authority over to God. However, as Lord almighty he was absent on most occasions this in effect gave all control over to the Massachusetts Bay colony and, in particular, John Eliot. Given that the town was built on a supposedly biblical vision in line with what Eliot deemed to be biblical laws and ordinances, this was not perhaps such a problem. On the day of the Covenant's signing Eliot's sermon had featured a long dissertation on Exodus 18, which described the system of the governance of the Israelites under

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202
For this incident and its various retellings as well as this and subsequent quotations see Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 18, 20-22, 25-29, 47-50; Also Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 41

203 See Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 14-15 for the covenant in full and events surrounding it

Moses and it was this system that was now to be imposed upon the listeners. It was this system that Eliot would later speak of rapturously in his book *The Christian Commonwealth* as a model for all Christians. Its extreme theocratic vision would lead to it getting burnt publicly by the authorities in Boston, the first book ever to do so in the current United States, yet the same authorities would take no issue with it being imposed on Algonquians and indeed, facilitated it[204].

In his letters, both public and private, he spoke endlessly of his ambitions for Natick. In the years before its construction, it was his fixed ideal endlessly referred to. Effectively his goal was to create a town that would be a model for Puritan governance across New England, a place in America eventually more Puritan than the Puritans. He therefore spoke of desiring "to traine up [Algonquians], to be the Lords people only, ruled by his Word in all things" and that "they shall be wholly governed by the Scriptures in all things both in Church and State" which he hoped would lead to a "government… in the hands of the saints of the most high"[205]. This would create "a patterne and Copie before them, to imitate in all the Countrey, both in civilizing them in their Order, Government, Law and in their Church proceedings and adminstrations"[206]. In other words, a model that can be replicated anywhere in its holiness and devotion. Natick was, once its inhabitants were put right and had God enter their hearts, to be this beacon. As with Governor Endicott, the correctness of this plan was not in doubt, prophecy and the signs of the imminence of the millennium had indicated such.

All this required a change of souls infinitely further reaching than had been achieved by this point. In this regard, Eliot was thorough. Natick was to become a beacon by its very design, all its laws and social structures and indeed the very concept of Natick itself was designed to be a centre for complete acculturation into what he deemed to be Puritanism. In terms of preaching, the town did have some practical advantages to Eliot. Prior to being moved into Natick, many of his followers had been spread out and Eliot could rarely visit them. One village he only went to once a year due to the difficulties of travelling[207]. By congregating all his followers in one place, Eliot made his followers easier to organize, contain and be certain to follow God as they were not without the word or minister. For Eliot this was not just a matter of convenience but also of ideology. He defined settlement as a requirement for this project. He once wrote "how uncapable they be to be trusted therewith [church government and laws], whilst they live so unfixed, confused and ungoverned a life,

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Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 141**;** John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth: or, The Civil Policy of The Rising Ki ngdom of Jesus Christ* (DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2005 [London, 1659]), 'Preface', acc essed at http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libraryscience/19 [11 August 2013]

205
Wilberforce Eames, *John Eliot and the Indians 1652-1657: being letters addressed to Rev. Jonathan Hanmer of Barnstable, England, Eliot's Letters to Hanmer, reproduced from the original manuscript, Minister at Barns table in the possession of Theodore N. Vail* (The Adam and Grace Press, New York, 1915), p.8; Whitfield, *Lig ht Appearing*, 23-24

206 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 12-13

207 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 20

uncivilized and unsubdued to labour and order”[208]. Semi-nomadic and without the self-directed manners to change that, it was inconceivable for them to become Christian or to be even trusted with the structures of Puritans without settlement. This was what was meant in practice by the phrase ‘reducing to civility’.

This is a phrase that repeats itself in the literature (see title quote) by Eliot, by Daniel Gookin and other missionary figures. It was a repetitive mantra on what to do. They needed to be reduced, that is forced, and brought to ‘civility’. Civility was never precisely defined but did seem to be all encompassing. The Massachusetts Bay colony law book spoke of them “hav[ing]… engaged themselves to be willing and ready to understand the law of God: It is therefore ordered… to reduce them to civility of life”[209]. Civility was here the law of God but Eliot went further when he spoke in a private letter “they come forward in civility… only it is drowned in theire wild, and rude manner of living, but by culture, order, government, and religion they begin to be furbished up”[210]. This was in 1654, after Natick, after some ‘civility’ had been established but it was threatened by ‘their wild, and rude manner of living’. In Natick they could be raised or ‘furbished up’ to a higher standard, not just of religion, but of culture, order and government. It was these things they were being reduced to and were being done for their own personal good, for without which they could not be Christians.

It logically followed that their patterns of life, ‘unfixed, ungoverned a life’ would have to make way for a ‘civil’ one. Here ‘civility’ meant, in addition to ‘culture, order, and government’, *settlement*, the forced removal of people from a way of life as seasonal horticulturalists into that of an English type town with English type buildings such as houses, forts and bridges. Eliot was most explicit about this when he spoke of building Natick as “the work of the day is to civilize them”[211]. As has been seen, to be civilized was in effect to meet the expectations of Puritan gentleman, such as John Eliot. Figures such as William discussed in Chapter 3 were near civilized, as they had Anglicized all their habits and beliefs. However, those like William or Hiacoomes had done so of their own volition. In Natick, Eliot tried to impose these values by force and the law. All this was very different from the way Thomas Mayhew Junior had come about his conversion strategy which involved negotiating and dealing with local notables and convincing them of the advantages of his cultural ideas. With much greater backing behind him, Eliot was far more ambitious and so aimed at total control, treating the Algonquian population as *tabula rasa* to be imprinted with and reduced to his ideas. For this reason, Natick was built on the frontier, far from contact with local settlers, who probably were not very devout and could be bad influences. It was also built next to the territory of rival groups such as the Mohawks as a possible pointer towards further expansion. Eliot, after all, saw Natick as only the beginning.

4.3 Land, Labour and Economy

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208 Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 18

209 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 37

210 Eames, *John Eliot and the Indians*, 21

211 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 23

This was a beginning where an 'unfixed, confused and ungoverned' people would be subdued into 'labour and order'. Constructing Natick could be used to introduce Algonquians to these necessary labours. Using company funds to buy tools, the town was built in a year. In addition to the buildings, streets were laid out and built while the wigwams were set on a pattern next to the roads, as opposed to the scattered way they had been before and so demonstrating a more 'rational' approach to town development[212]. This was accompanied with another innovation, the paying of wages. Although how voluntarily this was, is put into question by them refusing to be paid after the construction of the footbridge as "they were farre from desiring any wages when they do their own work" but did express gratitude for his concern[213].

Along with the layout of the town, Algonquian labourers were also set to work on altering the landscape. Eliot had intended that Natick be a place where they would learn to not just build but also fish, grow flax and hemp and farm in a proper, English manner[214]. Under his guidance, his charges divided up the land into separate plots primarily for tillage and the maintenance of animals. Hitherto unused to private property, fences and ditches were laid out to separate strips of land. These were then parcelled out between different heads of households with some held over to be ploughed in common. These heads of households were, of course, all male and now become owners of family farms, a practice which required a great change in discipline compared to life as member of a hunting band. This also took responsibility for land ownership away from the sachems, who had previously distributed the band's communal land to his/her followers, and gave it to individuals who now became the land's 'owners'. Eliot had earlier identified their supposed dependence on the sachems as a reason behind the perceived lack of Algonquian 'work ethic' and 'desire for wealth', and so this partition was meeting his objectives[215]. This drive towards private landownership did not just fit ideological prescriptions but also environmental changes. Fences and ditches kept away livestock from their crops, a new problem unknown in Southern New England before 1620. It also increased their dependence on trade with the English as tools were expensive and animals difficult to maintain especially considering their initial inexperience[216].

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212 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 41-42; Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 36-37

213 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, p.36-37 This ambiguous episode can be interpreted in numerous ways. Either wa y, it puts into question the exact economic relationship between Eliot and his charges. Were they really salar ied workers although he says they were in other parts? How 'voluntary' was this voluntary waged labour? H ow much did they understand of the functions of money? It should be remembered, however, that only a fe w years earlier they were facing near starvation conditions.

214 Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 8

215 See Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 37-38

216 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 41-42, 46 shows the Algonquians willingly and 'desirous' for dividing up their land and new skills; For discussion on the effect of new Agricultural patterns see Van Lonkhuyzen, *A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians*, 412-413 also Goddard & Bragdon, *Native Writings*, 15-17

As Eliot had wanted, all these changes drew Natick into the greater cash economy with the English and away from pure self-sufficiency. For Algonquians, their land, having been submitted to the authorities, was now protected and recognized under law. Their greater entrance into the cash economy meant greater access to markets for desirable consumer goods from tin cups, buckets, cloths and glass bottles in addition to farming equipment and animals[217]. This, however, required consistent earnings. For Eliot too there was the issue of funds. Highly dependent on a string of anonymous benefactors in England and with the colonial authorities unwilling to divulge its funds on anything as politically unpopular as 'Indians', there were hopes that Natick would achieve a level of economic activity that would make Natick and Eliot's mission self-financing. The paying of wages and of teaching labour was merely a first step towards this for Eliot. The repeated doses of religion they would receive, it was felt, would fulfil most of the rest. As Daniel Gookin wrote "The rules of religion teach them to be diligent and industrious; and the diligent hand maketh rich, and adds no sorrow with it"[218].

This was just as well given that Natick had very little to sell. The fur trade was exhausted, returning to their old way of life impossible even if they could (and it provided no value to the traders or missionaries) and so all they had to sell was their labour, primarily to local settlers and, of course, to Eliot. Alternatives were sought after. As early as 1647 Eliot noted their growing industry in selling things for the English market namely berries, meat, fish and baskets[219]. Although basket weaving and other craft weaving would remain an important staple of the Algonquian economy for the following centuries, the resources they provided were clearly inadequate[220]. To face this problem, Eliot and Gookin constantly provided two schemes for alternative employment neither of which, despite constant efforts, were ever hugely successful. The first was to provide spinning wheels for women to produce clothes for both the market and themselves. In the missionaries' minds this also had the advantages of teaching the necessary skills to produce English-style clothing (and so help them be weaned away from traditional clothing[221]) and also of domesticating the women – another necessity of 'civility' – and moving them from their involvement in gathering and horticulture, which had long horrified English commentators.

The second scheme was for apprenticeships so that Algonquian children would be sent to English homes to learn appropriate skills and fitting gender roles, housewifery for the girls and a trade such as woodcutting for the boys. This was also supposed to help end a labour shortage in 'sober and

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217 See Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 11

218 Ibid, 66

219 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 42

220
Laura E. Conkey, Etherl Boissevain & Ives Goddard, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Late Period" in *The Handbook of North American Indians vol.15: Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Smithsonian Ins titute, Washington, 1978), 184

221 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 12

diligent' English households[222]. Both schemes do not seem to have been very successful. The first did not provide enough money or even clothes. Indeed, Eliot often had to have clothes shipped over from England to keep his praying Indians in proper apparel. Natick was frequently dependant on such hand-outs[223]. The second scheme was more operable but faced the regular prejudices of settler homeowners. Many were uninterested in teaching anything and just required farm labour[224]. In later periods (and also on Martha's Vineyard), those sent into households were frequently indentured servants there to pay off debts and so there was little incentive to train them beyond what was deemed necessary[225]. Some of those were even de facto slaves and so were bought and sold like any other commodity[226]. Many lucrative skills were reckoned too dangerous to teach – Anthony of Natick was prohibited from learning to be a smith out of the fear that an 'Indian' might learn how to make locks and firearms[227]. Given these circumstances, unsurprisingly, many Algonquians were reluctant to sending their children over to possibly hostile households[228]. There were a few successes but despite the efforts of Eliot, most Algonquians would turn out to be unable to operate in the market economy as anything other than farm hands. In practice, in order to subsist hunter-gathering and nomadic activity had to continue, despite the increasingly difficulty of this in a changing environment.

All this was to disappoint many of those Algonquians who had associated their conversions with potential gains in wealth. At one of Eliot's question and answer sessions, frustrations boiled over and one covert asked, in a telling question, why should non-Christian Algonquians convert given that they were as poor as them. Eliot responded in a typical fashion, noting they now had better (English) clothes and that if they kept on obeying God and kept to six days of work and one day of rest, eventually all will have "*cloths*, *houses*, *cattle*, *riches as they* [The English] *have*, *God would give you*

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222 Ibid, 79

223
Salisbury, *Red Puritans*, 33-34, Axtell, *Invasion Within*, 161; Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 15, 46; Winslow, *Glorio us Progress*, 15, Eliot, *Letter to Robert Boyle*, 178; Eames, *John Eliot and the Indians*, 9

224 See Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 79

225
For Algonquians living in households and the effect it had on them, see E.Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, passim, for example 26-27, 152, 261; For the rise of indenture see Leibman, 'Introduction', 20, 34-35

226
For Algonquian slavery in the region see Margaret Ellen Newell, "The Changing Nature of Indian Slavery in N ew England, 1670-1720" in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, ed. Colin G. Gal loway and Neal Salisbury (Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Boston, 2003), esp. 121-126 The boundaries be tween 'servant' and 'slave' were never particularly clear

227 Eliot, *Further Progress*, 11

228 Axtell, *Invasion Within*, 159-160 for a summary

them"[229]. Some, at least in the breach, caught and held onto this ideal. In later church confessions, the would-be communicants express a similar view between a work ethic that was supposedly being imprinted on them and the religious beliefs they were meant to be proclaiming. For instance, Magus stated "I thought I will pray as long as I live, and I will labor, because Gods promise is, If we labor we shall eat and I see that that is a true word; for they that do labor do eat". Meanwhile John Speene, compared his previous sinful life to the way he had learnt to work "I did greatly love hunting and hunted labour: but now I beleeve that word of God, which saith, Six days thou shalt labour and God doth make my body strong to labor"[230]. Many other confessions feature such an emphasis on the virtues of labour and the need to imitate the English in that regard.

The record is confused and uncertain but it seems very likely that over time they got accustomed to the regimentalization of labour and working for wages. After all, 'jobs' had appeared in basket weaving and agricultural work. They did adapt themselves to English agriculture including its animals and equipment and their diet had become closer to that of their settler neighbours. These 'accomplishments' were also mirrored in Martha's Vineyard where the Algonquian population went on a very similar economic trajectory to those of Natick even without the presence of Eliot trying to reduce them to civility. Rather, it seems they brought civility to themselves. In the same year Natick was built, on the island forty local men including the sachem Towanquatick (see Ch.3) came together to sign a covenant. This document was, as on the mainland, to lead to the establishment of a nominally independent indigenous government overseen by Mayhew and local colonial authorities. While in practice this document allowed greater indigenous freedom than was the case in Natick, it also came with the widespread adoption of English laws, government system and customs. Like at Natick, a ceremony was held to mark this covenant but unlike there, the missionary was not involved with those in attendance telling Mayhew they desired to be Christian and that God "would slay the rebellion of their hearts"[231].

While no Natick style settlement was completed on the island, over time the adoption of customs and habits for the colonists became very widespread and very much spread into the economic domain. In the years following the 1651 covenant, Martha's Vineyard also saw the emergence of 'jobs', waged agricultural labour, work-related changes in gender roles and increasing propertarian notions of land ownership, with land transformed from communal holdings to plots. Also like in Natick, all this existed alongside a more traditional semi-nomadic economy that was necessary to provide sufficient resources. Here the sachems went from distributors of large chunks of land to owners of said land which would later have catastrophic effect. This suggests that united the experiences of both the island and Massachusetts Bay was not just the missionaries but also similar market forces. In particular, in both places the coming of Christianity correlated with the coming of debt. While debt was already a serious problem across Southern New England in 1643 in both places it only grew after the arrival of the missionaries. This is unsurprising given the unbalanced nature of

229 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 39 (Emphasis mine)

230 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 36, 28 (both quotes)

231 Thomas Mayhew Junior in Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 'To The Corporation', 9(unnumbered)

the economy where Algonquians had great demand for English goods but had little they could give, economically speaking, in return except their labour – and their land.

A commodity which was particularly bad for entangling Algonquians in debt was alcohol, despite prohibitions put on by the missionaries and local authorities against selling it or drinking it. Alcohol abuse never ceased being a serious problem and those willing purchase some able to go on credit to local traders. Despairing of the situation, Gookin and Eliot by the 1670s even allowed them to grow their own supply[232]. Gambling and gaming for wages – something to which Gookin considered them "addicted" – was always a major source of large debts to Englishmen[233]. This was in addition to the normal commodities trade in which ripping off 'Indians' was standard practice. Once in debt there was practically no escape from it and required greater work for wages, more and more of which went off to pay the debt. To those heavily indebted, a larger number as time went on, indenture and effective slavery were the routes out. In both places this could mean military service. In Martha's Vineyard in particular it could mean whaling, or working on a seasonal basis in the Atlantic. In both these jobs the men were sent away and rarely saw in their families (their wives and children might also be indentured, the women into domestic roles). All this was to counter the move towards nuclear, patriarchal families so encouraged by John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew Junior[234].

Failing selling themselves into indenture, they could always sell their land. This was happening across Southern New England among Christians and non-Christians alike. According to Daniel Gookin, the moving of Algonquians into places like Natick and the establishment of English legal structures amongst them was partially designed to protect their land from both English speculators and themselves, who might have been tempted to sell it to pay off debts[235]. This probably only slowed the process as later incidents were to show. In 1684 Eliot and Gookin tried in vain to prevent Waban and several others in Natick from selling 800 acres of land at a very low price. This was despite an agreement not to sell parts of praying towns without total agreement amongst all proprietors, which Waban and his group lacked. Instead this group of influential Algonquians acted unilaterally in selling the land against the desires of the wider community. Many of the sellers were recognized drunkards and raising money for alcohol was a possible motive in the sale[236].

About the same time a case erupted in Martha's Vineyard involving the sachem Mittark. Mittark had come from the East of the island, far from Edgartown, in the region known as 'Gay Head'. When he turned to Christianity in 1663 he was the first in his area to do so. He was an influential sachem and

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232 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 17**;** Eliot, *A Late and Further Manifestation*, 6; E.Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, passim; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 11

233 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 13; Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 41

234 E.Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, passim; Leibman, 'Introduction', 48-49

235 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 39

236 See Mandell, *Behind The Frontier*, 34

his conversion marked the beginning of the Christianization of his area. He had, like the others, reorganized his area on English lines and so became the major landowner in the process. In the 1680s, however, his son, Joseph Mittark, decided to sell all his land, including hundreds of tenants to then Governor of New York. This was a violation of traditional practices of inheritance, various promises and even a written oath. Yet eventually it was sold after great legal wrangling (in an English court) leaving his once followers then tenants homeless and needing somewhere else to live[237]. These were hardly the only cases but were perhaps the most extreme. With fewer legal protections and with the demise of sachem obligations in addition to the problems of debt, the economic selloff continued apace regardless of stated intentions.

4.4 Governance and Leadership

Men like Waban and Joseph Mittark had the advantage of being community leaders. As community leaders, they were in a certain economic position that would not have been the case in the pre-1620 era, such as being taken for land owners and so being able to sell the land and raise money, often to pay debts. This would have been incomprehensible without the English presence. The entrance of the cash economy had allowed new opportunities and helped weaken traditional social obligations of community leaders. However, this existed along with changes in social structure brought about by the missionaries. Both Waban and Mittark owed their influence partly to their role in leading the conversion of their localities. Mittark was a sachem who brought his followers along with him in Gay Head. Waban was so loyal to Eliot and the Massachusetts Bay government from the start that they appointed him 'Chief Minister of Justice' of the Nonantum Algonquians. Both clearly had benefitted from this in ways that went beyond the spiritual.

This involved integrating themselves or their families in the new power structures established in praying Indian centres. The reorganization of society attempted by Eliot and the leaders of Martha's Vineyard did not just imply new rules and institutions but also positions to enforce them: pastors, preachers, magistrates, town councilmen and teachers. Furthermore, despite Eliot's intentions and whatever Mayhew's goals neither of them could inspect the lives of their followers at all times. Both men were still pastors at English churches, Eliot at Roxbury and Mayhew at Edgartown, and could not monitor praying Indians at all times. They were not always there. In these conditions, complete control was impossible. Effectively Natick and the Vineyard's settlements had to govern themselves most of the time. In both places this was only granted under particular conditions and only to particular persons, requiring the right faith and the right attitudes.

In Natick the structure of government had been agreed to in the covenant. This was modelled on Exodus 18 with each man divided into groups of ten men, fifty men and a hundred men with a ruler chosen for each ten, fifty and a hundred, meaning each man had technically three fellow praying Indian rulers, one for each level. These positions were chosen by election. Supervising this was Eliot and the Superintendent of the New England Company who was, after 1656, Daniel Gookin. He would later write that in Natick rulers "were chosen by themselves" but importantly were "approved by a

237
For Mittark's Land Disputes see Goddard & Bragdon, *Native Writings*, 82-89, 94-97; For Mittark see E.Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 21-23 & Goddard & Bragdon, *Native Writings*, 7-8

superior authority". This superior authority was none other than Daniel Gookin who made sure that only those sufficiently pious and willing to follow instructions were those able to be elected as rulers regardless of the republicanism inherent in the electoral system[238]. As was often the case in Martha's Vineyard, the roles of Eliot and Gookin were rendered unnecessary by the praying Indians themselves who with greater autonomy chose from the beginning those primarily with Christian reputations. There was no Mosaic structure of tens and fifties but they decided to elect positions amongst themselves and follow English procedures. In the first election following the signing of the covenant, elections amongst the small but burgeoning 'red Puritan' community already selected those with a godly reputation and a tendency towards authoritarianism against 'sin'[239]. These would come to seen as admirable traits among the 'red Puritans' of Martha's Vineyard[240].

In both places, those who were selected served in positions of power – in effect, as intermediaries with the English authorities - showed a great deal of continuity with those who had ruled before the interventions of Mayhew and Eliot. In an analysis for Martha's Vineyard done by David J. Silverman using Experience Mayhew's *Indian Converts* he has shown that at least six out of the nine Algonquian magistrates listed in the book were either Sachems, members of a Sachems' family or a counsellor to a Sachem while 16 out of the 30 church officials listed had their genealogy within this social elite[241]. In her analysis of those chosen as teachers and 'rulers of hundreds' in Natick, Elise Brennan has stated that they "were either sagamores [Sachems] or persons closely related to Sagamores. Other praying town officials were made up of individuals from a few families only"[242]. One such family was the Speens, early and loyal converts from the very beginning and appear in some of Eliot's earliest records. They would maintain positions of control and influence in Natick well into the eighteenth century[243].

In other words, praying Algonquians selected their new administrators but selected mainly those from Sachemal families and other social elites. Although never legally hereditary, these positions would become effectively so. For instance, Mittark, a sachem, became a magistrate upon his conversion. His brother also became a magistrate. He also had a nephew who became a preacher, a

238 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 37

239 Thomas Mayhew Junior in Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 'To The Corporation', 10(unnumbered)

240 E.Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, passim

241 Silverman, *The Church in New England Community Life*, 268

242
A long list of office holders, their families, their descendants and their traditional Algonquian social position can be seen in Brenner, *To Pray or to be Prey*, 144-145

243
Isaac and Josiah Speen were members of Natick Town Council for various years in the 1710s see Goddard & Bragdon, *Native Writings*, 314-317, 335 They were probably descendants of Robin and John Speene early fol lowers of Eliot and the latter a teacher

grandson a schoolmaster and another grandson a pastor on the island's church making him the de facto leader of the community. His son, of course, sold all his land, which does not seemed to have halted the progress of his family despite its consequences. As men of influence, Eliot and Mayhew had always sought the influence and friendship of sachems. Mayhew required the protection and support of Miohqsoo and Towanquatick to further his aims. Eliot was afraid of their power and potential influence and was aware that losing their tribute and accepting missionary authority were major disincentives to conversion[244].

However, the tribute system eventually was not removed but replaced. Part of encouraging the cash economy was paying people who occupied the new positions Eliot, Mayhew and the Company had created and rather than dig into their rather limited resources, a system of tithing was introduced to achieve this. Residents of the praying towns and villages across Southern New England had to pay a tax for one-tenth of the grain crop they had gathered to pay these salaries[245]. In this way, taxation could become a replacement for tribute as Sachems moved from being leader of the band to magistrate, ruler or preacher and still retain community influence. It also gave the community another push towards working for money. The case of Cutshamaquin is revealing. Cutshamaquin was a Massachusett sachem, originally allied to the English, whose scalping for a Pequot led to the outbreak of the Pequot war. Loyal to Massachusetts Bay, he was one of those five sachems who submitted to its authority in 1644. Yet at first he was very wary of Christianity and tried to prevent Eliot from preaching[246]. At one point he expressed hostility to the building of Natick and claimed all the Sachems across the country were against it in addition to complaining to Eliot about how his followers were no longer paying him tribute as they were praying to God[247]. Yet soon afterwards he started to follow Eliot, formally converted by making a public confession of faith, signed the covenant and was chosen to become the first ruler of a hundred in Natick[248].

While there is no evidence that this sudden *volte face* was due to his tribute replacement or his new position, it is suggestive. Without converting, Cutshamaquin was in danger of losing his influence over his band while by converting he had little to lose, not even tribute. After signing, nothing antagonistic is heard from him again. Either way, as his example and those of Mittark and the Speens show, the social structure under Puritanism replicated many of the features of the previous Algonquian system with Sachems and their families moving from unreliable tributes to paid positions in a religious bureaucracy and owners of their land holdings, which in Martha's Vineyard could be quite substantial. Sachems, should they accept Christianity, were no longer attached to previous conventions of reciprocity and social obligations towards those lower in the social scale but

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244 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 37-38

245 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 38-39

246 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 3

247 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 38-39

248 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 14-15; 17-18

maintained, and, in fact, probably strengthened and formalized (under written laws) their role in enforcing the law and managing the community's resources.

Eventually the word 'Sachem' would disappear - quickly in Natick - but those of Sachemal origins would not in their new roles. Meanwhile, those of a lower social class, a very difficult group to access from the sources, had lost their liberty to move between hunting bands to find more agreeable sachems and, having lost or having had their traditional means of sustenance significantly reduced, were either fixed in particular locations as small landowners or were low skilled agricultural labour or both (if not indentured servants or slaves) and so were being pushed further down the economic scale with their options and liberty being reduced further and further. However, even those with the security of receiving tithes were quite poor by settler standards and not guaranteed access to basic resources and were treated with the same racism from settler society as anyone else both in general and when it came to work[249].

Despite this, the Algonquian bureaucracy would continue to grow as Christianization expanded and grew to greater than anticipated lengths. In 1676 the New England Company expressed curiosity as to why so much money was being spent on allowances to rulers (another perk of government) and why there were so many Algonquian rulers and bureaucratic positions to begin with; the response, if any, is unknown[250]. Here it should be noted that not all these new rulers and placemen were from the Algonquian aristocracy. Hiacoomes was 'of mean descent' and yet his early connections to Mayhew benefitted him. He eventually became joint pastor of the island church and community leader. His direct descendants would continue on this social trajectory and include many prestigious figures locally even into the eighteenth century[251]. Hiacoomes is an example of someone using their missionary connections and devotion to gain social mobility; in Natick, Waban was another.

His pre-Eliot years are a mystery. It is known that he was not a sachem but became prominent locally due to his promotion of Christianity, which led Massachusetts Bay to appoint him 'Chief Minister of Justice'. From 1646 he associated himself closely with Eliot and would eventually rise to become chief ruler of Natick as well as filling in many other positions. In return for this advance he promoted the Christian religion and its values. Several later testimonies recall his influence in bringing about religious change in Natick. Wutasakompauin, later himself a ruler in Natick, would claim that both Waban and Eliot persuaded him to start worshipping God while William of Sudbury stated "When Waban spake to me that I should pray to God, I did so". Those were not unique testimonies, nearly all agreed that Waban's role had been instrumental in Natick's early years[252]. As in other cases, the influence of Waban would survive his death in Natick with many leading eighteenth century figures in the town being his descendants[253].

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249 For example see E.Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 64, 95-97, 109

250 Winship, *The New England Company of 1649 and John Eliot*, 168

251 E. Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, passim

252 Eliot, *Further Progress*, 63, passim; Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 9, passim

4.5 Laws and the Sabbath

One of the jobs created by the imposition or replication of colonial social structures in Natick and the Vineyard was that of magistrate. Magistrates were the elected keepers of the new legal system, at least three in each town and village, and were designed to be, as Experience Mayhew wrote of one, "a terror to evil doers, and an encourager of them that did well"[254]. Their role was to impose punishments with sufficiently puritanical zeal. Adopted from English practice, trials were held with juries with the prospect of appeal to English courts. These 'Indian courts' were only designed to hear cases that involved only Algonquians with intra-ethnic disputes ending up in English courts with predictable outcomes. The statutory punishments were either fines or being censured and prohibited from attending meetings. This was another example of the role of English law in the spreading of the cash economy and its role in regulating behaviour. In Massachusetts Bay, at least, these fines went towards the building of meeting houses, education and any other "publick use… as shall ordinarily instruct them in the true religion"[255]. Thus incivility was paying for civility.

Surviving lists of laws exist for Massachusetts Bay before the construction of Natick. The first was passed as early as 1646 in Nonantum following discussion with the 'Chief Minister of Justice', Waban. Fitting in with the ambitions of 'reducing to civility' these eight laws were preoccupied with decorum and promoting the 'right' behaviour. Therefore idle men were to be fined five shillings, every man was build his own wigwam and not move about between homes being 'unfixed' and 'ungovernable', men were to cut their hair while women were to grow theirs' long and not show uncovered breasts and an unaffordable twenty shilling fine was imposed on men who had pre-marital sexual intercourse[256]. Wife beating was mentioned but nothing on murder, rape, stealing and those things normally part of the law. A second list of laws was promulgated three years later and merely reinforced and developed those agreed upon earlier by Eliot and Waban. In addition to those listed in 1646, the axe came down on alcohol abuse, powwowing, lying, greasing one's self, polygyny, adultery (made a capital offense), defaulting on debt, avoiding menstruating women (due to differing ideas of 'female modesty') and traditional funerary practices. Amusingly, this list of laws included "That they may labour after humility and not be proud" and "that they may live quietly one by another". No proviso was given on how to enforce these things. Again, these laws were preoccupied with enforcing, using fines, the 'civil' way of behaviour and gave little concern to either the administration of praying towns or most 'ordinary' crimes which were often treated better than those deemed in breach of 'civility'[257].

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253 Goddard & Bragdon, *Native Writings*, 272-336; esp.272, 317, 335

254 E. Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 25

255 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 23

256 [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 28

257 For this second list see Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 5-7

Unfortunately little information remains concerning the enforcement of these laws. People were certainly punished for transgressions such as fornication, wife beating or powwowing but how regular these punishments were, how consistent they were and how often people got away with it are all things probably lost to time. Certainly some behaviours, regardless of what the law said, remained common practices, such as alcohol abuse or 'idleness'. Although we cannot be certain it seems unlikely Eliot was able to eliminate from Natick lying or adultery even with those penalties. Polygyny, however, was one area which the missionaries did have success in rooting out. Another area where missionaries could claim success was in the Algonquian practice of the Sabbath. Both missionaries shared the widespread Puritan view that "… our whole religion fares according to our Sabbaths, that poor Sabbaths make poor Christians and that a strictness in our Sabbaths inspires vigour into all our other Duties"[258]. Both men were therefore zealous in promoting it, holding their meetings on it and making it regular subject of discussion. In Natick, breaking the Sabbath was enforced by strict laws of a ten shilling fines on those who worked, fished, gathered or engaged in any activity that was deemed unworthy of the day of rest[259].

Like praying, changing their sexual mores or the meaning of biblical stories, Algonquians across New England from the beginning of missionary contact expressed interest in this custom of resting one day a week[260]. Therefore, unsurprisingly, it became a topic for questions to Eliot in his post-meeting sessions. As always, great attention was paid by those asking about the nuances of the situation. One enquired "What should I pray for at night, and what at morning, and what on the Sabbath day?" thus showing awareness of the Sabbath being 'different'[261]. Another was more intricate "If one sleep on the Sabbath at meeting, and another awaketh him, and he be angry at it, and say, its because he is angry with him that he so doth. Is not this a sinne?" again showing an awareness of the gap between attitude and action and try where sin was in the gaps[262]. Ambiguous cases like these were not restricted to hypothesis, such events happened and allowed Eliot in engage in his pedagogical role. Such incidents became the talk of meetings. To take one example: one Sabbath night two men came to Waban's wigwam who had been hunting a racoon. They asked Waban to chop down a tree where the creature was hiding and he sent two servants to do this. At the next meeting a week later Waban was reproached for his actions[263]. So many questions were probably answered this way, by demonstrations of events.

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258 Mather, *The Life of the Renowned John Eliot*, 24-25

259 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 28

260 Examples: [Shepard?], *Day Breaking*, 32; Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 7; Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 9; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 47

261 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 25

262 Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 12

263 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 29-30

Already by 1651 Eliot was observing that they were in “constant care” of fulfilling their Sabbath duties and in a private letter of 1684 he wrote that “they do diligently observe and keep the Sabbath, in all places of their publick meetings… So that the sanctifying of the Sabbath is a great eminent part of their religion” albeit admitting that “some of the vain and carnal sort among them” were not so keen on maintaining it[264]. In confessions some Algonquians would relay their understanding of this new division of time, one said “now I beleeve that it is Gods Command, that we should labor six dayes, and keep the Sabbath on the Seventh day” while another recalled feeling like a great sinner for drinking so much one Sunday[265]. This sabbatarianism was not restricted solely to Natick, observers noted it everywhere there were praying Indians[266]. The Sabbath meeting and its congregation of peoples quickly became the key weekly event in the community, bringing together all those involved in praying Indian life. Even from the earliest stages of Christianization, the Sabbath was kept and followed with comparative strictness, and so became one area in which the missionaries were effectively successful, even if the praying Indians clearly needed little encouragement in keeping it.

4.6 Practice and Cultural Mixtures

The adoption of Sabbatarianism by Algonquians can be analysed in terms of the four factors listed in Chapter 1. The Sabbath was a missionary idea, sometimes imposed, which Algonquians took with enthusiasm and adopted for their own community purposes. Critically, it was in no way restricted by the environment (it wasn’t expensive to hold nor prohibited) nor did the flow of events conspire against it**.** Eliot and the Mayhews were satisfied with this adoption, seeing it in the achievements of their original aims. For Eliot in particular, this was an almost unique in its level of sweeping success. Conversion in the sense Eliot desired was always incomplete, he never came close to reducing everyone to civility. This was an impossible goal in practice and Eliot would regularly express disappointment over this failure, especially near the end of his life when circumstances turned even less favourable[267]. Even those who he proclaimed as getting close to his desired aims for converts were unlikely to representative. After all, in 1652, after six years of missionary activity Eliot could only get 15 Algonquians to confess their faith openly and those confessions were eventually not considered adequate. In later attempts that decade, while eventually more successful, numbers only shrank[268]. On Martha’s Vineyard too, doubts would continue to surface over how ‘Christian’ the new Christians were. In 1674, Thomas Mayhew Senior, writing to Daniel Gookin, noted that “in every

264 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 2; Eliot, *Letters to Boyle*, 184

265 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 27; Eliot, *Further Progress*, 5-6

266 Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 38; Ford, *Some Correspondence*, 87**;** E.Mayhew, *Appendix*, 2-3

267 Eliot, *A Late and Further Manifestation*, 23; Eliot, Letters to Boyle, passim

268 Eliot & Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, passim; Eliot, *Further Accompt*, passim; Eliot, *Further Progress*, passim

jurisdiction… [in Martha's Vineyard] the heads are worshippers. The whole holds forth the face of Christianity" before adding "how sincere, I know not"[269].

They were, as later historians were also to argue, judging these men by their own high metrics for 'converts' and so deeming them unsatisfactory or at least questionable. The failure of so many of his Eliot's followers to publicly confess did not necessarily mean they were just 'wheat and eel' Christians who were interested primarily in the resources and benefit they could obtain from the missionaries. Making that judgement would be to make the assumption without evidence that, as Michael McNally put it, "religions in general are systems of belief – coherent, self-referential wholes that offer orientation in the world because they offer singular, mutually exclusive frameworks of meaning" and that "Christianity's gains were unequivocally the losses of traditional religion" through a process of "acculturation"[270]. Rather the practices they took, they observed and were enforced to obey were made into their own. Their Sabbatarianism was not just something they imitated but something they were creative with. Their own meetings contained their own ceremonies which, while based on English practice, were not just a pale imitation.

For example, psalm signing was an integral part of Algonquian sermons and so they were sung at least once a meeting. First recorded at a sermon as early as 1648 in Martha's Vineyard and 1651 in Massachusetts Bay, this put part of the psalms sung in Massachusett to an English tune. It would involve the whole congregation both men and women and there were noted for their enthusiastic involvement in it across Southern New England, with Experience Mayhew noting that they would sing "while the days be of a sufficient length"[271]. Clearly this music, hitherto non-existent, was something which fitted into their culture unproblematically and distinguished their meeting practices from those of the English while still being 'Puritan'. Another example of this adoption and modification can be seen in burial customs. The first 'praying Indian' funeral that there is record of is that of a son of Hiacoomes' in 1650. The event was considered a moment of great importance by the early Congregationalist community on Martha's Vineyard and was taken by Thomas Mayhew Junior and Hiacoomes as a way demonstrating the proper English way of burial, another example of the importance of chance events in the formation of a culture. Mayhew gave a speech as the boy was buried in a coffin in a Puritan-style ceremony[272].

Archaeological evidence has demonstrated over time a shift from the tradition of burying in the foetal position to, like Hiacoomes' child, landed plots with coffins and gravestones – some even written in Massachusett. This was done by the Algonquians own accord as it is highly unlikely – and there is no evidence for it – that all Algonquian burials were supervised by the missionaries,

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269 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 65

270 McNally, *The Practice of Native American Christianity*, 846; 836-837

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Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 9; Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 27-28; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 43; Ford, *Some Correspondence*, 85; E.Mayhew, *Appendix*, 2-3

272 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 11; E.Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 7

Hiacoomes' son probably being an exception[273]. Also taboos on uttering the name(s) of the recently deceased and the practice of the wife of the departed covering herself in black paint disappeared[274]. Yet, again, this was not a wholesale copy of Anglo custom. Despite widespread prohibition against it and the opposition of missionaries, grave goods have been regularly found at burial sites of 'praying Indians', a tradition that continued well after conversion and even lasted as late as the nineteenth century. These included goods and English manufacture, including spoons, beads and bottles, as well as indigenously produced items showing they had not completely absorbed into the English economy[275].

Funerals and the Sabbath were adoptions and modifications which required few resources and investment, just ideas and action. Of the four factors, the two important ones were the meeting of missionary and Algonquian beliefs. There were no economic or environmental limitations on singing or burying, except maybe on the amount of grave goods one had. This was not the case for clothing. From the beginning, some took to wearing English clothes and this correlated to those wishing associate themselves with English culture. Eliot drew on the (superior) English clothes they wore to remind them of the wealth they had won by accepting Christianity. In Nonantum and other villages by 1649 they were already wearing special clothes for Sabbath meetings[276]. Yet to access clothes in Natick they were dependant on hand outs from England and what they produced themselves, which was likely not of high quality, despite their best efforts. They couldn't afford anything else. For that very reason some Algonquians would have to wear English clothing regardless of their particular desires. There was always limited choice to them and it is important not to interpret every move towards Anglicization as driven purely out of a desire to copy English culture.

In Natick their freedom to form their own cultural patterns regarding clothing was restricted by the environment they operated in. ACC, like all cultures, had to compromise with these limitations. It was in their attempts to adapt to economic life where the missionaries undoubtedly failed the most in their attempts to transform Algonquian culture. Yet in their questions to Eliot and in talking with Mayhew, they did express a desire to gain wealth, work hard and fit into a wider economy and accumulate English commodities. However, they would find this extremely difficult due to their circumstances and that they were unaccustomed to the work patterns and styles of life that were demanded of them. The unwillingness of the settlers to deal with them on anything approaching an equitable basis was another major barrier, as it led to skewed interactions which favoured the

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Silverman, *Indians, Missionaries and Religious Translation*, 165; For examples of Massachusett Language grav estones see Goddard & Bragdon, *Native Writings*, 366-367

274 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 13

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Kathleen J. Bragdon, "The Material Culture of the Christian Indians of New England, 1650-1775" in *Documen tary Archaeology in the New World*, ed. Mary C. Beaudry (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), 12 9-130

276 Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 15

accumulation of debt with all the consequences that went along with that. Social problems like alcohol abuse and widespread gambling for money, neither of which would have been conceivable in the days before the English settlement and the cash economy, added to this failure. Furthermore, the necessities of fitting into the cash economy in Southern New England required a strenuous life, based around intensive labour, especially for those who were indebted. Yet contact and allegiances with the missionaries helped in allowing them to afford items such as farm equipment, animals and weaponry as well as less-utilitarian items like the aforementioned grave goods[277].

The cash economy thus provided new opportunities for new cultural forms to develop while creating new restrictions and limitations. It set parameters on what could be done. Linked to these economic changes was a move towards a more class-based society among Algonquians who replaced their old informal reciprocal relationships with more formal ones protected by written English law; from sachems to rulers. This class system, which was connected to allegiances to the English and, of course, Puritanism, helped govern who got access to commodities as well as access to the new jobs. This does not seem to have been an explicit intention of Eliot and Mayhew, although they did appreciate having to deal with only a set number of people as representatives of Algonquian society. Furthermore, when the results of the policies they supported or imposed were clear they made no attempt to reverse them or even suggest that they were a problem. Indeed they were probably quite comfortable with it as they would have been familiar to them. Like with the consequences of cash, the emergence of new social structures associated with Christianity as well as ACC as a whole cannot be purely explained in terms of the intentions of a particular individual or individuals – not Eliot, nor Mayhew, nor Hiacoomes, nor anyone else. It was the creation of a particular set of circumstances at a particular moment in time albeit driven by certain people.

This can be demonstrated by the fact that many of the changes discussed in this chapter, in terms of economics, environment, social structure, Sabbath practices and the legal system, happened equally in both Natick and Martha's Vineyard. This was despite the contrasting styles of Eliot and Mayhew with Eliot trying to create a purified theocracy amongst the remaining scattered populations of Eastern Massachusetts Bay while Mayhew stood off more – he had to – and allowed his followers to copy, while he overlooked and supervised, what they saw interesting in English and Puritan social models. The effect, at least until 1675, was similar. How Puritan Natick was is disputed but it certainly not more Puritan than Martha's Vineyard was. Natick depended on the Company and Eliot to keep going, Martha's Vineyard was more independent and yet not too dissimilar results. For all the dreams of a Christian Commonwealth, Eliot's law was really a weak force and depended on the rulers he appointed to enforce it given his frequent absences. As the examples of the Sabbath, and polygyny show, attempts to change Algonquian behaviour were not without success, but this was only when Algonquians considered it in their best interest to do so, which was hardly equal for every piece of law.

All of this should not exclude recognition of the potential material benefits of conversion for everyone on the Algonquian social scale. The praying towns, in particular, were places where food and trade goods could be accessed more easily than elsewhere and for some on the mainland, the alternative would have been facing starvation or left unprotected from hostile neighbours like Mohawks. For this reason, one historian has compared Natick to a refugee camp where diverse

277 For weapons see Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 12

bands speaking different dialects came together under Eliot's aegis in search of much needed protection[278]. Later testimonies give credence to the view that fear was major motivation in conversion. Even Waban stated such in 1659 confessing that at the beginning of missions "sometime I thought if we did not pray, the English might kill us"[279]. Fear of losing one's land was another incentive as one testified "I… prayed, because many English knew me, that I might please them; and because I saw the English took much ground, and I thought if I prayed, the English would not take away my ground, for these causes I prayed"[280]. Pressure from families and the desire to maintain kin connections could also lead to conversion[281].

This only indicates, however, that this was one of many heterogeneous reasons for approaching Puritanism, rather than being the prime motivating reason. The subtle cultural changes discussed above would be difficult to explain were it the only reason. Furthermore and tellingly, there is very little record of apostasy or backsliding in either Natick or Martha's Vineyard in this period despite it being a very common theme in the missionary history of the New World. Eliot's references to backsliding and a return to powwowing are very infrequent. In the winter of 1650, before Natick was complete, he complained of some non-Praying Algonquian youth trying to 'seduce' members of his younger flock away from him and back to their traditional religious practices – with some success. In the same letter, he noted "to my grief" that some powwows have been active and some of his followers have returned to powwowing[282]. In a private letter of 1657 he refers to the recent apostasy of an unnamed sachem[283]. These are the only explicit references to backsliding occurring that Eliot wrote until the 1670s. There may well have been more than that, towns were not all that well supervised and much could have happened while he wasn't watching (as was certainly the case with alcohol consumption). Yet there is little indication as to what occurred in these records of 'backsliding' and so are difficult to interpret. It may have been an example more of cultural hybridity rather than an intentional turning away from acceptable practice.

After all, complaints of ignorance or lack of knowledge of their flock was the same criticism that he, and other New English pastors, had of their European flock but still considered them 'Christian'. While 'Praying Indians' kept on having an identity as 'Indians' there is no reference in any of their

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278 Grey, *New World Babel*, 62

279 Eliot, *Further Progress*, 31

280 Ibid, 58

281 Ibid, 10-11; 58

282 Whitfield, *Light Appearing*, 15

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F.J. Powicke, Some Unpubllished Correspondence of the Rev. Richard Baxter and the Rev. John Elio t "The Apostle to the Indians", 1652-1682, in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol.15, No.1 (19 31), 158

writings that they thought of themselves as non-Christians although 'tribal' and possibly band identities lost their importance[284]. Finally, the absence of non-Christian alternatives after 1646 is shown by the complete lack of revivalist movements calling people to return to their old ways, as compared to the Jesuits in New France where this was a regular occurrence[285]. Significantly the only rival religious movement to emerge in opposition to 'Red Puritanism' was a rival Christian sect. The Anabaptists of Nantucket made several important converts on Martha's Vineyard and the surrounding region at the end of the seventeenth century including that of a leading pastor. This force only lasted until confronted by John Mayhew, son of Thomas Junior, who preached and argued against it and it eventually disappeared. It had been a minor movement overall[286]. In a glowing if over-optimistic report of 1673 Eliot observed little sign of heterodoxy among them but noted that they were aware of what he termed their "darkness and ignorance" but not without some progress towards 'civility'. He concluded that thirty years of effort "have made a visible appearance of a divine work" and was not displeased with this outcome[287].

5.
King Philip's War and Conclusion

5.1 King Philip's War

From the 1650s to the mid-1670s the divine work which Eliot spoke so proudly of only continued to expand. In the praying towns and in Martha's Vineyard institutions such as schools and churches were set up and mushroomed apace. By 1673 there were six formal Indian churches across New England with which two on Martha's Vineyard, one on nearby Nantucket and two in Eliot's praying towns, all of which had been formed in the previous fourteen years[288]. This was in addition to fourteen praying towns in Massachusetts Bay housing approximately 1,100 people and several

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In many of the documents cited in *Native Writings* several are petitions or land deeds that refer to 'We Indi ans' and never to 'We Massachusett' or 'We Wampanoag' and this 'we' deliberately seems to have excluded English persons; see Goddard & Bragdon, *Native Writings*, passim

285 See Ronda, *An Indian Critique*, 80

286
Prince, *Some Account*, 304; Leibman, 'Introduction', 37; E.Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 42-44; 87-88 which is su rprisingly somewhat sympathetic to those who converted to Anabaptism

287
Eliot, "An Account of Indian Churches in New England in a Letter written A.D. 1673 by Rev. John Eliot of Rox bury" in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st Series, Vol. 10 (1809), 127

Christian settlements – at least nine - on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket[289]. A key driver in this, as expected and desired from the beginning by Eliot, was the involvement of Algonquians themselves in their own missionary activity[290]. Starting as early as 1651, Algonquian missionaries went to their brethren and to other bands expanding what they were being taught without Eliot or Mayhew even in attendance. Gradually 'Red Puritanism' spread across the rest of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and Central and Eastern Massachusetts with thirteen praying towns set up along with Natick. In these towns those Algonquians prominent in spreading the gospel and their relatives, especially those in Natick, were appointed to positions as teacher, church elder, ruler, town councilor and/or magistrate thus making Natick the focal point of Massachusetts Bay Algonquian Christianity as well as giving incentives to take part in missionizing.

This migration of people into new towns was not, of course, into virgin territory. It was part of the incremental creep of the frontier westwards into territory where Algonquians were still numerous and had maintained more of their pre-contact culture. Between 1670 and 1674 seven new praying towns were created in 'Nipmuck county' whose inhabitants were seeking protection from rival Indians westwards and do not seem to have been much interested in or had knowledge of Christianity. While they were submitting to colonial authority, other Algonquian groups continued in hostility towards missionaries and Christianity. A leading figure in this was Metacomet, known to English as 'King Philip'. Philip was the most powerful of the regional sachems and his groups had contacts and allegiances across Southern New England including in the praying towns. Although he expressed interest in Christianity, asking for books and literacy lessons and even allowing Eliot's son to preach to his band, he remained aloof to the religion much to the chagrin of Eliot and Gookin, who identified in him unconverted a major obstacle in the further spread of Puritanism in the region[291].

However, by the early 1670s he had become hostile to missionaries and to Praying Indians, probably because he feared they would diminish his authority[292]. This correlated with an increase in records of backsliding and apostasy and reversion to traditional practices such as powwowing. Eliot once said during this time that he never experienced "such violent opposition by Satan" among his charges[293]. All this happening in an environment where the pressure on land had never been greater, the changes in the land had made reverting back to a semi-nomadic life extremely difficult while they were clearly disadvantaged as settled farmers and agricultural labourers but most problematically

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288 Eliot, *An Account of the Indian Churches A.D. 1673*, 124

289
Gookin, *Historical Collections*, p.55 for the Praying Towns although he counts families and assumes five peop le per family; For Martha's Vineyard a 1698 survey arrived at 938 persons but this was after the epidemic of 1690 and a generation later from this period where it certainly would have been higher see Grindal Hawley, "Account of an Indian Visitation A.D. 1698" in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st Series, Vol. 10 (1809), 131-132

290 Shepard, *Clear Sunshine*, 50; Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 10-12

291 Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 60; Lepore, *The Name of War*, 39

was the population boom further eastwards meaning an increase in migration from the colonists aiming to take more and more away from the Algonquians, who found it difficult if not impossible to resist. All these factors led to the social explosion of a war which broke out in the middle of 1675.

The direct *casus belli* lay in the discovery of the body of one Algonquian named John Sassamon in a lake in Plymouth colony in February that year. He was believed to have been murdered[294]. A month earlier, he had given a warning to the colony's governor that King Philip was forming alliances with other sachems to launch an attack against the English but he was ignored at the time. Sassamon was the intercultural Algonquian *par excellence*. From the effective start of his life he had been involved with Christianity and missionary activity; both his parents converted during the smallpox epidemic of 1633 (and probably died then), handing over their son to English parents who tutored him. From there he developed excellent linguistic skills, becoming one of the few bilinguals in the region. He served as an interpreter for the English during the Pequot war and became a language teacher and interpreter for Eliot in 1640s. Once Natick was built, he became a teacher and would also become the first native student to attend Harvard University's special Indian college (one of only five). He would later settle at the praying town of Namasket where he became a minister. Yet, for reasons obscure, in the 1660s he went westwards to work with then new Sachem, King Philip, as a scribe (the Sachem was, of course, illiterate). He may have worked on trying to convert Philip, which was probably Eliot's hope. Sassamon was an unusually integrated figure who moved easily between English and Algonquian 'worlds' with the requisite skills and knowledge to survive in each. This unique status and the various roles it allowed him to do[295].

His death sparked an immediate trial where three allies of King Philip faced a mixed raced jury over the supposed crime. They were convicted and executed partially based on the testimony of one Algonquian minister[296]. It was these three executions that sparked the first attacks on English and Christian settlements by the forces of King Philip in June. Quickly the violence engulfed the entirety of Southern New England and became genocidal in scope. Long suspicious of praying Indians, the

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292
He once told a Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island "Thay saied that such [praying Indians] wer in everi thing more mischivous, only disemblers, and then the English made them not subject to the r Kings, and by ther lying to rong their kings" which was hardly a unique sentiment amongst sache ms, see Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 148

293
F.J. Powicke, Some Unpubllished Correspondence of the Rev. Richard Baxter and the Rev. John Elio t "The Apostle to the Indians", 1652-1682, in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol.15, No.2 (19 31), 462

294
Never mind the question of who was responsible, It was unclear whether or not he was actually murdered: it's possible he slipped on the ice and fell into the pond in a way that made it look like strangulation or assault; see Lepore, *The Name of War*, 23-26

295 For all details on Sassamon's life see Lepore, *Dead Men Tell No Tales*, passim

settler population turned against them and launched attacks against praying towns. Similarly King Philip's army, which soon morphed into a large alliance of most still independent indigenous groupings in the region, distrusted Eliot's followers, attacked Christians and symbols of Christianity and coerced many Praying Indians into following his lead. During the conflict, which lasted for a year, most copies of *Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God* – the bible translated by Eliot into Massachusett and a prized praying Indian possession - were destroyed although it is not clear who destroyed them; it could have been either group.

All this interrupted plans of the authorities to use Praying Indians as soldiers against King Philip's forces. In frontier conflict against the Mohawks many Christian Algonquians were being armed by the colonial administrations to defend the frontier and both Indian and English settlement. However, much to the horror of the missionaries, many Praying Indians decided to abandon the English and willingly fight for King Philip out of fear of English settlers and the lack of security they were receiving in the towns[297]. That winter, in order to protect their population, the colonial government sent about 350 praying Indians to Deer Island, a small island just off Boston. There they were inadequately provided for, lacking food, fuel and clothing, large numbers died and was another incentive for those still on the mainland to go over and seek protection with King Philip[298]. Eventually the survivors were allowed to return and fought alongside the colonists, helping them win the war[299].

Meanwhile those in Martha's Vineyard, shielded from the worst on the mainland by the ocean, were called upon to fight alongside the armies of Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth Colonies. They served in a militia protecting the island with Thomas Mayhew Senior blocking any attempts from the English to try and disarm the population[300]. They were shown to be very faithful and loyal but saw little if any combat[301]. Outside of the islands the combat turned out to be highly destructive, at one point King Philip's forces had pushed back the settlers nearly all the way to the Coast. By the time it ended, in August 1676 with the death of King Philip, half of all pre-existing English settlements were in ruins as were all but 4 of the 14 pre-existing praying towns, with Natick among the survivors.

296
Lepore, *The Name of War*, 22-24 Nahauton (the minister) was for his pains accused of faking his t estimony as to be perceived as a better Christian in the eyes of the English

297 This is the summary for thesis in Salisbury, *Embracing Ambiguity*, esp. 247-251 & 257-258

298
Eliot, Letter to Robert Boyle, p.251 in *The Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Vol. 17 (1880), 251-252

299 Salisbury, *Embracing Ambiguity*, 251-252

300 M. Mayhew, *Brief Narrative*, 34-35

301 Prince, *Some Account*, 296

It was an extremely destructive conflict – the worst per capita in the history of what is now the United States of America[302]. This was especially true for the Algonquian population which declined rapidly with the survivors either fleeing westward far away from English influence or eastwards into the remaining settlements which were now more firmly controlled than ever before. There were still ten surviving Christian communities on Martha's Vineyard and more on the coast. Even many of those Algonquians who did survive – whether Christian or otherwise - and did not or were unable to flee were sold in slavery across New England, other American colonies and even perhaps ending up in Northern Africa despite protests by Eliot against enslavement[303]. Those mainland survivors that were still in the towns had to be further centralized, moved into the remaining towns and given resources such as clothing and food, which, as always, they were dependent on the charity of English men[304].

5.2 The Erosion of Native Society

Unfortunately for those in need of assistance the war saw a shift in the settler population of New England towards even greater intolerance of those Indians who remained. Colonial governments were no longer so interested in conciliatory relationships with indigenous inhabitants and popular interest in conversion declined which meant, in turn, that funds dried up. There was less of a mood in support of any form of cultural negotiation. In schooling, where the missions had significant success, the native language was abandoned in preference to English. The New England Company now deemed that even Eliot's own approach was too liberal and that translations had been a failure, citing the praying Indians who fought for King Philip as an example[305]. Ideas that praying Indian life could be self-supporting proved to be even more of a fantasy post-war than pre-war, thus leading to a decline in schools, churches, agriculture (as paying for equipment was expensive) and all the institutions of Christian life. Alcoholism and the practice of selling one's self into indenture, as well as outright slavery, increased. A government report of 1698 found that in Natick Christian knowledge had declined significantly, only eight years after Eliot's death, with then only ten communicants in the church as opposed to 30-40 before King Philip's war despite an increasing population (due to refugees)[306].

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302 Lepore, *The Name of War*, xi

303
Eliot, *Letters to Robert Boyle*, 183; Eliot's problem with slavery was more that it was an inappropri ate method, in his eyes, of saving native souls as opposed to anything wrong with slavery *per se*, s ee Lepore, *The Name of War*, 158-160

304
See Eliot, *Letter to Robert Boyle*, 178; Winship, *The New England Company of 1649 and John Eliot*, 173, 188

305
Winship, *New England Company of 1649 and John Eliot*, 185; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 184-186

Martha's Vineyard, on the other hand, was less affected by these trends, but they still occurred albeit more gradually. Protected from the worst of the war by its geographical position and the intermediary role of Thomas Mayhew Senior, it was unprepared for the epidemic of 1690 with contemporary chronicles listing more than 100 adults dead (at least 10%, but likely far more, of the population) of which approximately three quarters were "sober religious professors", that is among the devout on the island[307]. This was only though to accelerate a fall in population that, like elsewhere, had been marked since the beginning of contact. A 1698 survey noted only 936 native inhabitants on Martha's Vineyard, down from between 1,500 and 3,000 in 1640s[308]. While by the 1720s, in a process which had long been complete on the mainland, settlers finally outnumbered the remaining, about eight hundred natives[309]. This had the usual consequences of dispossession and powerlessness. In 1692 Martha's Vineyard was merged into Massachusetts Bay Colony, reducing the more tolerant power of the Mayhew clan over the island and handing the jurisdiction over the Vineyard Algonquians to Boston, remote, further away and significantly less friendly and less tolerant of their autonomy.

The communities that remained, however, were resolute and contained a good proportion (how many cannot be said with any accuracy) of significantly devout persons. Formal churches remained powerful centres in Algonquian community life– and conservative in their approach including maintaining the practice of confession well into the eighteenth century when it had become an archaism in the rest of New England[310]. The church would become the community centre and would put policies in place to attempt to stem the tide of land sales, as land was given over to the church and town government to be held in common and then distributed to its followers, as the sachems of old had done, thus giving every male a stake in the land. Policies like this helped maintain a modicum of freedom of action against debt collectors and speculators and helped contribute to the survival of communities in the long run[311]. Natick though was not one of the communities that survived. On the mainland the Algonquians had even greater difficulty of protecting themselves and their land. This was even before King Philip's war, when they were already drastically outnumbered and surrounded by hostile settlers. In Massachusetts Bay the locations for praying Indian settlement shrank and the remnants were more and more confined as the populations grew less homogenous, a mixture of Algonquians from different bands and tribal groupings.

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306 Hawley, *Account of an Indian Visitation A.D.-1698*, 134

307 M. Mayhew, *Brief Narrative*, 28

308 Hawley, *Account of an Indian Visitation A.D. 1698*, 131-132; Ronda, *Generations of Faith*, 370

309 E.Mayhew, *Appendix*, 1; Ronda, *Generations of Faith*, 370

310 See Ford, *Some Correspondence*, 86-87

311 See Silverman, *The Church in New England Community Life*, 283-284

By the 1680s the elderly Eliot was noting a decline in religious standards in the town, observing that it was difficult to pass the faith on to another generation[312]. This coupled with a reversion to traditional form of subsistence despite the difficulty of doing so. Economic conditions in that decade were extremely poor and they were no longer able to maintain the agricultural existence that Eliot had propagated in the town[313]. Later archaeological evidence indicates that even compared to other Algonquians in the region those in the Natick were impoverished and lacked all but the most basic possessions[314]. Seasonal labour on English farms and/or indenture were the only real economic alternatives. As Eliot approached death and became too infirm to travel to Natick regularly a dispute broke out in the town between supporters of the native preacher appointed by Eliot, Daniel Takawomhpait and those who preferred Daniel Gookin Junior (son of the other Daniel Gookin). Some, including Waban, supported Gookin for his supposed greater sophistication and 'civility'[315]. Despite, or possibly because of, the eminence in which the younger Gookin was held in the town he would eventually use his position to speculate on its land and sell Natick out even further[316]. Eventually at some point in the early eighteenth century there was no longer a church in the town.

All that is not to say that Christianity disappeared. There was no reversion to the 'old religion'; Eliot remained, even after his death, a much admired figured in the community[317]. In 1729 research discovered that inhabitants of the town still read and kept their bibles. They also wanted to maintain control over religious services which were being pressured by English migration into the town; the migrants wanting services in English and did not like sharing a platform with 'Indians'. However, educational standards and the maintenance of the sacraments were lax[318]. It also found that Massachusett was already well being replaced by English, something which would not be complete on Martha's Vineyard for another century[319]. The early eighteenth century also saw material culture become more 'Indian' as the few houses built reverted to wigwams and English clothes were no longer worn due to their poverty[320]. On the other hand, patriarchal households and land ownership

312 Eliot, *Letters to Robert Boyle*, 178

313 Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 36-38

314 Bragdon, *The Material Culture of the Christian Indians of New England, 1650-1775*, 129-130

315 See Ford, *Some Correspondence*, 74-76

316 Van Lonkhuyzen, *A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians*, 422

317 Ford, *Some Correspondence*, 74, 87

318 Van Lonkhuyzen, *A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians*, 426

319 Bragdon, *The Material Culture of the Christian Indians of New England, 1650-1775*, 130

320 Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 38

remained, in this case in private individual small holdings which were much easier for speculators and settlers to obtain[321]. When it came to cultural choices, economic circumstances were critical.

Another sign of continuity was that Natick remained a 'praying town' with a town council headed and elected by its Algonquian inhabitants. Each year it chose 'selectmen' to run the town, with 'jurymen' and 'constables' to police it and 'surveyors' who "oversee the highways here in Natick" staffed regularly, judging by surname, with people appearing to have descended from those converts particularly close to Eliot[322]. While outside of the shrinking town boundaries they were at the mercy of the Massachusett Bay authorities, within the town law and crime and punishment remained an indigenous prerogative. Laws were even passed to prevent the selling of timber to the English, possibly out of ecological concern for the increasing lack of trees[323]. It gradually became effectively impossible to maintain the quasi-nomadic lifestyle than they had returned to. In 1718, Massachusetts Bay even had to ban hunting for three years as stock was so low and soon it was difficult to find wood to build wigwams[324]. There was no option of whaling, which was the economic lifeline of Martha's Vineyard, as difficult and non-communitarian as it was.

All this was happened while, as already observed, population level shrivelled. A report by three leading English divines as early as 1705 noted the weakening of churches and religious congregations due to the population decline remarking that "the hand of God has very strangely wasted them" and that was only in reference to previous five or so years in which no major event (like an epidemic) is recorded to have occurred[325]. This coupled with a further expansion of English settlement following the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) which meant that Natick was no longer on the frontier, but deep within colonial territory. While this meant a reduction in raids from the ever-threatening Mohawks it also meant a surge in settlers heading westwards and taking over lands. Unwilling and uninterested in protecting them, Natick gradually became an English town as the indigenous population simply melted away. There were still 'praying Indian' church members as late as the 1750s but the usual effects, as well as the entry of Natick Algonquians into military service during wars in which they suffered large casualties, meant that these were now a minority. A census of 1765 found only 37 Algonquians left residing in Natick[326]. By the end of the eighteenth century it was no longer anything other than an unremarkable English town and what Eliot had built had dwindled away.

321
David R. Mandell, ""To Live More Like My Christian Neighbours": Natick Indians in the Eighteenth Century" i n *WMQ*, Third Series, Vol.46, No.4 (Oct, 1991), pp.552-553; Van Lonkhuyzen, *A Reappraisal of the Praying In dians*, 425-426

322 Goddard & Bragdon, *Native Writings*, 314-317, also passim

323 Ibid, 328-329

324 Van Lonkhuyzen, *A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians*, 423

325 Ford, *Some Correspondence*, 83-84

326 Mandell, *Natick Indians in the Eighteenth Century*, 563; 572-574

5.3 Conclusion

As the seventeenth century progressed what had been in New England a situation which required some form of negotiation between peoples had been transformed into one of total English dominance. As this happened the economics of what was left of Algonquian life shifted from independence to attempts at interdependence to outright dependence and subservience. Yet during this time there was little reversion back to older traditions and 'resistance' based on religious grounds was limited to those inside King Philip's circle. However, as has been observed, power relations in themselves are inadequate as explanations for ACC. Contingency, economic and environmental factors and the role of missionary power all had their roles but ACC was also the creation of Algonquian efforts. Algonquians were not as malleable as Eliot would have liked. On matters religious they were selective as to what to adopt and were not that easily manipulated. There is little evidence what they sung, preached, and believed was anything other than an expression of their volition – even if at times there advantages to professing Christianity that stretched far beyond the spiritual. After all both missionaries were aware of the need to sell Christianity to their would-be flocks, in addition to legal mechanisms they might use to push their religious beliefs. As the examples of the Sabbath, Sermons, and the Questions that were discussed in Chapter 3, the belief in the relationship between health and prayer and the Puritianization of praying Indian attitudes towards sexual activity show, whatever the logic of Algonquian cultural borrowing it cannot be solely explained through the mechanisms of power and social relations. Nor can they be explained fully through economic and environmental circumstances, important as they were. A simple materialist explanation is not sufficient, Algonquian conversion was at least partly rooted in beliefs.

What was the nature of these beliefs? The lack of first-hand documentation on this topic from the Algonquians means there is much obscure about their motivations; what can though be seen from their remaining voices is a people active in questioning, wanting to find out more about the world around them but also confused by the events that had to happened to them. Both Eliot and Mayhew had arrived to preach to peoples whose traditional worldview had failed them. On Martha's Vineyard the powwows were completely impotent against the ravages of plague. In Massachusetts Bay Eliot's charges were the survivors of war, pathogens and a twenty year onslaught which had destroyed their livelihoods, their social organization and many aspects of their culture. In these circumstances, would it be surprising if they decided to turn to something else? Especially something that attempted to explain what had gone wrong and how to resolve it. The performances of tears and repentance so common in the confessions may have been a literary device or an affection, but there are real reasons to think that the sentiment behind it was not false.

As the questions in Massachusetts Bay and the reaction to Mayhew's healing promises on Martha's Vineyard demonstrate, at least some Algonquians were receptive to new ideas, even if they were, as many of the theological points indeed were, difficult to grasp. Regardless of intellectual content, it was ritual which held a clear appeal to converts. The Sabbath was held, meetings were listened to and performed with multilingual psalm signing, hymns, and lectures that attempted to engage the audience. Prayer was especially important, so much so that praying was seen by other non-Christian Algonquians as the signal feature of Christianity; how one could identify a convert. It also may have been the case that Eliot and Mayhew's brand of religion appealed to prior beliefs and prior rituals, the case of the praying places discussed in Chapter one is suggestive while many Algonquian social

attitudes that Eliot and Mayhew encountered show a great deal of resemblance to Puritanism yet do not seem to have originated with it.

Given all this a tentative hypothesis can be suggested. The appeal of Puritanism to Algonquians lay in the need for an alternative way of thought and ritual that both made sense to them and met life needs that their preceding forms of thought and ritual had failed to do. This should not be read as Christianity serving some nebulous concept such as 'spiritual needs'; rather this appeal included both utilitarian as well as narrative aspects. It was utilitarian in that Puritanism could be seen as a way of adapting to the new mores of the world around them which was changing in a direction which favoured the originators of Puritanism, the English. By adopting their religion they could integrate themselves further into the English world with its economic and intellectual benefits. This utilitarianism was most pronounced in attitudes towards disease and health, whereby they were told that by adopting these new ideas they could save themselves from disease and were given demonstrations to 'prove' it.

The narrative appeal lay in the fact that Puritanism could explain the Algonquians place in the world and what had gone wrong in the past and how it could be resolved by certain simple patterns of behaviour and ritual. This series of beliefs were flexible enough so that when these issues clearly were not resolved, as happened when epidemics returned to Martha's Vineyard in 1690, this calamity could be blamed on a lack on a Christian zeal rather than a need to return to the ancients. As should be clear by now, how much people actually believed and understood is beside the point. What is important is that they adapted Puritan narratives and rituals to serve their own needs. In all probability, Christian beliefs were only strongly propagated by a small number of individuals such as Hiacoomes and Waban and then spread across Southern New England Algonquian society through networks of bands and kin, whose attachment to the faith might not been as strong as Hiacoomes and others.

What then of the other three factors as discussed in Chapter one? In addition to whatever appeal Puritanism had it came with power and laws. However, as explained in chapter four, these were proclaimed but it is uncertain how much they were observed. English officials were rarely looking over praying Indians in either Natick or Martha's Vineyard and could not see how well they complied. Rather governance on a daily basis remained in the hands of Algonquians, who were now to enforce English laws within an Anglicized justice system. How well they did this is not known but surviving anecdotes indicate that Algonquian officials were well capable of rooting their understandings of justice in biblical justifications and Puritan understandings. Yet in attempting to transform Algonquian society the missionaries ended up replicating the Algonquian pre-Christian social structure despite attempts to fit into biblical or common law frameworks. Men who were men of influence before conversion could continue to be afterwards, provided that they integrated themselves into Algonquian Christian society. This would not only allow them to keep their social standing but actually widen their powers giving them greater access to a legal and cultural system which gave them legal ownership over the land as well as the social roles which came with Christianization. Indeed both Eliot and Mayhew had to integrate themselves with Algonquian sachems in order to win over converts, despite or probably because of the fact that Eliot had identified the sachems as perhaps the major obstacle to conversion.

As well as being enforcers the missionaries had an educational and communicative role. Eliot especially liked to think of his role as pedagogical in nature. They communicated what Christianity was, how to practice it correctly, what its benefits were, and how to understand the world in a Christian manner. Anything about religion that Algonquians might wish to know, the only people they had regular recourse to were the missionaries, who were, as far as is presently known, their source of information about much of the outside world. The missionaries were a gateway to the English world for Algonquians and in this manner they were essential. They created meetings, held regular sermons, set up schools, translated the bible and other books and dealt with the authorities (in Eliot's case. On the Vineyard, Mayhew *was* the authorities). Despite regular complaints about a lack of cash, missionary funding was what allowed the creation of the institutions of Algonquian Christian culture. After 1676, outside support was extremely limited and those institutions mostly wilted away or were heavily restricted. Therefore it cannot simply be the case that all Mayhew and Eliot had to do was to enter the mission field, preach for a while and then leave the Algonquians to their own devices to 'Christianize'. Such a view would be as naïve as the contrary. For the missionaries, the missionary field was a constant effort. Eliot, after all, saw his efforts as only a beginning.

The role of the environment and the economy in the formation of ACC is more ambiguous. Following 1620 Algonquians across Southern New England faced new challenges in coping with disease and changes to the land. Indeed the initial spread of Christianity on Martha's Vineyard can be seen as response to these challenges. In Massachusetts Bay too, the decision to live in Natick and praying towns may well been encouraged by the access to land and security it provided. The perceived advantages of Christianity in dealing with the environment may not have been restricted to disease, as the stories of Algonquians linking prayer and rain as well as prayer and other magical happenings suggests. Environmental forces, by removing and limiting the prospect of the Algonquians' old form of economy, certainly was a nudging factor towards Algonquian integration into the wider English economy. However, what integration did occur did not happen on the terms set by the missionaries. Eliot's power, influence and resources were at the end of it all far too weak to make Natick into a self-sufficient and industrious centre as he had desired. Algonquians were to integrate into the English economy at the lowest rungs in the social hierarchy. They were an extremely vulnerable minority for whom little was expected other than exploitation, regardless of Eliot's Christian charity and his belief in the virtue of labour. This was true across Southern New England. Eliot might have protected his charges from the worst aspects of that exploitation, but he was incapable of doing much else.

What, however, the case of Martha's Vineyard shows is that economic integration was not necessary for conversion to take place. When Mayhew and Hiacoomes started to preach on the island, the English had been there for only a short period so it can be assumed that integration between the two peoples was minimal at that point, yet this did not prevent Hiacoomes and Mayhew from having sweeping successes. Meanwhile in Massachusetts Bay more than twenty years of settlement passed before Eliot began to preach and what Christianization had existed there before Eliot must have been very patchy, despite there being more connections including the economic between Algonquian and English world than on Martha's Vineyard. Indeed the desire to become economically like the English and to trade and have further contact may have been an incentive to conversion as some hints in the question and confessions suggest. Those who converted were encouraged to work laboriously and believed, according to the confessions, that working hard was part of the new religion. Yet it is

doubtful that this belief helped them materialistically in any way, it might just have been a way to accept and justify their low position in the social pecking order of New England.

What is also uncertain is the relationship between sociocultural practices and the economic situation. Practices which became widespread – prayer, the maintenance of the Sabbath, the move towards nuclear families – did not require much or anything in the expenditure on the resources. While, on the other hand, copying English patterns of clothing, desired by some, was made only possible in Natick due to the support of Eliot, when that disappeared, they reverted to traditional clothing. This type of cultural change was made impossible due to the difficulties in gaining access to the proper resources and materials (and not, it seems, because there was much reluctance to wear them). After 1675 the economic neglect of Natick has associations with the clear weakness of religious practice in the town. It would be wrong to see religious or cultural practice in Algonquian New England as a zone free from economic pressures. However, in the surviving sources there is not enough information to draw any real conclusions as to whether practices emerged from economic or environmental conditions; that is to say, whether changes in the environment brought about new ways of culture and religion. That might be a subject for further research, although with the evidence presented here it seems doubtful. Algonquian Christian culture is notable for its conservatism.

All this leads to whether contingency, the final factor under discussion, had any role in the formation of ACC. The role of the run of the events can be seen quite clearly when comparing Martha's Vineyard and the mainland. Martha's Vineyard, as an island, was buffeted somewhat from events in wider New England and so managed to avoid much confrontation during King Philip's War. This, and the absence of any real frontier, allowed the community on Martha's Vineyard to survive where Natick eventually faded away. For Natick to be built it needed resources and these were probably those raised by parliament for this purpose as well as the support Eliot and the Company received from benefactors in England. This assistance, which was due to an event which initially had nothing to do with native missionization, gave the otherwise parsimonious Massachusetts Bay government a reason to support missions thus allowing Eliot to enter centre stage. Social forces in England itself helped create a situation in which the New England missions were allowed to develop. The cross Atlantic aspect of the missions was not much dwelled upon in this work, but could be an avenue for further research.

As usual in the history of the relationship between American Indians and colonists, the issue of epidemic disease overshadows much of the discussion. Conversion was clearly correlated to the arrival of disease, not just on Martha's Vineyard but in prior instances too. Diseases struck regularly and frequently and it just so happened that one of these happened soon after colonists had started to settle on Martha's Vineyard (probably not a coincidence). Also for Mayhew's purposes it was not just lucky that disease struck at an opportune moment but also that he found Hiacoomes at the same time. A passionate believer, Hiacoomes could communicate with his people in a direct fashion, challenging the powwows in ways Mayhew could not have done. Mayhew was also extremely lucky that Hiacoomes remained uninfected, which so impressed his early followers. In Natick too, there is similarity in the case of Waban. Both men formed early relationships with a missionary, were among the first converts and gained in social status and prestige because of it. In both cases, they had an individual drive to spread Puritanism amongst their own peoples and were not unsuccessful in bringing that about themselves, independent of the missionaries.

Despite the important role of contingent factors, and with exceptions such as the praying places discussed in chapter one, it is difficult to trace any contingent origins to the practices which became ACC. The support from England was important but even in Eliot's letters back home it is difficult to trace any impact on his missionary policy – never mind Algonquian practice – from back at home. The differing genesis of both Vineyard and Massachusetts Bay missions does not seem to have led to wildly differing religious practices in both places, rather as argued earlier, they were very similar. King Philip's war was, of course, a highly significant event but does not seem to have altered actual religious beliefs or practices in any significant way. In Natick it led to the decline of population and of the church, but there is little evidence that what was still believed was any different from before. Nor on Martha's Vineyard did the post-war situation see any notable shifts. A tentative hypothesis could be made from this: that by 1676 Puritanism had become so Algonquianized that its English origins were irrelevant. Even when Englishmen engaged in genocidal acts against Algonquians, including praying ones, this did not in itself see a move away from Christianity, as in Praying Indian mind their faith was their own and not indelibly associated with their would-be killers.

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Between 1646 and 1675 a movement spread across the Algonquians of Southern New England, inspired and driven by English missionaries but not something which belonged to them alone. Regularly dismissed by historians, it has been the intention of this work to attempt to understand the New England missions and the ways in which Christianity appealed to Algonquians, in addition to *what sort* of Christianity. It is my hope that this work has gone some way towards answering these questions. It is also an attempt to write a historical analysis that focuses in on religious belief without trying to reduce religion to materialist, functionalist, economic determinist or even bio-evolutionary explanations. Rather it attempts to place religious beliefs and practices onto the terms in which they were understood by its practitioners in a particular time in a particular place, as much as the historical sources allow such an analysis. It also attempted to achieve this without recourse to vague qualifiers such as 'meaning' or 'spiritual' (or in case of more recent anthropology, 'resistance'). In all this it two makes assumptions. One is that beliefs, such as religious beliefs, are not reducible phenomena at least not reducible to the phenomena which is regularly focus of historical scholarship.

They are rooted in economic and social belief, yet also a creative force in those realms while also simultaneously separate. Beliefs should not be viewed solely through the prism of rational choice, costs and benefits, and interests while all of those things may be important, they are not everything. Even when they must be considered, there are cultural elements at play. It is an important point of this work that any cost-benefit analysis of religious beliefs and conversion must also take into account the prior beliefs of the agents in question, of what they believe to be plausible. For the Algonquians, faced with disease and marginalization, religion could be perceived as giving utilitarian advantages over disease and over weather. The facts that such beliefs are preposterous in the year 2015 (and we may ask preposterous to whom?) and thus outside the discourse of 'rationality' is irrelevant. Importantly though, this should not be mean that utilitarian calculus is all religious beliefs are and that there is no role for cognition and bias. This work, I believe, gives plenty of evidence to the contrary.

The second assumption of this work is that Algonquians were not victims of history and that missions were just something which ‘happened’ to them but rather were active players along. In this, it assumes that Algonquians made their decisions based on culture, judgement and reason, as it is for all human beings. This may seem to be obvious but it is point which various forms of scholarship from the racist to the primitivist have tended to neglect. Cultural differences were certainly very important in Southern New England in the Seventeenth Century, but so were the similarities. There was just little interest at the time in understanding them. Only Algonquians, in their questions to Eliot, ever really tried to comprehend the ‘Other’. For the missionaries, the ‘other’ was something that needed to be reformed and removed. Perhaps the Algonquians had no choice, they were forced by circumstances to deal with the English (while individual English men could easily ignore Algonquians) but this hesitant, confused attempt at understanding is worthy of study itself. There must have been countless scenes like it over the history of the conquest of North America, nearly all of which were never recorded and so are lost to us.

Finally, despite the erosion of Natick and the effective termination of Eliot’s legacy there is still one church today which dates itself back from the mission of Thomas Mayhew Junior. That is the Indian Baptist Church at Aquinnah on Martha’s Vineyard. It converted from Congregationalism to Baptism in the nineteenth century from the influence of African-Americans, who frequently intermarried with Vineyard Algonquians in that period. They were put into contact mostly by the whaling industry which became the economic lifeblood of the natives of the island; an industry which has its roots in this period following the emergence of indenture on the island. The story I have told is largely a grim one, and the centuries following the seventeenth do not relent in its basic grimness, even if outright extermination as in the Pequot War and King Philip’s War was no longer practised (in part, because it was unnecessary. It had already been mostly achieved). That it has survived is down at least in part to the willingness and drive to maintain a tradition and faith that had some resonance to the community. From its origins in English ethnocentrism, that is what Algonquian Christian Culture became.

Bibliography

Below is a list of all the works cited above or have been of sufficient inspiration to me as to warrant mention in the bibliography. This is not a list of all works consulted, for that would be much longer. A key is listed (below) to identify the abbreviations used in the bibliography. In listing the two entries under 'Powicke, F.J' the use of the terms 'part 1' and 'part 2' are my usage as there is no distinguishing title between the two publications.

Key:

AIQ – American Indian Quarterly

EAL – Early American Literature

HEQ – History of Education Quarterly

NEQ – New England Quarterly

RAIN – Royal Anthropological Institute

WMQ – William & Mary Quarterly

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