
A brief Account of the present State, Income, Expenditures,
&c. of the Society for propagating the Gospel among
the Indians, and others, in North-America.

THIS society was instituted in the year 1787, and embraced, as its general object, the dissemination of christian knowledge, and the means of religious instruction, among all those, in their country, who were destitute of them. The natives of it seemed to claim their first attention, for we possess their lands and inhabit their country ; and vain as former attempts had been to civilize and reform them, yet the society thought it their duty to continue their exertions, and wait for the blessing of Heaven upon them.

They have been enabled to prosecute this design by their receiving, in the year 1789, from the late RICHARD CARY, Esq. of Charlestown, executor to the estate of the hon. JOHN ALFORD, Esq. a very handsome sum, which was bequeathed, by that gentleman, for the purpose of extending the knowledge of the gospel among the Indians. It was some time before the bonds and notes, of which this legacy principally consisted, came into operation. They now produce an annual income of three hundred and sixty-two dollars, which is confined entirely to the Indians in the will of the donor. With this sum the society assist in supporting the Rev. Zechariah Mayhew, as a missionary to the Indians of Martha's Vineyard, and the Rev. Gideon Hawley, as a missionary to those at Mashpee. They support a number of small schools on Martha's Vineyard, and they furnish the Indian schools at Mashpee, Oneida, and New-Stockbridge, with books, paper, &c. They have furnished the Indians of New-Stockbridge also with plows, chains, hoes, and other farming utensils, in order to make them acquainted with agriculture and the arts of civilized life. They have assisted them in building school-houses, and in printing some small, pious and useful books in their own language. Twenty-two bibles, 66 testaments, 120 spelling-books, 54 psalters, 48 primers, 48 of Watts's psalms and hymns, and 79 other pious books, particularly adapted to the use and instruction of children, have been put into the hands of the missionaries and schoolmasters, for the use of the Indian schools.

The missionaries to the Indians have received from the society, since their being employed by the society,

	487	dollars	50	cents.
The society have expended in the purchase of books	213		68	
The support of the schools at Martha's Vineyard has cost	100		22	
	<u>801</u>		<u>40</u>	

Those parts of our new country, which are settled by the English, but are yet destitute of the means of religious instruction, next claimed the attention of the society. In order to assist these persons with effect, it was necessary for the society to have a fund which might support missionaries, purchase books, &c. This fund they attempted to raise by a contribution in the several religious societies through the state, in consequence of a Brief granted them by government; and by private subscriptions from members of their own body. From these two sources, they have raised a fund which annually produces 246 dollars.

This fund, every one must see, is inadequate to the purpose of supporting missionaries in our new and vacant plantations. The society therefore, in the year 1791, petitioned the General Assembly for a grant to enable them to send missionaries into the vacant towns and plantations in the eastern parts of this commonwealth. This petition was granted, and the Court allowed the society to receive one hundred and fifty pounds a year, for three years, from the public treasury, in order to answer this valuable purpose.

An account of the manner in which this money has been expended, here follows.

Whole amount of the grant for 3 years — — £. 450 0 0

Of which the society has paid

1791.	To Rev. Daniel Little	—	—	66	12	0
	Abiel Abbot	—	—	43	10	0
	James Lyon	—	—	39	18	0
1792.	Peter Holt	—	—	18	0	0
	Levi Frisbee	—	—	45	0	0
	Samuel Macclintock	—	—	45	0	0
1793.	Daniel Little	—	—	6	0	0
	Ditto	—	—	30	0	0
	James Lyon	—	—	15	0	0
1794.	Joseph Thaxter	—	—	45	0	0
	Samuel Eaton	—	—	45	0	0

£. 399 0 0

Remains unexpended — 51 0 0

Of which is due to Mr. Little for a mission last summer 30 0 0

Balance in the hands of the society £. 21 0 0

The society have reason to believe that these gentlemen have been eminently useful in their respective missions, and they have received unequivocal proofs of the pleasure with which those who were the objects of their mission have in general received and heard them. In order to the society's prosecuting this design of their institution, it is necessary that the grants from government should be continued to them. For this continuance they have petitioned the legislature, and they hope to succeed.

A third object of the society has been to spread books of piety, and those necessary for the education of youth, among such persons as were not able to purchase them for themselves. To this purpose they have devoted the whole of their income, which is not expressly appropriated to the Indians, and they have received a number of donations of books from those who wished well to their design. And since the year 1790, they have accordingly distributed, in the eastern parts of this commonwealth, 220 bibles, 540 testaments, 715 spelling-books, 442 psalters, 1086 primers, 94 of Watts's psalms and hymns, and 3202 other books upon pious and practical subjects, making in the whole 6299. No books upon controversial subjects are included in this number, because the object of the society has been not to serve any particular sect or denomination, but to promote the interests of our common christianity.

Were the funds of the society larger, they have opportunity to increase the number of books distributed to great advantage. They request the donations of the opulent, either in money to increase their funds, or in books to be distributed, at the pleasure of the donors ; and they ask the prayers of all good men, that an institution, so useful, may be continued and increased.

Sensible that persons, who are entrusted with the distribution of money for public purposes, are accountable to the public, the society have printed the above sketch of their proceedings, which they hope will meet with the approbation of their fellow citizens, and procure them further assistance in the prosecution of the benevolent designs for which their body was incorporated.

By Order.

PETER THACHER, Secretary.

Boston, Jan. 1795.

Account of the Fund
For propagating the
Gospel among the
Indians

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