

The Crown, Church, and Flag in New England, 1686–1722

The bold late seventeenth-century decision to extend the Anglican Church to New England accompanied the revocation of the Massachusetts Bay Colony's original charter of 1629 by London civil officials in the 1680s, the establishment of the province as a royal jurisdiction, and the appointment of a royal governor. For more than a half-century after the arrival of John Winthrop's fleet of four ships at Salem and Boston in 1630, England's crown and Whitehall officials in London took little notice of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Settlers of the Plymouth Colony in 1620 had encountered a similar experience for a decade longer after the arrival of the *Mayflower*. In part the situation was shaped by the internal political and ecclesiastical turmoil and conflict in England between about 1620 and 1660. During these four decades, James I died in 1625 and his successor Charles I met with rising and sustained objections from Parliament to his policies. Affairs of church and state were beset by a long civil war that the royal forces lost, followed by an age of the Commonwealth from 1649 led by Protector Oliver Cromwell. The Church of England, the Book of Common Prayer, and bishops were abolished for 17 years beginning in 1643 and replaced by the Presbyterian Church and the Directory of Worship; while Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud was beheaded in 1645 and Charles I 4 years later.

In New England the appearance of the church contrasted sharply with Virginia and King James I's grant of a charter to the merchant adventurers of the Virginia Company of London. The first Anglican worship services at Jamestown in May 1607 were followed more than a decade

later when the provincial legislature in 1619 established the church in the colony. It was to remain the province's official religious group for two-thirds of a century. By the last quarter of the seventeenth century and after the extension of royal jurisdiction in other colonies, the church was extended to Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. Unlike the other religious groups that appeared in the provinces during the period, the Anglican was the only church that enjoyed the favour of the English government, the leadership of royal governors, and the endowment by local legislatures. The situation was at once welcomed in some provinces but eyed warily in others, particularly in Boston in 1686 and afterwards.

The New England charter differed significantly from the instrument that James I had granted for the settlement of Virginia in 1606. Absent from the Massachusetts Bay Colony's document was any mention of the Church of England and, instead, it noted that the religion of the settlement should be 'according to the doctrine and rites professed and established in England'.¹ Only the Bay Colony's charter offers words to describe a purpose of the colony to 'win and unite the natives to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Saviour of Mankind and the Christian faith'.² The Plymouth charter of 1620 granted to the New England Company had simply stated that the settlers should 'live together in the Feare and true Worship of Almighty God, Christian Peace and civil Quietness'.³

The settlements at Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were each founded and led by remarkably able and charismatic leaders—William Bradford and John Winthrop, respectively. But of the two men, Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts colony, embraced the notion that all nations had a covenant with God. He believed that because England had violated its religious covenant, the Puritans within the church must leave the country. Winthrop expressed the belief that the reformed Church of England of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I had fallen from grace by accepting Catholic rituals. He eloquently proclaimed in his sermon, 'A Model of Christian Charity', given probably in England in 1630 before the group's departure for New England, that the new community in America would be as a 'city upon a hill', watched by the world:

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this

work we have undertaken . . . we shall be made a story and a by-word throughout the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God . . . We shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us til we be consumed out of the good and whither we are a-going.⁴

Unlike the situation in Anglican Virginia and Pilgrim Plymouth, the Massachusetts church included many inspired religious leaders during the colony's beginning and throughout the early period, including John Cotton, Richard Mather, and Francis Higginson. William Bradford's account *Of Plymouth Plantation* during its earliest decades was not shaped in the style, manner, or purpose of Winthrop's sermon but his work joins Winthrop's *Journal* of 20 years and provides an illuminating account of the issues, disappointments, and accomplishments of the these two colonies until 1649.⁵

Until Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud came to power in the late 1620s, the English government had taken little interest in the persons or souls of American colonists:

Official documents paid lip service to the Church of England, the Virginia Company's charters and made no reference to religious orthodoxy and when the *Mayflower* pilgrims applied for leave to settle, the authorities discreetly avoided enquiring into their religious professions. Even in 1629, when the Massachusetts Bay Company received its charter, no insistence upon religious conformity was included in it. After all, the plantations were so far away that they were unlikely to infect the mother country with heresy and they might be regarded as a valuable safety-valve for the discharge of dangerous humours.⁶

Between 1620 and 1686, at least eight men associated with the church in England appeared in what is today Massachusetts, Maine, and the Plymouth Colony. The group included Richard Seymour (15xx–16xx), William Blackstone (1595–1675), Richard Gibbonsn (1608–1645), George Burdett (1602–1671), Robert Jordan (1613–1679), Francis Doughty (1616–1669), the first William Tompson (1598–1666), and a second clergyman of the same name (1633–1665). Seven of these men had attended Oxford or Cambridge universities in England or Harvard College in the Bay Colony. The three who attended Cambridge University were at two of the most prominent Puritan colleges William Blackstone and Richard Gibson at Emmanuel College the alma mater

of John Harvard, and George Burdett at Sidney Sussex of which Oliver Cromwell was an Old Member. At Oxford Robert Jordan matriculated at Balliol College and the first William Tompson at Brasenose The second Tompson graduated from Harvard College in 1653.⁷ The college affiliation, if any, of Puritan Francis Doughty is unknown.⁸ But we know little of the religious practices of the men except that they occasionally conducted services. However, all of them may be excluded from classification as traditional Anglicans. In common, they all represented to varying degrees the turmoil between religious factions within the Church of England during the first six decades of the seventeenth century.

Richard Seymour of Berry Pomeroy in Devonshire was the grandson of Sir Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset and brother of Henry VIII's wife Jane Seymour. He accompanied the short-lived expedition of George Popham to near present-day Phippsburg, Maine, in 1607, and conducted services there in August. The reclusive Blackstone arrived in New England at Weymouth in the Plymouth Colony in 1623 after he was ordained to the ministry by the Puritan-leaning Bishop of Peterborough Thomas Dove (1555–1630). He later migrated to and lived in the neighbourhood of Beacon Hill in Boston for many years before removing to Providence.⁹ Blackstone and Roger Williams disagreed on many theological matters but 'both agreed on the right to disagree' and Williams invited Blackstone to preach regularly to his followers in Providence. Blackstone continued preaching in various parts of Rhode Island and is considered to be the pioneer clergyman of the English Church in New England. The peripatetic Francis Doughty arrived at Plymouth in the 1630s and served briefly as the minister at Cohasset before being expelled from his post.¹⁰ He migrated to Virginia and served an established congregation on the eastern shore George Burdett arrived in the Bay Colony and was admitted as a freeman in September 1635 but he was constantly in trouble and banished for disturbing the peace in 1639; he returned to England the next year.¹¹

Soon afterward Richard Gibson was brought by Robert Trelawney to his colony, founded by Sir Ferdinando Gorges at Richmond Island in Maine at which the proprietor had established the Church of England.¹² Gibson later migrated to Pascataquack (Strawbery Bank) in New Hampshire and ministered to settlers on the nearby Isles of Shoals but was ordered to leave the colony in 1642 when John Winthrop opposed him on the basis of his religion; Gibson then returned to England.¹³

Robert Jordan followed Gibson and provided services at Casco Bay for a period but his primary interest was not the church but government and business. He was jailed briefly in Boston in 1663 for his religious beliefs and served as a judge for many years.

It is noteworthy that these men were driven to New England by a personal mission and not an official or divine commission to found or serve a congregation. They all were inspired by other distinctive individual motives and purposes. Perhaps in a search to escape religious turmoil or lack of opportunity in England, or possibly to seek personal privacy, to obtain land or some other economic reason.

The restoration of Charles II to the English throne in 1660 concluded two decades of Puritan political and religious primacy in the nation. The Church of England was speedily restored and it made a rapid recovery of parishes, bishops returned to their posts and to the House of Lords in 1661, the Prayer Book was revised, and Parliament approved the Act of Uniformity in 1662. The adoption of that statute marked a consolidation of Dissent. There was no longer any prospect of incorporating all the sects and denominations into a comprehensive national church. Echoes of Laud's archiepiscopate reverberated because Archbishop of Canterbury Gilbert Sheldon, like his predecessor, was an inveterate opponent of both religious toleration and comprehension and an intractable pursuer of nonconformists. The Savoy Conference of 1661 did much to diminish goodwill and fraternity between the Anglican Church and the various forms of English Dissent.¹⁴

Charles II's recovery of the church was accompanied with a new interest for the civil, economic, and ecclesiastical affairs of the nation's colonies in mainland America. It rested on the king's letter of 28 June 1662 to Puritan Massachusetts officials stating that:

since the principal end of that [Massachusetts] Charter was and is the freedom of conscience, we do hereby charge and require you, that freedom and liberty be duly admitted and allowed; so that such as desire to use the Book of Common Prayer and perform their devotions after that manner as Established here, be not denied the Exercise thereof or undergo any prejudice or disadvantage thereby, they using their Liberty peaceably without disturbance to others; and that all persons of good and honest lives and conversations be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the said Book of Common Prayer and their Children to Baptism.¹⁵

Bishop Sheldon (1598–1677), a former president of St John's College in Oxford University, was highly regarded in the politics of the university and the church. He was a chief advisor at Charles II's court and a Privy Councillor. Yet the origins of the awakening by London civil and ecclesiastical officials for the interests of the church in early America may have been influenced in part by a 1661 letter from Virginia parson Roger Green to then Bishop of London Sheldon, under the pen name 'R.G.', reporting on the negligent status of the church in the colony after nearly 60 years of settlement. Green's letter from America arrived in London at the time of the government's reaffirmation of the Navigation Acts of the 1650s. A situation that Professor Bernard Bailyn has noted placed the economic interests of the colonies subordinate to the good of England and was written into law in the Navigation Acts of 1660, 1662, and 1663.¹⁶ Perhaps it was the press of domestic civil and ecclesiastical political matters that delayed Compton bringing the letter of Green and a similar letter of 1675 from John Yeo of Maryland to the attention of the members of the Board of Trade and Plantations, despite Sheldon's urging him to do so for 14 years.¹⁷

The intersection of Charles II's letter on religious affairs in New England, the publication of Green's account of the church in Virginia, and the reaffirmation of England's Navigation Acts may be explained simply as a coincidence or as an expression of the court's new English civil and ecclesiastical policy and strategy for the overseas colony and church. Without reservation, Green's letter brought problems in Virginia and New England to the attention of church and state officials. Fourteen years passed before Charles II's letter to Massachusetts officials was given a strong hearing for establishing a church in Boston. A more coherent English ecclesiastical policy gradually was implemented by the Board of Trade and Plantations in the late 1670s, 1680s, 1690s, and the first decade of the eighteenth century. The delay may have been determined by reservations of government officials on how to proceed, introduce, and support the church in the Puritan Bay Colony. At issue was the political uncertainty and unspoken confusion generated by a long-standing lack of a national imperial policy for the extension of the church to overseas territories. Royal governors of Puritan Massachusetts were not granted authority by their commissions and instructions of office to provide oversight of the Anglican Church and ministers in their jurisdiction. Only in New Hampshire after 1735 was the church's interests advanced by the successive Wentworth family governors.

The initial interest and concern on behalf of the church rested in the hands of an English colonial administrator, Edward Randolph (1632–1703), who arrived in Boston in June 1676. His primary mission for Charles II was to investigate the colony's adherence to the terms of its original charter. A professional civil servant, he relentlessly devoted his strong leadership talents to advancing royal authority in the province and to increasing the crown's revenue. He was responsible for reporting to the Committee of Trade and Plantations on conditions in New England, particularly on how well the colonial merchants were complying with the trade laws.¹⁸ Randolph's detailed reports convinced Charles II in 1684 to revoke the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony of 1629 and grant a royal charter for the jurisdiction. Randolph was designated to serve as secretary of the new and unpopular Dominion of New England established by the new charter. While in that position he argued for tighter crown control over American proprietary and charter colonies. Randolph was given the difficult task of enforcing England's Navigation Acts against significant local popular and political resistance in whichever colony he was posted. The Bay Colony's leaders perceived that his presence represented the English government's attempt to assert imperial power in the province.¹⁹ His actions were a significant contribution to the development of England's colonial administrative infrastructure but he remained disliked in the dominion. During the 1689 Boston revolt, which deposed Governor Edmund Andros and overthrew the dominion, he was jailed.²⁰

For Randolph in Boston and the royal officials at Whitehall in London, the fundamental purpose of the colonies was the financial profit of England. But Randolph recognised the powerful religious and influential political leadership demonstrated by the Puritan clergy with regard to civil affairs and he vigorously sought to diminish the clergy's role. He reported to the Committee for Trade and Plantations that free exercise of religion was not permitted in the Bay Colony. Anglican followers were required to attend services of the Puritan church and if absent without cause they were liable to be fined. Furthermore, Anglicans were not admitted as freemen in the province, thereby could not qualify for the magistracy and other public offices.²¹ To remedy this situation, Randolph recommended to London officials that those persons in the colony declaring for the English church should be exempt from attending the services of the Massachusetts established church.²² His petition received consideration at the 6 February 1678/1679 meeting of the

Committee for Trade and Plantations and was accepted without amendment. The session also urged Compton to appoint a minister for Boston as a step to remedy the situation but the appointment was delayed for nearly a decade.²³ The bishop of London may have been too distracted with domestic political affairs to be concerned by overseas matters; he was in the midst of the death of Charles II, the exclusion crisis, and the accession of the known Catholic, James II, to the throne.²⁴

The tenacity and rigidity of the Puritan theocracy in Massachusetts to protect their interests antagonised London government officials.²⁵ The colonists' undisguised suspicions of English policies and practices were accurate: during the next decade Randolph would challenge the self-governing character of the New England charters. In turn, Massachusetts civil and church officials exploited every manoeuvre to defend the prospect of the revocation of the colony's 1629 charter and to forestall the appointment of a royal governor.²⁶ Randolph could count on allies among the so-called 'moderates' of the Council of the Dominion.²⁷ For the next 10 years Randolph shuttled between London and Boston on five trips, reporting on the turn of political affairs and fervently urging the Committee for Trade and Plantations to initiate more active imperial control over the Bay Colony's government.

After a periodic visit by Randolph to London in 1684 to report on Massachusetts' affairs, the colony's original charter was revoked. Returning to Boston on 14 May 1686, he brought with him two royal instruments: an exemplification of the revocation of the Massachusetts charter and King James II's commission for a new government.²⁸ The historic charter of the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay had been nullified together with all the rights and privileges founded on it. In its place, Massachusetts was established as a royal province, ruled by a council under a native son, Joseph Dudley, until the new governor arrived a few months later. Randolph also carried with him from London the commissions for the functionaries of the new government that appointed Dudley as president and himself a member of the council, with the power to establish the Church of England in Massachusetts by force.²⁹ His persistent efforts for a decade to install imperial government in Massachusetts had come to a successful conclusion.

A new era for the province began with the arrival in Boston of President of the Council of New England Joseph Dudley, carrying the new charter and accompanied by the Anglican minister Robert Radcliff on 15 May 1686. The men appeared at Long Wharf without a cheering

welcome from town officials or residents while walking from the wharf and passing the warehouses, shops, and houses to reach the Town House.³⁰ Popular confusion and controversy surrounded the introduction of the colony's royal charter and the prospect of the establishment of an English congregation. An Anglican church represented a further fissure in the community's vision of church and state and the established Puritan Church. In 1679 a number of Bostonians petitioned the king 'that a Church might be allowed for them for the exercise of religion according to the Church of England' but it was not achieved until 1686.³¹ Radcliff, a Fellow of Exeter College in Oxford University, faced several urgent tasks, including where worship services could take place. How many persons would respond to the founding of a congregation? Would it be possible to purchase land for the construction of a church building?

Immediately, Joseph Dudley assumed office as president of Massachusetts, Maine, Nova Scotia, and the lands between, and Radcliff asked for the use of one of the three Congregational meeting houses in Boston for worship. The council of the province denied the request but granted to the new religious group the use of the library room in the Town House which stood on the site of the present-day Old State House on State Street.³² The first Town House (1657–1711) was the legacy of the merchant Robert Keayne, and Professor Bailyn notes it was 'the true centre of the business life of Boston and indeed of the whole of New England'.³³

In London, the deft, wily, and politically shrewd Bishop Compton had appointed the Reverend Robert Radcliff as the first minister of the church in Boston. It was a critical and astute decision, for he was deservedly recognised as a distinguished preacher.³⁴ Having accompanied Randolph to Boston on the *Rose* in 1686, and amid popular confusion and controversy, Radcliff officiated at the first Anglican services held in the colony at the Town House on 6 June. One observer noted that he was 'a very excellent preacher whose matter was good and the dress in which he put it extraordinary, he being as well an orator as a preacher. The next Sunday, after he landed, he preach'd in the Town-House and read Common Prayer in his Surplice which was so great a novelty to the Bostonians that he had a very large Audience', perhaps partly out of curiosity, or partly to be seen in the company of a handful of royal officials.³⁵ Another attendant, the prominent London bookseller John Dunton, was in town and noted that he had heard Radcliff preach once or twice and

that he read 'the common prayer in his surplice' both of which 'were religious novelties in New England'.³⁶ On 15 June 1686, 'the Church of England by law established' was organised in Boston.³⁷ 2 months later, on 5 August 1686, Judge Samuel Sewall noted in his diary that 'William Harrison, the Bodies-maker is buried, which is the first that I know of buried with the Common Prayer Book in Boston'.³⁸ Three days later he recorded that 'the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered at the Town House'.³⁹

Politically and religiously, the 2-month period between 15 May and 15 August was probably the most turbulent period in Boston since the Half-Way Covenant, Roger Williams, and Thomas Hooker controversies 40 or 50 years earlier. The changed circumstances were dictated under the umbrella of royal power and authority and a governor appointed by the crown. It was made without pretence in degree or manner as a popular policy affecting the community considered and endorsed at a town meeting. The church's future course in the region would be scarred by its birth. The persons identified with the organisation of the congregation represented second- or third-tier imperial officials, local merchants with ties to London and Bristol commercial firms, and a few English-born residents and New England natives. Radcliff's learning and pulpit eloquence positioned him as a credible Anglican counterbalance to Increase and Cotton Mather and other learned Boston ministers. Immediately, the new congregation began solicitation for contributions to acquire property for the location and construction of a church building.⁴⁰

Sir Edmund Andros James II's long-time servant, was appointed the first royal governor of Massachusetts and the successor to Joseph Dudley. He arrived in Boston on 20 December 1686, as the governor of the Dominion of New England a territory that comprised Massachusetts Bay, the Plymouth Colony, New Hampshire, Maine, and the Rhode Island country. After 1688, his jurisdiction would expand to encompass Connecticut, New York and East and West Jersey. Like Randolph, Andros was a vigorous and commanding civil servant, pursuing an imperial policy that included the enforcement of the Navigation Acts and a conservative financial policy that stirred up opposition from the cadre of Boston Puritan clergymen and merchants. With a royal charter and appointment in hand, Andros energetically pressed forward to establish the first English church in Boston.⁴¹

On the day of his landing in Boston, Andros had attempted to make an arrangement for the partial use of the town's meeting houses for

Anglican worship and insisted that the services of the Church of England would be held Sundays in the Third (South) Church led by the Reverend Samuel Willard. It was a proposal met with steely rejection by the non-conformist ministers, but the Third (South) Church was still selected over the objections of its officers to serve as the unwilling host of the Anglican congregation.⁴² This proposed arrangement immediately rekindled friction between the royal governor and Congregational church leaders. For nearly a year, Radcliff held services at the Exchange until Easter 1687, but the forthrightly tough-minded Andros had wedged the long-feared English congregation into an established meeting house and the religious life of Boston.⁴³ Symbolically and in reality the church was firmly associated with royal government, partly due to Randolph's and Andros's relentless tactics for over ten years to establish a congregation and partly as a way of imposing imperial policies on the Massachusetts community. The initial name of the congregation was Royal Chapel, changed in 1702 to Queen's Chapel in honour of Queen Anne (1701–1713), and finally as King's Chapel in honour of the reigning monarch George I (1714–1727).⁴⁴ It was established as a result of the introduction of controversial political policies, including the institution of a royal charter, the arrival of a royal governor, and the impact of offensive imperial political and economic policies. In Boston, the appearance and presence of the church was inseparable from the instruments and officers of royal government.

The Puritan community was alarmed and incensed over the presence of the king's church in Boston. It was immediately recognised by critics as an outpost of English crown authority, as England's national church, culture, and ways. In 1686 there were three Congregational churches flourishing in Boston, the First Church (1630), the Second Church (1655), and the Old South Church (1670), along with the First Baptist Church (1665) and the French Huguenot Church (1685). For Increase and Cotton Mather, the holy vision for the establishment of the colony more than a half-century earlier had been betrayed. Without a doubt or reservation, the turn of events in church and state affairs signalled for them a further example of the colony's declension and waywardness from the design and purpose of the colony's founders. Increase Mather took up the battle-cry for the Puritan clergy and challenged the legitimacy and presence of the English church by publishing *A Brief Discourse Concerning the Unlawfulness of the Common Prayer Worship: And of Laying the Hands on and Kissing the Booke in Swearing* ([Cambridge,

1686], London, 1689). He wove a tightly critical argument that linked the Book of Common Prayer to the no-less-offensive Catholic Breviary Missal and Ritual. It was a familiar theme for Puritan polemicists and was recited repeatedly by his son Cotton and subsequent critics during the decades ahead. In a desperate effort to seek the restoration of the colony's 1629 charter Increase Mather travelled to London in 1690 as the representative of the Assembly in an unsuccessful attempt to recover and re-establish the colony's original charter. Massachusetts had become a royal colony a jurisdiction of the crown and subject to the imperial policies and administration of the Committee of Trade and Plantations and the Privy Council of the monarch.

In 1687 Increase Mather, Rector of Harvard College, published in London his essay *Testimony Against several Prophan and Superstitious Customs Now Practised by some in New-England, The Evil whereof is evinced from the Holy Scriptures and from the Writings both of Ancient and Modern Divines* (London, 1687). Mather associated the appearance and presence of the Anglican Church in Boston with the coming of a church which observed saints days and holy days and tolerated old customs connected with them, and he called for criticism and protest.⁴⁵ Mather's publication was not only an indictment of Anglican practices but fuel for dissenting criticism for the next 90 years.⁴⁶

The first known Anglican publication in North America printed in 1688 could be read as anapologetic rebuttal to Mather's sharp and challenging attacks on the practices of the English Church or simply as the initial basic devotional manual for the use of the prospective members of the new congregation. A popular work by the distinguished poet and bishop Thomas Ken (1637–1711), in England entitled *An Exposition on the Church catechism, or the practice of divine love* and published in London in 1685 and in Boston in 1688, it is better known under its subtitle *The Practice of Divine Love*. Perhaps the publication had been carried from Oxford to Boston in Radcliff's library and he arranged for it to be printed by Boston master printer Richard Pierce. But the circumstances of its publication strongly suggest that it was the opening of an Anglican defence to Increase Mather's sharp historical complaints.⁴⁷ It is probable that Boston's prominent Puritan ministers were familiar with Bishop of London Henry Compton's appointment of Ken in 1679 to serve at The Hague as the chaplain for Mary, the wife of William of Orange. During his appointment Ken was a keen observer of Dutch Calvinist clergymen and publicly raised strong doubts regarding the

validity of their ordination. Yet it remains unclear how and why Richard Pierce became the printer for the first Anglican publication in North America in an era of strong censorship of the press by the colony's officials. He was married to Sarah, the daughter of the family of John Cotton—her father was Seaborn—and Pierce was the printer for numerous publications by Increase and Cotton Mather and is best known as the printer of the first edition of the *New England Primer* in 1690.

Against a background of swirling clerical and popular objection, the new Anglican congregation immediately began to raise funds to meet the necessary expenses to acquire land for a building. After several attempts to purchase property had failed, leaders of the congregation turned to Governor Andros and the Council of the Bay Colony to aid the process. The officials applied their authority as the supreme governing body in 1688 to appropriate a part of the corner of the old burying ground for the church at the present site of King's Chapel at Tremont and Beacon Street. The enforced tenancy of the Third (South) Church came to an end and the first worship service was held in the new church on 30 June 1689.⁴⁸ Under Andros's administration, funds were raised for the construction of the Royal, later known as King's, Chapel. Among the 94 subscribers for the church building were 16 merchants and three royal officials.⁴⁹ The subscriptions amounted to £256.09.00 of which Governor Andros contributed £30, Lieutenant Governor Francis Nicholson of Maryland £25, and collector of the customs Edward Randolph £5.⁵⁰ The cost of construction of the church was £284.26.0.⁵¹ Despite the organisation of the new congregation and the institution of royal government, Anglicans remained financially obligated to support the Puritan establishment through the town rates. Yet 'they still had sustained the malice, scorn: countless affronts and indignities from the majority who charged them with idolatry and popery'.⁵²

The appointment of a royal governor inaugurated a new era for civil administration of the Bay Colony. After about 1680 the governors appointed by the Crown to serve in the early American colonies were issued royal instructions that included detailed responsibilities for supervising the English Church in their jurisdictions. But the implementation of the governor's ecclesiastical authority was not uniform and differed in the provinces in which the church was not established by the legislature. In Virginia and Maryland where the church was established and the number of churches and ministers was strongest, several governors played key roles in overseeing the institution.

But the Massachusetts royal officials were not given instructions as in other provinces to protect and encourage the established church presumably as a result of a political decision at Whitehall in London in deference to the religious situation in the province. In New England, the Congregational Church was established in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. The Massachusetts governors were not delegated the customary duties for the church practised by officials in Virginia and Maryland to prefer ministers to benefices, to check the validity of certificates issued by the bishop of London, or oversee that ministers were included as members of vestries.⁵³ Each governor in the Chesapeake Colonies was charged to recognise the bishop of London's authority and jurisdiction over the ministers and congregations in his province.⁵⁴ Connecticut and Rhode Island were not royal colonies and governors were not appointed by the crown but were elected to office by the provincial civil leadership. Beginning in 1730, the governors of sparsely settled New Hampshire received responsibilities for the governance of the church in the colony. But despite the strong support of successive Wentworths as governors only two congregations were established between 1736 and 1776.⁵⁵

Contrasting with the appointment of royal governors in Virginia Maryland North and South Carolina the crown's commissions and instructions to Massachusetts Bay Colony governors did not include responsibilities for the oversight of the church in the province. Nonetheless, several governors were elected members of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in London including Joseph Dudley (1702–1705), Samuel Shute (1716–1723), William Shirley (1741–1749, 1753–1756), Thomas Pownall (1757–1760), Francis Bernard (1760–1769), and the son of the Bishop of Salisbury Gilbert Burnet, William (1728–1729). Yet the governor's public support of the church was limited primarily to ceremonial occasions and occupancy of the official pews at King's Chapel and Trinity Church. Several of the men were elected to the vestry at King's Chapel and contributed financially to the support of the congregation.⁵⁶

The imperial policies considered and implemented by the Committee of Trade and Plantations after about 1680 for the church in America were on an individual provincial basis. London officials did not at any time consider or orchestrate a continental American ecclesiastical policy for the extension of the English Church to the colonies in the Western Hemisphere. The Anglican Church in New England was not a replica of

the English ecclesiastical apparatus. No archdiocesan or diocesan jurisdictions were established, no archbishops or bishops were appointed, and all native colonists seeking ordination were required to travel to London to receive the apostolic laying on of hands from an English prelate. For the church in New England and the other American colonies the tie was maintained by the use of the Book of Common Prayer, the recitation of the formulas of worship, and the administration of the sacraments.

After 3 years, in 1689, Radcliff returned to England and was succeeded by Samuel Myles, a 23-year-old son of a Massachusetts Baptist minister and a graduate of Harvard College in 1684.⁵⁷ It remains unclear why the young man was recruited for the post, perhaps he was a protégé of Radcliff or favourably known and supported by one or more members of the vestry. He was a layman and not an ordained minister and his lay status may have been a key reason for his appointment by the members of the vestry. His appointment kept the appointment of the next minister of King's Chapel in Boston hands, out of reach of any efforts by the royal governor and the bishop of London to fill the post. 4 years passed before Myles sailed for London and ordination as a deacon by the distinguished theologian Symon Patrick (1626–1707), Bishop of Ely, on 12 March 1693, and as a priest by Bishop of London Henry Compton at St Botolph's at Aldersgate on 11 June 1693.⁵⁸

The circumstance of Myles's appointment raises several important questions. Because he was a layman and not an ordained minister, were such services that required an ordained clergyman as, for example, the celebration of Holy Communion and marriages suspended during the 4 years of his service before travelling to London for holy orders in 1693? Perhaps the situation was designed by the vestry's prominent and influential members to distance the congregation from any intervening action by the colony's royal governor on behalf of the bishop of London or other crown authorities or, no less significant, to not interfere with Increase Mather's diplomatic and political trip to London to represent the Bay Colony in an effort to obtain the restoration of the colony's 1629 charter.

A mystery surrounds the lack of records detailing the organization of the Kings Chapel congregation, including the minutes and decisions of the vestry's meetings and the registers noting the performances of baptisms and marriages during the first two decades. At the English Reformation, Henry VIII decreed that all parishes were to maintain such records.⁵⁹ Surviving King's Chapel registers do not provide any details

of the names of persons baptised by the ministers before 1703, the names of persons married by the clergymen before 1718, or the names of persons buried before 1714. Absent are all records relating to Robert Radcliff's ministry, 1686–1689 and Samuel Myles's between 1689 and 1703. Occasionally some ministers delinquently considered that the registers they maintained in the course of their ministry were their private property and not of the congregation. The records may have been kept at their residences for recording, from time to time, appropriate entries. Robert Radcliff may have carried the first 3 years of records during his tenure back to England in 1689. In turn, Samuel Myles, untutored in the canonical requirement to maintain such registers, may have been remiss in such duty. The gap in information for the first New England Anglican congregation is indeed regrettable. At his death in March 1728 Myles may have included the registers among his personal property that he bequeathed to his wife, 'all his plate, books, wearing apparel, household goods, of what sort so ever'.⁶⁰ They had no children and she died soon afterwards and the subsequent history of the registers, if any, is unknown.

Myles presided over King's Chapel for nearly 40 years. In the first months after his appointment, he demonstrated that he was politically astute and a fervent royal loyalist. Joined by the churchwardens of his congregation, he reported to King William III the details surrounding the overthrow of the Andros regime.⁶¹ Their intention may have been to undermine Increase Mather's political efforts in London.⁶² Without mincing their words, Myles and his cohorts emphasised that the continuation of royal government in the province was essential for Anglican worship to survive in Boston.⁶³

The cataclysmic civil and ecclesiastical crisis that occurred in Boston during the 1680s and 1690s transformed the course of state and religious affairs in the Bay Colony. In London, the distant imperial circumstances in New England were overshadowed by England's constitutional crisis that gripped the attention of state and church leaders. James II (1633–1701) was King of England and Ireland and King of Scotland as James VII from 1685 until he was deposed by Parliament in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. His reign struggled with parliament and the attempts to create religious liberty for English Roman Catholics and Protestant nonconformists against the wishes of the Anglican establishment. That political tension made James's reign a struggle for supremacy between the English parliament and the crown, resulting in his deposition, the passage of the Act of Toleration and Bill of Rights in 1689,

and the line of Hanoverian succession in 1713. It is ironic that Bishop of London Henry Compton (1632–1713), the prelate who appointed Robert Radcliff to the Boston post in 1686, exercised a strong and prominent role in the English constitutional crisis.⁶⁴ He was a strong opponent of Roman Catholicism and, in company with Archbishop of Canterbury William Sancroft (1617–1693), exerted a political role in the negotiations and transfer of government by Parliament from James II to William III, Prince of Orange, and Mary II (1662–1694) as joint monarchs. Compton crowned William and Mary on 11 April 1689 at Westminster Abbey.⁶⁵ Yet it remains unknown if Compton's 1692 *Eighth Letter to his Clergy upon a Conference How they ought to behave themselves Under the Toleration* found its way to Boston and into the hands of King's Chapel's Samuel Myles. It was at once a politically sagacious and diplomatically friendly outreach by the leading Anglican leader and officer of state to nonconformists.⁶⁶

After the founding of King's Chapel in Boston, over two decades passed before further congregations were established in Massachusetts that rested on joint undertakings by local members with the aid and support of the SPG in London. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was not an agency funded by Parliament but an agency funded by the membership and philanthropic donations that supported the recruitment and annual appointment of missionaries to serve the English Church overseas. Educated at Oxford University, Bray became rector of St. Giles's Church at Sheldon in Warwickshire, where he published the popular instructional essay *Catechetical Lectures* in 1697. His efforts interviewing and recruiting men to serve the church in Virginia and Maryland drove him to found the SPG. The organisation financially supported men to serve the overseas church, an effort that pragmatically aided the implementation of the imperial ecclesiastical policies of the Board of Trade. It was not a chartered agency funded by the government but a philanthropic agency of the church, governed by Anglican leaders for the recruiting, appointing, and supporting missionaries overseas. More than half of the original 94 English members were clergymen, led by the archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishop of London.

During the first two decades of the eighteenth century, no congregations were established in Connecticut and New Hampshire and only three in Massachusetts, at towns distant from Boston, including Quincy (Braintree), 1704; Newbury, 1711/1712; and Marblehead, 1715. At Newbury the local meeting house was in need of repair and a majority of

the members decided to move to a new location but a minority insisted upon rebuilding the old building. To prevent a split, the majority obtained an order from the General Court forbidding the formation of a second church in the town. John Bridges, His Majesty's Surveyor-General and a loyal churchman, promised the dissenters his support if they would declare for episcopacy. They agreed and the SPG sent a missionary in 1711/1712. Thirty-six years passed after the founding of Kings Chapel before the second Anglican congregation was established in Boston, Christ Church (the Old North) in the town now numbering a population of about 12,000, a period during which two new Congregational Churches were established, the New North (1714) and the New South (1717).

Richard, Earl of Bellomont, governor of New York, determined the destiny of the church in Rhode Island. An able imperial administrator, he visited Newport during September 1699 and reported to the Board of Trade that no Anglican church was established in Newport or the colony.⁶⁷ The population of the settlement in 1690 was estimated at 1352 persons, while 10 years later the figure had increased to 1886 persons.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, during his visit, a band of Newport residents, perhaps orchestrated by Bellomont, petitioned London church and civil officials, seeking the establishment of a church in the town with the minister's salary paid by the Treasury.⁶⁹ The Board alerted Bishop of London Henry Compton and within a few months a minister was recruited and sent to Newport in 1699.⁷⁰ A second congregation was not established at Kingston until 1717/1718.

NOTES

1. William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619* (Charlottesville, 1969): I: 68–69.
2. Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History* (New Haven, 1934): I: 369.
3. A copy of the charter may be found at www.law.Yale.edu at the Law School Library in the Avalon Project, Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy.
4. John Winthrop's sermon is conveniently available in the *Winthrop Papers* (Boston, 1931): II: 282–295. See too Abram C. Van Engen, 'Origins and Last Farewells: Bible Wars, Textual Form, and the Making of American History', *New England Quarterly*, 86: 543–592. Francis J. Bremer, *John Winthrop, America's Forgotten Founding Father* (New York, 2003):

- 173–184. Susan Hardman Moore, ‘Popery, Purity and Providence: Deciphering the New England Experiment’, in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts, eds., *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994): 257–289.
5. Samuel Eliot Morison, ed., *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647* (New York, 1952); Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle, eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630–1649* (Cambridge, 1996).
 6. Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud, 1573–1645*, 2nd edn (London, 2000): 258.
 7. John Langdon Sibley, *Graduates of Harvard University* (Cambridge, 1873): I: 354–357.
 8. James B. Bell, *Empire, Religion and Revolution in Early Virginia, 1607–1786* (Basingstoke, 2013): 42, 84, 87, 90–91, 94, 126.
 9. Conrad Aiken, *Selected Poems with a New Foreword by Harold Bloom* (New York, 2003): 219–220, 225–227.
 10. Bell, *Empire, Religion and Revolution*: 90.
 11. Charles E. Clark, *The Eastern Frontier: The Settlement of Northern New England, 1610–1763* (Hanover, 1983): 40–41. Dunn, Savage, and Yeandle, eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630–1649*: 269, 274, 284, 290–291, 318, 330–331.
 12. Clark, *The Eastern Frontier*: 16–20.
 13. For biographical accounts of each of the men see my ‘The Colonial American Clergy of the Church of England Database’, www.jamesbbell.com. For Gibson see Clark, *The Eastern Frontier*: 44–46. Dunn, Savage, and Yeandle, eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop*: 392.
 14. James B. Bell, *The Imperial Origins of the King’s Church in Early America, 1607–1783* (London, 2004): 11.
 15. Henry Wilder Foote, *Annals of King’s Chapel from the Puritan Age to the Present Day* (Boston, 1882): I: 28.
 16. Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1955): 113.
 17. I have discussed in detail the gradual influence of Green’s and John Yeo’s similar letter on religious affairs in Maryland on London officials and imperial ecclesiastical policy in my *The Imperial Origins of the King’s Church in Early America, 1607–1783* (Basingstoke, 2004): 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 126, and in *Empire, Religion and Revolution*: 44, 111–112.
 18. Bailyn, *New England Merchants*: 154–159. William Stevens Perry, *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church* (1873; Hartford, 1969): III: 1–24.
 19. Perry, *Historical Collections*: III: 21–52.
 20. Michael Garibaldi Hall, *Edward Randolph and the American Colonies* (Chapel Hill, 1960). Foote, *Annals of King’s Chapel*: I: 37, 39–40, 54–57.

21. Freeman is a term which originated in twelfth-century Europe and is common as an English or American *colonial* expression in *Puritan* times. In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, to be a member of the Church is to be a freeman. The entire system of 'freemen' was officially eliminated by 1691, though parts of the system did still remain through the eighteenth century. Once a man was made a freeman, and was no longer considered a commoner, he could, and usually would, become a member of the church, and he could own land. The amount of land he was able to own was sometimes determined by how many members there were in his family. As a freeman, he became a member of the governing body, which met in annual or semi-annual meetings—town meetings—to make and enforce laws and pass judgement in civil and criminal matters. As the colonies grew, these meetings became impractical and a representative bicameral system was developed. Freemen would choose deputy governors who made up the upper house of the General Court, and assistant governors, who made up the lower house, who chose the governor from among their ranks, and who passed judgements in civil and criminal matters. To hold one of these offices one was required be a freeman. Thus, the enfranchised voters and office holders were landholding male church members. Women, Native Americans, and other non-Puritans were not made freeman.
22. Hall, *Edward Randolph*: 48.
23. *Ibid.*, 47–48.
24. Edward Carpenter, *The Protestant Bishop: Being the Life of Henry Compton, 1632–1713, Bishop of London* (London, 1956): 59–103.
25. Hall, *Edward Randolph*: 53–78.
26. *Ibid.*, 79–97.
27. *Ibid.*, 98–128.
28. *Ibid.*, 79–97.
29. *Ibid.*, 98–115.
30. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*: I: 41–42.
31. *Ibid.*, 36.
32. *Ibid.*, 43–44.
33. Bailyn, *New England Merchants*: 97–98.
34. Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500–1714* (Oxford, 1891): III: 1228.
35. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*: I: 43–44.
36. John Dunton, 'John Dunton's Journal in Massachusetts, 1686', in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, second series (Boston, 1846): II: 106.
37. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*: I: 44.
38. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines a bodies-maker as a tailor of the upper part of a woman's dress, such as a tight fitting outer vest, waistcoat, or inner vest.

39. M. Halsey Thomas, ed., *The Diary of Samuel Sewall* (New York, 1973): I: 119.
40. Ibid., 45–46.
41. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*: I: 58–83.
42. Ibid., 69–71. Peter Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England* (Amherst, 2012): 118.
43. Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York, 1984): 74. David S. Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America* (New York, 1972): 325.
44. Hall, *Edward Randolph*: 115–170.
45. Thomas James Holmes, *Increase Mather: A Bibliography of His Work* (Cleveland, 1931): II: 568–569.
46. James B. Bell, *A War of Religion, Dissenters, Anglicans and the American Revolution* (Basingstoke, 2008).
47. For Richard Pierce the printer see Benjamin Franklin V., *Boston Printers, Publishers, and Booksellers, 1640–1800* (Boston, 1980): 412–414; and Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America with a Biography of Printers and an Account of Newspapers*, ed. Marcus McCorison (New York, 1970): 84–85.
48. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*: I: 81–82. For architectural details of the church, see Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England*: 118.
49. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*: I: 69–70, 89–94.
50. Ibid., 90.
51. Ibid., 89–90.
52. Lovejoy, *Glorious Revolution*: 325.
53. Leonard W. Labaree, *Royal Instructions to Colonial Governors, 1671–1776* (New Haven, 1935): II: 484–487.
54. Ibid., 490–491.
55. Ibid., 486–487, 490–491.
56. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*: II: 605–610.
57. Ibid., I: 95–99.
58. Clergy of the Church of England Database at www.theclergydatabase.org.uk and James B. Bell, 'Anglican Clergy in Colonial America Ordained by Bishops of London', *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 83 (1973) Part 1: 141.
59. Henry VIII's Vicar General for the Church, Thomas Cromwell, in 1538 ordered that each priest of a parish must keep a book and enter the names of all those baptised, married, and buried. In the 1604 version of the Canon Law of the Church of England, Canon 70 renewed the requirement for keeping a parish register.
60. Sibley, *Graduates of Harvard College*: III: 292.

61. K. G. Davies, 'The Revolutions in America', in Robert Beddard, ed., *The Revolutions of 1688* (Oxford, 1991): 256–260.
62. Lovejoy, *Glorious Revolution*: 340–348.
63. 'Episcopal Ministers Address', in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, third series (Boston, 1838): VII: 192–195.
64. Carpenter, *The Protestant Bishop*: 104–152.
65. Ibid., 151–152. For Sancroft, ODNB.
66. Henry Compton, *The Bishop of London's Eighth Letter to his Clergy, upon a Conference How they ought to behave themselves Under the Toleration* (London, 1692).
67. Cal.S.P.Col.Ser., 1699: 542–548.
68. United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, DC, 1960): 756.
69. Cal.S.P.Col.Ser., 1700: 54, 58.
70. George C. Mason, *Annals of Trinity Church, Newport, Rhode Island, 1698–1821* (Newport, 1890): 10–13.

Anglicans, Dissenters and Radical Change in Early New
England, 1686-1786

Bell, J.B.

2017, XXV, 280 p. 39 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-55629-1