The Curious Incident of the Early Modern Protestant Missionary

It is the sharpest point of contrast between Catholicism and Protestantism in the early modern period – and between Protestantism's early-modern and late-modern incarnations. Across settled Europe, Protestants and Catholics eventually fought one another to a standstill, their conflicts grinding into an embittered stalemate. But if we widen our lens from settled Europe to the rest of the planet, this equivalence between Catholic and Protestant disappears almost at once.

This was the age when Catholic missions Christianised two-thirds of the Americas, however superficially; made deep inroads in parts of Africa and Asia, alongside Portuguese and Spanish colonial enterprises; and ran ahead of the colonial project to begin to build Catholic communities in Japan, China and beyond.[1] If we did not know better, we might have imagined that early modern Protestants would try to match and counter this audacious bid to extend Antichrist's realm across the world. Modern Protestants, whose missionary tradition is energetic, creative and sometimes aggressive, would certainly have done so. Their early modern forebears did not. Until the eighteenth century, and only haltingly even then, Protestants made no sustained or systematic efforts to engage in cross-cultural mission: which, for the purposes of this article, I take to mean the attempt to convert to Protestantism peoples whom European Protestants found alien on the grounds of language and culture. This lacuna is familiar, but it still ought to be surprising.

This article asks why this particular dog did not bark. Given the scope of the volume, its focus is on the (lack of) missionary effort by Scandinavian, British and Irish Protestants, although it is as well to remember that they are only a part of the story: in particular, the absence of sustained mission in the territories of the most adventurous early Protestant imperial power, the Netherlands, is noteworthy.[2] Studying a non-event is tricky, but even if the dog did not bark, it did sometimes stir and grumble in its sleep. A series of episodes did gesture in the direction of Protestant cross-cultural mission during these years. These rule-proving exceptions can shed revealing light on the wider failure of British, Irish and Scandinavian Protestants to engage in cross-cultural mission. In particular, they will show us that this is a story that can be told in two ways. There is a 'high' explanation, whose focus is a matter of concepts, ideologies and *mentalités*; and a 'low' explanation, which concentrates on institutions, structures and finances. Our question is: which of these explanations for missionary failure is the more fruitful, and how do they interact?

Lest the term 'failure' seem loaded, let me be plain: I am taking no position on whether early modern Protestants *ought* to have engaged in missionary work or not. My point is that not doing so was a failure *in their own terms*. Early modern Protestants regularly paid lip-service to cross-cultural mission. The 1626 charter governing Sweden's first colonial enterprises promised grandly that, through them, the heathen would be 'taught morality and the Christian religion'.[3] The prominent London preacher William Crashaw, preaching before the assembled worthies of the Virginia Company in 1610, could tell them with a straight face that 'the principal ends' of their errand into the wilderness were 'the plantation of a Church of English christians there, and consequently the conuersion of the heathen from the diuel to

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[1] Amongst the enormous scholarship on this subject, see the excellent survey in R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[2] There is some discussion of the Dutch case in Alec Ryrie, 'Mission and Empire: an Ethical Puzzle in Early Modern Protestantism' in Dorothea Wendebourg and Alec Ryrie (eds), *Sister Reformations II: Reformation and Ethics in Germany and in England* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 181-206, on which the present article partly draws: see esp. pp. 189-196.

[3] Trygve Skarsten, 'Johan Campanius, Pastor in New Sweden' in *Lutheran Quarterly* vol. II no. 1 (1988), 47-87 at p. 49,

God'.[4] When John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, first began to meditate on emigration in the 1620s he made no mention of the Native Americans' souls, but as the project gathered pace he and others began to claim that 'the propagacion of the gospell to the Indians' was 'the main end of our Plantation', 'the thing we do profess above all'. When the colony was chartered, Winthrop, as its governor, swore 'to draw … the natives … to the knowledge of the true God'. The colony's official seal rammed home the point. The iconic central figure of the Indian quotes a momentous verse of the New Testament: St. Paul's vision of a man from Macedonia calling him and his companions to preach the Gospel in Europe for the first time. Now the same divine imperative called the settlers to another new continent, and to take the Gospel once again towards the setting sun.[5]

These rhetorical promises did not go completely unfulfilled. In the colony of New Sweden, the Lutheran pastor Johan Campanius, posted there from 1643-8, made some attempt at mission to the Lenni-Lenape Indians, and as a result has some claim to be the first Lutheran foreign missionary. He managed to learn some of their language and to explain some simple doctrines, although there is no evidence of his winning any converts, and indeed he concluded that doing so would be almost impossible. Neither the colony's governors nor Campanius' own successors showed any interest in his project. He produced a translation of Luther's shorter catechism in 1648, one the first European attempts to write down a North American language. It remained unpublished for fifty years, because no-one was willing to bear the cost of printing it.[6] Missionary efforts in New England progressed a little further. The conversion in 1643 of Hiacoomes, a Wampanoag Indian on the island of Martha's Vineyard, sparked a remarkably successful mission on that island, although it failed to spread to the mainland.[7] And famously, John Eliot, who was teaching elder at the church of Roxbury, just outside Boston, from 1632-88, took on the missionary's mantle in 1646 and became known as the 'Apostle to the Indians'. His achievement – a series of 'praying towns' for Native American converts who ultimately numbered over a thousand – is real, but also painfully limited. The catastrophic settler-native conflict known as 'King Philip's War' in 1675-8 put an end to New England's pretence of peaceful coexistence. More importantly, perhaps, Eliot stumbled into his vocation almost by accident, making his first missionary attempts not because of any deep commitment to the enterprise, but because the enemies of the Massachusetts Bay colony in London were exploiting its (thus far) abject failure to live up to its missionary promises. It is not to diminish his achievement or his commitment to point out the most striking feature of his mission: he served almost entirely alone.[8]

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[4] William Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London before the right honorable the Lord Lawarre, Lord Gouernour and Captaine Generall of Virginea* (RSTC 6029. London: for William Welby, 1610), sig. C3r.
[5] *Winthrop Papers, vol. II: 1623-30* (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931), p. 145; Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the First Planters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, from 1623 to 1636* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1846), 142; Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 1; Acts 16:9.
[6] Skarsten, 'Johan Campanius'; Thomas Campanius Holm, tr. and ed. Peter S. Du Ponceau, *Description of the Province of New Sweden, Now Called by the English, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: McCarthy & Davis, 1834), 140-1.
[7] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), 230-1; J. William T. Youngs, Jr., 'The Indian Saints of Early New England' in *Early American Literature* vol. XVI/3 (1981-2), 244-5.
[8] The best modern account is Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, esp. pp. 5, 45-51; cf. the much more negative view of Eliot in Jennings, *Invasion of America*. See also Loren E. Pennington, 'The Amerindian in English promotional literature, 1575-1625' in K. R. Andrews, N. P. Canny and P. E. H. Hair (eds), *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic and America 1480-1650* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978), 191-2.

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The usual suspect for this missionary failure is theological. The Calvinist doctrine of predestination, so goes the argument, made missionary effort seem futile by suffusing the Reformed Protestant world with a complacent fatalism.[9] Unfortunately, this almost entirely collapses on closer examination. It is not simply that Calvinists in Europe were, in their heyday, proverbially energetic and frighteningly effective in winning converts. Even within the Calvinist theological academy, the keenest advocates of mission were often those who were most seriously committed to a hard line on predestination. The Utrecht theologian Gisbertus Voetius, who developed the first real Protestant missiology and was a passionate advocate of cross-cultural mission, was also a delegate at the Synod of Dordt and was fully signed up to its high Calvinism.[10] It did not seem to him that there was any contradiction. Indeed, the most steadfast opposition to the missionary enterprise came not from Calvinists but from Lutherans, with their much more muted doctrines of predestination.

Yet some theological issues were certainly in play. Even if Protestants could agree with their Catholic counterparts that the gospel ought to be preached to the heathen, Catholic missions drew on sources of energy that Protestants could not reach. For earnest young Catholics ardent for some desperate glory, the mission field offered a chance not merely to convert the heathen but to attain a martyr's crown. The Belgian Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest, writing in 1678, characterised newly-arrived missionaries in China as envying their comrades who had been lucky enough to die en route, saying, 'If only this soul were taken away a long time ago in a maritime voyage or by the waves of the sea or some disease, to be among so many brother martyrs!' Of course we ought not to take this entirely seriously: Catholic martyrs, whether in the global mission field or anywhere else, were not driven by a death-wish. But it is true that the Society of Jesus had to be careful to weed out would-be missionaries who were deemed 'too eager for martyrdom'.[11] This was not a problem early modern Protestants had. Whether predestinarian or not, this was simply not how they thought about martyrdom and salvation.

A deeper issue related to the shape of history. Many Reformed Protestants – and especially the New Englanders, whose colonial project was apocalyptic in its very conception – shared a very particular view of how the age would end. First, popery would be destroyed. Then, the Jews would convert en masse to Christianity. And then, but only then, there would be a worldwide mission to, and mass conversion of, the heathen. In other words, mission to non-Christian peoples was not wrong, but it was premature. As Roger Williams, one of the founders of the Rhode Island colony, put it, 'God's great business between Christ … and Antichrist' must be resolved before any other missions could be undertaken. In the meantime, 'there is a seale set upon the hearts' of the heathen, and it is impossible to break it. The division was between those, such as John Cotton, who thought that in the meantime there

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[9] See, for example, Andrew Porter, *Religion versus empire?: British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 28.
[10] James Tanis, 'Reformed Pietism and Protestant Missions', in *Harvard Theological Review* vol. 67/1 (1974), 65-73; Jan Jongeneel, 'The Missiology of Gisbertus Voetius', *Calvin Theological Journal* 26 (1991), 47-79; Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 401-5.
[11] Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, 'Mission Frontiers: A Reflection on Catholic Missions in the Early Modern World' in Alison Forrestal and Seán Smith (eds), *The Frontiers of Mission: Perspectives on Early Modern Missionary Catholicism* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 180-193 at pp. 183-4; cf. Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

might be heathen converts 'now and then', 'here and there'; and those such as Williams, who thought that the Church as it stood was too corrupt to preach to the heathen at all.[12]

John Eliot, for one, fully accepted this framework. So he was ready to preach the Gospel, but he did not imagine he would set North America ablaze; he hoped to snatch a few individuals from the general destruction. It was a frame of mind which certainly did not preclude mission, but was perhaps more likely to see it as a duty than an opportunity. And it is also worth noticing how some Protestants escaped from it. Eliot, several other English observers, and, a few years earlier, John Campanius, became interested by the possibility that the Native Americans were descended from the lost tribes of Israel. Advocates of this hypothesis cited the fact that some Native Americans practiced circumcision, their use of dreams in divination, certain supposed similarities of calendar and ritual, certain commonalities between their languages and Hebrew. William Penn even claimed that they looked like Jews: 'a man would think himself in Duke's Place or Berry Street in London when he seeth them'. This fanciful notion had serious implications. If the Native Americans were the lost tribes of Israel, then perhaps it was *their* conversion would truly mark the beginning of the end-times. Perhaps Eliot's mission was not simply going to garner a handful of converts, but instead to pave the way for the millennium. The point here is not primarily to observe Reformed Protestant intellectual contortionism. Rather, it is the fact that Eliot had to embrace such a far-fetched theory which shows that the theological obstacles to mission were real.[13]

However, the main formal theological objection to cross-cultural mission advanced during the period was much more direct. This turned on the missionary enterprise's best-known Biblical proof-text: the so-called 'Great Commission' of Matthew 28:19, in which Christ sent the apostles to make disciples of all nations. The argument was that this command applied only to the apostles themselves, not to their successors, who therefore had no authority to preach to other nations. Moreover, since the apostles must plainly have fulfilled Christ's command, the gospel had already been preached to all nations in ancient times, and those nations which were now heathen must therefore have rejected it. The church, on this view, has no business casting its pearls before swine once again. This frankly perverse exposition of the text had a medieval pedigree, and while the first generations of Protestants (Martin Luther included) were cool towards it, some their successors felt its attractions. Theodore Beza argued that distant peoples were simply not the Church's concern, although in the end relatively few Calvinists accepted this reading. It was in confessional Lutheranism that it became an orthodoxy. The theology faculty at Wittenberg ruled on the matter in 1651, insisting that, since the Great Commission had long since expired, it was inappropriate to repeat the process. This view remained standard amongst Lutherans into the eighteenth

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[12] Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 9-21; Thomas Lechford, *Plain dealing, or, Nevves from New-England a short view of New-Englands present government, both ecclesiasticall and civil* (Wing L810. London: W. E. and I. G. for Nath. Butter, 1642), 21; Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Tanis, 'Reformed Pietism', 72.

[13] The case was made most exhaustively in Thomas Thorowgood, *Ievves in America, or, Probabilities that the Americans are of that race. With the removall of some contrary reasonings, and earnest desires for effectuall endeavours to make them Christian* (Wing T1067. London: William Hunt for Thomas Slater, 1650), reprinted twice in the 1660s, which explicitly used this to argue that the Americans should be 'Gospelliz'd' (54-5). Cf. Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 83-90;Isak Collijn, 'The Swedish-Indian Catechism: Some Notes' in *Lutheran Quarterly* vol. II no. 1 (1988), 92; Thomas Campanius Holm, tr. and ed. Peter S. Du Ponceau, *Description of the Province of New Sweden, Now Called by the English, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: McCarthy & Davis, 1834), 113-15.

century, despite being challenged by a vocal minority and roundly mocked by Catholics, who understandably enough took missionary success as a sign of Christian virility.[14]

This argument was advanced with a straight face, but it is difficult not to see it as a post hoc rationalisation of a position adopted for less idealistic reasons. Like the apocalyptic knot into which the Reformed had tied themselves, Lutheran scruples about the Great Commission reveal the extent to which Protestant world-views during the confessional age were dominated by a single problem: the existential threat of Rome. Lutheranism in the age of Orthodoxy was in defensive mode, its chief bulwark against Catholic inundation being strict observation of the 1555 Augsburg and the 1648 Westphalia settlements. 'No Estate,' Augsburg maintained, 'shall try to persuade the subjects of other Estates to abandon their religion.' In the confessional age, this clause was interpreted through territorial churches to make cross-border religious initiatives of any kind seem both disreputable and irresponsible. Disreputable because they challenged the political status quo, and irresponsible because that fragile status quo had been won at terrible cost, and on it Protestantism's tenuous security depended. In this context, as the Huguenot advocate of missions Adrien Saravia observed, the claim that the Great Commission still obtained could seem like 'some Anabaptisticall fancie', chasing a mirage of heathen converts across the ocean at the cost of unleashing Rome's all-too-real attack-dogs here and now.[15]

Hence one of the oddities of the early Protestantism's few foreign missionary efforts: they tended to be framed as part of the struggle with Rome. Dutch ministers in Sri Lanka taught their population to 'refute the Popish Errors concerning Purgatory, the Mass, Indulgences, Auricular Confession, &c'.[16] In North America, there as yet was no Catholic problem, but that did not stop the settlers from worrying about it. One reason Winthrop cited for evangelising the Native Americans was to prevent the presumably ubiquitous Jesuits from infiltrating them first, just as one motive cited for the overall American enterprise was to confront Spanish imperialism. The New Englanders who tried to defend their lack of missionary zeal in print in 1643 claimed that, while they had not preached to the pagans on their doorstep, they had been sending pastors to the other English colonies in Virginia and the Caribbean, which (in their view) were still sodden in the dregs of popery. And when Eliot's missions did begin, their bemused subjects were made to sit through denunciations of popery.[17] Even when England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was founded in 1701, Queen Anne's charter laid out the motive for preaching to her heathen subjects: 'diverse Romish Priests and Jesuits are ... encouraged to pervert and draw over Our said Loving Subjects to Popish Superstition and Idolatry'.[18] The priority was clear. While

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[14] Tanis, 'Reformed Pietism and Protestant Missions', 66; C. Scott Dixon, *Protestants: A History from Wittenberg to Pennsylvania 1517-1740* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 170; James A. Scherer, *Gospel, Church and Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Augsburg Publishing: Minneapolis, 1987), 67-9.

[15] Eric Lund (ed.), *Documents from the History of Lutheranism, 1517-1750* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 170; Adrien Saravia, *Of the diuerse degrees of the ministers of the gospell* (RSTC 21749. London: John Wolfe, to be sold by John Perin, 1591), 47; Dixon, *Protestants*, 169-70.

[16] Philip Baldaeus, 'A True and Exact Description of the Most Celebrated East-India Coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, as also of the Isle of Ceylon' in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 4 vols (ESTC T097848. London: for Awnsham and John Churchill, 1704), III.802.

[17] *Winthrop Papers II*, 114; *New Englands first fruits in respect, first of the conversion of some, conviction of divers, preparation of sundry of the Indians, 2. of the progresse of learning in the colledge at Cambridge in Massacusets Bay* (Wing E519. London: R. O. and G. D. for Henry Overton, 1643), sig. B2r-v; Richard Pointer, 'From Imitating Language to a Language of Imitation: Puritan-Indian Discourse in Early New England' in Laura Lunger Knoppers (ed.), *Puritanism and its Discontents* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 156-7; Dixon, *Protestants*, 171-2.

[18] Porter, *Religion versus empire?*, 18.

early modern Catholic missionaries aimed to convert anyone and everyone, Protestant missionaries really only wanted to convert Catholics.

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However, the mentalities which early modern Protestants brought to the missionary enterprise were not only theological and confessional. They also carried very specific baggage from their national contexts. The four Protestant monarchies that are our focus here – the Anglo-Irish, Scottish, Danish-Norwegian and Swedish-Finnish states – were the only states whose European borders included significant numbers of people whom they saw as barbarians. The Welsh, the highland Scots and the Gaelic Irish had been Christian by culture and identity for a millennium or more, but were seen by the Anglophone Protestant elites of London, Edinburgh and Dublin as barbaric in lifestyle as well as in speech. The Christianisation of the Sámi of northern Scandinavia was much more recent, and – at least as it appeared from Stockholm, Copenhagen or even Trondheim – was very superficial. And since early modern Christendom was heir to a long tradition which conflated the categories Christian/civilised and pagan/barbarian, the assumption that peoples like the 'wild Irish' were only nominally Christian came naturally.[19] We are accustomed to thinking of cross-cultural mission as something that requires the crossing of oceans, but these states' conceptions of how to deal with the spiritual challenge of barbaric peoples had been learned at home.

Wales pointed the way. Until the 1530s, Wales was in effect a conquered principality under military rule. Thomas Cromwell initiated a series of reforms culminating in the so-called Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543 which, in effect, merged Wales into the English state, creating shires and courts on the English model, and leaving the Welsh language – the only tongue of the great majority of the population – with no formal existence. This was not exactly part of the contemporaneous religious Reformations, but nor was the timing a coincidence. The connection was notoriously drawn by William Barlow, the most outspokenly and gratingly Protestant bishop in Wales, who was himself, of course, an Englishman. In a series of letters to Cromwell, he lamented the 'barberouse ignorance' and 'inueterate accustomed sup*er*stic*i*on' of his flock: there is, he wrote, 'no dioces I suppose more corrupted nor none so farre out of frame w^{t}out hope of reformac*i*on'. But he had a proposed solution: education. Arguing for an existing college at Abergwili to be transferred to Brecknock, and a new grammar school and daily lecture on Scripture (in English) to be founded in Carmarthen, he hoped that 'the welsh rudeness wolde sone be framed to english cyvilitie' and that 'the welsh rudenes decreasynge, Christi*an* cyvilitye maye be introduced'.[20] *English* and *Christian* were, plainly, synonyms.

It did not work out quite as Barlow had hoped. He made enemies of virtually all of his clergy, whom he had accused of 'slaabringe necligence', and during the Catholic restoration of Mary I, they united to bring down Barlow's successor and protege as bishop of St David's and send him to a martyr's death. The Welsh language stubbornly refused to die out and was treated as clear evidence of the population's barbarity throughout our period: as one

[19] Timothy Fitzgerald, *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity: A Critical History of Religion and Related Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 120-3.
[20] BL Cotton MS Cleop. E. IV fos 128v, 141r, 142r, 316r.

Englishman put it in 1682, 'gibberish is usually prattled throughout the whole Taphydome'.[21] But from the point of view of English statesmen and churchmen, Wales still looked like a success of sorts. Its population conformed to the Protestant settlement, obediently if unenthusiastically. Its gentry were fully bought into the governing class. It looked like a workable model, and potentially an exportable one. If civility and Englishness were imposed on a barbaric people, then, over time, they would conform to England's norms, religious as well as cultural and political.

The Sámi territories of northern Scandinavia appeared to teach a similar lesson: that the way to bring civilised religion to barbaric peoples was by patiently imposing structures of conformity on them and waiting for the plaster to set. There had been churches built in northern Sweden-Finland and Norway since the thirteenth century, but they were scattered thinly through a vast and sparsely populated region, and a modest missionary momentum in the late medieval period appears to have dissipated following the Reformation. A late sixteenth-century minister in Finnmark claimed that the coastal Sámi were Christians, of a sort, but that the people of the mountainous interior had 'no proper knowledge of God'. The Swedish state took the lead in trying to put this right. From 1559 onwards successive kings ordered clergy in the north to provide at least a skeleton sacramental service to their scattered and nomadic flock. Anders Nilsson, parish priest at Piteå from 1566-93, was one of the first to do so in earnest: Nilsson spoke Sámi himself and combined his pastoral ministry with a lucrative mercantile trade and with work as a border commissioner for the Swedish crown. He was given formal responsibility for dealing with the Sámi of Piteå and Luleå in 1587, and twenty years after his death it was still being said that the Sámi brought their children to Piteå for baptism by 'Anders'. In the early seventeenth century, King Carl IX imposed a county-like administrative structure on his northern territories, much as had been done to Wales in the 1530s, and required that each one should have at least one church. A Sámi school was established in Piteå in 1617; others followed, and some of their graduates went on to study theology at Uppsala and to be ordained. Luther's short catechism was printed in Sámi in 1667. Denmark-Norway was slower off the mark, but during the seventeenth century successive bishops of Nidaros (Trondheim) also began attending to their pastoral provision. The energetic Peder Krog, bishop from 1688-1731, oversaw the building of an impressive forty-eight new churches in his vast diocese, and undertook four extensive visitations: in 1708 travelling as far as Vadsø on Norway's Arctic coast, well over a thousand kilometres from Trondheim even as the crow flies.[22]

The consistent theme of these efforts was baseline ritual and liturgical conformity, including the suppression of indigenous Sámi religion. Krog insisted on the importance of teaching the Sámi to speak Norwegian. Gabriel Tuderus, a Sámi minister in the Kemi *lappmark* in the late seventeenth century, became notorious for his zeal in finding and destroying the drums used by Sámi shamans, and in sealing up the *boasso*, or sacred holes, in Sámi tents where the drums were kept.[23] In their own terms, these campaigns were successful. A high-profile witchcraft case of 1692, in which an elderly man was arrested in

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[21] Prys Morgan, 'Wild Wales: Civilising the Welsh from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries' in Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (eds), *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Keith Thomas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 265-283 at p. 270.

[22] Siv Rasmussen, 'The Protracted Sámi Reformation – Or the Protracted Christianizing Process' in Lars Ivan Hansen, Rognald Heiseldal Bergesen and Ingebjørg Hage (eds), *The Protracted Reformation in Northern Norway: Introductory Studies* (Stamsund: Orkana Akademisk, 2014), pp. 165-183 at pp. 169, 172-4; Dikka Storm, 'The Church, the Pietist Mission and the Sámi: An Account of a Northern Norwegian Mission District in the Early Eighteenth Century' in *Norwegian Journal of Missiology* 3 (2017), 59-75 at pp. 65-6.

[23] Christian Meriot, 'The Saami Peoples from the Time of the Voyage of Ottar to Thomas von Westen' in *Arctic* 37/4 (1984), 373-384 at p. 377.

Varanger for the use of a shaman's drum, arose because he was reported by other Sámi: he was apparently an incomer from the east, and his pagan ways shocked the Christianised people of coastal Norway. But the veneer of conformity does not seem to have run very deep. A scathing early eighteenth-century account of 'the delusions and superstitions of the Lapps' written by a teacher in Varanger described a people who were by now all baptised, and who attended worship on the few occasions per year when itinerant clergy passed through, but whose lived religion was a mixture of Catholic observances and shamanism.[24]

The Welsh and the Sámi, then, provided one model of what success could look like: slow, painstaking, of dubious depth, but completely without challenge to Anglo-Scandinavian social and linguistic norms and fully in line with the state-building projects of the English, Swedish and Danish monarchies. There was a tantalising alternative offered by highland Scotland. The Gaelic Scots were regarded by lowland governing elites with just as much disdain as the Welsh or the Sámi, but they were a much more powerful element of the Scottish polity, and as things turned out, when the Protestant Reformation came late, suddenly and violently to Scotland in 1559-60, the Highlanders were participants in the drama rather than bystanders. Archibald Campbell, who as both earl of Argyll and also the head of clan Campbell was woven into both lowland and highland power structures, and who could field the largest private army in Britain or Ireland, was at the heart of the Protestant cause from the beginning: it is hard to imagine how it could have succeeded without him. He also brought large parts of the Highlands into the new religious world with him. His former tutor John Carswell, like him an amphibious figure who spanned the linguistic divide, was made a superintendent of the Reformed church in 1560 and bishop of the Isles in 1565: in 1567 he produced the first book ever printed in Gaelic, a translation of the Scots *Forme of prayers*, subtly adapted for Highland use. Not many other books followed, but in a predominantly oral culture that was not decisive. What mattered was that the Highlands' formidably learned orders of bards, who had traditionally supplied many of the clergy for the Highlands, continued doing so under the new dispensation – with a firm steer from Clan Campbell. These bardic clergy were uniquely well equipped to use Carswell's Gaelic texts and mediate them to the people. The Highlands' Reformation was certainly not complete, as religion quickly became a point of division between rival clans, but it was far-reaching. During the 1640s, the Synod of Argyll was at the forefront of Covenanter ambitions. Scotland's Gaelic Reformation, then, was not really a story of cross-cultural mission at all, but rather one of indigenous growth.[25]

Given those two models, it is not perhaps surprising that Protestant states chose the low-risk, low-reward option offered by the Welsh-Sámi example. This option was tested to destruction, and far beyond, in Ireland. In 1560, the earl of Argyll had offered the English to bring Campbell influence to bear in Ulster, then the most exclusively Gaelic region of Ireland where the Tudor state's write barely ran. But the prospect of empowered, modernised Gaelic Irish subjects with independent political agency, however Protestant they might be, was regarded sceptically in London and with horror in Dublin.[26] English control over Ireland would eventually be established the old-fashioned way. Civilisation would come before conversion, even if that meant the prospect of conversion vanishing over the horizon.

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[24] Rasmussen, 'Protracted Sámi Reformation', 175-7.

[25] Jane Dawson, 'Calvinism and the Gaidhealtachd in Scotland' in Andrew Pettegree et al. (eds), *Calvinism in Europe 1540-1620* (Cambridge 1994); idem., *The Politics of Religion in the Age of Mary, Queen of Scots: The Earl of Argyll and the Struggle for Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Alec Ryrie, *The Age of Reformation: The Tudor and Stewart Realms 1485-1603*, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 279-80.

[26] Dawson, *Politics of Religion*, pp. 126-137.

Hence what ought to be the most surprising of all the mission fields which early modern Protestants left fallow. It is common enough to observe that Ireland was Europe's most extreme case of religious difference between rulers and population, and to discuss why the Irish Reformation 'failed'. In the context of brutal military conquest and plantation, the Welsh model, of Reformation as state-building, never stood much of a chance.[27] But at the risk of stating the obvious, one central reason why so few of the Gaelic Irish converted to Protestantism is that there was – as in so many other mission fields – no significant or sustained effort to convert them.

The principal exception to this rule was William Bedell, bishop of Kilmore from 1629-42: a stubborn, learned, idiosyncratic, politically inept and – by all accounts – saintly prelate, whose naive projects were met a wall of opposition in his lifetime, and after his death were far more praised than emulated. The formative experience of Bedell's life was a stint as an ambassador's chaplain in Venice from 1607-10. There he befriended Paolo Sarpi, as unorthodox, antipapal and quite possibly atheistic a Catholic as one might hope to find, and also learned that, to Italians, English seemed as barbaric as any Celtic language. When plucked from East Anglian obscurity in 1627 to be the new provost of Trinity College, Dublin, he arrived with the distinctly un-Irish notions that ministering to the island's Gaelic-speaking Catholic population did not mean requiring them to renounce their language or their religious identity as a precondition. He taught himself to read and write Irish Gaelic, although – having long been troubled with partial deafness and 'weakness of ... voice' – he was not much of a speaker of the language, and apparently never preached in it. But he did spur others to do so, reviving the lapsed provision in Trinity's statutes funding Gaelic-speakers to be 'exercised in the reading of the Scriptures in the Irish language', and as bishop ordaining Gaelic-speakers whenever possible, including, on several occasions, Catholics whom he had persuaded to convert. He apparently sponsored the publication of a Gaelic-English primer in 1631, and he led a small team who spent the bulk of the 1630s producing a complete translation of the Old Testament into Gaelic (the New having been published in 1603).[28]

How much success such a missionary approach might have had is unclear, partly because Bedell's ministry was cut short by the Irish rising of 1641 and his death, perhaps from typhus, when under house arrest in early 1642; and partly because our accounts of his life ooze hagiographical overstatement. But it does appear that he genuinely won some respect and affection from his Gaelic-speaking flock, whether from his attempts to stop his diocesan administration from exacting extortionate fees from them, or his studiedly theatrical use of episcopal hospitality, such that – one eye-witness recalled – 'at Christmas he had the poor Irish to feast and sit about him, both men and women that dwelt next unto him, that scarse had any whoale cloathes on their backs, or could understand a word of English'. Certainly he received unusually gentle treatment in 1641-2, and at his funeral, not only was his son-in-law allowed to use the Protestant rite for him, but an honour guard of O'Reillys

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[27] Steven Ellis, 'Economic problems of the church: Why the Reformation failed in Ireland', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 41 (1990), pp. 239–65, usefully compares the Welsh and Irish cases; see also the classic article by Nicholas Canny, 'Why the Reformation failed in Ireland: une question mal posée', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30 (1979), pp. 423-50, and the rejoinder by Karl S. Bottigheimer, 'The failure of the Reformation in Ireland: une question bien posée', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985), 196-207.

[28] William Bedell, Jr., *A true relation of the life and death of the right reverend father in God William Bedell, lord bishop of Kilmore in Ireland*, ed. Thomas Wharton Jones (Camden Society new series 4, 1872), 4, 15, 44; E. S. Shuckburgh (ed.), *Two Biographies of William Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore: With a Selection of his Letters and an Unpublished Treatise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), pp. 126-7, 296; John McCafferty, 'Venice in Cavan: the career of William Bedell, 1572-1642' in Brendan Scott (ed.), *Culture and Society in Early Modern Breifne / Cavan* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), 173-187. I am grateful to John McCafferty for his guidance on Bedell.

accompanied the coffin, fired a volley over it and cried, 'Requiescat in pace ultimus Anglorum!' – which could have meant the 'best' or the 'last' of the English, and was likely intended to mean both. His irenic openness to dialogue with Catholics, and his enthusiasm for the Gaelic language, certainly does seem to have won him some converts, at least some of whom stood by the Protestant cause when the storm broke in 1641.[29] Perhaps nothing more could have come of it, but if there was ever to have been an authentic Gaelic Reformation in Ireland, this is surely the only way it could have come.

Yet the most obvious reason why Bedell's mission failed is that he was almost entirely isolated within the Anglo-Irish establishment. The clergy of his diocese formed a wall of opposition against him, and he spent a great deal of his time, energy and money as bishop in a series of futile lawsuits against his own diocesan chancellor, who in Bedell's eyes was running the church courts as something close to a protection racket and whom he found he could not dismiss. In that case he was largely up against raw self-interest, for he was trying to shake up what had become lucrative sinecures, but his opponents were more than moneygrubbers. His promotion of the Gaelic language was a threat to the Anglo-Irish ascendancy and to the very notion that civility, Christianity and Englishness were intertwined. His reforms at Trinity College prompted howls that 'learning and Englishmen' would suffer. His opponents there and in his diocese pointed out that Irish legislation in force since the days of Henry VIII required the use of English in any public setting, an aspiration which might have been unrealistic but which could still command lip-service. One of Bedell's few political victories came in a convocation in Dublin in 1634, where the bishop of Derry tried to close down Bedell's Gaelic projects with an appeal to the Henrician laws. Bedell was supported, on that occasion at least, by James Ussher, archbishop of Armagh, and the convocation ruled that the liturgy should be read in Gaelic when this was the language of the population. It is remarkable that Protestants – for whom vernacular worship was such a core principle – ought to have had to fight this battle, and the victory turned out to be largely an empty one. Ussher's backing for Bedell was lukewarm, famously reducing Bedell to tears of frustration as he pleaded for more open support in 1630, and reducing Bedell's biographer to contorted excuses for the sainted archbishop's resolute lack of attention to missionary issues. And if Bedell's supporters lacked all conviction, his opponents were not short of passionate intensity. Once all the politics and finances are stripped away, at root this was about prejudice. Bedell's son-in-law recalled once seeing the bishop quizzed by a sceptical Englishman about why he was so keen to reach out to the Gaelic Irish. As Bedell tried to answer, his questioner

> looked down stedfastly with derision upon his feet, and being asked *why he did so?* said, that *he was seeing whether my L[ord] of K[ilmore] wore broges or no;* thus jearing his Christian affection and compassion towards the poor Irish.[30]

Christian affection and compassion, plainly, were not enough.

The barriers to the missionary project in Ireland were laid bare by the matter of the Old Testament. Bedell's translation project was a target for his enemies, and the lead translator, Murtagh King, a Gaelic Irishman who had converted to Protestantism in the early 1620s, was the target of a malicious, perilous and apparently quite unfounded lawsuit in the late 1630s: he was fined £200 and seems to have died in prison or shortly after release.[31] The translation was completed – all save seventeen of the metrical psalms, apparently – and Bedell was attempting to prepare it for publication, but was overtaken by the rebellion:

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[29] Bedell, *A true relation*, p. 80; Shuckburgh, *Two Biographies*, pp. 129, 160-1, 205.
[30] Bedell, *A true relation*, pp. 44-5, 174-5; Shuckburgh, *Two Biographies*, pp. 117-18, 131, 317.
[31] Brendan Scott, 'Accusations against Murtagh King, 1638' in *Archivium Hibernicum* 65 (2012), 76-81.

financing such a substantial undertaking would not have been easy. The manuscript, remarkably, survived, albeit as 'a confused heap, pitifully defaced and broken', but like Johann Campanius' Lenni-Lenape catechism, nothing was done with it for four decades. Its eventual publication in 1685 was the initiative of another intellectually idiosyncratic Protestant, albeit this time an Irishman: Robert Boyle, the founding father of modern chemistry and a consistent supporter of missionary projects on both sides of the Atlantic. By identifying a handful of senior Irish churchmen willing to collaborate with him, maintaining a consistent focus on the project over a number of years, and – not least – by spending a vast amount of his own money, Boyle enabled the reprinting of the Gaelic New Testament and then a first edition of Bedell's translation of the Old.[32] Boyle saw these texts as essential for the missionary project, and his hope that they might be given away to and used by Gaelic-speaking Catholics was a little alarming to some of his allies, who feared that some of his irenic sentiments would 'savour too much of popery to pass a protestant press'.[33]

Boyle's money and determination, and the sometimes equivocal support of a handful of highly-placed churchmen, was enough to push the project through, but the principled opposition had not gone away. Henry Jones, bishop of Meath and one of Boyle's strongest allies, had once hoped to seek parliamentary support for a Gaelic Bible, but was surprised by the strength of the reaction: 'I found it almost a principle in their politics, to suppress that language utterly, rather than in so public a way to countenance it.' Narcissus Marsh, bishop of Ferns and Leighlin, wrote to Boyle of 'the discouragements (and indeed threats) that I have had' because of 'the unwelcomeness of this undertaking to many in this country', and believed that Jones' successor as bishop of Meath had been intimidated into withdrawing from the project. Andrew Sall, a Irish Jesuit who converted to Protestantism and became Boyle's most important collaborator, had no illusions about how most Irish Protestants saw the subect: 'One of them had the gallantry to tell me in my face, and at my own table, that while I went about to gain the Irish (to God I mean) I should lose the English.' And he made a revealing comparison:

> Our own apparent but very false brethren ... are not ashamed to profess a dislike of our endeavours to convert the natives of this country, upon maxims like those of the American planters, in hindering the conversion of their slaves to Christian religion.[34]

For some at least of the Anglo-Irish, the situation had now moved beyond looking for civilisation before conversion, and reached a point where civilisation seemed impossible and, therefore, conversion undesirable.

If the experience of trans-oceanic mission was being used to interpret the 'near' mission in this way, how far was the reverse true? We do not know, but it is hard to imagine that Protestants who were considering the possibility of converting distant barbarians did not draw on their longstanding experience of dealing with barbarians closer to home. There are certainly hints to that effect. In 1622, the Puritan educational reformer John Brinsley published a manifesto for grammar schools, whose title page promised that it was directed especially at 'those of the inferiour sort, and all ruder countries and places; namely, for *Ireland*, *Wales*, *Virginia*, with the *Sommer* Ilands [Bermuda], and for their more speedie attaining of our *English tongue*'. For him at least, the Anglicisation-first template forged in

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[32] Robert Boyle, *The works of the Honourable Robert Boyle. In five volumes* (ESTC T004460. London: for A. Millar, 1744), vol. v p. 606. Boyle's total invesment was certainly over £300 and may have been as much as £700: R. E. W. Maddison, 'Robert Boyle and the Irish Bible' in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 41/1 (1958), 81-101 at p. 97.

[33] Boyle, *Works*, vol. v p. 609.

[34] Thomas Birch, *The life of the Honourable Robert Boyle* (ESTC T66425. London: for A. Millar, 1744), p. 364; Boyle, *Works*, vol. v. pp. 605, 614.

Wales was an exportable model.[35] After half a century's bitter experience of that model's failure in Ireland, the grimmer lessons learned there were also being exported. King Philip's War was to New England what the 1641 rising was to Ireland: a reason, or pretext, for the Protestant establishment to see the native population not as ignorant barbarians who might yet be civilised, but as treacherous savages who needed chiefly to be suppressed. With Ireland being explicitly used as a model, the prospects for any kind of renewed missionary work were not good.[36]

At the least, we can plausibly trace one of the key obstacles to effective Protestant mission to this insistence on linking conversion and civilisation. When seventeenth-century Protestants did contemplate cross-cultural mission, they did so with a concept of conversion that was both demanding and highly culturally specific. Where Catholic missions might prioritise baptism, since the sacrament was itself an efficacious means of grace, Protestant missionaries tended to require clear evidence of converts' understanding of and personal commitment to and moral alignment with the faith before there could be any talk of sacraments. This was a particularly serious issue in New England, a settlement founded in part in order to purify old England's permissive policy on both baptism and the Lord's Supper. Eliot only petitioned for his first 'praying Indians' to be admitted to communion in 1652, fully six years after the start of his mission. Astonishingly, they were rejected. The first admissions finally took place in 1659. One of the New Englanders did his ironic best to make a virtue of the difference between the Catholics' production-line methods and their own painstaking procedure: 'wee have not learnt as yet the art of coyning Christians, or putting Christs name and Image upon copper mettle.' Through modern eyes, this looks less like costly integrity and more like a fastidious reluctance to believe that Native Americans could truly convert. The same author's basic explanation for the lack of missionary success was 'the vast distance of Natives from common civility, almost humanity it selfe'.[37] If bitter experience on both sides of the Atlantic had taught early modern Protestants anything, it was that bridging that distance was both a necessary precondition for any real conversions, and also exceedingly unlikely to happen. It was only pressure from ill-informed politicians and enthusiasts back home, or from occasional naive idealists like Bedell, that kept the subject alive at all.

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A recurrent characteristic of seventeenth-century Protestant missionary efforts, such as they were, was the enthusiasm of a handful of isolated individuals. Campanius, Mayhew, Eliot, Bedell, Boyle: this does not quite exhaust the list of early Protestant cross-cultural missionaries, but nor are they the tip of much of an iceberg. But that recurrent pattern of individual enthusiasm is itself an important part of the story.

The early modern Roman Catholic Church's religious orders were well-funded, well-staffed and deeply grounded institutions which regarded cross-cultural mission as amongst their core purposes, if not their primary one. They were able to train, fund, equip, deploy,

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[35] John Brinsley, *A consolation for our grammar schooles* (RSTC 3767. London: Richard Field for Thomas Man, 1622).

[36] Pennington, 'The Amerindian in English promotional literature', pp. 192-3.

[37] Charles L. Cohen, 'Conversion amongst Puritans and Amerindians: a Theological and Cultural Perspective' in Francis Bremer (ed), *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives* (Boston, 1993), 244-5; *The Day-Breaking, if not the sun-rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New-England* (Wing S3110. London: Richard Cotes for Fulk Clifton, 1647), 15.

oversee, support and replace missionaries, and to commit to doing so for decades on end. No early modern Protestant church had any institutions even faintly comparable to this. The religious orders had been dissolved and their endowments laicised at the Reformation, and this destruction of the institutions and seizure of the funds that might have been used for missionary purposes is, in retrospect, perhaps the highest of the many prices which the Protestant churches paid for their alliance with state power. It is the underlying cause of the institutional problem which is central to early modern Protestant mission's failure, and it is the slow emergence of alternative solutions to that problem in the eighteenth century which finally began to turn the tide.

This was not simply about resources. In many cases, Protestant ministers simply did not have the means of being called to missionary work, and within structures which prized good order and right calling, this was not a minor problem. The New Englanders, again, faced this difficulty in particularly pure form. For Congregationalists, all ministers were equal in status; each of them was called to serve a particular congregation, and paid by that congregation. As Thomas Lechford, one of the colonies' early critics, asked, how can such a church possibly produce missionaries, sent (by whom?) to serve a flock that did not yet exist? 'By their principles, no Nation can or could ever be converted.' Lechford meant this as an argument for episcopacy, but more hierarchical Protestant churches faced similar problems. Standard Protestant theologies of ministry insisted that ministers had to be called to serve a particular congregation. Saravia, although advocating missionary work in principle, absolutely insisted that any would-be missionary must be duly called, and 'throughly furnished for so great an enterprise, before he vndertake it'; self-appointed apostles are 'ouer-weening and deceiued'.[38]

Perhaps so, but the counter-example of the one seventeenth-century Protestant group who were untroubled by these problems suggests that self-appointed apostles could have their uses. The only calling which Quakers recognised or needed was that of the inner light, and the readiness of all Quakers, men and women alike, to take on a missionary role alarmed their contemporaries. Mary Fisher's case was only a little more extreme than many of her fellow-Quakers'. This Yorkshire servingmaid moved on from shouting down her minister as he tried to preach and telling the scholars of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, that they were a 'Synagogue of Satan' to, in 1655, travelling to Barbados to preach, and thence in 1656 to New England. She and her companion were accused of witchcraft and transported back to Barbados, eventually returning to England. Undaunted, in 1657 she and five others set off for Livorno: their initial plan to go to preach in Jerusalem gave way to a only slightly more realistic scheme to confront both the Pope and the Ottoman Sultan. Astonishingly – at least, if we are to believe her own detailed account of the meeting – she managed to secure an audience with Mehmet IV, encamped with his army at Adrianople. 'He and all that were about him received the words of truth without contradiction,' she wrote; 'they do dread the name of God many of them.'[39] Like Bedell, she had the theological flexibility to treat other religions as half-truths, rather than simply as errors to be stamped out. It must be admitted that the Sultan did not actually become a Quaker, but in Fisher's first destination, Barbados, the early Quaker missionaries' impact was marked. In 1676 another Quaker missionary to the island, Alice Curwen, bluntly told a slave-holder she had met that 'thou hast no right to reign over their Conscience in Matters of Worship', promising that 'the Lord God Almighty will set them Free in a way that thou knowest not, for there is none set Free but in Christ Jesus'.[40]

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[38] Lechford, *Plaine dealing*, 21; Saravia, *Of the diuerse degrees*, 48.
[39] Sylvia Brown, 'The Radical Travels of Mary Fisher: Walking and Writing in the Universal Light' in her *Women, Gender and Radical Religion in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 38-64.
[40] Edwin B. Bronner, 'An Early Antislavery Statement: 1676' in *Quaker History* vol. 62 no. 1 (1973), 47-50

Morgan Godwyn, a passionate but lonely Anglican advocate of mission to slaves who spent the 1670s on Barbados, was given a Quaker pamphlet reproaching the island's ministers for ministering to 'the White People only, and not to the Tawneys and Blacks': he was no Quaker, but he accepted the justice of the charge. The slave-holders he had met were alarmed by the 'great numbers' of Quakers on the island, infusing their slaves with a 'Phanatic's spirit'.[41] The Quakers' institutions, such as they were, may not have given much active support for mission: but nor did they do anything to hinder it, and that itself set them apart.

Indeed, of all the institutional barriers to cross-cultural mission, none was as formidable as slavery. There simply was no economic model available for running a Caribbean colony in this period that did not depend on slavery. That did not mean that Protestant consciences were at ease on the subject. One way they justified slavery to themselves was to argue – like the governors of the self-conscious Puritan colony of Providence Island, off the coast of modern Honduras – that Africans might legitimately be enslaved 'during their strangeness from Christianity'.[42] The obvious consequence of this position was that slave-holders actively opposed attempts to make Christians of their 'property', fearing both that their rights over Christian slaves would be restricted, and also that converts might use Christianity to critique or defy their enslavement. The Synod of Dordt, the closest thing to a ecumenical council of the Reformed Protestant churches in the early modern era, ruled in 1617 that slaves 'ought to enjoy liberty', that slaves born in Christian households ought to be baptised, and that baptised slaves ought not to be sold: but it fell short of recommending that Christian slaves should be freed, fearing, correctly, that this would simply ensure that slave-holders would block any missionary projects.[43] The case of a Virginia slave, Elizabeth Key, who in 1656 successfully sued for freedom on the grounds of baptism, demonstrated that slave-holders' fears were not groundless. In 1667 Virginia passed legislation blocking any further such suits, but this and similar legal moves in other colonies did not allay slave-holders' opposition to Christianising slaves. When England seized New Netherland in 1664, baptisms (and marriages) of slaves in the colony ceased. Bermuda's governing Council blocked a minister who petitioned to be allowed to baptise slaves in 1669, and definitively banned the practice in 1687.[44]

Slave-holders' self-defence makes this a predictable enough position, but there was surprisingly little opposition to it. A few well-known seventeenth-century voices criticised slavery as such, but often – as in the famous antislavery declaration by the Quakers of Germantown, Pennsylvania – their aims were more to protect the economic position of free labourers and to keep pagans out of the New World than to further the spiritual or even the material welfare of enslaved peoples. Morgan Godwyn, the most striking exception to this rule, returned to England from a decade and a half in Virginia and Barbados as a passionate advocate for the conversion of both enslaved Africans and indigenous Americans, and his 1680 pamphlet *The Negro's & Indians Advocate* is unstinting on the cruelties and brutalities of slavery. It is also, however, testimony to the wall of opposition which he and those few who agreed with him faced than to any serious attempt at converting slaves. He had confronted slave-holders who feared Christianity would inspire slaves 'to *mutiny* and *rebel*,

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[41] Morgan Godwyn, *The Negro's & Indians Advocate, Suing for their Admission into the Church* (Wing G971. London: J.D., 1680), 4-6, 108.
[42] Karen O. Kupperman, *Providence Island 1630-41: The Other Puritan Colony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 165-172, esp. p. 168.
[43] Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: from the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (London: Verso, 2010), p. 64; Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 69-70.
[44] Blackburn, *Making of New World Slavery*, p. 251; Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 102-3.

to free themselves from *Tyranny* and *Oppression*', or at least to demand time to attend church on Sundays and to have their sworn testimony accepted in court. Against these fears, all he could offer were unconvincing assurances that Christianity 'presseth *absolute* and entire *Obedience* to *Rulers* and *Superiours*' and that no Christian would dare swear a false oath. On the awkward claim that baptised slaves ought to be freed, he claimed (wrongly) that this argument had no basis in law and (dubiously) that no slave in Barbados believed that it was so. Yet as he was well aware, even these questionable arguments had no purchase on a deeper and often unspoken objection: slave-holders' conviction 'that the *Negro's*, though in their Figure they carry some resemblances of Manhood, yet are indeed *no Men*'. Godwyn recalled having baptised a thirty-year-old enslaved man, only to be told by his mistress 'that *Baptism ... was to one of those no more beneficial, than to her black Bitch*'.[45] When Andrew Sall compared the Anglo-Irish elite's view on mission to that of the American planters, this is what he meant.

In practice, the institutional constraints on intra-European missionary projects to the Celtic and Sámi peoples were different, but not much less severe. Since these peoples lived in the core territory of Protestant kingdoms, they fell under the parochial structures of their established churches, and bishops like Peder Krog or William Bedell had all the calling and authority they needed to minister to them. This did not, however, mean that they had the necessary finances, since the bedrock of these churches' funds was the tithe, and tithe income from unsettled, impoverished peoples was limited. Moreover, the need to collect it meant that the churches were compelled to be at least as concerned with fleecing their flocks as with providing pastoral care for them. It is no accident that the keystone of the late sixteenth-century Swedish mission to the Sámi was Anders Nilsson, 'the wealthiest parson in northern Sweden', nor that for him, and for many of the other northern Swedish clergy, their primary relationship the Sámi was a trading rather than a pastoral one.[46] Bedell was surely right to identify his officials' extractive use of the church courts as a key obstacle to his mission from the very start, and his more worldly-wise friends were also evidently right to advise him that a war with those officials could not be won. Even when local structures were not actively hostile to the missionary enterprise in this way, the parochial system of an established church – whose governing fiction was that the population were already believers and church members, and simply needed to be maintained within that state – was a poor fit to a missionary situation. As the Welsh and the Sámi discovered, it lent itself to a kind of minimal outward conformity. Even a committed bishop like Krog tended to measure his success in churches built, ministers ordained and Norwegian-medium schools staffed, and took the sanguine view that the correct spiritual consequences would necessarily follow.

For most of the seventeenth century, the only institutional structures which could be used to support Protestant missions were the state-chartered trading companies which carried out the early Dutch, English, Danish and Swedish imperial ventures. Some of these companies employed ministers to accompany their merchants overseas. This was theologically dubious (Voetius denied it was legitimate) but it was at least possible. As a basis for serious missionary work, however, it was a slender hope. The English and Swedish trading companies' lip-service to the principle of spreading the Gospel was limited to the pious hope that commerce itself would build international brotherhood, and to the provision of chaplains for their own expatriates: men who might, if like Campanius they were inclined, dabble in a little missionary work on the side, knowing that their commercial employers

[45] Godwyn, *Negro's & Indians Advocate*, pp. 3, 38, 108, 128, 140; Betty Wood, 'Morgan Godwyn (*bap.* 1640, *d.* 1685x1709)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
[46] Rasmussen, 'Protracted Sámi Reformation', pp. 172-3.

would ‘laugh in their sleeues at the sillinesse of such as ingage themselues in such matters’.[47] The Dutch trading companies took their missionary responsibilities a little more seriously, but even their ministers were skimpily funded and kept on an extremely tight leash. If this was the future of Protestant mission, it would be a long time coming.

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Another future was set in motion by Bishop Krog of Nidaros after his visitation to northern Troms in 1705. In a report to King Frederick IV, he appealed for more funds for teachers, warning that otherwise the Sámi of the region might choose to attend Swedish churches instead, weakening the Danish-Norwegian state’s control over that crucial corridor of its far north. The warning did not have the result he intended. The king sent his own agent to the region, without Krog’s knowledge, charging him to enquire ‘how the ecclesiastical work among the Sámi was to be conducted’. A new approach was brewing, driven by a king who had become Europe’s highest-place advocate of the new Pietist movement. In 1714 the *Misjonskollegiet* was founded in Copenhagen: a government department under direct royal authority with responsibility for all missionary projects in the territory of the Danish crown. In the same year, a group of seven priests from Krog’s diocese petitioned the king to sponsor a new approach to the mission to the Sámi, and in 1716, one of them, Thomas von Westen, was picked by the king to lead it. He founded a new seminary in Trondheim, whose aim was not to teach Norwegian to the Sámi but the Sámi language to missionaries. Von Westen’s personal contribution to the new mission was decisive: he himself travelled extensively, and by concentrating his missionaries on the fjords – where few churches had been built – and on building Sámi-medium schools, he was able to reach much deeper into the region than any of his predecessors. But what made his impact different in nature from the individual missionary entrepreneurs of the previous century was that, when he worked himself into an early grave in 1727, institutions had been created which outlived him. He was able to make policy changes to prevent the church from presenting a punitive and exploitative face to the Sámi: for example, ending the death penalty for pagan practices, and preventing the use of churches for the sale of state-licensed alcohol. Krog, who regarded the tolerance of the Sámi language as a grave mistake and who particularly resented the royal instruction to grant the mission control over churches in the north of his diocese, steadily tried to obstruct the mission, but although he outlived von Westen, he was now the isolated individual. His successor as bishop was one of the seven petitioners from 1714, and he would go on to undertake fifteen visitations in his twelve years as bishop.[48]

Royal sponsorship made this one of the most robust of the new Protestant missionary institutions, but the innovation underlying it was private pious initiative. This is how the New England mission, such as it was, was sustained. In 1644 an English enthusiast established a £20 annuity to support ‘the Preacher to the poor Indians in New England’, even though no such person yet existed. That was the beginning of a flood of donations, many sparked by a wave of optimistic pamphlets about Eliot’s early achievements in 1647-9: one of the first examples of the triangular trade in preaching, improving tales and hard cash between

[47] Skarsten, ‘Johan Campanius’, 49; Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached*, sig. C2r; William Symonds, *Virginia. A Sermon Preached at White-Chappel ... 25. April. 1609* (RSTC 23594. London: I. Windet for Eleazar Edgar and William Welby, 1609), sig. A3r.

[48] Dikka Storm, ‘The Mission Networks and the Religious Situation’ in Hansen et al’ (eds), *Protracted Reformation in Northern Norway*, pp. 185-207 at pp. 193-7; idem., ‘The Church, the Pietist Mission and the Sámi’, pp. 64, 66-8.

indigenous peoples, missionaries and their home-country supporters. Some £16,000 was raised from private donors to support the New England mission before 1660; the money was invested so as to produce a regular income, which totalled £22 in 1653 and had risen to £800 by 1656, and regular, substantial sums continued to arrive in Massachusetts for the rest of the century. It was used to pay very respectable salaries to the two missionaries, Eliot and Mayhew; to pay for the production of books in Algonquin; and to pay for Indian education, including the endowment of the short-lived Indian College at Harvard.[49]

This came to little enough, but it was a sign of what was to come. Morgan Godwyn's lonely advocacy of mission to slaves helped to spur the formation of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1701. Eliot's ministry was likewise said to have inspired Augustus Hermann Franck, the entrepreneurial whirlwind driving Pietism, to look beyond the central European mission field. Frederick IV of Denmark was, again, his indispensable partner: the two German missionaries whom he sent to the Danish colony of Tranquebar, in southern India, in 1706 were sent without the knowledge or permission of the Danish East India Company, who, when they discovered the project, instructed their agents in Tranquebar to 'hinder the beginning, growth and establishment' of the mission.[50] Unsupported, those missionaries would certainly have been stymied. The support of Franck's Halle and of the Danish crown gave their mission the possibility of enduring. It also meant that when the missionaries returned to Europe, they had a ready-made network of supporters in Halle, where they met, amongst others, the young Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf was sufficiently impressed by them that he vowed to do what he could to further missions to the heathen, and by 1760 his Moravian church had sent over two hundred missionaries beyond Europe, chiefly but not exclusively to Danish-held territories.[51]

Which leaves the question: was the failure of the Protestant missionary effort in the seventeenth century, and its resurgence in the eighteenth century, a story of structures, institutions and finances, or a story of theology, of concepts of civility and conversion, and of will? The only answer is: yes. The Protestant churches lacked the institutions to engage in mission; they were slow to create such institutions in part because they did not have the collective will and determination to do so; they lacked that will and determination in part because their institutions provided no space where it could develop, and indeed actively blocked it when it appeared. The two problems – the abstract problem of mindset and will, and the prosaic problem of structures and institutions – were intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Their solution could only come together. It is no surprise that that solution came slowly and haltingly. It ought, perhaps, to be more surprising that it came at all.

[49] Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 233; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 178-80, 208-22.
[50] D. Dennis Hudson, *Protestant Origins in India: Tamil Evangelical Christians, 1706-1835* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI, 2000), 1-5, 10.
[51] J . C. S. Mason, *The Moravian Church and the Missionary Awakening in England, 1760-1800* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 2001), pp. 5, 23.