

into the black. While the 12,500-circulation *Griffin* (Georgia) *Daily News* and some 120 other papers have shut down their Web sites, larger publishers, with the financial resources to be patient, are optimistic.

Forrester Research, a Cambridge, Massachusetts, consulting firm, expects publishing on the Web to be “a tough slog” until 2000. But then it should become profitable, with on-line advertisers (up to 75 percent of them, *national* advertisers) spending a projected \$4.5 billion a year. By 2002, estimates another firm, Jupiter Communications, annual online advertising should reach \$7.7 billion.

Today, Kirsner says, the bulk of most Web publishers’ income comes from three types of advertising: display, classified, and sponsorships. To have their ad graphic displayed 500,000 times on the *New York Times on the Web* site, for instance, advertisers pay \$20,000, or \$40 per 1,000 “impressions.” But that way of charging advertisers may be becoming obsolete, Kirsner says. In 1996, Procter & Gamble arranged to pay for its display ads on the Yahoo! search service according to how many times users clicked on the ads *and were delivered to a P&G site*—not just how many times the ad was shown. An even more frightening development, from an on-line publisher’s point of view, is that some Web sites have begun selling ads on

a “pay-per-transaction” basis: advertisers only pay if visitors to the site actually buy something.

To forge stronger long-term relationships with advertisers, “and perhaps to distract them from the new payment models,” observes Kirsner, some online publishers “are offering both sponsorship packages and ‘co-branded’ areas—essentially ‘advertorial’ custom publishing products.” The *New York Times*-owned *Boston Globe Online* has an “Emerging Business” area sponsored by Fleet Bank. *Florida Today’s Space Online* made sure it had the Kennedy Space Center and other sponsors aboard before its launch.

Web publishers are also running classified ads, long a big moneymaker for newspapers. *Boston Globe Online* expects classifieds to bring in as much as 35 percent of its revenue this year, up from less than five percent in 1996.

Though Web surfers are accustomed to free access, subscriptions are another potential source of revenue. The *Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition*, for example, derives more than 20 percent of its revenue from subscriptions. Other on-line publishers are also experimenting with subscriptions. Indeed, while there are some signs that the World Wide Web may become a paying proposition, “experimentation” is still the byword.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Putting Down the Puritans

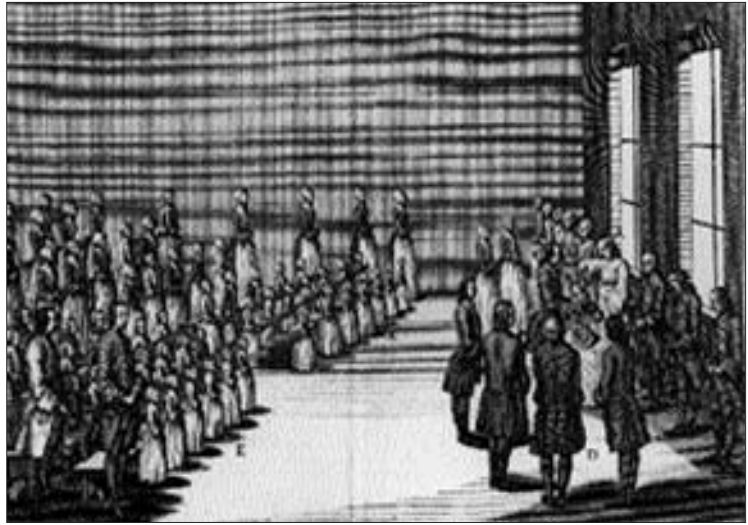
“The Post-Puritan Paradigm of Early American Religious History” by Charles L. Cohen, in *The William and Mary Quarterly* (Oct. 1997), Box 8781, Williamsburg, Va. 23187-8781.

Starting in 1933 with the publication of *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630-1650*, and continuing with such classics as the two-volume *The New England Mind* (1939-53), historian Perry Miller put the Puritans of 17th-century New England on the scholarly map. Without quite intending to do so, Miller turned them into the archetypal Americans, the elect of God with a special mission to create a New Jerusalem. In recent years, however, historians stressing the varieties of colonial religious experience have challenged the idea that the Puritans were all that important.

“In Miller’s tale,” notes Cohen, a profes-

sor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, “the New England saints designed an impressive intellectual edifice grounded on the covenanted relationship between themselves and God only to lament its buckling as succeeding generations failed to reproduce the founders’ piety. [Jonathan] Edwards [1703-58] salvaged the scheme by modernizing an outmoded metaphysics with the enlightened harmonies of Isaac Newton and John Locke, and revivalists spread the Puritan dynamic of sin and redemption to south and west. By the Revolution, the New England mind had become America’s.”

The Puritans claimed a pre-eminent place in historians' thinking in part because colonial New England left an unmatched abundance of literary materials. But revisionist historians—proponents of the new social history, written from the “bottom up”—are not content with such “elitist” testimony. Borrowing techniques from the behavioral sci-



Among the sects active outside New England in the mid-18th century were the Moravians (here, at a baptism), concentrated in Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

ences, they have used data from sources such as court depositions and inventories to paint a picture of the unlettered multitudes.

Challenging Puritanism's significance, the revisionists portray the middle or southern colonies “as somehow more typical of subsequent American social and institutional evolution,” Cohen writes. They even question the Puritans' influence in New England, suggesting that the region's “social arrangements derived more from inherited patterns of English agriculture, law, or custom than from religious or ecclesiastical practice.” And they point out that there were other religious forces at work in colonial America: Anglicans, Lutheran pietists, Jesuit missionaries, and a variety of sectarians.

Summarizing what he calls the “post-Puritan paradigm,” Cohen says there is agreement that a turning point in American life came around 1680, after a period

of declining piety. But then “the most enduring American religious patterns coalesced, not in the pious sobriety of Puritan New England . . . but in the earnest if stolid fabrication of ecclesiastical institutions throughout Anglo-America” between 1680 and 1820. The two leading revisionist historians—Jon Butler, author of *Awash in a Sea of Faith* (1990), and Patricia U. Bonomi, author of *Under the Cope of Heaven* (1986)—differ on the pace of America's “Christianization.” Bonomi contends that churches and churchgoing grew steadily during the 18th century, Cohen says. Butler sees 18th- and 19th-century Americans as less pious—and more open to occult practices.

Though the revisionists have shown that the Puritans of New England were far from being the whole story, Cohen concludes, they go too far in minimizing their importance. A coherent, comprehensive portrayal of early American religious life has yet to emerge.

The Lord's Judgment

“Lord Acton's Ordeal: The Historian and Moral Judgment” by Perez Zagorin, in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Winter 1998), One West Range, Charlottesville, Va. 22903.

The English historian Lord Acton (1834–1902) is today best remembered for his dictum, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Behind those famous words, though, argues Zagorin, an emeritus professor of history at the University of Rochester, was a conception of

the historian's duty so stern, and a moral code so absolute, that few historians have been able to go along with him.

John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton was both a lifelong Roman Catholic and a lifelong liberal (in the 19th-century sense of the term), who feared the state as the chief threat