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## “The Light Shall Begin to Break Forth” Protestant Missions to the Indians in Colonial America

*Andrew H. Hedges*

*Andrew H. Hedges was an associate professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University when this was written.*

The restoration of the knowledge of the gospel to the Lamanites is a recurring prophecy in the Book of Mormon, occupying the attention of prophets from Lehi to Moroni and constituting one of the books central themes. Today, with thousands of missionaries preaching the gospel to the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples, and with several million of these descendants claiming membership in the Church, we can see how literally this prophecy is being fulfilled. It is important to remember, however, that Latter-day Saint efforts and successes in this regard have often built on the work of missionaries from other faiths who had previously introduced American Indians to Christianity through the Bible.

That these earlier efforts to teach Lamanite remnants about Christ were neither accidental nor unimportant is demonstrated by the prophet Nephi, who, through vision and angelic tutoring, learned that the latter-day restoration of Book of Mormon peoples to the gospel would involve “the book of the Lamb of God”—the Bible—going forth “from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren,” after which “other books” would go forth that would “establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (1 Nephi 13:38–40). In many areas in the New World, this introductory work with the Bible started centuries before the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, but was clearly—if Nephi’s vision means anything—an important step toward these peoples eventual restoration to the fulness of the gospel. To discuss the latter-day redemption of the Lamanites only in terms of Latter-day Saint missionary efforts after 1830, is in short, to miss half the story.

This important but somewhat neglected phase of the restoration of the Lamanites to the gospel in the latter days comprised the missionary efforts of several Protestant missionaries who worked with various tribes of Indians during the colonial period in what is today Massachusetts, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, and who collectively converted thousands of Indians to Christianity. Impressive as the immediate results of their labors may have been, however, these missionaries’ real contribution to the Restoration lies in their position as the first Protestants to make a sustained effort to teach the American Indians Christianity on American soil and in the inspiration they provided for future generations of missionary-minded men and women representing a variety of Protestant denominations. Detailed accounts of their efforts and successes were published and republished over the course of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, helping to inspire hundreds of Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist missionaries to direct their energies toward converting Native Americans to Christianity rather than fellow Europeans only. Although the labors of these later missionaries met with mixed results, thousands of Native people, hailing from tribes living across the continent, were nevertheless introduced to the Bible to one degree or another, thereby setting the stage for the debut of the “other books” Nephi saw going forth among the remnants of the Lamanites. Their efforts, in short, both inaugurated and helped sustain—through the published, well-read accounts of their successes—the fulfillment of an important, prophesied step toward the restoration of Book of Mormon peoples to the fulness of the gospel.

### John Eliot

By far the best-known of American colonists who tried their hand at establishing Christianity among the American Indians is John Eliot. In spite of his fame, relatively little is known of Eliot’s early life; that he was born in England in 1604 is certain, but some doubt remains as to which county he was born in and the status of his family. After earning his degree at Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1622, Eliot, who became good friends with the Reverend Thomas

Hooker,<sup>[1]</sup> joined the exodus of Puritan divines from England in 1631. After having served as teacher of the First Church of Roxbury for a time, he was made that body’s pastor in 1633, a post he kept for the rest of his eventful life,

which ended in 1690. Active in the proceedings against Anne Hutchinson,<sup>[2]</sup> Eliot was known by his contemporaries as an honest, devout, zealous man, whose occasional idiosyncracies—he preached vehemently against the growing use of

wigs, as well as against the evils of tobacco use—were more than offset by his almost boundless charity.<sup>[3]</sup>

But it was his unceasing efforts to convert the American Indians of the surrounding countryside to Christianity that made Eliot a household name for several generations of colonists.<sup>[4]</sup> His interests in the Native Americans seems to have begun during the Pequot War in 1637,<sup>[5]</sup> when he spoke so strongly against the colony’s proceedings against the New England tribe that colonial officials branded him another Roger Williams<sup>[6]</sup> and asked that he publicly recant. Ten years later, in the fall of 1646, he began instructing the natives living near Roxbury in the fundamentals of Christianity, motivated, he told his friend and colleague Daniel Gookin, by his desire to glorify God, his “compassion and ardent affection” for the American Indians, and his obligation to fulfill the “covenant and promise” New Englanders had made to their king to “communicate the gospel unto the native Indians.”<sup>[7]</sup>

Once he had begun, there was no turning back for Eliot. Braving debilitating sicknesses, fatigue, weather, hostile tribesmen, and apathetic colonists, the “Apostle to the Indians,” as he came to be known, prosecuted his designs until he was so feeble that the Honorable Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel to the Indians in New England and Parts Adjacent, which began funding his and similar efforts in 1649, was forced to find money with which to pay a servant to accompany him on his missionary forays into the New England countryside.<sup>[8]</sup> Under Eliot’s direction, fourteen “praying towns” were established, where praying American Indians seeking Church membership could live apart from their unconverted brethren and practice the arts of civilization, community, and Christianity. Colonial

jealousies and suspicions during King Philip’s War<sup>[9]</sup> emptied the praying towns of their inhabitants, and only four were resettled following the end of hostilities. Eliot persevered, however, and by 1687 most of the eighteen congregations of praying Indians in New England were on the mainland, as were three of the six established American Indian churches. Some have estimated that five thousand Native Americans in the region had embraced Christianity to one degree or another by this time—fully one quarter of the estimated twenty thousand American Indians living in New

England and her adjoining islands at the time.<sup>[10]</sup> By the turn of the century, Increase Mather reported that the number of established American Indian congregations in the area had swelled to “thirty several,” many of whom were holding midweek lectures as well as Sabbath meetings.<sup>[11]</sup>

Eliot had some help in bringing all this about. One of his closest friends and staunchest allies was Daniel Gookin, who, four years after being elected a magistrate, was appointed by the Massachusetts Court to be superintendent of those American Indians in the colony who had submitted to English rule. In this capacity, Gookin frequently attended Eliot on his tours through the praying towns, and he stood alone among the magistrates in excoriating the colony’s treatment of the Christian Indians during King Philip’s War. Through the use of interpreters, he became a well-respected lecturer to the American Indians and was quite popular with those among whom he

worked.<sup>[12]</sup> Other ministers with whom Eliot occasionally coordinated his efforts included the younger John Cotton, son of the great Puritan divine by the same name, and Richard Bourne and William Leverich, who taught the Native Americans living around Sandwich and Mashpee in Plymouth Colony. Leverich had turned to the American Indians at Eliot’s request after abandoning his English congregation to the “spirit of Pharisaisme and formality” that had overcome

them.<sup>[13]</sup> Eliot’s and most other missionaries’ willingness to learn the American Indian language was a tremendous help as well, making it unnecessary for Christian Indians to learn the English language in order to learn the essentials of the English religion. So, too, did Eliot’s willingness to translate a variety of religious materials into the Massachusetts dialect, including the entire Bible (in 1663), two catechisms, a grammar, a primer, a singing psalm book, Lewis Bayly’s “Practice of Piety,” Richard Baxter’s “Call to the Unconverted,” and Thomas Shepard’s “Sincere Convert and Sound

Believer.”<sup>[14]</sup> This is all the more significant because the literacy rate among the natives in their own language was relatively high; fully one-third of the men, women, and children Richard Bourne and John Cotton were working with in 1674, for example, could read their own American Indian language, and others were clamoring to learn.<sup>[15]</sup>

Eliot’s liberality toward the American Indians was due, at least in part, to his personal beliefs about their basic humanity, their history, and the role he saw them playing in sacred history. In accordance with the numerous biblical passages that emphasize the ultimate brotherhood of mankind, Eliot and the others frequently referred to the natives as

nothing less than the “sons of Adam,” among whom lived many every bit as predestined to eternal salvation as the best of England’s elect.<sup>[16]</sup> Holding the Native Americans as “men of the same mould, [God’s] offspring as well as we,” these missionaries placed them squarely within the scheme of sacred history by identifying them as peoples discussed at length in the Bible, and so heirs to the blessings promised those groups. Most felt that America’s native inhabitants were descendants of the Tartars or Scythians who lived, in ancient times, in northeast Asia, and who at some point in the murky past had been “spilt by some revenging hand of God” onto America.<sup>[17]</sup> As such, they were the “Gentiles” mentioned so prominently by the Psalmist, Isaiah, and writers and characters of the New Testament—including Christ Himself—whose conversion to Christianity was perhaps to precede, perhaps to follow, the conversion of the Jews, prior to the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth.<sup>[18]</sup>

Others, citing similarities between the traditions and religious beliefs of the Bible’s Hebrews and the Native Americans, argued that the Native Americans actually belonged to the house of Israel and could even legitimately be called Jews themselves, an opinion that gained ground with some after Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel of Amsterdam endorsed it.<sup>[19]</sup> For John Eliot, it was “as clear in the Scripture, that these are the children of *Shem* as we of *Japhet*,” and just as clear from more recent developments that the day of “these lost and scattered Israelites” had arrived, a thought which gave this frequently beleaguered missionary the strength to go on.<sup>[20]</sup>

### **The Mayhews of Martha’s Vineyard**

For all their fame, John Eliot and his companions were neither the first nor the most successful of the English missionaries working with the Native Americans of colonial New England. Those honors, rather, belong to several members of the Mayhew family, whose ministry of more than eighty years to the Algonquins living on Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, begun in 1642, resulted in thousands of Indians converting to Christianity. The Mayhews were relative latecomers to the northern English colonies; indeed, by the time twenty-one-year-old Thomas Mayhew Jr. arrived on the island in 1642, Puritans had been in parts of Massachusetts for twenty-two years and had established towns around Narragansett Bay and in the Connecticut River Valley. Despite his late start, however, the young Thomas, “having no small Degree of Knowledge in the *Latin* and *Greek* Languages, and being not wholly a Stranger to the *Hebrew*,” quickly made an impression on his countrymen and was soon appointed minister of the “eight or ten English families” that had settled the east end of the island some years before.<sup>[21]</sup> As zealous a Puritan as he was talented, and finding his responsibilities relatively light over so small a congregation, Thomas Jr. quickly turned his attention toward converting the Native Americans with whom he and his countrymen shared the island. The work proceeded slowly at first; even after learning their language and becoming acquainted with several individual Native Americans, the young missionary had only managed to convert one American Indian by 1643, and another three years passed before he delivered his first public sermon. With his tongue loosed, however, things began to heat up for the young missionary, and by 1650, thirty-nine Native American men, and an even greater number of women, had embraced the new religion. By mid-October of the following year, the number had swelled to 199 men, women, and children, who were meeting in two congregations, and by the end of October 1652, a decade after his first halting attempts to “express his great Concern and Pity for their *immortal Souls*,” Mayhew counted 282 adult American Indians in his fold.<sup>[22]</sup>

Thomas Jr. perished at sea five years later en route to England, where he had hoped to be able to “give a more particular Account of the State of the *Indians* than he could well do by Letters.”<sup>[23]</sup> Upon his death, Thomas Mayhew Sr., the young ministers seventy-year-old father, took over the mission. The elder Mayhew, who had acquired rights not only to Martha’s Vineyard after his business prospects had failed on the mainland but to the neighboring Nantucket and Elizabeth Islands as well, had arrived on the island shortly after his son and had been serving as the islands’ governor ever since—a post he kept for the rest of his life and which he reportedly filled with unparalleled justice and equity. Despite his advanced years, Thomas Sr. resolved to visit at least some of the Native American congregations at least once a week—no small task, since some were located almost twenty miles away on the other side of the island from where he lived.<sup>[24]</sup>

The old man’s efforts paid off, however, and the gospel’s progress among the natives of the islands he governed was nothing short of phenomenal under his enlightened direction. A small number of Native Americans were admitted to full communion in 1659, and, with John Eliot on the mainland nodding his approval, they formed themselves into a

church in 1670, complete with Native American officers.<sup>[25]</sup> By 1674, Martha's Vineyard was home to two American Indian churches, where almost fifty communicants regularly partook of the Lord's Supper. Virtually all of the island's other Native Americans were regularly attending Sunday services in six different congregations—presided over by ten Native American pastors—by this time; indeed, the elder Mayhew wrote Daniel Gookin that of the some three hundred Native American families inhabiting Chappaquidick and Martha's Vineyard, there was “but one of them that prays not to God.”<sup>[26]</sup> Nearby Nantucket experienced similar growth. The ninety or so families that had converted to Christianity on that island by 1670 had swelled to include “about three hundred Indians, young and old,” by 1674, who, under the watchful eyes of four native preachers, were meeting in three different congregations—one of which included thirty communicants.<sup>[27]</sup>

Due largely to the respect afforded the aged Mayhew by Native Americans and English alike, King Philip's War left the islands virtually unscathed. Indeed, while colonists on the mainland were confining the praying Indians there to a few well-watched towns or to Deer Island, Thomas Sr. actually armed the natives of Martha's Vineyard and the nearby islands—who, at approximately 3,000 adults, outnumbered the English colonists there twenty to one—and had them function as a guard for the English living there. Native Americans, accordingly, continued to convert both during and after the hostilities, and by the time the governor-missionary died in 1682, at the ripe old age of ninety-three, most of the Native Americans on Martha's Vineyard and the surrounding islands had embraced Christianity to one degree or another.<sup>[28]</sup>

The Reverend John Cotton spent two years instructing the Native Americans on the Vineyard in the mid-1660s, but it was Thomas Mayhew Jr.'s son, John Mayhew, who took over when the aged governor, his grandfather, died. At the end of his short ministry—he died in 1689 of a “heavy Pain in his Stomach”—ten American Indian congregations, boasting one hundred communicants in three churches, were meeting on Martha's Vineyard “in a very orderly Way,” while the number of congregations on Nantucket had swelled to five.<sup>[29]</sup> The American Indians were without any English overseers for five years following John's death until his son Experience Mayhew, who was fluent in the Indian language but a mere sixteen years old when his father died, was finally old enough to minister to them. The lack of English ministers, however, did not stop Christianity's progress during this time. Cotton Mather estimated the number of Christian Indians inhabiting Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket in 1694—the year Experience started preaching to them—at a full three thousand individuals, or virtually every American Indian on the islands.<sup>[30]</sup>

### **John Sergeant, David Brainerd, and John Brainerd**

Due in part to the highly publicized efforts of Eliot and the Mayhews, interest in converting the Native Americans to Christianity continued throughout the eighteenth century as European colonists slowly, yet inexorably, displaced Native Americans to the colonies' western frontiers. This interest spawned a number of attempts to send missionaries to tribes who had not yet heard the word of God, most of whom, by this time, were living relatively more remote from the English than Eliot's charges had. Unforeseen events prevented a number of these missions from ever getting off the ground, while others proved highly successful for a time; the increasing ferocity of colonial wars wreaked havoc with most of them at one time or another, however, and none came close to matching the success Eliot and the Mayhews had enjoyed earlier. In this period of deteriorating relationships between Indians and Europeans, however, their labors among various tribes played an essential role in keeping Christianity alive among the Native Americans and, ultimately, in paving the way for the Book of Mormon. John Sergeant's fifteen-year mission to the small group of “River Indians” living on the Housatonic River in southwest Massachusetts was one of the more successful of these efforts. Noted for his

“Ingenuity, Learning and Piety” by his contemporaries, this young Congregationalist sought an appointment to the American Indians early in his ministerial career, feeling, he wrote in his journal, “asham'd to own myself a Christian, or even a Man, and yet utterly refuse doing what lay in my power to . . . promote the salvation of souls perishing in the Dark.” His chance came in 1734 while he was working as a tutor at Yale, when the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), organized in 1698 and looking for a likely young man whom it could support on a mission to a tractable group of American Indians, heard of Sergeant's wish to “rather be employ'd as a Missionary to the natives . . . than accept a call any English parish might give him” and offered him the job.<sup>[31]</sup> The Society's choice of both missionary and tribe was apparently a good one, although neither had any previous experience

with missionary work; by the time a “nervous fever, attended with Canker,” hustled the thirty-nine-year-old Sergeant from this world to a better in 1749, the missionary had baptized 182 men, women, and children, established a church of forty-two communicants, helped create a school where Timothy Woodbridge taught fifty-five children, and settled 218 individuals in the Native American town of Stockbridge—up dramatically from the “short of fifty” Sergeant had first

<sup>[32]</sup> found in the area. During the course of his labors on the Massachusetts frontier, Sergeant learned of a group of American Indians living twenty miles to the west of Stockbridge who might be interested in Christianity. Hoping to duplicate Sergeant’s success at Stockbridge, the SSPCK sent another aspiring missionary, David Brainerd, to sound these natives out in their town of Kaunameek. A disciple of Gilbert Tennent and an early “New Light” Presbyterian who had recently been expelled from Yale for indiscreetly opining that one of his tutors had no more grace than a chair, Brainerd spent a year working with the natives at Kaunameek and learning Mahican—with the help of Sergeant—before leaving them in Sergeant’s care and moving to the American Indian town of Crossweeksung, located at the Forks of the Delaware River, in 1744. Subject to bouts of depression, and occasionally so ill he was forced to present his sermons while sitting down, Brainerd labored with the Delaware Indians and sought to make inroads with the numerous tribes living on the upper Susquehanna until consumption drove him from the field in the spring of 1747. Long enamoured with the idea of death and returning to God, Brainerd died that fall at the house of Jonathan Edwards, where the great theologian’s eighteen-year-old daughter Jerusha—to whom the twenty-nine-year-old missionary was apparently engaged and who died a mere six months later—“almost overstepped the proprieties of her sex” while trying to nurse

him back to health.<sup>[33]</sup> His efforts, although relatively short-lived and plagued with infirmities, nevertheless produced results; by the time he left for the East, Brainerd had gathered some 130 natives to the Indian town of Bethel, thirty-

seven of whom were in full church communion.<sup>[34]</sup>

David Brainerd’s mission did not die with him, however. John Brainerd, David’s younger brother, filled in for David the summer he lay dying in Northampton and took over the mission after his death that fall. Every bit as devout and “New Light” as his older brother, and much more stable and healthy, John converted a number of natives to the faith over the next eight years and was happy to report an ongoing reformation in the lives and habits of the “sundry” American Indians whom he had “persuaded . . . to come from distant parts and settle” at Bethel. Disease, however, undermined his efforts to an extent; although some forty natives had joined the Christians at Bethel under John’s hand by 1752, John estimated that at least one-third of the town’s original inhabitants had died by then, leaving the overall

numbers there virtually the same as when David had left.<sup>[35]</sup> Never enjoying anything even approaching the almost pentecostal season his older brother had enjoyed at Crossweeksung, John’s mission nevertheless hummed steadily along until May 1755, when rising French power in the West overawed enough American Indians living on the colonies’ frontiers that the SSPCK, fearing for John’s safety, recalled him.

## Conclusion

Despite all that these missionaries accomplished among the Indians in Massachusetts, Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, disease, war, land conflicts, and intermarriage took their toll on the Native American congregations—and on the Native American population in general—throughout the course of the colonial period. By the early years of the nineteenth century, the once thriving communities and congregations of Eliot and the Mayhews had been reduced to

a few families and individuals,<sup>[36]</sup> and by 1830 most of New England’s seaboard Algonquins had lost, for all intents and purposes, their tribal identities. Converts of Sergeant and the Brainerds suffered similar losses, and in 1824, bereft of any white advocate in the East who might plead their cause, they began a journey westward that ultimately took them

to the Indian Territory in 1832.<sup>[37]</sup> Yet to conclude from this that these missionaries’ efforts were ultimately in vain would be a failure to understand the Lord’s plan of restoring the Lamanites to the fulness of the gospel in the latter days. Restoration scriptures make it clear that the Book of Mormon would be a *second* witness of Christ to the remnants of the Lamanites—not the first witness, and by no means the only witness. The Bible was to be the first witness, and someone in America had to take the first halting steps in making its contents known to the natives of the land. While the specific tribes with whom these men labored had largely died out by the time the Book of Mormon arrived on the scene, the work they started among the Lamanites at large had not. Indeed, it had successfully set the stage for the fulfillment of prophecies and promises that had been in place for over two thousand years. Like William Tyndale’s Bible, these missionaries’ efforts were an essential prerequisite to greater things; and just as any reference to an English translation of the Bible today is a quiet acknowledgment of Tyndale’s efforts, so much of the success the gospel enjoys among

many Native Americans today is an implicit salute to the missionaries who taught the Native Americans of colonial America.

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- [1] Thomas Hooker (ca. 1586–1647) led his congregation out of Massachusetts in 1635 and settled the town of Hartford on the Connecticut River, the first permanent European settlement in what would become Connecticut.
- [2] Anne Hutchinson (ca. 1590–1643) immigrated to Boston in 1634, where she openly challenged ministerial authority by asserting that God communicated with individual men and women and could, through revelation, give them assurance of personal salvation (the so-called “Antinomian heresy”). Tried and convicted for heresy and sedition in 1638, she and her family, with some followers, moved south to Narragansett Bay as some of Rhode Island’s earliest European settlers.
- [3] For brief overviews of Eliot’s life and character, see John W. Ford, *Some Correspondence between the Governors and Treasurers of the New England Company in London and the Commissioners of the United Colonies in America, the Missionaries of the Company, and Others between the Years 1657 and 1712* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), xvi–xvii; “The Historical Account of John Eliot, the First Minister of the Church at Roxbury,” in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st series, 8 (1802): 5–34; “Anecdote of Rev. John Eliot, of Roxbury,” in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st series, 10 (1809): 186–87. For a more detailed account, see Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *John Eliot: “Apostle to the Indians”* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).
- [4] For in-depth studies of Eliot’s efforts among the Indians in eastern Massachusetts, see Andrew H. Hedges, “Setting the Stage: John Eliot and the Algonquins of Eastern Massachusetts, 1646-90,” *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: The New England States*, ed. Donald Q. Cannon, Arnold K. Garr, Bruce A. Van Orden (Provo, Utah: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 2004); Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission to the Indians Before King Philip’s War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Dane A. Morrison, *A Praying People: Massachusetts Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission, 1600–1690* (New York: P. Lang, 1995).
- [5] The Pequots were a tribe of American Indians inhabiting the lower Connecticut River Valley. Some 400 Pequots were killed in 1637 after colonists set fire to a fort in which the Indians had taken refuge following an outbreak of hostilities between the two groups.
- [6] Roger Williams (ca. 1604–83) argued with the Massachusetts Puritan clergy over Indian land rights, relations with the Church of England, and child baptism. Escaping deportation, he traveled to Narragansett Bay and founded Providence, Rhode Island, in 1636.
- [7] Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England [1674]*, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st series, 1 (1792): 170; see also “Historical Account of John Eliot,” 28–29.
- [8] See Ford, *Correspondence*, 1, 68.
- [9] King Philip’s War was the costliest and bloodiest of the seventeenth-century colonial Indian wars. The war began when the Wampanoag Indians—led by Metacomet, or “King Philip,” as the colonists called him—began resisting settlers’ encroachment on their lands in 1675. By the end of the war three years later, more than one thousand colonists and an untold number of American Indians had lost their lives.
- [10] See “History of Newton,” in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st series, 5 (1798): 261.
- [11] Ford, *Correspondence*, 83.
- [12] For brief overviews of Gookin’s life, see Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 228–29, and *Archaeologia Americana, Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1836), 2:425–28. For Gookin’s popularity, see Ford, *Correspondence*, 74–76.
- [13] Henry Whitfield, *Strength Out of Weaknesse; or, A Glorious Manifestation of the further Progresse of the Gospel among the Indians in New-England* (London: M. Simmons, 1652), in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical*

*Society*, 3d series, 4 (1834): 180–81; see also Ford, *Correspondence*, x–xi, xiv.

- [14] See Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 169,172. Such religious publications in the Indian language continued after Eliot’s death; for a complete list and discussion, see William Kellaway, *The New England Company, 1649–1776* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962).
- [15] See Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 197–200.
- [16] Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 143, 147, 152, 181; see also Whitfield, *Strength out of Weaknesse*, 161,156.
- [17] Thomas Shepard, *The Clear Sun-shine of the Gospell Breaking Forth upon the Indians in New-England* (London: n.p., 1648), in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3d series, 4 (1834): 33; [Shepard], *The Day-Breaking, if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New-England* (London: Rich Cotes, 1647), in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3d series, 4 (1834): 14; see also Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 145.
- [18] See Whitfield, *Strength Out of Weaknesse*, 155–57; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 143,154,160, 223. For a discussion of seventeenth-century ideas concerning the order in which various groups of people would be converted before the Millennium, see Richard W Cogley, “John Eliot and the Origins of the American Indians,” *Early American Literature* 21, no. 3 (Winter 1986–87), 211.
- [19] See Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 145–46; Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel, amongst the Indians in New England* (London: Edward Winslow, 1649) in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3d series, 4 (1834): 72–74, 93–95.
- [20] 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: n.p., 1651), in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3d series, 4 (1834): 119–20; emphasis in original. Eliot initially subscribed to John Cotton’s theory that the American Indians were displaced Tartars from Asia. By 1649, however, he was entertaining ideas that at least some of the American Indians were descendants of the tribes of Israel, and that all were Hebrews. He also subscribed to the idea that the Jews would be converted before the Gentiles would; see Cogley, “Origins of the American Indians,” 212–17. Over the course of the colonial and early national periods, various authors—notably James Adair and Elias Boudinot—tried their hand at identifying the American Indians’ Israelite origins. This effort found its fullest expression in Ethan Smith’s *View of the Hebrews*, where Smith argues that the Native Americans were actually remnants of the lost tribes. See Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 133–39, for an excellent discussion of this topic.
- [21] Thomas Prince, *Some Account of those English Ministers who have successfully presided over the Work of Gospelizing the Indians on Martha’s Vineyard, and the adjacent Islands, in 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: n.p., 1727), 280; emphasis in original.
- [22] Prince, *Some Account*, 281,286, 289–90; emphasis in original.
- [23] Prince, *Some Account*, 291–92; emphasis in original.
- [24] See Prince, *Some Account*, 280, 292–95, 297–98.
- [25] See Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 203–4; Prince, *Some Account*, 299–300.
- [26] Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 205.
- [27] Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 206–7; see also John Eliot, “Letter from Eliot to Hon. Robert Boyle,” in *Old South Leaflets* 1, no. 21 (Boston: Directors of the Old South Work, Old South Meeting House, n.d.), 2–3.
- [28] Prince, *Some Account*, 295–97, 299, 301. For an overview of Thomas Mayhew Sr.’s life, see Lloyd C. M. Hare, *Thomas Mayhew: Patriarch to the Indians, 1593–1682* (New York: D. Appleton, 1932).
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Prince, *Some Account*, 305; [Eliot], “Letters From Rev. John Eliot of Roxbury, to Hon. Robert Boyle, 1670–1688,” in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st series, 3 (1794): 185. Thomas Prince reported that at John Mayhew’s death, the Indians were meeting in only “four or five several Places” across the island, rather than the ten Eliot reported. As Eliot was a contemporary of John Mayhew, and his estimate makes much more sense than Prince’s in light of the number of congregations reported by others both before and after John’s death, I have opted to cite his figure in the text.

[30] See Prince, *Some Account*, 306–7.

[31] Samuel Hopkins, *Historical Memoirs Relating to the Housatonic Indians* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1753), reprinted in *The Magazine of History with Notes and Queries, Extra Numbers 17–20, Volume V* (New York: William Abbatt, 1912), 19–21.

[32] Hopkins, *Historical Memoirs*, 14, 158, 11–12. For brief overviews of Sergeant’s missionary career, see Henry Warner Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions: Studies in Cultural Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 137–38, and James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 197–200. For a detailed account of the Housatonic Indians, see Patrick Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

[33] Thomas Brainerd, *The Life of John Brainerd, the Brother of David Brainerd, and His Successor as Missionary to the Indians of New Jersey* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Company, 1865), 132. Brainerd’s desire to leave this world of sin occasionally expressed itself rather morbidly. Once, while visiting a house “where was one dead and laid out,” Brainerd “looked on the corpse,” he wrote, “and longed that my time might come to *depart*.” Reflecting on still another death, Brainerd thrilled at seeing himself “dead, and laid out, and inclosed in my coffin, and put down into the cold grave, with the greatest solemnity” (Serenio Edwards Dwight, *Memoirs of the Rev. David Brainerd; Missionary to the Indians on the Borders of New-York, New-Jersey, and Pennsylvania* [New Haven, Conn.: S. Converse, 1822; reprint, St. Clair Shores, Mich.: Scholarly Press, 1970], 180,192).

[34] See Brainerd, *The Life of John Brainerd*, 117–18. For a brief overview of Brainerd’s missionary career, see Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions*, 152–55.

[35] Brainerd, *Life of John Brainerd*, 255–57.

[36] See Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 195 n., 201 n.

[37] See Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions*, 138–39,156–57.