

Religion

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When both the New East India Company (EIC) and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge received their charters in 1698, the first steps were made to regulate and organise the religious lives of all people, English, European and non-European within its expanding corporate jurisdictions, ending an era of company autonomy over the religious organisation overseas. These provisions strictly outlined the company's relationship with the established church, its responsibility to provide ministers, and its obligation to organize evangelism, thereby entrenching the direction that religion was to take under the new company in India and in English territories across the globe.¹ The actions taken in this charter highlighted the growing awareness among political and religious leaders in England of religion's role in corporate overseas expansion yet the companies themselves had been fully aware of religions importance for much of the seventeenth century. Through varying models of religious control, English overseas companies established governmental, political and social identities that helped their employees navigate the pressures of life in distant lands. Over the long sixteenth century control of religion alongside governance, networks, print culture and migration was crucial in establishing a distinctively corporate sociology for global interaction. If we are to understand English overseas expansion and the foundations of empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we need to ask what was the role of religion in corporate sociology and what was the relationship between religion and the formation of corporate control abroad.

Throughout the early modern era, corporations provided the main institutional framework to organise and police the commercial, political and religious lives of their members. Unlike the specificity of the 1698 charter, English company charters for much of the seventeenth century gave general religious and social obligations (both domestically and abroad) to advance English Protestantism abroad. Extending Protestantism into religiously cosmopolitan and diverse environments led to attempts to police the religious lives and

¹ *A Collection of Charters and Statutes Relating to the East India Company* (London, 1817), xv–xvi.

behaviour of the companies' English personnel. By policing the behaviour of their English employees abroad the company's leaders hoped to secure their various religious, political and commercial aims. Religion helped to define these processes of spiritual, commercial, diplomatic and political negotiations with internal and external parties. The commercial and religious aims of the company became entwined as the companies' flexible governments developed various forms of religious control shaped by local circumstances and global experiences.

This chapter investigates how England's overseas companies controlled religion abroad to regulate the behaviour of people within their jurisdiction and ensure the continued success English corporate expansion. Religion was a means for companies to regulate the behaviour and religious practice of their employees and populations overseas. The various ways in which companies controlled religion to manage the sending of ministers, writing of laws, evangelism and the administering of churches helped to form the character and identity of corporate religious life both in England and abroad. By assessing the development of corporations through the lens of religious governance, we can better understand the practical effects of corporation's juridical agility and how religion helped to reinforce overseas trading corporations jurisdictionally evasiveness allowing them to flexibly negotiate a position as autonomous extensions of English government abroad. Secondly understanding how English overseas corporations developed distinct ways of controlling the religious behaviour of the English settlers and the European and non-European peoples who came under their jurisdiction, including Native Americans, Muslims, Hindus, Catholics, Armenians and Jews highlights the global interactions that form corporate sociology. Furthermore, an exploration of religion illustrates how the membership of English overseas corporations was porous, responding to influence of European and non-European peoples and faiths. Through understanding the multiple ways English companies engaged with religion to control interactions, we can better appreciate how corporations regulated behaviour through religion. Such an approach highlights how corporations were at the same time distinct, as well as integrative, connecting globally English corporate polities across the world.

Corporate structures both provided the legal space and protection to establish diverse but connected forms of autonomous English governmental authority across the globe. An assessment of religion in England's overseas companies allows further analysis into how overseas companies developed into corporate political bodies that established and advanced their own sovereignty. Religion and its control became a mechanism through which corporate structures were directed and governed English polities overseas we can not

only see how companies were in “their very organization a government over its own employees and corporators” but also how its members, formed the identity of these polities.² Therefore, expanding our understanding into how early modern English people regulated the political and religious behaviour of its employees, corporators and how these communities were governed.³ Furthermore, through an assessment of how religion regulated interaction between communities under company control we are better able to recognise the role of numerous faiths in the development of English authority abroad. An understanding of the role of religion in companies also helps to define the political, religious and social dialogue between religious communities and leaders that English companies encountered. It highlights what Karen Kupperman has described as attempts by English and Indigenous peoples “sought to incorporate ... into their own system” one another.⁴ However, investigations still need to go further to identify the “corporate role” in the incorporation and exclusion of people from English company governance in the seventeenth century. By doing so we can clearly identify the “delicate balance of strict hierarchy and consultative government” in companies, but also how various religious groups informed and shaped corporate polities such as consultative government.⁵ Explaining the corporate regulation of cross-cultural dialogues that incorporated both English, European and non-European people into adapted forms of English governance in Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indian oceans and how this process was shaped by religion and religious interactions.⁶

Moreover, an understanding how corporations controlled religion allows us to better examine the role of individuals in these corporate frameworks who were established and filter ideas back into England affecting domestic religious and political debate. Illustrating how England's companies became centres for political and social experimentation that provided members with a structural connection to England, which alongside commercial goods, allowed information and ideas to be exchanged across the globe. Although the literature on exchange in the east has been company focused it has emphasised academic

2 Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6.

3 Edward Cavanagh, “A Company with Sovereignty and Subjects of Its Own? The Case of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670–1763,” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, Vol. 61, No.1 (2011), 25–50.

4 Karen, Kupperman, *Indians & English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 1.

5 Stern, *Company-state*, 11.

6 Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indian, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

and scientific knowledge rather than political debate in England. Furthermore, Atlantic Historians such as Carla Gardina Pestana, Robert Bliss and Jenny Hale Pulsipher have highlighted the influence political experimentation in America on political debate in England. However, both strands of scholarship have been noticeably un-corporate in their focus.⁷ By understanding the models of religious control that companies adopted across the globe a clearer connection can be drawn into the role of governmental expansion and experimentation abroad in influencing religious and political debates in England. This can be achieved by analysing the role of individual agents and members of companies, such as chaplains who became influential figures exchanging ideas of religious control between India, America, the Ottoman Empire and England.⁸

Early modern England, from local to national level, was made up of many corporations: town and city, livery and trading companies, the national church, parliament and even the crown, were all formed within the language of corporations in which religion had a long and influential history. Evolving out of the monastic corporations of the medieval period, religion had long been an element of corporate life in the great overseas companies. Unlike their monastic forefathers for whom religion was the driving force of their corporate existence, the overseas companies of the Stuart age, considered religious matters an important but ancillary responsibility to their commercial aims. The church in the medieval period consisted “at least in part of a network of corporate entities”, of diocese monasteries and cathedral chapters.⁹ All of which were self-defined and governed as corporations, through their members’ consent

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- 7 For companies in the east and knowledge exchange see Haig Smith, “Risky Business: The Seventeenth Century English Company Chaplain and Policing Interaction and Knowledge Exchange”, *Journal of Church and State* (2017); Simon Mills, “The Chaplains to the English Levant Company: Exploration and Biblical Scholarship in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century England”, in Judith Becker and Bettina Braun eds, *Die Begegnung mit Fremden und das Geschichtsbewusstsein*, (Gottingen, 2012), 243–266; “The English Chaplains at Aleppo: Exploration and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, 1620–1760”, *Bulletin of the Council of British Research on the Levant*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2011), 13–20; G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007); For political influence of western expansion see Pulsipher, Subjects; Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640–1661* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Robert Bliss, *Revolution and Empire: English Politics and the American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).
- 8 Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Exploration, 1560–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Smith, “Risky Business” (2017).
- 9 Charles Reid, “Rights in Thirteenth-Century Canon Law: A Historical Investigation” (unpublished PhD diss., Cornell University, 1995), 6.

and the “web of individual rights” that were granted through a “corporate existence.”¹⁰ The pre-reformation “web” of corporate rights, described by Charles Reid and Bruce P. Frohnen, provided the English church with layers of security from the overreaching power of the Vatican. Furthermore, the Magna Carta in theory (although this was often tested) secured the independence of the pre-reformation English church to appoint its own officers away from crown interference, which stated that the church “shall be free, and have her whole rights, and her liberties inviolable.”¹¹ Obtaining individual corporate rights, medieval ecclesiastical corporations developed their own legal characters that made them more than just the sum of their members. They developed corporate personalities, which they held in perpetuity, possessing their own legal rights, such as corporate seals and a common chest, which was later a characteristic of England’s seventeenth century overseas companies.

The rights and roles of members of medieval Catholic ecclesiastical corporations were similarly protected and defined by their corporate involvement. Members could be involved in the election of church leaders and officials, the most iconic moments involving this corporate right included election of the Pope by the College of Cardinals.¹² Other members had a series of rights that ultimately depended on their position within the corporate structure. However, these rights did not look too dissimilar from those of Mayors, or Governors in the urban and trading corporations of the seventeenth century.¹³ Corporations were a civic tool unifying groups of people into one commonwealth or society and, thereby, policing their behaviour, both religious and secular, in a manner befitting that of a commonwealth. Oliver Cromwell’s lawmaker, William Sheppard, argued the importance of corporations as numerous “Body Politic” in which men were “fram’d” together.¹⁴ In doing so, Sheppard like many of his contemporaries believed that good government was ensured as the corporations acted to police the religious, political, commercial and social behaviour of its members. Described as “the best of Polities” early moderns believed that the behaviour of the individual and the communities that made up the corporation would be governed in such a manner that would not damage

10 Bruce P. Frohnen, “Individual and Group Rights: Self-Government and Claims of Right in Historical Practice”, in Bruce P. Frohnen and Kenneth L. Grasso, *Rethinking Rights: Historical, Political, and Philosophical Perspectives* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 2009), 111.

11 Magna Carta (1215).

12 Reid, *Rights in Thirteenth-Century Canon Law*, 395.

13 Frohnen, “Individual and Group Rights,” 112–15.

14 William Sheppard, *Of Corporations* (London: 1659), 1.

the corporation, and thereby the nation.¹⁵ Phil Withington and others have pointed out the proliferation of corporations in the early modern period, highlighting that England was an “incorporation of local communities into a national society and state.”¹⁶ The reason for this was that corporations, whether commercial, urban, or religious, were established to organise and ensure that the behaviour of its members was not damaging or detrimental to the mission of the whole body politic.¹⁷ Building upon Emily Erikson’s work on how networks help to understand the mediation of behavioural patterns, religious governance can be seen as a “micro-level” attempt to police behaviour.¹⁸ Through Religious governance we can then see the development of the “macro-level” social, political and corporate organisation abroad. Through this lens we can see how corporations were organisations that engaged, established and finally policed the behaviour of its members.

In the same way that the seventeenth century jurists Edward Coke had highlighted shared origins between corporations and “*Collegium* or *Universitas*”, there was a similar perception towards church congregations, who were “Distinct Corporations or Churches of *Christ*”.¹⁹ For example the Governor of Madras, Streynsham Master, noticed similarities between the two merging Coke’s definition with that of a church congregation describing the company’s community. Master’s in a complaint to the East India Company (EIC) concerning the 1668 rules and orders, believed that the company’s leaders had not done enough to establish control and good government over the English community in India. For this, the Factory according to him needed to be “more like

15 Sheppard, *Of Corporations* (London: 1659), 1–3.

16 Phil Withington, *Society in Early Modern England: The Vernacular Origins of Some Powerful Ideas* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 4; “Public Discourse, Corporate Citizenship and State Formation in Early Modern England” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 4 (2007), 1016–38; *Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), especially chapter 2; For a insight into the position of urban and town corporations in early modern English state formation, in particular both secular and religious patronage in town corporations see Catherine Patterson, *Urban Patronage in Early Modern England: Corporate Boroughs, the Landed Elite, and the Crown, 1580–1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

17 To understand more about the role of corporations in policing the behaviour of individuals and networks that formed them see Emily Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company, 1600–1757* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 22.

18 Erikson, *Between Monopoly*, chapter 1.

19 Edward Coke, *An Abridgement of the Lord Coke’s commentary on Littleton*, (London, 1651), sect. 412, 413 L. F., *A speedy remedie against spirituall incontinencie Shewing it to be sinfull in any, to heare, a flase ministrie. With a briefe description of a true Church of Christ* (London, 1641); Stern, *Company-State*, 6.

unto the College, Monasteries or a house of Religion.”²⁰ Through the shared characteristics of collectivism and fellowship, the congregation and company, during the seventeenth century, existed within the language of corporations. By “covenanting” merchants were seen as establishing “Corporationall” bodies whose members congregated together much like a church covenant. Whether the merchants of the EIC who had “covenanted” together in a joint-stock company or Presbyterians and Anglicans whose congregations had “Covenanted to be a Church Body”, both formed social entities that were seen as companies of people.²¹ Furthermore, in broad terms, overseas companies were made up of members of congregations and, as such, both the church and overseas companies were a “Company of Christians” who, as corporate bodies, shared in the “Joint-Stock of religion” in which “all bear a great adventure” both financial and spiritual.²² As communal organisations corporations acted on behalf of their membership or congregation, providing them with the structural framework “for continuous and systematic public activity” in order to achieve their goals.²³

The extension of English authority across the globe through the seventeenth century was fuelled by the involvement of English overseas companies. Joint stock and regulated corporations advanced English commercial and colonial endeavours abroad, governing and structuring these ventures. Overseas companies were used to advance English commercial and territorial desires from eastern Canada to Japan. However, their connected place in the development of English overseas expansion has often been overlooked in studies that focus on colonial ventures in the Atlantic rather than the entangled world of corporates overseas expansion in the seventeenth-century.²⁴ Furthermore, the distinction between colonial and commercial enterprises has been misleading,

20 Unsent letter by Strenysham Master, BL IOR. Eur Mss E/210.

21 BL IOR. Eur Mss E/210.

22 BL IOR. Eur Mss E/210; Samuel Kem, *An olive branch found after a storme in the northern seas. And presented to his Majesty in a sermon at the court in New-Castle. By Samuel Kem, a little before his Majesties going to Holmbey* (London, 1647), 11

23 Phil Withington, “Public Discourse”, 1017.

24 For Atlantic history, see David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick eds, *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas, *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Allan Macinnes and Arthur Williamson eds, *Shaping the Stuart World, 1603–1714: The Atlantic Connection* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Pestana, *English Atlantic*; Bliss, *Revolution and Empire: English Politics and the American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*. For the limitations of Atlantic history see Peter A. Coclanis, Alison Games, Paul W. Mapp, and Philip J. Stern, “Forum: Beyond The Atlantic” *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 63, No. 4, (2006), 673–776.

as in both cases the organisational framework of the corporation was used to structure and legally authorise the actions across the globe.

Global corporations were connected, both structurally and through their commercial activities by religious control. English overseas companies had shared structural origins in their charters, which developed in relation to the use of religious governance. However, this did not mean that there were no dissimilarities amongst the many companies and corporations, especially in America, which one nineteenth-century commentator described as needing “the talents of an Alfred” or the “arm of the Norman tyrant” to unite them.²⁵ Despite differences, these overseas corporate enterprises were connected by their shared structural origins. There have been some attempts to seek to address questions surrounding the connections in English global expansion in this period. For the most part the literature has been limited in its discussion of its corporate foundations.²⁶ Amongst the limited discussion Phil Stern has suggested that these connections were established in the structural inception of companies, both Eastern and Western, highlighting that their charters ensured that they were formed out “of the same ilk.”²⁷ Both in the East and the West, companies such as the Massachusetts Bay Company (MBC), Virginia Company (VC), Hudson Bay Company and EIC, shared the same legal origins through their corporate charters to govern over their members, trade, towns and inhabitants.²⁸ However, through their corporate framework these companies shared more than just a structural similarity as each company developed forms of religious control as a means to regulate its governmental identity and the religious behaviour of their populations abroad. The VC and EIC called upon “classical rhetoric”, ideas of civic humanism and religious support to establish polities and encourage domestic backing for their temporal and spiritual missions.²⁹

25 St. George Tucker, *Blackstone's Commentaries: With Notes of Reference, to the Constitutions and Laws, of the Federal Government of the United States; and of the Commonwealth of Virginia* (Philadelphia, 1803), 1: 405.

26 Huw Bowen, Elizabeth Mancke and John G. Reid eds, *Britain's Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, c. 1550–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Games, *Web of Empire*; Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

27 Philip Stern, “British Asia and British Atlantic: Comparison and Connections,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol.63, No. 4 (2006), 700.

28 Stern, “British Asia and British Atlantic,” 703.

29 Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonisation, 1500–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 58–62; “‘Everyman, that prints, adventures’: the rhetoric of the Virginia company sermons” in Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough, *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History*

Companies were linked by their use of religious governance, highlighting how their differences not only divided them, but also united them.

The confused nature of English Protestantism spawned a variety of opinions and forms of domestic religious authority in England which, when placed abroad by overseas companies, mingled into complex governmental arrangements. Just as English corporate entities abroad were formed in religiously pluralistic environments, the early Stuart church in England was spawned from dispute and discussion in an “arena of lay activism and, at least potentially heterodox, doctrinal debate.”³⁰ Across England, varying Protestant communities defined in differing ways how religion should be governed. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, religious governance in England began to undergo radical changes as moderate Protestants sought further reform in the church alongside the political and religious life of England as a whole.³¹ Debates on civil and religious government had been conducted since the mid to late sixteenth century, with various factions in the church forming around theological theory, formation, and leadership. As Alison Games has commented, the overseas provided an arena in which religious governance could be conducted through “heterogeneity, dispute, [and] experimentation.”³² It was

1600–1750 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Stern, *British Asia and British Atlantic*, 700–01, 704–705.

30 Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: "Orthodoxy", "Heterodoxy" and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 5.

31 For the broad spectrum of Protestantism in seventeenth century England see also Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier, *The Anti-Christ's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake ed., *Religious Politics in Post-Reform England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2006), particularly Diarmaid MacCulloch, “The Latitude of the Church of England” 41–59 and Paul Seaver, “Puritan Preachers and their Patrons” 128–42; Leo F. Solt's work offers a more traditional approach to church history, but nevertheless includes a broad definition of the varying Protestant, Puritan and Catholic groups in England, arguing that to view these groups as just homogenous blocks “obscures the rich religious diversity” of the Elizabethan and Stuart ages: *Church and State in Early Modern England, 1509–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 83, 82–87; For a discussion of different strands of Puritanism and debate and discussion see Randall J. Pederson, *Unity in Diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan reformation, 1603–1689* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Carla Gardina Pestana offers a distinctly un-corporate account of the effect of Protestant diversity in England, alongside European, African and Native American religious diversity on the development of the “multiplicity of religious faiths and practices that eventually characterized life at the margins”, in *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

32 Games, *Web of Empire*, 253.

in the corporate world outside of England that many of the domestic debates were put into action. Overseas companies became the structural frameworks, which implemented political, academic and social debates surrounding religion overseas, and connected them back into England.

Between 1600 and 1750 corporate ideas about religious control overseas had their foundations in the domestic debates on the relationship between the church and the English state. Recent discussion concerning the dynamic between English expansion overseas and the debates surrounding the monarchy, church and state, the episcopacy, sacraments and religious liberty, have often been centred in the Atlantic world. Described by Michael Winship as an “umbilical connection”, the focus in much of the literature has been on the manner in which English peoples on a broad spectrum of Protestantism were able to act upon religious debates in England through expansion into the Atlantic.³³ Influenced by these debates, English communities formed religious polities and commonwealths that developed ideas of “godly republicanism” and go on to influence the religious and political conflicts in England in the middle of the century, whilst others would eventually, through subtle differences, adapt the established church for their own purposes.³⁴ However, notably lost in the discussions on religious debate in the Atlantic world is the influence of the corporate structure that was foundational to the establishment of many of these religious polities.

Furthermore, the absence of any in-depth discussion of the corporate personality of these Atlantic religious polities has led to a disconnection between the role of religion in the formation of English communities in the east and west. Subsequently the influence religious life amongst non-Christian peoples has been overlooked, especially concerning the significant impact they had on ideas of governing and controlling religion in these English communities overseas. Sanjay Subrahmanyam highlighted how ideas and mental constructs

33 For role of religious debates in the formation of American political government see Michael P. Winship, *Godly Republicanism: Puritans, Pilgrims, and a City on a Hill* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 46; *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636–1641* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); “Godly Republicanism and the Origins of the Massachusetts Polity”, *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (2006), pp. 427–62; J.S. Maloy, *The Colonial American Origins of Modern Democratic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

34 For Atlantic imperial activities and links to radicalism see John Donoghue, *Fire Under the Ashes: An Atlantic History of the English Revolution* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013); Pestana, *English Atlantic*; Bliss, *Revolution and Empire*; For discussion on the evolution of the established church in Virginia see James B. Bell, *Empire, Religion and Revolution in Early Virginia, 1607–1786* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2013).

“flowed across political boundaries” connecting English overseas expansion in geographies across the globe.³⁵ Similarly the development of political models of government connected English corporate expansion abroad. By understanding the connected development of companies and how religious governance regulated the behaviour of communities and individuals within them historians are able to avoid what Simon Potter and Johnathan Saha have described as “the simplification encouraged by the planetary scale analysis that absorbs Global historians.”³⁶ A connected history of English governmental expansion through corporations provides the space to recognise the agency of communities and individuals.³⁷ Moreover, by interpreting the role and place of corporations in how people in the past “understood (and sought to influence) patterns of long distance interaction” we can see how companies were integral to the development of experimental ideas in government and how they connected distant geographies in the seventeenth-century.³⁸ By investigating religious governance in England’s overseas companies’ we are better able to develop our understanding of expansion English authority abroad as connected enterprise across the east and west.

This does not mean that England’s companies trading to the east, in particular the Levant Company (LC) have not attracted interest for their involvement in English religious discussion and debate, both at home and abroad.³⁹ Although the communities of English people who travelled East under the companies would never number those who settled in the Americas, they, like their corporate brethren in the Atlantic world, transported across the Mediterranean and Indian oceans political and religious debates that “mirrored” those in England.⁴⁰ The diverse but small Protestant communities that ventured east would take with them the religious conflicts surrounding church service and sacraments, refusing at times to preach from the Book of Common Prayer “in

35 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1997), 748.

36 Simon Potter and Johnathan Saha, “Global History, Imperial History and Connected Histories of Empire,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2015).

37 Michael Adas, “Comparative History and the Challenge of the Grand Narrative,” in Douglas Northrup, ed., *A Companion to World History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell), 229–243, 238.

38 Potter and Saha, “Global History”.

39 Natasha Glaisyer, *The Culture of Commerce in England, 1660–1720* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2006); Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*; Gerald M. Maclean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2004).

40 Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire*, 5.

or contempt of the publick service of God.”⁴¹ Leaders in both the EIC and LC lamented the variation of the Protestant community abroad, complaining that just as in England, the divisions between Protestants created discord in the lives of the English people who lived in factories and territories.

Officials also protested that the divergent Protestant theologies that were represented amongst the companies’ personnel, especially their religious officers, placed in danger any opportunity of evangelism in the religiously cosmopolitan environments in which they operated.⁴² Yet, conflict and conversion was largely confined to internal Protestant issues, which was fuelled more often than not, by denominational diversity rather than the varied religious geographies that they entered. Moreover, the diverse religious environments entered by company personnel also provided intellectual links between faiths that would encourage religious debate in England. Companies such as the LC and EIC were crucial in establishing networks between religious leaders, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church. Furthermore, many individuals who travelled abroad used their positions and experiences to establish links that would put the companies at the centre of a flourishing exchange of religious knowledge. Chaplains became influential figures in developing an exchange of knowledge through their experiences, writing in pamphlets, tracts and books about the religious communities and forms of religious governments they encountered.⁴³ Not only did these works inform readers back in England of religious governance abroad, but they did so by constructing “a new global geography of empire” at the heart of which were merging and evolving forms of religious governance.⁴⁴

41 Forster, *English Factories*, XIII: 284.

42 See chapters 3 and 5; Streynsham Masters to Samuel Masters, 9 December, 1678, in Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio, Lawrence M. Principe eds, *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle, 1636–1691 (BC)* 6 vols, (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2004) VI: 446; The Earl of Winchilsea to the Earl of Southampton, August 13, 1664, *Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch*, Vol. I, (*Finch Mss.*), (London: 1913), 326; Stern, *Company-State*, 110–11.

43 For works relating to the religious knowledge exchange see Henry Lord, *A display of two forraigne sects in the East Indies vizt: the sect of the Banians the ancient natiues of India and the sect of the Persees the ancient inhabitants of Persia: together with the religion and manners of each sect collected into two bookes by Henry Lord sometimes resident in East India and preacher to the Hoble Company of Merchants trading thether* (London, 1630); William Bidulph, *The trauels of certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bythinia, Thracia, and the Blacke Sea And into Syria, Cilicia, Psidia, Mesopotamia, Damascus, Canaan, Galile, Samria, Iudea, Palestina, Ierusalem, Iericho, and to the Red Sea: and to sundry other places. Begunne in the yeare iubile 1600* (London, 1609); For the theories of knowledge exchange and the establishment of political power England seventeenth century companies see Ogborn, *Indian Ink*.

44 Ogborn, *Indian Ink*, 22.

Chaplains of the LC and EIC such as Henry Lord, Edward Terry, Edward Pococke and Henry Maundrell became influential through their writings, whilst corporate chaplains into the eighteenth century such as Samuel Lisle and John Evans chaplains in the LC and EIC respectively became bishops in the Anglican church. An investigation into the complex diversity of English Protestantism, as well as the religious environments these companies operated in, allows us to better understand the various forms of religious and political ideas that shaped debates, both in England and abroad.

Several historians have examined the role of religious evangelism in the expansion of English authority in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but very little attention has been given to its role in the foundation of English government abroad, in the seventeenth century.⁴⁵ For example, Penelope Carson's work on religion in the EIC investigates how the company "dealt with religious issues from its early mercantile beginnings to the bloody end of its rule in 1858."⁴⁶ However, apart from a brief discussion on the last two years of the 1690s, the seventeenth century is excluded from her discussion, and the vast majority of her of her work on the company in eighteenth century is on the second half of the century following Plassey. Similarly Rowan Strong, in his work on the character of imperialism and its association to Anglicanism, argues that a conscious concern for empire emerged in the eighteenth century with the formation of evangelical societies.⁴⁷ Although the work of Wilson, Strong, and many others, has provided "concrete ingredients" for the evolution of imperialism, the focus of much of the historiography on the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has meant that the empire's long seventeenth-century foundations have often been ignored.

45 For work on evangelism and the expansion of English governmental authority overseas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see Penelope Carson, *The East India Company and Religion, 1698–1858* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2012); David Hempton, *The Church and the Long Eighteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Norman Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Patricia Grimshaw and Andrew May, ed., *Missionaries, Indigenous People and Cultural Exchange* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010); Laura M. Steven, *The Poor Indian: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Edward E. Andrews, *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Rowan Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire, c.1700–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Joseph Hardwick, *An Anglican British World: The Church of England and the Expansion of the Settler Empire, c. 1790–1860* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

46 Carson, *Company and Religion*, 2.

47 Strong, *Anglicanism*, 6.

Similarly, the connection on religious involvement in overseas expansion has often been centred on its spiritual and evangelical rather than governmental role. The discussion concerning English overseas expansion and religion has often been focused on the role of imperial evangelism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in which the religious interaction, embodied in the Christian minister or missionary and evangelical societies, followed in the wake of seventeenth-century merchants.⁴⁸ This does not mean that historians have not investigated the link between evangelism and commercial and territorial expansion in the seventeenth century. As Gabriel Glickman has pointed out in relation to the New England Company (NEC), evangelical corporations did attempt to change colonial strategies in north-east America, encouraging the association between conversion and commercial and territorial expansion.⁴⁹ David Armitage has argued that, whilst evangelism did not necessarily equate to rights of sovereignty, it in conjunction with commerce, plantation and territorial permanence, it was a factor in justifying the expansion of English territory.⁵⁰ By examining the role and changing shape of evangelism in England's overseas companies, it is therefore possible to reassess the function of evangelism, observing its governmental role in the global sociology of English corporate expansion between 1600 and 1750. In doing so the role of evangelism becomes more than just a story of the spiritual conversion of a soul but also part of narrative that sees religion as a tool of corporate jurisdictional evasiveness that allowed overseas trading corporation to expand governmental territories and reinforce their authority over the behaviour of numerous European and non-European peoples and their faiths.

Building upon earlier policies of religious governance EIC following the acquisitions of Bombay in 1668 continued a form of passive evangelism. Between 1668 and 1750 this, although gradually more diluted, continued

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- 48 Brent Sirota, *The Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680–1730* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); Samuel Clyde McCulloch, "The Foundation and Early Work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (1945), 241–258; Laura M. Stevens, "Why read Sermons? What Amercianists can learn from the Sermons of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" *History Compass*, Vol. 3 (2005), 1–19; Andrews, *Native Apostles*; Carson, *Company and Religion*; Strong, *Anglicanism*; William Kellaway, *The New England Company, 1649–1776: Missionary Society to the American Indians* (London: Longmans, 1961).
- 49 Gabriel Glickman, "Protestantism, Colonization, and the New England Company in Restoration Politics" *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (2016), 376, 365–391.
- 50 David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 95–97.

to be the main contribution of the EIC to Protestant propagation in India. During the last half of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, the East India Company continued to develop a longstanding policy of passive evangelism placing it at the heart of its religious policy to control both its personnel and native people who were gradually falling into their governmental and spiritual jurisdiction. As the jurisdictions of the EIC religious governance expanded to include a substantial multi-ethnic and multi-religious population, both through the acquisition of territory and encouraging migration, the company's policy of passive evangelism and religious sufferance became more essential to ensuring the spiritual and commercial mission of the company. Religion and evangelism under the company was responsive to the pressures of life in India. At the same time religion helped to advance English spiritual and political authority, it also (for a time) acted to obstruct any overtly aggressive attempts the English had to infringe on the religious and social lives of indigenous peoples. Over the eighteenth century the effectiveness of religion as a preventative to corporate expansion would greatly reduce, from much of the seventeenth century the EIC's officials in India engaged and interacted both with internal and external constituencies developing a distinctly corporate relationship with religion that flexibly advanced the commercial and territorial aims of the company whilst nimbly engaging and interacting with numerous European and Indian religious communities in the east.

Unlike the aggressive evangelism of Jesuits and Portuguese Catholics who had gone before them in Bombay and Madras the EIC policy of passive evangelism highlighted the process of negation of global sociology as the company used its religious policies to present the company as an alternative to their European counterparts.⁵¹ Towards the end of 1729, Viceroy João Saldanha da Gama wrote to João V a long letter accusing the Inquisition of being one of the causes behind the Estado's decline. The viceroy accused the inquisitors extorting wealthy Hindu and Muslim merchants under the threat of confiscating their possessions.⁵² According to the letter the Goan inquisitors had forced the non-Catholic populations of the Estado to migrate to other territories, in particular to areas under the control of the English and French companies. As an example, the viceroy mentioned the case of Tana, a town in the Provincia do Norte where a lucrative textile factory was operating until an Inquisitorial *devasa* in the area forced the majority of workers, who were Hindus, to escape

51 Stern, *Company State*, 112.

52 Rivara, APO, Doc. 130, p. 384.

to Bombay, where they were now producing “all the silks, wools, *gorgurões* and silk handkerchiefs and *picotilhas*, which are introduced in this Court [Goa].”⁵³

Directly set up in opposition to the Roman Catholic evangelical methods, EIC officials were acutely aware and quick to prevent the continuation of any such practices. The Deputy Governor of Bombay, Henry Young in 1669 expressed concerns and a need to be “more cautious and circumspect” of the Portuguese Catholics if the company and its ecumenical governance were to succeed on Bombay.⁵⁴ Furthermore he warned of the evangelical practises of Catholic ministers complaining that their “use compulsion” in converting local Indians was having a damaging effect on relations with the local population.⁵⁵ A month later Young and some associates continued to complain about the effects of catholic evangelical practices in Bombay, suggesting that they were forcibly baptising Indians.⁵⁶ The effect of this on the company’s religious governance was twofold; firstly in the immediacy it caused the company serious problems as it directly undermined the EIC’s policy to encourage migration. Not only did such actions directly oppose the EIC’s use of sufferance but they also acted to “keepe people from coming on” to the Islands.⁵⁷ Secondly Young questioned the conversion itself, and as such both the eternal soul of the individual, and the evangelical aim of the company were placed at risk. For the Protestant Young and his associates “noe Christia” was made through being “forcibly (mocke) baptized” as the act did not include the “confession of faith ... or profession to forake the Divell ... or to fight under [the] Christian banner.”⁵⁸ In response to the actions of the Catholic priests Young ordered that they cease, pointing out that it was damaging relations with the local Indian population whilst commanding that they were “not to christen nor punish” any “Gentiles without a licence.”⁵⁹ In doing so Young not only forced the Catholic community to observe the supremacy of the company’s Protestant religious governance and its policy of sufferance, but also ensured that its method of passive evangelism would have priority when trying to convert local Indian peoples.

53 Rivara, APO, Doc. 130, p. 325.

54 Foster, *English Factories*, XIII: 218.

55 Henry Young and James Adams, to Surat, February 22, 1669, William Foster ed., *The English Factories in India, 1618–1669*, 13 Vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1896) XIII: 218.

56 Young, Adams and Coates, March 17, 1669, Foster, *English Factories*., 219.

57 Young, Adams and Coates, March 17, 1669, Foster, *English Factories*., 219.

58 Young, Adams and Coates, March 17, 1669, Foster, *English Factories*., 219.

59 Young, Adams and Coates, March 17, 1669, Foster, *English Factories*., 219.

For the religious and secular leadership of the EIC, Protestant evangelism was to play an important role in securing the company's relationship with the Indian community, as being a positive alternative to other European commercial companies. For the company in India, the Portuguese provided them with a European contemporary who accentuated the difference between the Catholic evangelism taking place in Goa, and their own passive evangelism. Unlike the zeal and heavy-handed evangelism of Catholic religious government, the EIC's primary objective was to demonstrate their difference through passive ecumenical governance; at the head of which, the Chaplain would establish a well-governed Protestant church godly society.

The evangelical mission of the company's ecumenical governance, which sought to establish English civility in India through the conversion of Indian peoples to Protestantism, struggled in the face of south Asian theological flexibility. Company agents often wrote of their fascination and frustration with the doctrinal malleability of local Indian peoples, able to assimilate certain Christian practices and teaching into their wider faith. Just as with the MBC and the Native Americans, the subject of the appropriation and adaptation of the Protestant doctrines within indigenous religions became a matter of concern for the EIC as well as possible tool for the evangelical aims of the company's religious governance. For the company, it was a complete anathema how Hindus were "by the principles of their owne religion they are allowed our sermons (though not our prayers)" however, according to one EIC agent this religious flexibility provided the company with an opportunity.⁶⁰ They advocated that they should utilise the ecclesiastical openness of Hinduism to passively evangelise, through the effective policing of its personnel's behaviour, to the indigenous population. By the good behaviour of its personnel alongside the hope that some local people would attend church and hear sermons, agents hoped that the company through this "true pious fraud" would "deceive (or rather undeceive) them into our profession" converting them to Protestantism.⁶¹ For EIC leaders this "pious fraud" was the backbone of their passive evangelical agenda and a core element of the company's ecumenical governance. By ensuring at first ensuring the good behaviour of its personnel, and then slow exposure to the practices of the Protestant faith, EIC officials believed themselves to be involved in some form of religiously, true and sanctioned trickery were they would encourage the local people to believe they had fallen rather than been pushed into the Christian embrace. Despite the problems Protestant

60 Bombay to Surat, October 18, 1668, Foster, *English Factories*, XIII: 72.

61 Bombay to Surat, October 18, 1668, Foster, *English Factories*, XIII: 72.

evangelical interaction with native faiths posed it was the aim of the EIC religious governance to ultimately by “guile catch them in the net of the Gospel”, bringing native Indians into the fold of English Protestant civility.⁶² However, this doctrinal flexibility provided the company with problems as the adoption of Protestant religious practices by Hindus, did not necessarily equate to full blown conversion or membership in the company’s governmental structure.⁶³

Much like the EIC in the Indian Ocean, religion and evangelism played an important factor in the Atlantic world, helping to define the characteristic of corporate identity in New England. Although a distinctly different direction, to its eastern counterpart, the MBC corporate evangelism highlights the integrative relationship between the development of religion in a corporate world that stretched across the eastern and western oceans. Two years after William Castell’s petition to parliament concerning evangelism in New England, Hugh Peter and Thomas Weld arrived back in England. Ordered by the MBC council, Peter and Weld, published the evangelical tract *New England First Fruits*, highlighting that, just as parliament was succeeding in England, the MBC was remembering its charter evangelical charge. The commonwealth and the New England Mission became “transatlantic sibilings.”⁶⁴ In doing so the MBC emerged as an Atlantic solution to ideas surrounding religious governance in England, its corporate governance providing a solution to issues that plagues the religious and political debates of Cromwellian England.⁶⁵

Following the publication of *First Fruits*, the MBC’s evangelical aims obtained growing support on both sides of the Atlantic. Whilst ministers in Massachusetts began to evangelise, in England reports of these ministers’ works were published in pamphlets. By the winter of 1645, the General Court in Boston had formerly made requests to ministers to consider what could be done to embark on some form of evangelical agenda.⁶⁶ A series of pamphlets initiated in 1648 by Thomas Shepard and the publication of his tract *The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel*, the necessity of evangelism was finally considered. However, it would not be till the publication of Edward Winslow’s tract, dedicated to parliament in the spring of 1649, that any legislative progress was made. By the

62 Bombay to Surat, October 18, 1668, Foster, *English Factories*, XIII: 72.

63 22 February, 1669, Foster, *English Factories*, XIII: 218.

64 Karen Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 6–7.

65 For more information see Susan Hardman Moore *Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007),

66 N. B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay New England* (RCM) 5 vols. (Boston, 1853–54), II: 84, 134, 166; III: 85–96–97.

summer of that year, the Act for “promoting and propgating the Gospel of Jesus Chirst in New England” was passed.⁶⁷ This act laid the foundations for the establishment of England’s first overseas evangelical company 13 years later, offering a financial life raft to the struggling MBC who, through the society and later the NEC, could obtain funds in England to support the evangelical aims of its government. Moreover, it signified a slow but noticeable change in the way in which the English state saw the responsibility of religious governance overseas slowly move away from chartered commercial companies, to specifically evangelical corporations.

The establishment of the first evangelical corporation marked the beginning of a gradual change in domestic ideas on the character of English overseas expansion corporate government, and the development of religious governance. The Act, which called for the “glorious propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ amongst those poor heathen”, was established to successfully achieve this “one Body Politique and Corporate in Law.”⁶⁸ This, England’s first overseas evangelical corporation, was to be called “The President and Society for propagation of the Gospel in New-England” and, after the restoration, would be known as the New England Company. Structurally, it was much like any corporate body including the MBC; it had a president, a treasurer and a court of assistants. However, unlike the MBC, its government, according to its charter, was to remain in England.

Quickly, the evangelical corporation drew in support from mostly wealthy Congregationalist and independent merchants in London, who immediately set about raising funds and publishing a series highlighting the evangelical aims of the corporation.⁶⁹ The tracts offered an insight into reformation of Native

67 Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England manifested by three letters under the hand of the famous instrument of the Lord, Mr. John Eliot, and another from Mr. Thomas Mayhew Jun., both preachers of the world, as well to the English as Indians in New England* (London, 1649); July 1649: “An Act for the promoting and propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England,” in C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*, II: 197–200.

68 Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*, II: 197–98.

69 Between 1651 and 1660 the company published five tracts, 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. Manifested by letters from such as preacht to them there* (London, 1651); Henry Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness. Or a Glorious Manifestation Of the further Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New-England* (1652); John Eliot, *Tears of repentance: or, A further narrative of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New-England: setting forth, not only their present state and condition, but sundry confessions of sin by diverse of the said Indians, wrought upon by the saving power of the Gospel; together with the manifestation of their faith and hope in Jesus Christ, and the work of grace upon their hearts.* (London, 1653);

Americans, who had been enlightened by the “Clear-sunshine of the Gospel.”⁷⁰ These tracts not only illustrate the reformation of Native Americans, but also the wholesale reimagining of the purpose of the MBC, along with other New England governments. They suggested that their mission was no longer to set a godly example both for and over English brethren but to propagate godly governance to New England’s Native Americans. As Henry Whitfield wrote, “the Lord hath now declared one great end he had of sending many of his people to those ends of the earth” and that was the conversion of the Native American people to god’s governance.⁷¹ Such an evangelical movement was perceived by John Eliot as an alternative conquest, which traded the violent conquest of the Spanish, (and replicated by the settlers of the MBC) for a benevolent occupation of the soul and mind. Writing in 1652, Eliot explained that many who had settled in America “have onley sought their owne advantage to possesse their Land, Transport their gold, and that with so much covetousnesse and cruelty”. In doing so, they had “made the name of Christianitie and of Christ and abomination”, both to their own and to the Native Americans.⁷² Part of this abomination lay in the perceived ideas of the genuine conversion; a convert by violent conquest had not truly repented. Instead, Eliot’s benevolent conquest, in line with Puritan theology, would be like the planting of the “mustard seed” which would slowly grow and amount to true believers in Christ.⁷³ Authors would then revel in informing their readers of the successes of evangelism, offering examples of true conversion and confession of Native Americans such

A late and further manifestation of the progress of the gospel amongst the Indians in New-England declaring their constant love and zeal to the truth: with a readiness to give accompt of their faith and hope, as of their desires in church communion to be partakers of the ordinances of Christ: being a narrative of the examinations of the Indians, about their knowledge in religion, by the elders of the churches (London, 1655); A further account of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England: being a relation of the confessions made by several Indians (in the presence of the elders and members of several churches) in order to their admission into church-fellowship. Sent over to the corporation for propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ amongst the Indians in New England at London (London, 1659).

70 Thomas Shepard, *The clear sun-shine of the gospel breaking forth upon the Indians in Nevv-England. Or, An historicall narration of Gods wonderfull workings upon sundry of the Indians, both chief governors and common-people, in bringing them to a willing and desired submission to the ordinances of the gospel; and framing their hearts to an earnest inquirie after the knowledge of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world* (1648); Bross, *Dry Bones*, 9.

71 Whitfield, *The light appearing*, 44–5.

72 Eliot’s letter in Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, introduction.

73 John Wilson, *The Day-breaking, if not the sun-rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New-England*, (1647), frontispiece, 16, 23.

as Monequassun and Toteswamp.⁷⁴ It was precisely this slow mission that the MBC leaders embraced, rebranding its theological government through evangelical agenda taking hold in England.

This subtle, but nonetheless noticeable, shift in policy for the MBC's theological governance towards active evangelism was not only predicated by an identity crisis triggered by moral superiority, but also economic incentive. This incentive was both spiritual and real, offering "comfort to your owne accounts in the day of the lord", whilst also providing those in the MBC and the rest of New England with a financial lifeline.⁷⁵ The Wars of the Three Kingdoms, return migration and a downturn in trade had left the colony facing an economic crisis and the knitting together of an evangelical agenda with financial speculation offered the possibility of reprieve. In 1648, Eliot linked conversion to the growth of material wealth amongst populations of both Native American and English settlers, as converted Native Americans sought to adopt the practices of English "civil" society. The example one evangelist gave involved the adoption of English clothing, suggesting that Native American conversion would lead to a rise in the sale of English textiles and clothing, describing how Praying Indians "have some more cloths" than the "wicked Indians" who practiced their own faiths.⁷⁶ Shepard would go on to write that, at one public sermon, so many Native Americans arrived dressed in English clothing that "you would scarce know them from English people."⁷⁷ The financial possibility opened up through convert communities was not only limited to textiles, but also in technology, architecture and construction, and was key to the evangelical mission.⁷⁸ Conversion equated to the wholesale adoption of English Protestant civility over barbarous native practices and, as such, it opened up new markets for New Englanders' goods.

Conclusion

By 1750, England's overseas companies, such as the EIC, MBC and NEC had used religious control to stamp their authority over peoples and faiths across

74 Eliot, *Tears of repentance*, 16; *A late and further manifestation*, 7–8.

75 Shepard, *Clear sun-shine*, 5.

76 Shepard, *Clear sun-shine*, 26–27.

77 Shepard, *Clear sun-shine*, 11; for more on clothing, status and symbolism in the New England during the seventeenth century see Ann M. Little, "Shoot That Rogue, for He Hath an Englishman's Coat On!": Cultural Cross-Dressing on the New England Frontier, 1630–1760," *New England Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (2001), 240–42.

78 Bross, *Dry Bones*, 24.

the globe, thereby securing their governmental autonomy. However, as a new century approached, the English metropole took steps to centralise the role of religion, evangelism and the overseas. Consequently, this changed the character of English imperial expansion and the relationship between English corporate governance and religion forever. Despite the successes of England's overseas companies at establishing visible forms of English religious governance from New England to the Coromandel Coast, there was mounting pressure within England to do more to advance English Christian government abroad.

In 1687, John Dryden dryly wrote, "with my country's pardon, its said, Religion is the least of all our Trade". Eight years later, Henry Prideux, the future dean of Norwich, decried that the EIC "had done nothing to instruct" in the Christian faith the many Hindus and Muslims under their jurisdiction and not been given the "means whereby they may be sav'd."⁷⁹ Prideux would also go on to state, in a report of religion in the company's factories in India, that the company had "failed to propagate the Gospel among the Natives," whilst claiming that it was in the "secular interests" of the company "as well as Spirituall" for them to focus on evangelism.⁸⁰ As criticism continued to mount over the EIC's corporate religious governance and its "inability" to actively evangelise parliament, the crown and leaders in the Established Church took steps to formally impose strict codes to religious governance in these companies, through their charters. Moreover, the establishment of evangelical corporations such as the NEC, SPCK, and the Society for Promoting the Gospel in Foreign Parts, weakened the incentives to establish forms of corporate religious governance in England's commercial companies, as it transferred much of the religious responsibility away from them. By removing this responsibility, it freed up corporations from the constraints of having to be religiously mindful in its government, allowing a new era of aggressive imperial expansion to take shape that differed greatly from the corporate overseas expansion of the seventeenth century.

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