



The Virginia Company and the Foundations of Religious Governance in English Commercial Expansion

Published by the Council of Virginia, three years after the VC had established Jamestown in 1607, *A true and sincere declaration* was the first of many attempts by the company's leadership to appeal to the public for support.¹ The governors of the company led by John Smith declared the company's mission and its 'Principal and Main Ends' were to 'preach, & baptise into Christian Religion' the local Native American, in particular Algonquin, population.² Although religious evangelism had been factored into the founding mission of the VC, after three difficult years it became an important element in securing support for the company in England. The first three years of the settlement's existence had been disastrous: drought, starvation and poor relations with local Native Americans had led to 80% of the first settlers dying. Investors in England were frustrated by the lack of any financial return on their speculative investments, and supporters of overseas expansion were concerned by the company's failure to establish a secure settlement. Despite the dire experiences of

¹ *A true and sincere declaration of the purpose and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia of the degrees which it hath received; and meanes by which it hath bene advanced: and the resolution and conclusion of his Majesties council of that colony, for the constant and patient prosecution thereof, untill by the mercies of God it shall retribute a fruitful harvest to the kingdome of heaven, and this common-wealth* (London: 1610).

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

the settlers, the tract's authors sought to reassure supporters in England that the company could succeed. Its authors believed success could only be achieved when the VC leaders and backers established Protestant religious governance in Virginia, thereby striving for a '*Religious and Noble, and Feasible end*'.³

For the leaders of the VC who published *A true and sincere declaration*, religious governance provided a model of governmental authority that framed how the company, its personnel and the politics that they controlled behaved. Moreover, in England, the religious mission of the VC reinforced what was perceived to be the nation's, and thereby the company's spiritual and missionary destiny in America and subsequently was its 'principal means of promotion' for the whole Virginia enterprise.⁴ Investigating England's first company to have colonial control over a territory outside of the British Isles, this chapter develops our understanding of Protestant evangelism as a governmental tool to control behaviour, as well as defining the early development of English government abroad and Anglo-indigenous interactions both before and after 1624.⁵ Furthermore, it highlights how governance could be used as a tool to evangelise, fulfilling not only worldly goals but also advancing

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴ Andrew Fitzmaurice, "'Every Man, That Prints, Adventures": The Rhetoric of the Virginia Company Sermons', in Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough, eds., *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and history 1600–1750* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 24. The link between sermons, evangelism, public support and the financial success of the VC in England has been well examined by historians; see Francisco J. Borge, 'Prayer for Purses: The Rhetoric of Compensation in the Virginia Company Sermons', *Prose Studies: History, theory, Criticism*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (2010), pp. 204–220.

⁵ Edward L. Bond, *Damned Souls in a Tobacco Colony: Religion in Seventeenth-Century Virginia* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), p. 76; David R. Ransome, 'Pocahontas and the Mission to the Indians', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 99, No. 1 (1991), pp. 81–94; Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechan-canough: Three Indian Lives Changed* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006); Kupperman, *Facing Off*; Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580–1640* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1980); Armitage, *Ideological*, pp. 62–67, 83–84, 91–96; David Sacks Harris, 'Discourses of Western Planting: Richard Hakluyt and the Making of The Atlantic World', in Peter Mancall, ed., *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550–1624* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 410–453; Borge, 'We (Upon Peril of My Life) Shall Make the Spaniard Ridiculous to All Europe: Richard Hakluyt's "Discourse" of Spain', in Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt, eds., *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 167–176.

spiritual aims. Instead of focusing on the intense factionalism that plagued the company's leadership and government in London, the chapter investigates the company's government in Virginia.⁶ Through an analysis of the surviving charters and other institutional documents, it highlights how the VC in Virginia was successful in developing a consistent governmental identity. It discusses how the need to populate their settlements encouraged the swift development of strict religious laws and codes for the pastoral policing of unruly English populations and local peoples. It also examines the role of evangelism as a policy that was enacted in opposition to the spread of Catholicism and Iberian power in the Atlantic. Furthermore, it traces the expansion of the company's jurisdiction over Native American populations through religious governance, whilst ensuring continued financial, spiritual and political support in England. Moreover, the chapter explores the organisation and formation of the Church and evangelism in Virginia and how educational programmes in these environments monitored behaviour and conversion.

For many of those involved in either the spiritual or the temporal aims of the company (or both), their success was ensured through the adoption of religious control over both goals. The VC was foundational to the establishment of English governance abroad, marking the first moment that English overseas companies would be employed to control territory overseas as well as use religion to secure their positions at home and abroad. Chartered for commerce whilst also regulating the behaviour of English people abroad, the formation and development of the VC marked a moment in which corporations began to claim authority over the daily lives of English and local communities overseas.

PROTESTANT EVANGELISMS IN OPPOSITION TO CATHOLICISM

From the late sixteenth century onwards, English expansionist policy had for the most part been centred on Protestant and Catholic religious

⁶ Smith, *Merchants*, pp. 57–95; Theodore Rabb, *Jacobean Gentleman: Sir Edwin Sandys, 1561–1629* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 353–386; Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (New York, NJ: Verso, 2003), pp. 100–105; W.F. Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company: the failure of a colonial experiment* (New York, 1932).

tensions as England and its Iberian competitors competed for supremacy in the Atlantic. These moments of expansion included aggressive policies of internal colonisation in Ireland and the Highlands, buccaneering against Spanish shipping, and small privately funded colonial attempts in North and South America. During the sixteenth century, English overseas expansion had remained somewhat small scale. Even if the charting of the Muscovy and Levant Companies is included as the high point of English commercial expectations in this period, the reality was that they would not be formidable commercial entities until the following century. The focus of English and Scottish expansion in this period had been internal, as both the Tudors and the Stuarts had sought to secure their internal frontiers in both Ireland and the Highlands. In doing so, Protestant monarchs, and the governments of the two kingdoms, believed they were combating the threat of a Catholic menace dangerously close to their shores. Similarly, Elizabethan foreign policy was centred on the legally sanctioned piracy against Spain and Portugal.

James, upon ascending the English throne brought to the table ideas that he had cultivated in Scotland, in his attempts to tame Gaeldom; these concerned the use of religious governance to ensure the successful transportation of Anglo-centric authority abroad. In doing so, James framed English expansion within an international dialogue that pitched of ‘Protestant godliness against Catholic ungodliness’.⁷ Early imperial theorists such as Hakluyt and Purchas were ‘propagandists for militant Protestantism’, who argued for an English equivalent to Spanish colonisation in the Atlantic, as a means to enhance the standing of Protestant rulers.⁸ Richard Hakluyt the Elder had advocated this as one of the reasons for overseas expansion, writing that it was a national obligation for ‘Princes of the reformed religion’ to spread the Protestant faith

⁷ Alison Cathcart, ‘Scots and Ulster: The Late Medieval Context’, in William P. Kelly and John R. Young, eds., *Scotland and the Ulster Plantations: Explorations in the British Settlements of Stuart Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), p. 72.

⁸ Nicholas Canny, ‘The Origins of Empire: An Introduction’, in Canny, William Roger Louis, and Elaine M. Low, eds., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 4; Richard Hakluyt, *Divers Voyages Touchinge the Discoverie of America* (London: 1582); Richard Hakluyt, *A Particular Discourse Concerninge the Greate Necessitie and Manifoldde Commodityes that are Like to Growe to this Realme of Englande by the Weasterne Discoveries Lately Attempted... Known as Discourse of Western Planting* (London: 1584); Samuel Purchas, *His Pilgrimes*.

abroad.⁹ In doing so the English would prevent the spread of Catholicism and with it the territorial advances of Spain and Portugal across the globe. This would not only increase the international prestige of the English monarch and nation, but would also maintain their ‘providential role... to defend the achievements of the Reformation and to oppose the power of Spain, which was identified as the bulwark of papist superstition, both in Europe and beyond’.¹⁰ Expansion overseas and religion had long been firmly connected, mutually encouraging each other, whilst also enhancing national prestige. However, James’s accession to the English throne secured the status of religious governance as a tool for the spread of English authority and civility overseas.

Through the VC charters, the propagation of Protestantism and the desire to establish English authority permanently abroad meant that governance, specifically religious, became a crucial tool of corporate expansion overseas. In the 1606 charter, the company was considered a means to spread the Protestant religion ‘to such people’ who were perceived to be living ‘in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God’.¹¹ Moreover, it could also be used to establish and embed English authority over those who conventionally lay beyond the jurisdiction of the English state. Similarly, the VC’s second charter (1609) called for the ‘Conversion and Reduction of the People in those Parts unto the true Worship of God and Christian Religion’.¹² By establishing English religious governance in Virginia, the company would prevent ‘the Superstitions of the Church of Rome’ and Catholic nations from establishing further footholds in America.¹³ James believed that by settling Protestantism in America they would in time convert ‘the Infidels and Savages, living in those parts’ and in doing so bring them ‘to human Civility’.¹⁴ As the preacher Robert Gray declared, it was the duty of the English ‘to bring the barbarous and savage people to a civil and Christian kind of government’.¹⁵ The company’s understanding of civility was

⁹ Hakluyt, *Western Planting*.

¹⁰ Canny, ‘Introduction’, in *Origins of Empire*, p. 20.

¹¹ *The First Virginia Company Charter* (1606).

¹² *The Second Virginia Company Charter* (1609).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Robert Gray, *A good speed to Virginia* (1609), sig. C2r.

part of a two-pronged mission, the first to advance Christianity and the second to establish English authority, thereby ensuring Native Americans was ‘subject to a civil authority’ that was recognisably English and Protestant.¹⁶ Native Americans’ incivility was defined by their lack of faith and poor use of the land they had been given in abundance. Thus, English colonisation and the process of imparting civility were presented as a form of economic, spiritual and social exchange. Although one-sided, this exchange was defined by the fact that ‘the Indian has had an excess of land but lacked faith and civility, whilst the English had faith and civility to spare but not enough land’.¹⁷ Civility in Virginia was tied to both religion and the land; preachers such as William Crashaw could argue at once that ‘we will take nothing from the savages by power nor pillage’ and that they would ‘take from them only that they may spare us: first, their superfluous land, secondly their superfluous commodities’.¹⁸ This transaction was distorted further by Crashaw, who concluded that it was done ‘out of our humanity and conscience’ and that it ultimately weighed in favour of the Native Americans, who obtained more out of it. Crashaw concluded that Native Americans would obtain ‘namely such things as they want and need and are infinitely more excellent than all we take from them, and that is 1. Civility for their Bodies, 2. Christianity for their souls. The first to make them men, the second, happy men’.¹⁹ Through this exchange, those who had been brought into Protestant ‘civility’ would find themselves incorporated in the wider ‘settled and quiet Government’ of the English Church, state and corporation.²⁰

Unlike in the charters granted by Elizabeth and James I to the EIC in 1600 and 1609, the VC charter included a clause on religion, or more appropriately evangelism, positioning it as an obligation of the company. The VC was required to evangelise, as the advancement and establishment of Protestantism and English authority in Virginia was the desire of the

¹⁶ Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 212; Lauren Working, *The Making of an Imperial Polity: Civility and America in the Jacobean Metropolis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 75.

¹⁷ Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*, p. 208.

¹⁸ Crashaw, *A Sermon preacher in London before the right honourable the Lord De La Warr, Lord Governor and Captain General of Virginia...* (1609), sig. D3v–D4r.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*, p. 210.

²⁰ *The First Virginia Company Charter* (1606).

monarch, and a key responsibility delegated to the company. Following its second charter in 1609, Gray advocated conversion by any means necessary, including force.²¹ Gray argued that ‘a Christian king may lawfully make war upon barbarous and Savage people, and such that live under no lawful or warrantable government’ and by doing so ‘make conquest of them’.²² For Gray and many others, the VC became the arm of the state through which England’s Protestant duty of conversion, conquest and civilising the ‘uncivilised’ could be achieved. The ‘civilising effect’ of the propagation of Protestantism was portrayed as a national duty and ‘so Noble a Work’ that, along with the establishment of religious governance, it was entrenched in the language and ethos of the VC.²³

From the company’s inception, Algonquins played a prominent role in the public image of the corporation as the agents for promoting the spread of Protestant civility to the indigenous peoples. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the company’s mission to spread Protestantism amongst Native American peoples was considered integral from the outset, enshrined as an obligation in all the VC’s corporate charters. By spreading Protestantism amongst the Native American populations, the company’s religious leadership were not only concerned with their immortal souls, but through conversion, bringing them into the company’s jurisdiction and under its authority. Very quickly, many from all ranks and elements of the corporations sought to get to work on fulfilling this ‘most pious and noble end of this plantation’.²⁴

POPULATION

The company’s leadership, particularly those abroad, were conscious of the need to ensure that their populations were governed effectively in accordance with English religious and secular customs. Company officials adapted different aspects of English authority to secure control of their English population in Virginia, one of which was religious governance. This does not mean, however, that the VC did not also draw

²¹ Gray, *A good speed to Virginia* (1609), sig. C2v.

²² *Ibid.*, sig. C4r.

²³ *The First Virginia Company Charter* (1606).

²⁴ ‘Virginia Council, Instructions Orders and Constitutions... To... Sir Thomas West Knight Lord La Warr, 1609/10’, in *RVC*, III: p. 27.

on governmental experience from other areas, such as the military, Privy Council, Parliament and ambassadors. Out of the eleven men who held varying positions of authority in Virginia between 1607 and 1624, seven had a military background, having either served in Ireland or seen action in several conflicts within Europe.²⁵ The transition from military leadership to governing over a civilian population was no doubt difficult for many of these men. This was made worse by the fact that many of the civilians they governed were more prone to evading authority than following it. Due to high mortality rates, and stories of hostile Native American populations, the VC struggled to populate its settlements. As the company became increasingly desperate, officials turned to convicts as manpower to populate its lands. The by-product of this was that settlements in Virginia became associated with undesirable, morally ambiguous populations, whose presence put at risk the company's secular and spiritual missions. When recalling his time in Virginia, John Smith wrote exactly of this, complaining that in England the colony's leadership and the company were blamed for 'not converting the Savages'.²⁶ Smith combated this allegation by pointing to the population of the colony, writing that the leadership cannot be blamed 'when those they sent us were little better if not worse'.²⁷ For the VC, this population placed strain on the company and its spiritual mission to evangelise, as their behaviour risked bringing Protestantism and its authority into disrepute.

For several of the Virginia governors, the solution was to adopt 'Lawes divine, moral and martial'; in other words, a code of laws that incorporated religious governance with militaristic order in its enforcement.²⁸ For many, martial law was the only way to ensure success and

²⁵ Governors Wingfield, Smith, Percy, De La Warr and Yeardley and Deputy Governors Dale and Gates all had military careers before entering service in the Virginia Company, whilst Governor Ratcliffe and Lieutenant Governor Argall had naval careers either before or after service in the company. Furthermore, De La Warr also served as a Privy Councilor to both Elizabeth I and James I, whilst Wingfield sat as a Member of Parliament and Gates was Ambassador in Vienna prior to VC service. For the individual biographies, see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13745> [accessed 3 July 2016].

²⁶ John Smith, *Advertisement For the unexperienced Planters of New-England, or anywhere* (London: 1631), p. 5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ William Strachey, *For the colony in Virginia Britannia. Lawes divine, moral and martial, &c* (London: 1612).

good governance; as Lieutenant Governor Thomas Gates declared, ‘no good service can be performed, or war well managed, where military discipline is not observed’.²⁹ Although not officially the leader of the colony Gates, on behalf of the absent governor Thomas West, Lord Delaware, saw himself as the company’s leader in Virginia. He concerned himself primarily with establishing and maintaining good godly governance over those English settlers who migrated to Virginia. To do so, he ensured that those who were sent by the company into his jurisdiction observed the laws and religious customs of England, and what he saw as an Englishman’s true charge, the ‘principal care of true Religion’.³⁰ Of the 37 laws that Gates set down, the first seven articles directly involved the Church or its ministers, whilst over a third of them in some way had religious connotations. For Gates, ‘the word of God’ tied ‘every particular and private man, for conscience sake to obedience’ and the authority of the company’s leaders.³¹ Along with articles reinforcing laws and punishments against recognisable crimes such as murder, theft, embezzlement and slander, Gates made provision to ensure harsh punishments for blasphemy and Sabbath breaking. Further, he set down strict and regular religious observance in the colony to twice daily, seeing routine communion as ensuring, through the individual, a civil society. He wrote that those who prepared ‘themselves at home with private prayer’ would be ‘better suited’ for public life and worship.³² Six years later, the General Assembly in Virginia renewed Gates’s laws reaffirming and reinforcing the position of the Church, religion and ministers in the colony.³³ For company officials, the enforcement of strict religious observance was a necessity. This was not only because God demanded it, but also because religious governance provided the moral framework from which civil society could be established and governed.

Company officials quickly established authority, structuring and implementing religious governance in their plantations in Virginia as a means to ensure commercial success. Despite this, the VC was not seen as an

²⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., p. 7.

³² Ibid., p. 4.

³³ James B. Bell, *Empire, Religion and Revolution in Early Virginia, 1607–1786* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2013), p. 34.

enterprise of prosperity or commercial success, being known rather as a financial quagmire based on commercial ‘fairy tales and hopes’, associated more with death, conflict and disreputable populations.³⁴ The reasons for the VC’s apparently slow progress in achieving their initial promise of substantial financial gain would have been a familiar topic of conversation to contemporaries, and one that the company’s leadership were acutely aware of. For ministers such as Patrick Copland, who was employed by the VC to generate fresh support for the company, the answer was obvious. They had abandoned the ‘principal ends of the Companies in following the business of the Plantations’.³⁵ Amongst the many groups that disputed ideas in the VC, ministers and preachers formed their own distinct but connected group, offering ‘a mode of political advice’ through sermons and religion.³⁶ Not surprisingly, for preachers the principal aim for the company was the orderly governance of the religious and secular lives of the English settlers and indigenous peoples who lived within the jurisdiction of the VC.

Just as the VC had authority over English settlers, it had also been entrusted with the responsibility of converting local Algonquin Indians and bringing them under the company’s religious governance, thereby assimilating them into the English fold and securing English dominion there. Conversion became an element of the corpus that secured dominion or imperium in America.³⁷ Just as forts, and a strong physical presence in an area, demonstrated to foreign powers geographic

³⁴ John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, August 1, 1613, in *Letters*, I: p. 407.

³⁵ ‘A relation of the late proceedings of the Virginia and Sumer Islands Companies, in answer to some imputations laid upon them, together with the discovery of the grounds of such unjust objection, and a Remedy proposed for the better avoiding the like inconveniencies hereafter; Humbly present to the Kings most Excellent Majestie by the said Companies, April 12, 1623’, in *RVC*, II: p. 362.

³⁶ Fitzmaurice ‘Every Man, That Prints’, p. 35. For more on faction and dispute in the VC, see Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480–1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 323–327; L. H. Roper, *The English Empire in America, 1602–1658: Beyond Jamestown* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire; Routledge, 2009), pp. 29–31, 87–92, 108–111; Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, pp. 216–220.

³⁷ Ken Macmillan, *Sovereignty and Possession in the English New World: Legal Foundations of Empire, 1576–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 186–187; Macmillan builds upon the ideas and themes given by Anthony Pagden in *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500–c.1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); David Armitage, *Ideological Origins*.

and administrative permanency, so too did conversion, which symbolised not only spiritual prestige but also permanent sovereignty over local populations. In his sermon to the company, the minister William Symonds used the language of imperium to demonstrate how conversion if not obtained through other means would be done through might.³⁸ Preaching on Genesis 12, Symonds compared God's call to Abraham to England's call to settle Virginia, reminding his congregation of the patriarchs' struggle, and how 'in a strange Country' they were to be wary and 'look for enemies' and that as enemies there was 'a *warrant*' by 'God's ordinance to bring a curse upon them, and to kill them'.³⁹ For Symonds, the spiritual, cultural and political conversion of the land and people of Virginia to English notions of Protestant civility was the ultimate goal of the company and the nation, and should be achieved by any means possible, whether 'education' or force.

Although some of the criticism was aimed at the company's apparent inability to secure consistent profits, ministers and preachers linked financial criticism to the VC's lack of vigour in pursuing their religious aims. As one petition to James I put it, the 'propagating of Christian Religion in those Barbarous parts' would be the only way that the English would enlarge 'your kingdom' as well as increase the 'Revenue for the enriching of your people and for the future strength this State'.⁴⁰ However, by 1624 it was becoming apparent that the VC had failed, at least on the face of it, to combine religion and trade sufficiently. Growing internal factionalism, falls in profits, the massacre in 1622, and the failure of the company's religious responsibility all eventually led to the Crown revoking its charter.⁴¹ The history of the VC in the first two decades of the seventeenth century provided the leadership of its contemporary companies instances of religious governance abroad that they could use to mould or replicate or ignore altogether.

³⁸ William Symonds, *Virginia. A sermon preached at White-Chappel, in the presence of many, honorable and worshipfull the adventurers and planters for Virginia* (London: 1609), sig. Gv.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. Gv, G2r.

⁴⁰ 'Relations of the Late Proceedings', April 12, 1623, in *RVC*, II: p. 362.

⁴¹ Craven, *Dissolution*.

PRESENCE OF AN ECCLESIASTICAL STRUCTURE

Throughout the company's history, the clergy were called upon to support its religious mission in Virginia. However, it was in the early period of its existence that the clergy in England played their most vital role in securing support for the company. Sermons were crucial in pushing the 'humanistic vision and ideology of the new colony' concerning moral and civic virtues, including the pursuit of spiritual and temporal glory and an active life.⁴² Furthermore, clergymen responded to the possibility that Virginia and its luxurious commodities represented a corrupting influence, by highlighting how they would instead benefit the state and society by elevating the role of evangelism and therefore England's international standing and power.⁴³ Between 1609 and 1612, the company embarked on a publicity campaign that was centred on the use of sermons reinvigorating the waning support for the company. In 1609 alone, the VC funded eight orations to encourage public engagement, seven of which were sermons, of which only three publications are available.⁴⁴ Between 1610 and 1622, a further nine sermons were preached before the company, including one by John Donne and another by EIC minister Patrick Copland.⁴⁵ Ministers from amongst the humanistic community including Donne and the dean and future Bishop of Durham, Thomas Morton, called for support of the company's religious and secular mission in America.⁴⁶ They blamed the difficulties that the company was facing on its financial rather than spiritual focus. These sermons combined the proselytising mission of the company with that of financial success, suggesting

⁴² Fitzmaurice, 'Every Man, That Prints', p. 24.

⁴³ Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonisation 1500–1625 (Ideas in Context)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1–7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26; For the sermons preached at Paul's Cross: Richard Crakanthorpe, March 24, George Benson, May 7, and Daniel Price, 25 May; at Whitechapel: Symonds, *Virginia. A sermon*; Robert Grey, *God Speed to Virginia*, April, Dean of Gloucester, Thomas Morton (later Bishop of Durham), preached of the lawfulness of colonising, and Robert Tynley, *Two Learned Sermons: The One of the Mischievous Subtiltie and Barbarous Crueltie, the Other of the False Doctrines and Refine Heresis of the Romish Synagogue. In the First are Examined Passages of that Libell Written by a Prophane Fugitiue [Robert Parsons] Against the Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance, in the Seconde are Answered Many of the Arguments Published by Rob. Chambers, Priest, Concerning Popish Miracles* (London: 1609).

⁴⁵ Copland and Pope, *Virginia's God Be Thanked*.

⁴⁶ Working, *Imperial Polity*, pp. 69–71.

that only through the former could the latter be achieved. The Dean of Ely Cathedral, Robert Tynley, argued that the principal mission of the company was to remove, through Christian evangelism, ‘the chains of error and ignorance’ that the local Algonquins lived under.⁴⁷ According to Tynley, in doing so the company could ‘assuredly expect the fruits which usually accompany such godly enterprise’.⁴⁸ Similarly, William Symonds, whose patron was Robert Bertie, Lord Willoughby, compared the work of the English to that of the biblical patriarch, Abraham. He wrote that it was only in fearing God, as Abraham had done, that the VC’s planters would receive the blessing of God and ‘grow into a nation formidable to all the enemies of Christ’.⁴⁹ The humanistic vision of clergymen and the company’s leadership continued throughout the company’s existence, in which the mercantile aims of the company were bonded with its religious governance.

Ensuring that enough ministers were being sent out to secure the VC’s authority and the ‘comfort of the souls of the inhabitants’ of Virginia (whether English or Native American), the company attempted to offer incentives to encourage ministers to travel there.⁵⁰ This involved a lucrative stipend of up to £200 a year, as well as offering land, sometimes amounting to 100 acres, with a guarantee of six tenants to work the land.⁵¹ Alongside these financial rewards, the VC ensured that their ministers were protected under the company laws. After reiterating that no man could ‘blaspheme God’s holy name’ nor ‘see any traitorous words against his Majesties Person’, Gates, in the fifth of his codes, ensured protection under the law for the company’s ministers in Virginia.⁵² The law required that all company workers ‘hold them [ministers] in all reverent regard’ or they would be punished by publicly asking for forgiveness or face a whipping.⁵³ Both royal and company authorities sought to ensure that Virginians duly respected the ministers of the established

⁴⁷ Tynley, *Two Learned Sermons*, p. 67.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁴⁹ Symonds, *Virginia*, p. 35.

⁵⁰ February 22, 1620, in *RVC*, I: p. 314.

⁵¹ Virginia Company, Instructions to George Yeardley, November 18, 1618, in *RVC*, II, 102; February 22, 1620, in *RVC*, I: p. 314.

⁵² Strachey, *Laws divine, moral and martial*, p. 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Church. By firmly backing the authority of church ministers, they aimed to ensure that the VC's own religious authority and religious governance were observed.

Furthermore, a strong church leadership provided the foundations to extend the company's missionary agenda and Protestant call to arms, which continually re-emerged in the subsequent charters of the company. In each case, it reinforced the importance of religion and religious governance in the development of the corporation. The 1612 charter of the VC reminded its members of their obligation in the 'reclaiming of people barbarous to civility and humanity' through Protestant evangelism. It was the perception of the English governmental leaders that the VC would bring back into the Christian family those who had, through geography, been lost. As with the lost thirteenth tribe of Israel, the Protestant members and leaders of the VC would reclaim the Native Americans from their 'defection from the true knowledge of God', as they shared the same biblical 'descent and beginning'.⁵⁴ It was believed that the presence of the English corporation and its reformed Protestant government could transform an environment and its people 'like our native country'.⁵⁵ For those concerned with the evangelism of the Native Americans, this involved coercing them away from their chief deity, whom the English believed to be the Devil incarnate. Crashaw lamented that 'Satan visibly and palpably reigns there', so much so that it was not comparable to 'any other known place of the world'.⁵⁶ The company further saw connections between the deity Okee and the Devil in the practices of their powerful priests. They saw the eradication or the erosion of the priests' power in the Native American communities as the first step to achieving the evangelical mission of the company and establishing English authority.

EVANGELISM AND EDUCATION

To evangelise successfully and secure the company's authority over Native Americans, VC officials instituted a programme of Christian education aimed at eradicating Native American religious and cultural customs and

⁵⁴ Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1849 [1612]), p. 45.

⁵⁵ Strachey, *Lawes divine, moral and martial*, sig. G4v.

⁵⁶ Alexander Whitaker, *Good Newes from Virginia sent to the Counsell and Company of Virginia, resident in England* (London: 1613), p. IX.

replacing them with Protestant English ones. In 1611, the company wrote to Lord Delaware lamenting English relations with the local Algonquins claiming that this had been a ‘great hinderance of planting Christianity’, which was ‘the chieftest thing in our intencion though not the first in prosecution is and ought to be... the reducing of those Savages to the true knowledge of God’.⁵⁷ From an early stage, the company sought to bring Native Americans under its religious governance through the introduction of a formal education programme for the indigenous children of Virginia. A long-time supporter of the colony Alexander Whitaker described this mission as a direct order from God, and as such the prime goal of the colony. Whitaker wrote in his foreword to *Good news from Virginia* that he had received a calling from God to evangelise the Native Americans in Virginia.⁵⁸ Moreover, he compared the Native Americans to the Britons prior to the arrival of the gospel on English shores, arguing that the local Algonquins needed the charity of Christianity to progress towards temporal and spiritual civility. He then legitimised this action by pointing out that all people are the biblical descendants of Adam. Due to this, he believed that Native Americans had ‘reasonable souls and intellectual faculties as well as wee’ and so were susceptible to conversion, especially through education.⁵⁹ The use of biblical descent or origin to sanction evangelism was not uncommon. Popular contemporary theories on the origins of the Native American peoples were that they descended from one of the lost thirteen tribes of Israel or Ham.⁶⁰ William Strachey argued that, as descendants of Ham, Native Americans had been deprived of the paternal religious guidance of Noah, and that from Ham ‘the ignorance of the true worship of God tooke beginninge, the inventions of heathenisme, and adoration of false gods, and the devil’.⁶¹ According to

⁵⁷ Virginia Company to Lord Delaware March 1611, Magdalene College, Ferrar Papers (FP) 30.

⁵⁸ William Crashaw, forward, in Whitaker, *Good Newes*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶⁰ For more on theories of the Lost Tribes of Israel, see Chapter 4; for more on the ideas of a shared religious history between Native Americans and English, see John Corrigan, ‘Amalek and the Rhetoric of Extermination’, in Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenda, eds., *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2011), pp. 53–72; Kupperman, *Facing Off*, pp. 118–120.

⁶¹ Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile*, pp. 45–47.

Strachey in ‘not applying’ himself ‘to learne from his father the knowledge and prescribed worship of the eternal God’ Ham had taken the ‘first universial confusion’ and brought ‘the travails and idolatry’ into America.⁶² Taking the place of Noah, the VC would offer the opportunity for Native Americans to learn the knowledge of the Christian faith and the ‘eternal God’ thereof. To many, the VC was a vehicle for evangelism, a corporate St Augustine, continuing his works as apostle to the English by spreading the Christian faith he brought to England, and taking it as ‘Apostles to Virginia’.⁶³ For Strachey, the responsibility of Noah and St Augustine, had now fallen to the English, to evangelise and teach the Native Americans to worship the Christian God. By converting Algonquin men, women and children, Whitaker and Strachey were extending the spiritual boundaries of English religious governance. In doing so, they were solidifying the jurisdictional control of the company over those Protestants, both English and Algonquin, who fell within its geographic control. If achieved, evangelism not only secured the English the authority of the company, but it also visibly affirmed the permanence of Protestantism abroad.

For many contemporaries, the conversion of Powhatan’s daughter, Matoaka, whilst also affirming Whitaker’s calling, was proof of the success of educational evangelism. Better known as Pocahontas, Matoaka converted to Christianity after several years in captivity under Whitaker’s tutelage. Her conversion and subsequent marriage to John Rolfe, as well as the birth of her child Thomas Rolfe, led to a request from the company in 1616 for her to accompany her husband and son back to England. Upon her arrival in England, Matoaka, or Lady Rebecca Rolfe as she became known, was thrust into public life, attending receptions and masques hosted by both the King and Queen, as well as being entertained by the Bishop of London at Lambeth Palace.⁶⁴ In the lead-up to

⁶² Ibid., p. 46.

⁶³ Whitaker, *Good Newes*, p. IV.

⁶⁴ On the masque that Matoaka saw, see ‘The Vision of Delight’, in Stephen Orgel, ed., *Ben Jonson: Selected Masques* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1970); for Pocahontas’s meeting with the Queen, see McClure, *Letters*, II: pp. 49–50; or Matoaka at Lambeth Palace, Samuel Purchas, *Hakluyt Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 19 vols. (Glasgow: Macleese, 1905), XIX: p. 118; Dagmar Wernitznig, *Europe’s Indians, Indians in Europe: European Perceptions of Native American Cultures from Pocahontas of the Present* (Lanham: MD; University of America Press 2007), p. 18.

Matoaka's voyage to England, John Smith wrote to Queen Anne asking that she treat her with kindness, recalling how she saved his life. Smith suggested that it would be crucial for the Queen to meet Matoaka, as she was the 'first Christian ever of that Nation, the first Virginian [to] ever speak English, or ha[ve] a child in marriage by an Englishman' and as such God had made 'her his instrument'.⁶⁵ For Smith, any refusal to meet her would have been detrimental to the fate of the English and Christian mission in Virginia, as 'her present love to us and Christianity might turn to such scorn and fury, as to divert all this good to the worst of evil'.⁶⁶ Many in the VC, held similar beliefs to Smith, perceiving Matoaka conversion as being part of a divinely ordained plan, and so the company granted John Rolfe £100 and ordered that they should both return to Virginia, where Matoaka was to work towards 'the planting and propagation of Christian religion'.⁶⁷ However, the prospect of being used as an agent of the English to convert her fellow Native Americans to Christianity, and thereby erode their sovereignty, must have been unbearable for Matoaka.⁶⁸ Matoaka's story is illustrative of the much wider policy of evangelism that the company adopted. This was grounded in the education of Native American children who were taken from their parents and taught English customs and Christianity. Although it proved far from effective, the company's leaders hoped the children would return to their families after their education, as agents themselves of the company's authority and religious governance. Firmly anglicised, the VC believed they would be taken back by their people and would slowly encourage others to replace Native American religious customs with that of Protestant English authority.

By the time Matoaka left for England, the company's leadership had become wary of the power of the Native American religious leaders,

⁶⁵ Kupperman, ed., *Captain John Smith: A Select Edition of His Writings* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 69–71.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁶⁷ Warrant, 10 March 1617 Council in London to John and Rebecca Rolfe, FP 72; Warrant of Edwin Sandys and John Wrote to Thomas Smythe, 10 March 1617, in Ransome, 'Pocahontas', p. 94; Kupperman, *Facing Off*, p. 203; Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500–1776* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 87–90.

⁶⁸ Kupperman, *Facing Off*, pp. 199–203; Ransome, 'Pocahontas', pp. 81–94.

keen to present itself at home as achieving its goal of establishing religious governance. The company was right to be alarmed when Matoaka's uncle, an influential priest, named Uttamatmakkin, accompanied her to England. Apprehensive about allowing Matoaka to travel to England, Powhatan eventually gave his permission, provided that her father's priest, Uttamatmakkin, accompanied her—an arrangement that made Thomas Dale uneasy.⁶⁹ Company officials were wary of allowing Uttamatmakkin to accompany Matoaka, given his influence and what they perceived as distrust of the English. Uttamatmakkin not only presented a risk to the company, but also drew attention to the limitations of its religious mission, and thereby presenting the possibility of unfavourable public scrutiny. When interviewed by Samuel Purchas, he proved to live up to all the company's expectations, refusing to engage with anyone who wished to convert him, leading Purchas to describe him as a man who is 'very zealous in his superstition' noting that despite attempts to convert him he would 'hear no persuasion to the truth'.⁷⁰ The priest's devotion to his faith was not the only thing that the VC found alarming, Uttamatmakkin's interest in English authority and power also presented them with a future problem as his Atlantic journey provided him with the opportunity to acquire intelligence that would later risk the stability of the company's authority and religious governance.

Returning after the death of Matoaka in 1617 Uttamatmakkin immediately sought to convince Powhatan's successor, Opechancanough, of the dishonesty of the English, using evidence from his time in England to do so.⁷¹ Worried about the effect of this, Argall wrote that 'Tomakin [Uttamatmakkin] rails against England' and the English people.⁷² Concerned about how the company would receive this news, Argall tried to play down how Uttamatmakkin's reports were received by Powhatan and Opechancanough, writing that by his actions 'Tomakin is disgraced'.⁷³ Although Samuel Argall's account would suggest that

⁶⁹ Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough*, p. 178.

⁷⁰ Purchas, *His Pilgrimes* (1625), IV: pp. 954–955.

⁷¹ Matoaka died in March 1617 who died from possible pneumonia aboard a ship sailing for Virginia and was buried in St George's Church, Gravesend on March 21, 1617.

⁷² Governor Argall, 'A Letter probably to His Majesty's Council for Virginia, June 9, 1617', in *RVC*, III: p. 73.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Uttatomakkin had not been fruitful in wooing Opechancanough, he had been more successful than Argall thought. By acquiring alarming information on the size of the English population, as well as reporting that, at a reception with King James, he had been treated poorly, in a way that was unbecoming of an ally, Uttatomakkin provided damning reports of the English, putting the colony's security in jeopardy. Altogether, the priest painted a disparaging picture of a nation that could not be trusted and who were not serious about their alliance.⁷⁴ On top of Uttatomakkin's news was the efforts of Argall and the company to negotiate a treaty in which Thomas, Matoaka's son and Powhatan's grandson, would have usurped Opechancanough's right to the throne. Uttatomakkin's report about treaty negotiations and the treatment of allies was to be a likely factor in Opechancanough's decision to attack the English in 1622. However, Uttatomakkin's own motives have received very little attention in the historical discussion.⁷⁵ By reporting that the company and settlers could not be trusted, Uttatomakkin was not only serving his nation, but also moving to preserve his own faith from the religious governance of the VC. His position as a priest placed him in a position to influence and inform the decision of Powhatan's successor. In doing so, Uttatomakkin set in motion events that would lead to the dissolution of the company and end plans to place the Native American peoples under its authority.

Despite the tragic fate of Matoaka, religious education continued to be the focus of the VC's religious governance, the result of which would lead to the company discussing the establishment of colleges to evangelise and train local Algonquins in what they believed to be English civility. One year after the death of Matoaka in 1618, formal provisions for the VC's educational programme were discussed at a meeting in London. At this meeting, VC leaders called for a college to be established for the 'training up of the Children of those infidels in true Religion, moral

⁷⁴ As Kupperman points out, Uttatomakkin's indignation came from the custom that a 'lack of generosity in relationships was despicable'. He compared King James's behaviour in not giving him a gift to the story of Powhatan receiving a white dog from Smith 'which Powhatan fed as himself', concluding that 'our King gave me nothing, and I am better than your white Dog'. See Kupperman, *Facing Off*, p. 214; John Smith, *Generall Historie of Virginia New England and the Summer Islands* (London: 1624), p. 123.

⁷⁵ Jeffrey Glover, *Paper Sovereigns: Anglo-Native Treaties and the Law of Nations, 1604–1664* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), p. 115.

virtue, and Civility and for other godly uses'.⁷⁶ However, the earliest that a formal dialogue concerning education in the colony can be traced was two years after Jamestown was planted. In a set of instructions sent to Gates, the company's council in England ordered him to not only seize farmland from the Weroance peoples, but also 'those which are young and to succeed in the government'.⁷⁷ The hope was that through education, they would come to adopt English 'Manners and Religion', and eventually all 'their people will easily obey you and become in time Civil and Christian'.⁷⁸ At the same time, the council also sent more extensive instruction to absentee governor Delaware, explaining to him that they wished him to work towards 'the conversion of the natives and savages to the knowledge and worship of the true god'.⁷⁹ They further recommended that Delaware obtain some local Native American children in order for them 'to be brought up in our language and manners'.⁸⁰ Despite actively instructing Virginia planters to evangelise through education, ten years passed by before the VC made any formal arrangements to establish a college in Virginia. By this time the task was considered so essential that, in England, bishops were requested by the Crown to 'contribute to so good work' and be 'willing to give all assistance and furtherance' in the 'education of the children of those Barbarians'.⁸¹ The members of the VC believed their religious governance not only saved Native Americans from eternal damnation, but also converted those deemed 'barbarous' to English civility, thwarting expansion of the Iberian nations in North America.

Whether through offering spiritual guidance or giving financial help for the 'training and bringing up of Infidels children to the true knowledge of God & understanding of righteousness', the established Church

⁷⁶ *The Third Virginia Charter* (March 12, 1612); although not a technical charter, the letter sent to George Yeardley is sometimes called 'The Great Charter'; see 'Instructions to George Yeardley, November 18, 1618', in *RVC*, III: p. 102.

⁷⁷ Virginia Council 'Instructions order and Constitutions to Sir Thomas Gates Knight Governor of Virginia, May 1609', in *RVC*, III: p. 19.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ 'Instructions Orders and Constitutions, 1609/10', in *RVC*, III: p. 27.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ The King. Order to Archbishops of Canterbury and York, 1616, in *RVC*, IV: pp. 1–2.

in England was mobilised to help this mission.⁸² The Archbishops of both Canterbury and York were requested to encourage support for the ‘propagation of the Gospel amongst Infidels’, and they did so.⁸³ That year the company received £300 from the diocese of the Archbishop of Canterbury and by 1618 £1,500 had been raised in parishes throughout England for the mission.⁸⁴ These funds would have most likely come from areas where high-ranking clergymen were enthusiastic members of the company. These individuals included George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury; John King, Bishop of London; James Montague, Bishop of Bath and Wells; William James, Bishop of Durham; Henry Parry, Bishop of Worcester; John Bridges, Bishop of Oxford; George Montaigne, Dean of Westminster; and Matthew Sutcliffe, Dean of Exeter, all of whom had taken an active interest in the company, either in its government or its funding.⁸⁵ Moreover, in Virginia the responsibility for the education and conversion of Native American children was seen as a collective responsibility. In order to continue to encourage further conversion, the company adopted a policy of sanctioned child abduction. In 1621 the VC sent instructions to the governor and council of the colony ordering that each ‘Town, City, Borough, and other particular Plantation’ was required to ‘obtain unto themselves by just means a certain number of the Children of the Natives’, who were to be ‘educated by them in true Religion and a Civil course of life’.⁸⁶ Such children ‘obtained’ by the English settlers were to receive a level of primary education in order to be ‘fitted for the College[s]’ that were to be established throughout Virginia.⁸⁷ Between 1618 and 1622, the company initiated moves to establish two centres of

⁸² Court held for Virginia May 26, 1619, *RVC*, I: p. 220.

⁸³ James Axtell, *The Rise and Fall of the Powhatan Empire: Indians in Seventeenth-Century Virginia* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundations, 1995), p. 33.

⁸⁴ Copy of Sir Thomas Smyth’s Acquittance to the L. Archbishop of Canterbury for £300 of the money collected for a College in Virginia: Received of the Bishop of London 2 March 1617, FP 71.

⁸⁵ *The Second Virginia Company Charter* (1609); *The Third Virginia Company Charter* (1612).

⁸⁶ ‘Instructions to the Governor for the time being and Counsel of State in Virginia’, 24 July 1621, FP 285.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

education in Virginia. The first was a college at Henrico and the second was the East Indian School at Charles City.⁸⁸

At the forefront of the mission was at least one minister in every borough in the colony. Across its existence, the VC sent out 22 ministers to administer to both the Native Americans and English settlers in Virginia.⁸⁹ Ministers were required to ‘allure the Heathen people to submit themselves to the Sceptre of God’s most righteous and blessed Kingdome, and so finally to join with them in the true Christian profession’.⁹⁰ The invocation of royal imagery through the sceptre, even as a necessary step to conversion, highlights how VC leadership perceived the role of the company in spreading both secular and spiritual authority of the English state. Not only did conversion account for the soul of the individual but it also asserted the company’s authority over the converted. Through conversion into the established Protestant church of England, individuals subjected themselves to a body whose head was the monarch. This form of subjecthood through conversion not only reinforced English territorial claims, but also strengthened the company’s authority, as the representative body of the English state in Virginia. By firmly establishing an English Church presence in Virginia, leaders on both sides of the Atlantic hoped to weaken indigenous religious power. This was part of a well-established policy by James that aimed at forcing the local indigenous populations to adopt and conform to English authority as enforced by the religious governance of the company.⁹¹ However, just as with many of the other settlers, epidemiological and environmental factors resulted in high mortality amongst the clergy. However, by 1620, the mortality rate lowered, and the number of priests in Virginia rose, so that half of Virginia’s eleven boroughs at any one time contained a minister.⁹²

⁸⁸ William and Mary, despite receiving its charter in 1693, asserts that although it is the second oldest college in the United States, it was originally supposed to be established in 1619, thereby through a claim of ancestral lineage putting it above Harvard, see <http://www.wm.edu/about/history/index.php> [accessed May 5, 2015].

⁸⁹ Bond, *Damned Souls*, p. 128; A broadside issued by the Virginia Company, and directed to the Governor and council in Virginia, 17 May 1620, FP 173.

⁹⁰ A Broadside, May 17, 1620, in *RVC*, III: p. 276.

⁹¹ Alexandra Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 40.

⁹² William Stith, *The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia* (Williamsburg, VA: Williams Parks, 1747), p. 173.

Despite the increase, the number was not as high as the company had hoped, and so it requested that the Bishop of London send more ministers to the colony. Not only did the bishop oblige, but he also contributed significant sums to the establishment of a college to ensure that the VC could train its own ministers, as well as convert and educate Native Americans.⁹³ By maintaining the clergy's presence in Virginia, the VC hoped to solidify its religious governance by providing the spiritual leadership needed to educate and convert.

On top of claims to sovereignty and the soul, advocates of educational evangelism amongst Native Americans continued to suggest that religion was a route not only to spiritual but also commercial profit. An anonymous letter read out by Sir Edwin Sandys at a company meeting in 1620 gave a charitable donation of £500 to the education of Native American children in the Christian faith in the belief that such work would bring 'many casting gifts into the Treasury'.⁹⁴ The company also went on to gift substantial amounts of land and manpower to the school and college to be worked on for the school and college to sustain itself.⁹⁵ Such actions further highlighted the company's support for the religious policies being enacted in Virginia. Furthermore, it illustrates how the VC's religious governance was being keenly observed and supported back in England, both by members of the company and by non-members.

The gifting of books to the colleges and churches, as well as other items, also became common practice in England, as many people in and outside the company sought to become benefactors to the evangelical project in Virginia. The VC's minute books log several occasions when items were requested to be sent by the company to the churches and colleges in Virginia; from bibles to table cloths, as well as two books—St Augustine's treatises and the works of the Puritan leader William Perkins.⁹⁶ The choice of sending these two books to one of the colleges

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ *RVC*, I: pp. 307–308.

⁹⁵ Virginia Company, Instructions to George Yeardley, November 18, 1618, in *RVC*, II: p. 102; Virginia Company, 'A Note of the Shipping, Men and Provisions Sent and Provided for Virginia... in the Yeere 1621', in *RVC*, II: p. 640.

⁹⁶ For an extensive list of gifts, see 'A Memoriall of Religious Charitie Exercised on Virginia to the Glory of God and Good Example of Men, These Three Last Yeares, 1619. 1620. 1621', in *RVC*, III: pp. 576–577; for notice of books in minutes see 'At A Quarter Courte held for Virginia November 15, 1620', in *RVC*, I: p. 421.

in Virginia is revealing. The presence of St Augustine of Hippo's treatises epitomised the religious mission of the English company seeing themselves as walking in Augustine's footsteps. Just as he had championed education in the process of conversion, so the VC would evangelise and convert Native Americans through education. Similarly, the choice of Perkins offers an insight into the theological, as well as educational, foundations for proselytising in Virginia. Perkins, as a Calvinist, had doctrinal leanings towards supralapsarian evangelism, believing that it was a necessity to secure those whom God had preordained and bring about the day of judgement. In his writings, he argued that those who had 'afflicted conscience' who were not reformed Protestants should be informed of their vices and 'hear the voice of the Gospel' so that their souls could be saved.⁹⁷ For Perkins, Puritan theology was 'the science of living blessedly forever', and for him this salvation, although predestined by God, was obtainable by all. He described faith as a mustard seed and argued that even something that small is itself evidence of God's work, and so is the assurance of salvation.⁹⁸ For the company, education was its way of expounding this 'science', moving the Native Americans' away from what the English settler perceived as irreligious vices. In doing so settlers planted not only Perkins's mustard seed of spiritual salvation, but also the idea that conversion would lead to civil and societal salvation amongst the Native Americans.

Both educational centres at Henrico and Charles City were established through similar fundraising schemes and charitable donations, by way of which both offered 'free' education to children of Native Americans. The latter was the brainchild of Patrick Copland, who, upon returning from Japan, raised funds to establish a school for Native American children in Virginia. Copland, who will be discussed in other chapters, had developed a name for himself during his time in the EIC, becoming a celebrity after his conversion of an Indian boy, who was later named Peter Pope by King James. Obtaining support from both the EIC and the VC, Copland entered the service of the latter, being made a freeman of the company in

⁹⁷ William Perkins, *The arte of prophecying, or, A treatise concerning the sacred and onely true manner and methode of preaching*, trans. Thomas Tuke (London: 1607), pp. 121–122.

⁹⁸ Perkins, *A Golden Chaine, in The Whole Works of... M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: 1636), I., p. 11; Perkins, *A case of conscience the greatest that ever was, how a man may know, whether he be the son of God or no* (Edinburgh: 1592), p. 53.

1622 and the rector elect of the college at Henrico. He championed from his own experiences the cause of education and evangelism at company meetings. In fact, by 1622, Copland was held in such high esteem by the company that they pleaded with him to go to Virginia as a minister, writing ‘Upon the earnest desire of divers Adventurers that Mr Copland would please go to Virginia and apply himself to the Ministry there’.⁹⁹ Through charitable donations, the company offered practical support for educational programmes, seeing the necessity of the work, writing that the ‘eyes of God, Angell, and men were fixed’ upon it.¹⁰⁰

However, despite moves to formalise the evangelical process in Virginia, company settlers had, for some time, been taking and educating Native American children in the Christian faith. For its part, the company was keen to make it seem as if ‘the Indians’ were ‘very loving, and willing to part with their children’, seeing the arrangement as similar to the European practice of warding.¹⁰¹ Yet, the practice did not create a brotherly bond between the Native Americans and the English. Instead, the taking of children, along with the systematic attempts to eradicate local customs and culture through education, did more to cause distance and resentment than foster cultural and religious harmony.

ENFORCEMENT

As the VC entered the 1620s, the same policies that made up its religious governance placed it at risk, with local Native American populations growing increasingly hostile towards the encroaching presence of its religious government, and ministers trying to ensure religious and social unity amongst the English population. One of the minister’s key responsibilities in the plantations was to maintain religious unity and thereby social cohesion, acting to prevent any infraction that could escalate into religious or civil unrest. Throughout its existence, the VC’s servants, both in America and in England, consistently called for ‘worthy Ministers here’.¹⁰² The company was very clear on its ministers’ traditional role in

⁹⁹ ‘At a Virginia Court Held the June 19, 1622’, in *RVC*, II: p. 49.

¹⁰⁰ ‘A Quarter Court held for Virginia, January 30, 1622’, in *RVC*, I: p. 588.

¹⁰¹ ‘Rolfe to Sir Edwin Sandys, June 8, 1617’, in *RVC*, I: pp. 70–73.

¹⁰² Council in Virginia, ‘Letter to Virginia Company of London, January 1621/22’, in *RVC*, III: p. 583.

the religious life of the plantation, just as in England they were to provide ‘the service of Almighty God’ for ‘the spiritual benefit and comfort of the people’.¹⁰³ However, ministers in Virginia were also required, to establish or reinforce company governance in environments outside the traditional roles of the English parson. Ministers as well as other church officials were not only required to administer to the spiritual well-being of the planters, but also to act as enforcers and arbiters of the company’s law. This was a deliberate move by the leadership of the company to utilise the Church in the colony to firmly entrench both spiritual and temporal law in Virginia. Churchwardens were ordered to police their communities and present anyone who was drunk to the commanders of each plantation, whilst in 1619 John Pory ordered that ministers and churchwardens seek out and expose any ‘any ungodly disorders’, specifically prostitution.¹⁰⁴ The company further ordered that, just as in England, ministers, particularly Conformist chaplains, were to ‘be respected and maintained’ according to the laws of the company.¹⁰⁵ To establish civil unity, company leadership dictated that ministers needed to settle the ‘usual form and discipline of the Church of England’.¹⁰⁶ By careful religious governance, the company would avoid ‘all factious and needless novelties tending only to the disturbance of peace and unity’.¹⁰⁷ As church leaders, ministers were the company’s enforcers, employed to preserve religious unity and thereby establish social harmony and God’s favour.

Traditional religious punishments were also used to ensure societal cohesion amongst English settlers in Virginia, as VC leadership further engrained religious governance in the company’s way of life. Leadership utilised the religious practice of excommunication, turning it into not only a form of spiritual punishment but also a governmental sanction. Ministers from all parishes were required to meet every quarter next to the governor’s mansion to list and discuss those who had been suggested for excommunication. Upon agreement, they would recommend a list of

¹⁰³ ‘Instructions, November 18, 1618’, in *RVC*, II: p. 102.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 583; Manner of Proceeding, July 30, 31, August 2, 3, 4, 1619, in *RVC*, III: p. 172.

¹⁰⁵ Virginia Company, ‘Instructions to the Governor and Council of State in Virginia, July 24, 1621’, in *RVC*, III: p. 469.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Instructions to the Governor and Council of State in Virginia, July 24, 1621’, in *RVC*, III: p. 468.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

names to the governor, who would then order for them and their property to be seized.¹⁰⁸ By not only placing the individual's eternal soul at risk, but also making them social pariahs, excommunication ensured both the spiritual and temporal submission of settlers to the colony's laws. Mavericks would be marked out and left to fend for themselves, not only against the prospect of the Virginian wilderness, but also against an increasingly hostile Native American population.¹⁰⁹

The leadership of the company in Virginia pointed out that, in the spiritual teachings and governance of the Church, its ministers were required to plant, encourage and enforce the 'doctrine, rights, religion, and ecclesiastical form of government now professed and established in England'.¹¹⁰ Religious governance had its foundations in the familiarity and authority of the Church of England. Company officials in Virginia, just like many political and religious leaders in England, sought to create a unified Anglican society abroad. Captain John Bargrave advocated religious homogeneity to encourage societal cohesion and harmony, comparing the effects of doctrinal division between the biblical prophets Moses and Aaron to the religious tension amongst the Virginia planters. He concluded that doctrinal disunity was a leading cause of social discord in the colony. Seeking to preserve the religious unity of its planters, officials commanded that anyone 'who shall profess any doctrine contrary to ours' would not be allowed to 'remain or abide within our said plantations', facing banishment, or worse, excommunication.¹¹¹ The conformity of ministers was such a pressing issue that even King James I wrote asking about the 'quality of our ministers in Virginia', being particularly concerned that they 'would ever conform themselves to the Church of England'.¹¹² James even went so far as to specify that the building of churches should also conform to those in England, writing 'our churches

¹⁰⁸ 'Instructions to the Governor, July 24, 1621', in *RVC*, III: p. 468.

¹⁰⁹ For excommunication and spiritual censure in Early Modern England, see Ralph Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People During the English Reformation, 1520–1570* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); David Cressy, *Travesties and Transgression in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), particularly chapter 8.

¹¹⁰ Captain John Bargrave, 'A Form of Policy for Virginia, Before December 7, 1623', in *RVC*, IV: p. 412.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² A report of Sir Yeardley going Governor to Virginia, 5 December 1618, FP 93.

should not be built like Theatres or Cockpits, but in a decent form, and in imitation of the churches in England'.¹¹³ For James and Bargrave, the effect of this religious disunity not only led to scandal, but also threatened the supremacy of government. Whether in Virginia or England, it was only through religious unity that the interests of the Crown, state and company were ensured. Each body was both independent of, and dependent on, the other for commercial, political and financial support; however, all were, in his opinion, reliant on cohesive and unified religious governance for governmental success. Bargrave further reinforced the ties between the Church and the governance of the company's plantations, claiming that anyone who refused to be 'governed by our ecclesiastical government' should be considered a 'resister of our sovereign power'.¹¹⁴ Here, religious governance enforced the company's authority through both spiritual and temporal powers. By resisting the religious governance of the company, individuals challenged the sovereign powers of both the Crown and Church, which had vested their jurisdictional authority in the company when abroad.

PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

The company's religious governance was based on fear, as much as it was evangelism, since it sought not only to bring Native Americans to Protestant civility and authority by saving their souls, but also to protect the eternal lives of its planters by eradicating certain religious beliefs and practices that they deemed to be devil worship. In a letter back to London, Whitaker drew parallels between the religious practices of Virginia Algonquians or Powhatan, and Catholics, describing festivities involving fire and smoke as 'a thing like a censer'.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, he also used terms such as 'deformed monster' to describe 'their [Algonquian] god'.¹¹⁶ Some years later, John Smith recalled, in some detail, the times when he witnessed Native American religious customs. He described one occasion when he witnessed a *powwow* and felt that to be amongst the

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ 'A Form of Policy, December 7, 1623', in *RVC*, IV: p. 413.

¹¹⁵ Alexander Whitaker to William Crashaw, 9 August 1611, in Edward Wright, ed., *Jamestown Narratives: Eyewitness Accounts of the Virginia Colony, the First Decade: 1607-1617* (Champlain, VA: Roundhouse, 1998), p. 550; Whitaker, *Good Newes*, sig. G2r.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Algonquins during the event was as if being ‘near led to hell, Amongst the Devils to dwell’.¹¹⁷ For the English, local Native American customs were both a spiritual and social threat. They represented moments of social and religious power amongst the Algonquin peoples that challenged English authority in the region.

A mix of wilful ignorance and mistranslation provided the English with a misleading picture of Native American religious practices, serving to legitimise their evangelical mission. The VC developed a justification for evangelism based on the information provided by their own settlers’ misguided assumptions about Powhatan religious customs and cultural practices as well as occasional connections with English Protestantism. Rumours of ritual sacrifice were persistently circulated in the early years of the company’s settlement. This was mostly through Smith’s confused reporting of the Powhatan male rite of passage, the *buskanaw*, in which English settlers reported, ‘in some part of the Country they have yearly a sacrifice of children’.¹¹⁸ The events symbolised the death of childhood, in which mothers would publicly grieve for their children, making funeral pyres, whilst their young sons were thrashed with bundles of sticks by the men of the tribe. Following this, the children were taken into the woods by the men and taught the skills required to be adults. English settlers failed to see the symbolism of the death of childhood and rebirth into adulthood, instead reporting having seen children sacrificed and lying lifeless under trees, as women grieved. Smith acknowledged that some of the children did not die, but he painted an imaginative picture of their fate, writing that for those still alive ‘Okee or Devil did suck the blood from their left breast, who chanced to be his by lot till they were dead’.¹¹⁹ Smith’s colourful account combines fear with ignorance, which, when added to Christian zeal, provoked many in the company to further their attempt to impose the company’s religious governance over the Native Americans through evangelism.

Furthermore, to many contemporaries, the practice of the *buskanaw* reinforced the need for the VC’s religious governance, as the ritual seemingly perpetuated the cycle of Native American heathenism. In particular, the company was concerned that the custom was also an event that

¹¹⁷ Smith, *Generall Historie*, p. 48.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

involved recruiting priests who, according to Whitaker, were ‘a generation of vipers even of Satan’s own brood’.¹²⁰ Fear of the supernatural power of the Native American priests, especially in effecting changes in the weather, often preoccupied the imaginations of English settlers. Just as Native Americans sought to supplicate the Christian God during times of harsh weather, English settlers sought to blame extreme weather and ecological events on the powers of Native American priests. Witnessing an English attack on the Nansemond Indians, Whitaker wrote of a *powwow* taking place and how, being led by a priest, the Nansemonds were a ‘mad crew dancing like Antics, or our Morris dancers’, and that his Indian guide, watching this, warned the English that there would be much rain to come.¹²¹ The captain of Jamestown fort, George Percy, who led the attack, described the event vividly and concluded that the Native Americans ‘making many diabolical gestures with many nigramantcke [necromantic] spells and incantation[s]’ were trying to make it rain in order ‘to extinguish and putt out our men’s matches, and to wet and spoil their powder’.¹²² The reason Europeans wrote so extensively on the failure of the *powwows* was ‘precisely because they took those powers very seriously’, which is why they often fearfully included, in their writings, those moments when the priests had been successful and rivalled the power of the Christians.¹²³

The religious and secular leadership of the company were fearful of the Native American priests’ spiritual and social powers, against which they would ultimately fall short, and their evangelical mission to establish English religious authority over the Native Americans be considered a failure. Not only did the company’s settlers view the deities of the Native American faith as representing aspects of the Devil, but the same label was also often thrown against the spiritual leaders of their faiths. Even after settlers noticed children returning from the *huskanaw* and questioned whether sacrifice was indeed taking place, they continued to be alarmed by the ritual. Perceiving it as a religious occasion when children were further pushed down a path of spiritual savagery, colonists

¹²⁰ Whitaker, *Good Newes*, p. 26.

¹²¹ Quoted in Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 179.

¹²² George Percy, *Trewe Relaycon, of Proceedings and Occurences of Moments which have happened in Virginia* (London: 1612), p. 259.

¹²³ Kupperman, *Jamestown*, p. 180.

also worried that the *huskanaw* created a warrior class within Algonquin society that threatened the existence of the English in Virginia. Seeing the returning children as successfully having been initiated into the Native American priesthood, Smith pointed out that, when they returned, they were destined to become ‘priests and conjurers’.¹²⁴ However, the reverse can also be said, as Europeans also recalled the failures of Native American religious practices and the supremacy of their own faith. The fear of the indigenous faith encouraged settlers to obediently respect and follow their own faith for protection, whilst epidemiological and environmental events, or ‘invisible bullets’ that decimated local Indian populations, were seen as divine intervention in support of the settlers’ aims.¹²⁵ The effect of this reinforced the company’s religious governance and further encouraged its leaders to zealously oversee the implementation of its religious and political aims.

RELIGIOUS GOVERNANCE AND DOWNFALL OF THE VIRGINIA COMPANY

By 1622, relations between the VC and the local Native American populations had reached boiling point, as the evangelical tenets of the company had continued to fuel resentment amongst the local Algonquin population. Still considered by the VC leadership as ‘the first institution and profession of this company’, its members had further been ordered to do their utmost for the ‘reclaiming of the Barbarous Natives; and bringing them to the true worship of God, civility of life, and virtue’.¹²⁶ The continuing zeal of company officials to propagate the gospel amongst the Native Americans substantially contributed to the deterioration in relations between the company’s English settlers and the Native Americans. The consequences of this breakdown in relations would ultimately lead to the death of one-third of the Europeans on 22 March 1622. Across

¹²⁴ Smith, *Generall Historie*, p. 36.

¹²⁵ Thomas Harriot, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (London: 1590), p. 29; for the subversive role of religion in establishing power in the New World, see Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Invisible Bullets’, in Michael Payne, ed., *The Greenblatt Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 121–160.

¹²⁶ ‘Orders and Constitution collected by Treasurer, Council, and Companie of Virginia, 1619–1620’, in *RVC*, III: p. 348.

the colony, settlements were attacked, and it was those commonly associated with the company's religious governance that bore the brunt of the aggression.

Both the settlements of Henrico and Smith's Hundred, which had strong connections with the education of Native American children and adults in the Christian faith, had to be abandoned. Similarly, when the attack reached Wolstenholme Towne, the church was the focus of the Native Americans' aggression and only a part of it was left standing. Despite a lack of written sources concerning the motivations of Native Americans involved in the attack on the English colony, it can be inferred from the focus of destruction that, at least in part, the uprising was in response to the religious agenda of the company. As the company's principal spokesperson for its colonists, Edward Waterhouse believed that the VC's proselytising was the principle cause of the massacre.¹²⁷ In a publication five months later, Waterhouse declared that although there was still 'great work to do', the 'desire to draw those people to Religion by the careless neglect of their own safeties, seems to have been the greatest cause of their own destruction'.¹²⁸ As for the company's religious mission, its only consolation was that Jamestown had been spared due to a warning from a Native American convert named Chanco. In a declaration of the state of the colony in 1622, the company specifically mentioned this incident, thanking God for 'the good fruit of an Infidel converted to Christianity', without whom, they suggested, they would have lost many more lives.¹²⁹ Despite attempts by the company to re-establish religious governance through an education programme, even offering 'good and careful education' as a form of recompense to those Native Americans who warned and supported them during the attack, the company's evangelical hopes were at an end.¹³⁰ Just two years later, with

¹²⁷ Edward Waterhouse, *A Declaration of the State of the Colony and Affaires in Virginia* (London: 1622); or more on evangelism before and after the 1622 massacre, see Beth Quitslund, 'The Virginia Company, 1606–1624: Anglicanism's Millennial Adventure', in Richard Connors and Andrew Colin Gow, eds., *Anglo-American Millennialism from Milton to the Millerites* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 90–92.

¹²⁸ Waterhouse, *State of the Colony*, p. 18.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹³⁰ Treasurer and Council for Virginia, 'Letter to Governor and Council in Virginia, August 1, 1622', in *RVC*, III: p. 673.

the scars of 1622 still unhealed, the company lost its charter and James seized the company's lands in Virginia, turning it into a royal colony.

Ultimately, the outcome of the massacre was the revocation of the company's charter in 1624. However, despite its fate, the VC served to provide a foundational example for ideas surrounding government, religious governance and Anglo-indigenous relations for future English overseas corporations. The VC and its methods of governance became the Anglo-corporate templates from which subsequent English overseas companies drew. Six years after the events of 1622, John Winthrop remembered Virginia's fate when advocating the settlement of New England. He wrote in the *Reasons for the Plantation of New England* that there were three 'great and fundamental errors' why the VC had failed. They were interlinked, each one affecting the other, offering a warning to those who wished to settle in New England.¹³¹ For Winthrop, the VC had abandoned its religious mission and populated its lands with a 'multitude of rude and misgoverned people', meaning that the company had been unable to 'establish a right form of government'.¹³² The 'right form of government', according to Winthrop and those who joined him as leaders of the MBC, would be one in opposition to the VC's model, placing what they believed to be the true religion and the establishment of a godly population first. Whether those involved in England's future overseas companies ignored or learnt from them, the experiences in Chesapeake Bay would influence their plans and actions concerning religious governance.

CONCLUSION

As the first company to have direct control over territory outside of England, the VC made some of the first attempts to establish English authority overseas, marking a foundational moment in English global expansion in the seventeenth century. At the heart of this organisation was the central mission to establish its authority over its territories in order to effectively regulate the behaviour of peoples and personnel who fell under its authority. This involved the first attempts by an overseas company to govern an English population in foreign environments, as well as peoples

¹³¹ John Winthrop, *Reasons for the Plantation in New England* (London: 1628).

¹³² *Ibid.*

who were outside the English cultural, religious and political milieu. The Protestant religion of England was utilised as a tool to draw people into English ecclesiastical and governmental jurisdiction. The establishment of corporate religious governance in Virginia by 1624 can be seen as a pyrrhic victory. It had been successfully planted in both jurisdictions; however, the cost of doing so would be hefty for the corporation. In the case of the VC, it ended with the loss of its charter.

The decades that followed the dissolution of the VC saw the refinement of religious governance into specific models capable of monitoring the religious, political and social behaviour of a variety of peoples and cultures. The VC advanced and established English authority in the Atlantic in the first two decades of the seventeenth century through experimentation, following which religious governance would be taken and adapted across the Americas, the Middle East and India during the seventeenth century, shaping the governmental character of English expansion across the globe.

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