NEW ENGLAND'S PURITAN CENTURY
Three Generations of Continuity
in the City upon a Hill

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Between the sailing of the Arbella and the death of Cotton Mather lies almost a century. Within that century New England went from being a mere dream in the hearts of devout Puritans to a thriving province in England's world-wide colonial system. Although historians love to discern factions and conflicts and detail evolutionary changes in order to tell a better story, it appears that the over-all story of the first century of New England Puritanism was one of peace, continuity, the laying of a solid foundation. At the close of this century, New England was still an essentially Puritan society. The story of New England's Puritan century is not primarily about a vulnerable religiously-based colony being molded by London's imperialistic power. Rather, the history of Puritan New England shows that their religious ideology gave them a special resilience against the eroding power of Anglicization. Although the state was ultimately out of Puritan hands (at least in Massachusetts) and the culture was beginning to be shaped by anglicized, "Atlantic-oriented" merchants, Puritanism remained strong. If we do not define Puritanism too narrowly, that is if we allow some diversity within a wider Puritan movement, then by the third generation in the wilderness Puritan integrity had held.

That century can be broken down into three parts: (1) The generation of John Cotton and Richard Mather, 1630–1661 from the founding to the Restoration: years of virtual independence and nearly autonomous development; (2) The generation of Increase Mather, 1662–1689 from the Restoration and the Halfway Covenant to the Glorious Revolution: years of struggle with the British crown; (3) The generation of Cotton Mather, 1689–1728 from the overthrow of Edmund Andros (of which Cotton Mather was a part) and the new charter, mediated by Increase Mather, to the death of Cotton Mather.[1]

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[1]A description of distinctions of each generation can be seen in Samuel Torrey's 1674 election sermon, "An Exhortation Unto Reformation." Eleazer Mather's "A Serious Exhortation" (Cambridge, Mass.: S.G. and M.J., 1676) along with Increase Mather's preface to that published sermon, reflect the same consciousness of generational degeneration.

Generation I

It was a great and high undertaking of our fathers when they ventured themselves and their little ones upon the rude waves of the vast ocean that so they might follow the Lord into his land. A parallel instance not to be given except that our father Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees or that of his seed from the land of Egypt. . . . In the wilderness have we dwelt in safety alone, being made the subjects of most peculiar mercies and privileges. The good will of him that dwelt in the bush has been upon the head of those that were separated from their brethren. And the Lord has (by turning a wilderness into a fruitful land) brought us into a wealthy place.—Increase Mather[2]

As I described in my earlier article in this journal,[3] Theodore Dwight Bozeman and Robert Middlekauf are technically correct to chide Perry Miller for putting too much weight on Samuel Danforth's (1626–1674) famous May 11, 1670 election sermon, "A Brief Recognition of New England's Errand into the Wilderness." That particular sermon does, indeed, merely say that the Puritans ventured to New England for "liberty to walk in the faith of the gospel." Danforth said little about broader aspirations for New England except to say that if they return to the consecration of the Great Migration their adversaries will be amazed.[4] However, it is a mistake to suggest that the Puritans did not have grand dreams for their City upon a Hill. John White, an English pastor writing to recruit colonists for Massachusetts at the very inception of the colony, demonstrated that they were indeed moving forward toward an evangelical goal. He emphasized that the purpose of planting New England was "the furthering of the gospel." Their motivation was far from a felt need of the Puritans to flee from England to a refuge. On the contrary, White found that the chief objection to the enterprise is that the Puritans are needed in England to continue "the advancing of religion." His answer: "Here . . . my labors that way are not so needful in the land, because many others may put too their hands to the same work. In New England, there are none to undergo the task."[5]

The second generation testified to the positive goal that brought the founders to New England. Edward Johnson (1599–1672), in particular, emphasizes this theme in his 1654 *Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England.* For Johnson, New England was the training ground "to muster up the first of his forces in." Likewise, the pious merchant, John Hull, described New England as "a wine-cellar for Christ to refresh his spouse in." He believed that it was the example and writings of those refreshed in this wine-cellar that awoke "the whole nation" "to think of a general reformation," making them "willing to enter into a war." Hull believed the New England Jerusalem lit the fire that set off the English Civil War.[6]

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[2]Increase Mather for the 1679 Boston Synod, *The Necessity of Reformation* (Boston: John Foster, 1679), i.

[3]John B. Carpenter, "Puritan Missions as Globalization," *Fides et Historia* 31:2 (Summer/Fall 1999): 104–6.

[4]Samuel Danforth, "New England's Errand into the Wilderness," (Cambridge, Mass.: S.G. and M.J., 1671), 9–10, 22.

[5]John White, *The Planters Plea* (London: William Jones, 1630), 399.

[6]E. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England* (1654; Delmar, N.Y.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1974), 1. "Diary of John Hull," (1857) in *Puritan Personal Writings: Diaries,* ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (New York: AMS Press, 1982), 168.

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Even the term "Great Migration," an invention of the second generation, signals the religious motives of the founding generation. Of the many migrations of English people to the colonies in the early seventeenth century, the move to New England was relatively minuscule.[7] Its greatness came from its meaning. Simply a yearning to escape would not have been a "great migration." Thomas Shepard (1605–1649), answering those accusing the Puritan migrants of simply fleeing persecution replied that they came to New England so that "God will have his Church and the Kingdom of Christ go up also in these remote parts of the world, that his Name may be known to the heathens." Cotton Mather's contemporary, Samuel Wigglesworth wrote, "A pure and undefiled religion was the great thing our ancestors had in their view when they cast their eye towards this wilderness for a habitation."[8]

The Great Migration was a demonstration of what sociologist Saskia Sassen describes as "the unmooring of identities from what have been traditional sources of identity, such as the nation or the village." From England to New England, the Puritans were forming "new notions of community, of membership, and of entitlement."[9] These new notions were based on Puritan covenant theology. The common experience of crossing the "rude waves" and fashioning new communities in the wilderness based on a common, vigorous faith, made New England Puritanism a resilient cultural force, far more resilient than the English Puritanism it left behind.

John Winthrop observed that his group of Puritan colonialists was gathered from all over England.[10] Though some churches transplanted en mass, Massachusetts was not the relocation of an English province to America. These people who were joined by a common faith, had to be first formed into one people and create a new province. Relocation from their native England to (what to them was) the isolation of the "howling wilderness" changed Puritans by enabling them to apply their particular principles with a consistency unattainable in the old country. Puritanism ranks among the most rigorous products of the Reformation; the migrants to New England were drawn from the most dedicated and consistent of Puritans. The "free air" of America removed them from "the mollifying influences of an old and complex society." They were able to begin anew where they could order all things according to God's law, in both scripture and nature. "Their rigor was proportionally intensified."[11]

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[7]Virginia D. Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 15–16.

[8]Thomas Shepard, "A Defense of the Answer," in *The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings*, eds. Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2001), 120. Samuel Wigglesworth, *An Essay for Reviving Religion: A Sermon delivered at Boston* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1733), 34.

[9]Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: New Press, 1998), xxxii.

[10]John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in *The Journal of John Winthrop*, eds. Richard S. Dunn and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 8.

[11]Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 45.

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To build a commonwealth on Biblical principles was, of course, their intention. However, they clearly had not worked out a careful blue-print of exactly how this society was to be built. Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" sermon speaks in generalities and of principles rather than specifics. This was prudent; unexpected innovations, like the multiplication of towns, had to be made. Church polity also called for innovations. The localistic reaction provoked by Charles I's attempts to rescind local prerogatives for royal centralization was a factor. [12] Although each town had a great deal of self-rule, most New England towns shared certain characteristics. They either settled with a minister or aspired to get one as soon as possible.[13] To their English supporters their congregationalism was a particularly controversial innovation but, in reality, it was not entirely new. They had before them the model of the separatists at Plymouth, the "Pilgrims" of Thanksgiving fame. They seem to have adopted the separatists' polity without imbibing the separatist spirit. The Puritans slipped into congregationalism with relative ease when they arrived in New England.

The church was both exclusive (in the sense of keeping certain people out) and established. They were what John Eliot described as an inclusive parish church around a core covenanted group. The true church was no less the gathered "company of visible saints" than espoused by congregational purist.[14] The call of the church in the parish is to a "universal home-missionary enterprise." Eliot advocated presbyterian-style Church councils and hoped, even as late as 1668, for the government to take the lead in reform.[15] The Puritans sought to marry Christendom's idea of a national church to a thoroughly Reformation conviction that the true church is the invisible church. This tension between the parish church and the covenanted core, the true invisible church, was a creative tension.

New England's churches could not have been identifiably "Puritan" if they did not exclude, in some way, someone. A thoroughly inclusive culture was unthinkable.[16] However, every resident was required to be under the church's ministry. This combination of the exclusive and the national was one of their greatest achievements. By being exclusive, they helped preserve their particulars; by being national—that is, requiring, at first, everyone to attend one of the established churches, they guaranteed that those particulars would be presented to non-adherents—people who did not necessarily share their culture.[17]

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[12]T. H. Breen, "Persistent Localism: English Social Change and the Shaping of New England Institutions," *The New England Quarterly* vol. 32: 4.

[13]For example, the first article of Springfield, Massachusetts' 1636 town charter, according to Alden T. Vaughan in *The Puritan Tradition in America: 1620–1730*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 192.

[14]John Eliot, *Communion of Churches* (Cambridge, Mass.: Marmaduke Johnson, 1665), 1.

[15]F. J. Powicke, ed., "Some Unpublished Correspondence of the Revered Richard Baxter and the Reverend John Eliot," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, vol. 15 (Manchester, 1931), 174–76.

[16]Mark A. Peterson, *The Price of Redemption: The Spiritual Economy of Puritan New England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 173.

[17]See Darrett Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston: A Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630–1649* (New York: Norton, 1965), 261.

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That New England was intent on putting down permanent, independent roots shows in their determination not to be dependent on Cambridge-trained ministers. That six years into a wilderness the Puritans founded a college is not only testimony to their high view of education but their view of themselves as an independent commonwealth. Harvard was the institutional expression of their desire to diligently "keep up learning . . . lest degeneracy, barbarism, ignorance, and irreligion do by degrees break in upon us."[18] And yet, surely this is only half the story. There is no reason why they could not have sent their young men, like Increase Mather, to Cambridge or Trinity College in Dublin in order to prevent an "illiterate ministry." The early founding of Harvard declared that they were not going to depend on external institutions to preserve their Puritan principles.

The City upon a Hill faced two nearly simultaneous and theologically related challenges: the antinomianism of Anne Hutchinson and the dualism of Roger Williams. Roger Williams "rejected the synthetic and conversionists attempts of Anglicanism and Puritanism to unite politics and the gospel."[19] For Williams "spiritual peace" was "of a higher and far different nature from the peace of the place or people."[20] A separation existed between the two realms and thus a separate ethic in his brand of spirituality. In this he had stepped out of Puritanism. Among the many texts which represent the more holistic Puritan view is John Cotton's *The Bloody Tenent Washed* and Jonathan Mitchel's election sermon of 1671. In this sermon Mitchel, while admitting that "God may bring good out of evil," insists that since the people's highest good is "eminently bound up and concerned" with the glory of God's Name, Rulers who "seek the glory of God . . . must intensely seek the welfare of his people."

Antinomianism too represents a strand of dualism that would weaken or sever the organic unity that Puritans envisioned between the individual's heart relation to God and life in the secular world. Both Williams and Hutchinson were seeking to introduce what H. Richard Niebuhr called the paradigm of "Christ and Culture in Paradox" into a society built on the conviction that "Christ" was "the Transformer of Culture." It was precisely this Puritan insistence on engaging and transforming—rather than escaping—all of life that made Puritanism so resilient and influential. When Edward Johnson, in his *Wonder Working Providence*, described the kinds of errors into which Satan had tempted New England within its first generation, he described them in terms of separations: (1) dividing between the word and the word (pitting scripture against scripture), (2) separating Christ and his grace, (3) separating the Word of God from the Spirit of God, and (4) dividing Christ from his ordinances.[21] Johnson is so certain that the reader will recognize the error in such a division of propositional word from Spirit that he does not feel the need to analyze it to show where the error lay. In today's theology, such

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[18]Jonathan Mitchell, "A Model for the Maintaining of Students and Fellows of Choice Abilities at the College in Cambridge" (c. 1663), *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 31 (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1935), 311.

[19]H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper, 1951), 183.

[20]Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution* (London, 1644), 25.

[21]E. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 94–97.

Word–Spirit dichotomies are common, from Pentecostal "Word of Faith" teaching about the difference between *rhema* and *logos* to the Barthian "*Nien*" to natural revelation. Similarly, Thomas Weld describes the antinomians as if they were extreme dichotomizing Gnostics. Whether this is a fair portrait of the Antinomians or not, it does reflect a Puritan abhorrence of dichotomizing.[22]

Although Williams apparently had some following at Salem, his over-all impact as a dissident in Massachusetts was small. In the long term he seems to have contributed greatly to the stability of the Bible commonwealths by creating the "basin" into which the outcasts of Puritan New England could be sent. His Providence Plantations became a kind of safety valve for New England.

Anne Hutchison's antinomianism appears to have been a far greater threat to internal stability. Winthrop, in his journal, admits that at one point the "great alienation of minds" was so sharp that "it began to be as common here to distinguish between men, by being under a covenant of grace or a covenant of works, as in other countries between Protestants and papists."[23] Janice Knight sees the antinomian controversy and the strong measures Winthrop used to put it down as proof of the two warring parties in New England Puritanism: the spiritists or Cottonians, like John Cotton, who believed in immediate conversion, and the preparationists, like Winthrop himself, who believed in a "morphology of conversion."[24] I believe, because of the unanimity the ministers were able to muster, that the crisis really illustrates "the Bay Colony's most startling accomplishment, fifty years of relative social peace." Nevertheless, Knight is right to point out that initially there do seem to have been real differences. The differences, however, were, as Winthrop quotes Cotton, merely about different ways of "magnifying the grace of God": one party focusing on justification and the other on sanctification.[25] However, these are the kinds of differences that either would not have arisen back in Old England or would not have caused as much controversy. Now that they were missing their old nemesis, William Laud's Anglicanism, the differences among themselves grew in importance. They had to confront them. The legitimate differences between "preparationists" and "predestinarians" or between "intellectualists" and "voluntarists" were forced to the surface. Eventually, especially after Hutchison claimed immediate revelation for her beliefs, even John Cotton, her long-suffering pastor, condemned her, taking a leading role in admonishing the antinomians. The ministers unified action solidified an orthodoxy in Massachusetts and made New England Puritanism of the seventeenth century far more homogeneous than the Puritanism they left behind. When later challengers arrived on the shores of New England, like the Familists, they made little impact.[26] This is not to deny that there

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[22]Thomas Weld, *A Short Story of the Rise, Reign, and Ruin of the Antinomians, Familsts, and Libertines that Infect the Churches of New England* (London: Parkhurst, 1692).

[23]John Winthrop, January 20, 1637 Journal entry, in Miller and Johnson, *The Puritans*, 130.

[24]Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 23–30.

[25]T. H. Breen and Stephen Foster, "The Puritans Greatest Achievement: A Study of Social Cohesion in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," *Journal of American History* 60 (June 1973): 5. Winthrop, January 20, 1637 Journal entry, 133.

[26]Weld, *Rise, Reign, and Ruin of the Antinomians . . . .*

was diversity within New England Puritanism. But efforts to pit John Cotton the evangelical against the "preparationists" with their theology of the covenant are broken on the rock of the founders' ultimate unanimity, John Wheelwright, an intemperate new arrival, notwithstanding. While there were probably different theological styles and emphases roughly along the lines Knight describes, they were differences within—not against—Puritanism.

Kenneth Lockridge points to literacy as contributing to this homogeneity. The relatively high rate of literacy in New England in the founding generation and its continual rise in the following generations contributed to making New England a single place.[27] For the first generation the Massachusetts press was centered at Cambridge, under the shadow of the Puritan Harvard. The speaking aristocracy was also a writing aristocracy for a largely Puritan readership.

Generation II

My father, when he was leaving this the world, did commend it as his dying council to me, that I should endeavor the good of the rising generation in this country, especially that they might be brought under the government of Christ in his Church.—Increase Mather[28]

Increase Mather stands as the quintessential Puritan over all three generations. By birth he belongs to the second generation but his experiences in England gave him a taste of the first and his longevity allowed him to bury many of the ministers of the third. Although born in New England, he finished his education in Ireland, and started his ministry in England where he had expected to live for the rest of his life. When the enforced conformity of the Restoration came to Guernsey, England where he was a chaplain, he refused to conform. He experienced the fate of his father who had been put out by the purges of Archbishop Laud. He underwent the same trials as the first generation of immigrants to New England and it showed when he returned home to debate over the Halfway covenant. He opposed the innovation at first. However, he eventually came to adopt it and even defended the 1661 Synod as quite in the spirit of the Puritan founders in a 1673 treatise entitled *The First Principles of New England.* Increase called for diligence in preserving New England as a Congregational homeland. His calls for persecution "evoke a vision of an American Israel in which society and congregations were one."[29] That, of course, is precisely the original Puritan vision. When in Britain, though, during his sojourn to petition the king for a new charter for Massachusetts, he was key to the formation of the "United Brethren," a short-lived alliance of Congregationalists, Presbyterians and other dissenters. Puritanism was never defined exclusively as congregationalism. Even Increase understood, after the Glorious Revolution, that the congregational exclusivism of New England's first generation, though it may

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[27]Kenneth Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry Into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West* (New York: Norton, 1974), 21.

[28]Increase Mather, *The First Principles of New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Samuel Green, 1673), 3.

[29]Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570–1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 199.

have served its time, was over. Like his father, he saw that new times called for new measures.

A political earthquake in England was a seismic event for the formation of New England in the second generation: the Restoration. During the first generation, Massachusetts could behave like an autonomous nation. In 1655 the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony banned the importation of malt, wheat, barley, beef, meal, and flour ("the principal commodities of this country"), even from the mother country.[30] This made perfect sense in mercantilist economic theory—if Massachusetts was an independent state. During England's commonwealth, Massachusetts was a de facto independent state. Massachusetts flew its own flag; it eliminated the king's name from the oath of allegiance; it issued land without recognizing the king's right to it; it banned judicial appeals to the privy council. Soon Charles II would begin to reel them back in.[31]

The "Halfway Covenant" is the example par excellence of the Puritan ability to adapt their ideals to new realities. The crisis that instigated the Halfway Covenant was built into the original polity. Only church members were supposed to receive ordinances of communion and baptism. Puritan theology taught that the covenant which God had made with the elect included their children (at least until they could "own the covenant" for themselves). Hence, the infant children of church members could be baptized. In the original polity, though, when such children grew up without experiencing grace for themselves they could not be admitted as church members. When they had children, those children—grandchildren of the visible saints—were not even eligible for baptism. Hence, by the end of the first generation increasing numbers of New Englanders were unbaptized. The Halfway Synod of 1661 decided that baptized children of church members who were orthodox and were not living scandalously could have their children baptized. Mark A. Peterson believes that the "Halfway Covenant" marked the emergence of New England Puritanism's sense of responsibility to the whole world. Peterson begins his chronicle of New England Puritanism in 1660 because he believes it was then that the "real world" returned to New England "with a vengeance."[32]

The widespread adoption of the Halfway Covenant sprang from the Puritan sense of pastoral responsibility for the whole world. The strong party of dissent from the innovation, first from young Increase Mather and about a century later from the New Divinity, sprang from the Puritan commitment to a spotless "Bride of Christ." The Halfway Covenant was a compromise between the two impulses. The Halfway Covenant provided the perfect institutional compromise between the world and the Church. "Any attempt to square the circle of Puritan religious injunctions demanded: Augustinian dualism on the one hand, and the making of the world one immense monastery on the other."[33] Peterson believes that the Half-

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[30]Samuel E. Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), 164.

[31]Robert Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 198. Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 139.

[32]Peterson, *The Price of Redemption*, 12.

[33]Adam B. Seligman, "Transaction Introduction," in R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (London: John Murray, 1926), xxxiv.

way Covenant was a sign of the evangelistic impulse that was to make Puritanism so vibrant. The Halfway Covenant was the Puritan answer to the problem of social diversity. Because society includes everyone, including the unregenerate, a way must be found to preserve the social role of the church. The Halfway Covenant allowed the Puritan church to bring the unregenerate under its ministry without completely dissolving the line between the world and the church.

Anglican businessmen and officials started to increasingly settle in Boston. They reminded Puritans of what set them apart from mainstream English culture. These Tory merchants tempted New England with compromises that had been easy to avoid in the "rarefied atmosphere of the first thirty years of settlement."[34] But Puritan convictions were not so easily washed away. Puritanism had been able to lay a solid foundation in the first generation. Thus when the convictions were challenged, they did not evaporate under the hot sun of Cavalier Britain. To the contrary, Michael Hall cites the 1670s as the high point of New England Puritanism because "self-awareness was most fully articulated and before the social, political and intellectual forces that would erode Puritanism had taken effect."[35]

This sense of Puritan self-awareness had some political implications. In 1678 the Massachusetts General Court boldly (and probably foolishly) stated: "the laws of England are bounded within the four seas and do not reach America." As for the tariff, because New England was "not represented in Parliament, so we have not looked at ourselves to be impeded in our trade by them."[36] Tory Anglicans in New England served to unify Puritans in opposition, in the short term, more than to create converts to the Royalists. Edward Randolph (1632–1703), an Anglican and "staunch royalist," was appointed by the Lords of Trade to inspect the adherence of the Massachusetts government to the Navigation acts and the 1673 Tariff. One Massachusetts jury after another refused to convict those he had caught smuggling. He wrote very critically of the Puritans, saying that the leaders were "inclined to sedition." Nevertheless, Randolph believed there were many "who only wait for an opportunity to express their duty to his majesty." These people were generally "the wealthy persons of all professions" in a society where the "chief professions are merchants . . . and wealthy shop-keepers or retailers."[37] Some of the merchants, particularly recent Anglican immigrants, wanted the yoke of Puritan economic scruples lifted. They were to get their way—but only by Royal fiat.

Upon the revocation of Massachusetts' charter in 1684 a brief interim council took power, supported by merchants like Richard Wharton. They were mainly interested in using their power to further their business interests. When the crown's faithful Edmund Andros arrived in 1686, he undid most of what the interim council of merchants had done. His policies turned the Anglican, royalist Richard Wharton against him. Wharton returned to London to lobby for the replacement

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[34]Peterson, *The Price of Redemption*, 11.

[35]Michael G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: the Life of Increase Mather, 1639–1723* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), xiv.

[36]Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 199.

[37]Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 155–57.

of Andros. Wharton had been the leader of those agitating for the revocation of the old charter so that Massachusetts Bay could be a Royal colony. As a capitalist, though, he was disappointed in the new political system. Wharton's loyalty, like most capitalists, was to the dictates of the market.

True Puritans had other reasons to turn against Andros. Andros forced Boston's South church to host Anglican services. By allowing the services to be protracted, he made the Puritans wait outside their own meeting-house for the Anglicans to finish. Increase Mather was sent to London to lobby against Andros, barely escaping arrest on his way out of the new "Dominion of New England." That Mather was chosen rather than some merchant or former magistrate shows New England society still spontaneously looked to their ministers for all kinds of leadership. Andros' "attempt to remodel New England had only served to strengthen popular attachment to the tried and trusted ways of local community life."[38] Soon loyal New England Puritans expressed their renewed sense of identity. In the same year Andros was overthrown a Boston publisher reprinted the original charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company. Cotton Mather issued a declaration condemning the old regime, calling for the charter to be restored and justifying the seizure "of those few ill men which have been (next to our sins) the grand authors of our miseries."[39] New England longed to return to the Puritan commonwealth.

The zeal with which Bostonians, backed by Cotton Mather, toppled Edmund Andros and put him in jail shows that Randolph was an overly optimistic Tory. There was still a vibrant Puritan heartland. As Mark A. Peterson argues, first the Restoration and then Andros provoked a renewal of New England Puritanism by renewing its "oppositional mentality." As threats to their religious principles mounted from outside, Puritans like those of Boston's Third Church, as well as the Mathers, took the lead in defending traditional Puritan ways.[40] In England the temper of Puritans had cooled dramatically after the Restoration.[41] After over a half-century of the most remarkable internal stability in the Western world, Andros' provocation showed that New Englanders had not lost their fire.

Increase Mather in *An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New England* (1676):

It was in respect to some worldly accommodation that other Plantations were erected, but *Religion and not the World* was that which our fathers came hither for. . . . *Pure Worship and Ordinances* without the mixture of human inventions was that which the first fathers of this colony designed in their coming hither. We are the children of the good old *non-conformists*. . . . And therefore that woeful neglect of the rising generation which hath been amongst us, is a sad sign that we have in great part forgotten our *errand* in this wilderness; and then why

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[38]Richard Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675–1717* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1981), 114.

[39]Massachusetts Bay Colony, *A Copy of the King's Majesty's Charter for Incorporating the Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England in America* (1689). Cotton Mather, *The Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston* (Boston: Samuel Green, 1689), 4.

[40]Peterson, *The Price of Redemption*, 174–75.

[41]"It withered in the dark tunnel of persecution between 1660 (Restoration) and 1689 (Toleration)." J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness* (Wheaton, Ill..: Crossway Books, 1990), 28.

should we marvel that God taketh no pleasure in our young men, but they are numbered for the sword, the present judgment lighting chiefly upon the *rising generation*.[42]

Increase Mather's articulate appeal for New England to return to its founding principles strikes at the heart of what economic realities were doing to the second generation of New England Puritans. I believe we should take their jeremiads seriously. Something was draining away from New England. They called what was happening to them "declension." Piritim Sorokin claimed that when ideational societies begin to break down, prophets call for "fideism."[43] This may very well be true. Certainly many of the Puritan observers on the scene were emphatic that declension was setting in. However, there was enough of the old zeal left among enough people to inspire the rise of the jeremiad and create a large audience for the genre in New England. That Increase Mather and many of his contemporaries turned to the jeremiad is a symptom of the vitality of their ideational culture. It's only when we hear "peace, peace" that there is no peace.

Commitment to New England's mission was not a monopoly of the clergy. Though Anglican merchants began to settle there, many of the merchants were Puritan church members in good standing. "So far from being at odds, merchants, magistrates and ministers through family connections and intermarriage formed one thoroughly interlocked community."[44] For example, Governor Simon Bradstreet was both a successful merchant and a magistrate; he was the son of a Lincolnshire minister. His son, also Simon, became a minister in New London and his daughter, Dorothy, married the Rev. Seaborn Cotton. In particular, John Hull, a merchant who became the mint master in Massachusetts, longed for the renewal of Winthrop's vision of a pure City upon a Hill. He recorded a brief prayer in his diary beseeching God's forgiveness for his colony for being too lenient on blasphemous Quakers. Peterson particularly chronicles how heavily involved members of Boston's Third Church were in the upper echelons of commerce. Their wealth came mostly from their active involvement in trade and retailing. They appear to have been "significantly wealthier than their neighbors who were not affiliated with the church."[45] The picture is very complicated: not all merchants were cosmopolitans agitating for liberalization and not all ministers were purists.

Both the Restoration, with its persecution of English Puritanism, and the toleration ushered in by the Glorious Revolution, were to have diametrically different effects on English and New England Puritanism. English Puritanism was reduced to mere dissent with the Restoration. Boston was transformed from a backwater of Puritanism into its capital. Through this transformation, Boston's Puritans cultivated "an evangelical intensity, an urge to export its culture, that

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[42]Original emphasis, 16–17, according to Bailyn, *The New England Merchants of the Seventeenth Century*, 140–41.

[43]Michael P. Richard, "Applying Sorokin's Sociology," in *Sorokin & Civilization: A Centennial Assessment* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 167.

[44]Stephen Foster, "The Puritan Social Ethic: Class and Calling in the First One Hundred Years of Settlement in New England" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1966), 232.

[45]Peterson, *The Price of Redemption*, 72.

was something new."[46] In addition, in New England, with the Glorious Revolution hopes for the complete reformation of the Anglican Church were revived.[47] Puritanism's original purpose was alive and well. Thus the reflexive defense of a challenged culture at first reinvigorated New England Puritan convictions. At this point the first generation gets idealized, they focus sharply on their "errand into the wilderness," and the jeremiad flourishes.

The apparent return of England to a more Protestant course after the Glorious Revolution and the flight of the Huguenots from France, some of whom come to New England, encouraged a vision of a Protestant union.[48] In response to King William's Toleration Act of 1689, Cotton Mather moved further and further away from Congregational exclusivism. In England the Act did what generations of persecution had not been able to do to English nonconformists: in legally granting their right to worship it took away their cause to fight. With no need for *jihad* their zeal drained away and their decline was sped. The combination of the people's rejection of the Puritan state and, about a generation later, legal recognition, was enough to break the back of English Puritanism. Logically, it could have done the same to New England Puritans, for in abolishing religious persecution the Act also removed what had spurred the first settlers to cross the Atlantic.[49] Distance made the difference. The cause was in England but the effect was different in America. In America they were not just scattered churches but a distinct province—a province with a strong sense of their own identity since they had been virtually independent.

Meanwhile, devout New England Puritans had found a new enemy against which to rally the troops. With the memory of Laud's persecution growing ever fainter, Puritan leaders of the second generation, as shown in their jeremiads, had changed the primary target of their fire: the declension of New England's own youth. The Pope may still be the anti-Christ but the anti-Christ could be defeated if only the covenant people were faithful. King Philip's War (1675–76), the loss of the charter, and economic downturns, all served to confirm that God had a controversy with the sinful covenant people. There was always a need for *jihad* in New England.

Generation III

Its part of the generation work of every Christian, to do his utmost that the Lord's Name and Honor may be held up to the succeeding generation.—Eleazer Mather[50]

I speak now to the generation coming on upon the stage, if you or a considerable number of you do not take care to be right spirited for God, that you may duly manage his work and

[46]Ibid., 229, 230.

[47]See Cotton Mather, *Eleutheria, or An Idea of the Reformation in England* (London: J.R, 1698).

[48]R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire*, 132.

[49]Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather*,140.

[50]E. Mather, "A Serious Exhortation," 14.

carry it on, and serve the God of your fathers with a perfect heart and willing mind, you will be like to destroy and lay this pleasant land desolate.—William Adams[51]

After the Glorious Revolution, King William issued Massachusetts a new charter in which the main pillar of religious control was permanently removed. The franchise was granted on the basis of property rather than church membership. Those hoping that Increase Mather could bring back the original charter were disappointed. The constitutional basis for Massachusetts' era of de facto independence was dissolved. The Puritan commonwealth was hereafter politically connected to larger organizations. The third generation of New England Puritans would have to learn to get along in a world not of their making. But "the oppositional mentality"—the jihad—had been awakened and it would not die down easily. The tendency of this time, so notes Samuel E. Morison, was "to tighten up" and insist on undiluted Puritanism.[52]

This aroused "oppositional mentality" may be behind two domestic New England controversies, one very well known. Most Americans, if they have any knowledge at all of this period, think of the Salem witchcraft trials. Kenneth A. Lockridge and Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum portray the Salem trials as a cultural "Battle of the Bulge," a desperate Puritan counter-attack especially by the Puritan hinterland against the forces of cosmopolitanism. Lockridge believes that in the trials the citizens of Salem Village were taking a stand for an intensely localistic version of Puritanism. They were reacting against "corruptions that smacked not simply of a different life-style but also of a higher authority which would doom their life-style to extinction."[53] The Puritans would not necessarily differ with this interpretation. Cotton Mather himself stated that the reason for the outbreak of witchcraft was because Puritanism so opposed such things. "Where will Satan show the most malice but where he is hated and hated most."[54] While the modern interpretation is that they were nothing more than mass hysteria combined with slack judicial practices, in fact it is reasonable to suppose that in a culture in which people believed that witchcraft was a real avenue to supernatural power, that some people would try it, especially those, like West Indian slaves, who were on the fringes of Puritan society.[55] When African and even ancient Anglo-Saxon folklore came into contact with Puritan scruples, the result was deadly.

Increase Mather's debate with Solomon Stoddard on giving liberal access to the Lord's Supper is another controversy that may never have been fired to such

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[51]William Adams, *The Necessity of the Pouring out of the Spirit* (Boston: John Foster, 1679), 41.

[52]S. E. Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard, 1636–1936* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1936), 46.

[53]Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Settlement and Unsettlement in Early America: The Crisis of Political Legitimacy Before the Revolution* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 39. See also Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[54]Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (London: John Dunton, 1693), 5.

[55]Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1976), 183.

heat if it was not for the spirit of jihad in the air. In the wilderness Stoddard (1643–1729) broke with some aspects of the New England way but certainly not with Puritanism itself.[56] Stoddard took the primitivist dimension of Puritanism one step further back into the Old Testament. "If one wished the restoration of the 'pure' church," observes Paul R. Lucas, "one looked first at the polity of God's church among the ancient Israelites."[57] Stoddard, unlike the New England main-stream, interpreted all of New England to be equivalent to Israel, rather than just the elect in New England.[58] Stoddard's misstep, though, should be seen in context. In the absence of significant religious competition he could afford to herd every-one into the church so as to put them all in the way of grace.

In addition, Stoddard had a thought-out theological rationale. "The inward actings of grace are invisible to others." Someone may have grace and not (yet) show it, while another may be counterfeiting "the visible actings of grace." It is, then, too difficult to discern the sheep from the goats.[59] Stoddard questioned the ability of Christians to accurately separate the sheep from the goats (in his 1687 tract *The Safety of Appearing at the Day of Judgment in the Righteousness of Christ*) and therefore advocated giving communion to all who were orthodox theologically and lead scandal-free lives. His open communion was not as radical as some make it out to be. Boston's Third Church, Charlestown, Cambridge, and Watertown, by down playing the "test of relation," each had widened the circle of those eligible for communion by the end of the seventeenth century.[60] Stoddard certainly did not regard all New Englanders as regenerate saints; he even had his suspicions about some of his fellow clergy. Stoddard's move, though at variance with the letter of New England practice, was in keeping with its evangelistic spirit.[61] Stoddard ar-gued that he was no innovator, that he was in keeping with "the pillars of the churches of New England."[62]

At first, the formation of the Brattle Street Church (1699) appeared to be a sig-nificant defection from supposed Puritan exclusivity to English latitudinarianism. Among the founders of Brattle Street, "a group of modernists," two were grand-sons of former governors of Massachusetts and around them "coalesced a larger group, most of them men of business."[63] They called Benjamin Colman, a son of Massachusetts who had gone to England; he received Presbyterian ordination be-fore returning to take over Brattle Street. Upon his return, Colman issued a mani-

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[56]Stoddard argued his case in Solomon Stoddard, *An Appeal to the Learned* (Boston: B. Green, 1709).

[57]Paul R. Lucas, "'An Appeal to the Learned': The Mind of Solomon Stoddard," *William and Mary Quarterly* 30 (April 1973), 262.

[58]For example, *An Appeal to the Learned*, 91.

[59]Solomon Stoddard, *The Tryal of Assurance* (Boston: B. Green and J. Allen, 1698), 13, 19.

[60]David Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 205.

[61]Increase Mather insisted, in opposition to Stoddard's innovations, that "visible saints are the matter of a particular church." *The Order of the Gospel* (Boston: B. Green and J. Allen, 1700), 16.

[62]Stoddard, *An Appeal to the Learned*, 92.

[63]D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, 292–93.

festo that implicitly challenged the Cambridge Platform. Colman turned out to be no more a rationalist and latitudinarian than Stoddard who only opened communion so he could have fuller congregations for his hell-fire, conversionist sermons. Colman was committed to a church of visible saints too, even if he thought the New England Way's tradition of discerning the saints was no longer useful.[64] Colman lived to see and support the Great Awakening. Far from being the "outstanding liberal" Edwin Gaustad claims him to be, Colman "remained staunchly Calvinist in theology and a friend to the new evangelical revivals." George Whitefield himself would remark favorably on Colman's gospel preaching (and vise versa).[65] Meanwhile, Samuel Willard (1640–1707), acting president of Harvard after Increase Mather, was just as orthodox as the Mathers and so could mitigate the latitudinarian influence.[66] Eventually, even the Mathers made peace with both Stoddard and Colman.

A more positive fruit of the jihad, the "oppositional mentality," was the rise of voluntarism. After the new charter was issued in 1691, the crown-appointed governors were not nearly as active in support of the Puritan "standing order" as the elected governors of the original charter had been. Rather than having become dependent on government protection, Puritan vibrancy showed in the sudden sprouting of voluntary associations and spontaneous movements. In central to western Massachusetts, Stoddard's Hampshire Association was an attempt to erect an organization of churches for mutual oversight in place of the government's lost role. Back in the east, both Cotton Mather and Samuel Danforth (1666–1727) lifted a page from the moral reform movements in England that briefly sprouted during Queen Anne's reign. They both formed societies to combat vice. Cotton Mather, starting in 1702, gathered young men to help the Boston authorities enforce moral legislation. His efforts produced little since by 1713 the societies had died and could not be resuscitated. Youth remained, however, a focus of the voluntaristic efforts to rekindle the Puritan fire. Samuel Danforth had more success, perhaps because his groups were more explicitly religious. He led, in Taunton, Massachusetts, the organization of societies for prayer, encouraging family worship, and, like Cotton Mather's groups, self-disciplining of young men. A revival ensued in Taunton, in 1705, which was celebrated, in Puritan style by a covenant renewal service.[67] Increase Mather had championed such services dur-

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[64]Benjamin Colman, *Gospel Order Revived* (n.p.: 1700), 2.

[65]Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (New York: Harper, 1957), 52. Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 117. Colman encouraged Jonathan Edwards to publish *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, invited Whitefield to Boston and had him preach at Brattle Street his first Sunday, and in a letter (15 May 1742) called the revival Whitefield fanned into flame "a great and glorious work of God" even while criticizing some of its excesses. Charles Chauncy, *The State of Religion in New England Since the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield's Arrival There* (Edinburgh: Robert Foulis, 1742), 42.

[66]James W. Jones, *The Shattered Synthesis: New England Puritanism Before the Great Awakening* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 55.

[67]Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace. Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 44–47; 181.

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ing King Philip's War as a mass expression of repentance. In the midst of revival, they turned back to this fading Puritan practice.

Sociologist Adam Seligman sees in these reform societies the Matherian counterpart to Solomon Stoddard's bringing the world into the Church; Mather and Danforth brought the Church into the world. These developments are fruit from the same tree: Puritanism was finding new forms of institutionalization.[68] This would only have happened if Puritanism was still a living movement even in the third generation.

Each of the first three New England Puritan generations demonstrated their yearning for Christian unity around a Reformation core, despite the established congregationalism. Of the first generation, "inclusivistic" John Eliot published *The Communion of Churches* in 1665. In it he proposed an organizational compromise between congregational and presbyterian forms. Eliot sought to justify the role of councils of gathered churches.[69] Increase Mather's "United Brethren" sparked correspondence back and forth between like-minded ministers on both sides of the Atlantic. Cotton Mather celebrated the "Blessed Union" with another publication, proclaiming on its title page "A most happy union has been lately made between those two eminent parties in England."[70] He insisted that New England was a place where "the names Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Antipaedobaptist, are swallowed up in that of Christian."[71] He even planned a grand ministerial association with a standing council to advance the ecumenical spirit but it foundered on congregational independence.[72] New England's original errand may have changed, somewhat, but for Cotton Mather the new identity had not changed into something less but into something more. England may not be converted en masse but there was still hope for a union of conformists and non-conformists on a Calvinist basis.[73] Stoddard, Danforth, Colman, and the Mathers did not act like Puritanism was a wilting movement.

Declension there may have been in the hearts of the sons and daughters of the founders of the City upon a Hill. But the myth of disintegrating Puritanism with a "liberal" Colman in Boston, a rebel Stoddard in the wilderness, and incipient Arminianism seen in the "moralism" of third generation Puritans (even Cotton Mather) simply holds no water.[74] Cotton Mather came to believe that even by the 1720s New England ministers were nearly unanimous in holding onto Puritan orthodoxy. He (in 1726) reported that New England Puritans "adhere to the confes-

[68]Adam Seligman, "Inner-worldly individualism and the institutionalization of Puritanism in late seventeenth-century New England," *British Journal of Sociology* 41: 537–53.

[69]See Eliot's *Communion of Churches*.

[70]Cotton Mather, *Blessed Unions* (Boston: B. Green, 1692), cover.

[71]C. Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, 5.

[72]Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596–1728* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 224.

[73]C. Mather, *Eleutheria*, 118–35.

[74]For example, see Cotton Mather's *Eleutheria*.

sion of faith, published by the assembly of divines at Westminster. . . . I cannot learn, that among all the pastors of two hundred churches, there is one Arminian."[75]

Peace was also made with the Baptists and kept with the Huguenots. Although Increase Mather, like his contemporary Stoddard, had called for more suppression of the Baptists, he also acknowledged the Baptists as legitimate in practice (by inquiring whether the local Baptist church had any objection to John Farnum, who was requesting the right to return to communion at the North Church).[76] His son Cotton preached a sermon at the ordination of a Baptist minister. Cotton Mather was stretching toward the evangelical unity that George Whitefield would later champion.

There was diversity within late New England Puritanism created by Benjamin Colman, Solomon Stoddard, and others. That diversity demonstrated not that Puritanism was unraveling but that in a new environment the movement could adjust in a variety of ways while maintaining an essential unity. It is true that the parochialism of New England Congregationalism was being challenged, but the challenges were on a Puritan basis. A new Puritan catholicity was developing which was preparing Puritanism for dispersal. Thus despite the howls of some of the Congregational mainstream, like the young Increase Mather, Puritanism exhibited in its first century in the New World that it had both a firm foundation and a variety of facades on that one foundation. Puritanism had managed nearly a century of stability in the City upon a Hill. It was poised on the launching pad of globalization.

The story of the first three generations of the "City upon a Hill" is not primarily about declension—at least not externally. Virginia D. Anderson notes that of all the early English colonies only in New England "did the framework of social and cultural institutions created by the first generation of settlers prove remarkably durable."[77] Indeed, given the pressures they were under from London and the natural centrifugal forces of human society, they managed to hold together to a remarkable degree. Hence the Puritanism's ideational culture dominated New England for over a century; for most of the first two generations, that dominance was complete: economic, political, and cultural. But even by the end of the third generation, it was still Puritanism that ruled the culture. Since throughout this period New England was relatively homogeneous, this vibrant Puritan church had the opportunity to shape the common mind from basic presuppositions up.

In so far as a given system of ideas has existed for a long time in a society at strategic points, it is a reasonable hypothesis that it exerts a steady influence in the direction of canalizing attitudes in such a way that they will become, in terms of such a system, meaningful. This is

[75]According to Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1955), 9.

[76]Foster, *The Long Argument,* 199.

[77]Anderson, *New England's Generation,* 1. David Hall notes the "remarkable continuity" of the first three generations of ministry in New England (*The Faithful Shepherd,* 270.)

the more true, the more the society in question is one characterized by the persistence of aggregates, by strength of "belief."[78]

So that ideational system of ideas, known as Puritanism, brought that society about and guided it at strategic points, apparently "canalizing attitudes" in a way that they became meaningful and ingrained. Because Puritanism was such an overwhelmingly ideational movement and because it remained vigorous and stable throughout New England's first century, its strong beliefs made it especially potent in shaping New England society and presumably the new nation in which New England was eventually so influential.

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[78]Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York: Free Press, 1937), 537.