

An Examination of the Writings Of Brébeuf, Le Jeune,  
and Le Moyne in the *Jesuit Relations*; 1632-1659.

By

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### **Abstract**

The role of missionaries from the Society of Jesus was to travel the world to convert people to Catholicism. Jesuits were extensively trained at the society's universities in preparation for missions. In 1632, missionaries were formally invited into New France. This thesis examines the writings of three Jesuit missionaries: Fathers Jean de Brébeuf, Paul Le Jeune, and Simon Le Moyne. Reports of the work that they did appeared in the *Jesuit Relations*. Through their entries in the *Relations* we learn that they adjusted the application of the training they received at the universities in France, modifying these according to the nature of their interactions with the Huron and Iroquois. The methods these Jesuits employed to convert indigenous people changed over the course of the missionary period. A close examination of topics such as illness, beliefs, conflict, politics, and interactions with indigenous peoples all had an effect on how these missionaries attempted to convert First Nations to Catholicism.

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## Missionaries

	<b>Brébeuf</b>	<b>Le Jeune</b>	<b>Le Moyne</b>
<b>Born</b>	Condé-sur-vire Normandy 1593	Châlons-sur-Marne France 1591	Beauvais 1604
<b>Noviciate</b>	Rouen 1617	Rouen 1613	Rouen 1623
<b>Time in Canada</b>	1625-1629; 1632-1649; Superior to the Huron 1634-1638	1632-1649; Superior in Canada 1632-1639	1638-1665
<b>Location in Canada</b>	Huronia	Montagnais, Sillery	Huronia, Iroquoia
<b>Legacy</b>	Colleges in Montreal and Toronto. Preparatory school in Indianapolis. High schools across Canada. Parish Municipality in Quebec. A street in Montreal. Canonized a saint in 1930.	High School in Quebec. A Township in Quebec. A lake in Quebec	Jesuit college in Syracuse New York.
<b>Death</b>	1649 at St. Ignace Village	Paris 1664	Trois Rivières 1665

## Indigenous Groups

	<b>Montagnais</b>	<b>Huron</b>	<b>Iroquois</b>
<b>Language</b>	Algonquian	Iroquoian	Iroquoian
<b>Location in Canada</b>	From St. Lawrence below Quebec to James Bay	South and East of the Georgian Bay in what is now Ontario	Around lakes of Central New York
<b>European Alliance</b>	French	French	Dutch then English
<b>Lifestyle</b>	Nomadic	Sedentary	Sedentary
<b>Population around contact</b>	Less than 50,000*	Between 20,000 and 30,000	17,000**

\* For the whole Algonquian linguistic group, which consists of the Micmacs, the Penobscots, the Montagnais, Ottawas, Chippewas, Mascoutens, Sacs, Foxes, Pottawattomies, and the Illinois. Edna Kenton, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in North America (1610-1791)* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1954). xxvi.

\*\* Kenton, xxvii

## Introduction

Early Canadian history represented a time of change and adaptation for the indigenous inhabitants and the settlers. My interest is in the *Jesuit Relations*. The *Relations* contain an abundance of information about indigenous societies as well as the Jesuits themselves. Jesuit missionaries became agents of change for First Nations peoples. At the Jesuit universities in France, missionaries were extensively trained to create Catholic converts all over the globe. A brief sample of the writings of Brébeuf, Le Jeune and Le Moyne in the *Jesuit Relations* demonstrates that Jesuit training was continuously modified to obtain converts. Moreover, their actions were mediated over the course of time through their interactions with Huron and Iroquois.

The *Jesuit Relations*, a compilation of observations written by different missionaries from 1632-1672, are a vital source of information for Canadian historians. The annual reports, sent to France for publication, described in great detail much that was going on in North America in the seventeenth century. They served as a reminder to the French elite of how arduous, yet necessary, missionary work was. Their observations regarding language, beliefs, and cultures also acted as a training manual for future Jesuits. In many ways, the *Relations* emphasized the French Jesuit world-view. Missionaries focused on indigenous beliefs and superstitions in relation to their own belief systems. The *Relations* clearly reflected the French world-view, and focused on



Jesuit interests. Additionally, the personalities of the missionaries also appeared on the pages of the *Relations*, albeit in a highly edited fashion, which impacted what they wrote about. Topics such as illness, conflicts and politics were also discussed due to their importance to the missionary work. Moreover, as societies changed, the focus of missionaries did as well.

Through an analysis of the *Jesuit Relations* I hope to demonstrate that the relationship between First Nations peoples and Europeans evolved as alliances and relationships changed over time. While it is clear is that the *Relations* were written by Jesuits and focused on their efforts in North America. A close reading can also provide insight into indigenous peoples' lives in the seventeenth century, and the changing relationship between Jesuits and the indigenous. Understanding alliances was crucial for missionaries who were hoping to establish missions among different nations. Not all relationships were portrayed as equal. The Huron, who formed an early alliance with the French and missionaries, were described in more positive terms than the Iroquois. The *Relations* also reveal how relations between the Iroquois and French changed over time, allowing missionaries, such as Le Moyne, to establish missions in Iroquoia. Opinions of missionaries consequently changed once they were able to observe and learn more about the Iroquois.

The *Relations* also provide more information on how French and indigenous societies interacted in the seventeenth century. By focusing on the observations of three different missionaries: Brébeuf (1632-1649), Le Jeune (1632-1649), and Le Moyne

(1638-1665),<sup>1</sup> I will demonstrate that they slightly adjusted their approaches to conversions as they interacted with different nations such as the Huron and Iroquois at different times. The primary goal of each missionary was to convert the indigenous people of North America, bringing them into a French alliance. Brébeuf spent his time in Huronia learning the language and cultures, gaining the trust of the people, and traveling to preach. Le Jeune wanted to establish a settlement for indigenous people, so they could live less like the indigenous and more like the French. Le Moyne, who arrived as tensions with the Iroquois were intensifying, became an ambassador between the French and the Iroquois while they were negotiating peace.

Examining the *Jesuit Relations* provides a great deal of information, but secondary sources have also been useful in the writing of this thesis. Authors, J.C. Aveling, *The Jesuits*,<sup>2</sup> and Christopher Chapple, *Jesuit Tradition in Education and Missions: A 450-year perspective*,<sup>3</sup> provide an excellent overview of the foundation of the Society of Jesus as well as their education. John Patrick Donnelly's, *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period, 1540-1640*, is a compilation of letters written by the earliest Jesuit missionaries. Bronwen Catherine McShea's doctoral thesis, "Cultivating Empire Through Print: The Jesuit Strategy for New France and the Parisian 'Relations,'"

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<sup>1</sup> Dates given for the three missionaries are their time in North America.

<sup>2</sup> John Cedric Hugh Aveling, *The Jesuits* (London: Blond & Briggs, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Chapple, ed., *The Jesuit Tradition in Education and Missions: A 450-year Perspective* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1993).

examines the relationship between Jesuit education, Jesuit patronage, and the parallels between France's peasant classes and First Nations peoples.<sup>4</sup>

Sources regarding Jesuits in New France provide background information for both France and New France in the seventeenth century. John Hopkins Kennedy's *Jesuit and Savage in New France*,<sup>5</sup> and James T. Moore's *Indian and Jesuit*,<sup>6</sup> examine the challenges that missionaries faced in the years prior to Cardinal Richelieu's intervention and the foundation of the Hundred Associates through to the arrival of other religious missionary orders. Gustave Lanctôt's, *A History of Canada*,<sup>7</sup> and Marcel Trudel's, *The Beginnings of New France*,<sup>8</sup> provide excellent information on the early years of New France, which extends beyond missionary work. Francis Parkman's, *The Jesuits in North America*,<sup>9</sup> is considered outdated, but for the purpose of this thesis it was to examine the stereotypes that were commonly held by historians in the nineteenth-century.

Francis Parkman relied heavily on the *Relations* for his information, often including large excerpts from the *Relations*. Historians such as Allan Greer, S.R. Mealing, and Edna Kenton also included excerpts from the *Relations* in their scholarly books. Greer's, *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century*

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<sup>4</sup>Bronwen Catherine McShea, "Cultivating Empire Through Print: The Jesuit Strategy for New France and the Parisian *Relations* of 1632 to 1673" *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (PhD diss., Yale University, 2011).

<sup>5</sup>J.H. Kennedy, *Jesuits and Savage in New France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

<sup>6</sup>James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter* (USA: Loyola University Press, 1982).

<sup>7</sup>Gustave Lanctôt, *A History of Canada: From its Origins to the Royal Régime, 1663*, vol. 1, trans. Josephine Hambleton (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1963).

<sup>8</sup>Marcel Trudel, *The Beginning of New France, 1524-1663*, trans. Patricia Claxton (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

<sup>9</sup>Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963).

*North America*,<sup>10</sup> was divided up into topics such as: disease and medicine, diplomacy and war, and missions to the Iroquois. Furthermore, Greer provides a brief introduction to each section, explaining the importance of his selections. S.R. Mealing's, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: A Selection*,<sup>11</sup> and Edna Kenton's, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in North America*,<sup>12</sup> both chronologically divide their excerpts. They also provide a brief introduction putting the period into context.

While secondary sources provide informative accounts of the Jesuits', the focus of this thesis is on the *Jesuit Relations* and Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne. All three men were of French origin, were raised in seventeenth-century France, and went to Jesuit universities where they learned about the world-view of a French Catholic Jesuit missionary. Brébeuf and Le Jeune arrived in New France at the same time, but Brébeuf went to live among the Huron and Le Jeune chose to stay close to Quebec and establish a settlement. Le Moyne arrived later, after many missions had already been established among the allied nations. Despite their similar education and training, Jesuits in New France used various methods, which changed over time, to obtain converts.

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<sup>10</sup> Allan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> S.R. Mealing, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: A Selection* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Edna Kenton, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in North America (1610-1791)* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1954).

## Chapter One:

### The Society of Jesus: Foundation and Education

The Jesuit order was founded at a time when the Europeans were discovering the world. Missionaries played an important role in the spread of European ideals and societal behaviours. The Society of Jesus was formed in response to fears of corruption in the Catholic Church and as an alternative to the expansion of Protestantism, which was considered a threat to Catholicism. The Jesuits intended to save all souls for God. In order to do so, they had to be out in society promoting their order and encouraging others to join the Society. Education was important for the order. Students were instructed on the fundamentals of religion, but education also helped senior members select which students to induct into the order, and to decide where they would be best suited for missions.

The society was hierarchically structured, with a General at the top and all others taking orders from him. The first General, and the founder of the Society of Jesus, Iñigo López de Loyola (b.1491). He was born in Basque country, in northern Spain. He was the last of the children born in his family. When he came of age his father sent him to live with Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar, who was the Chief Treasurer of King Ferdinand of

Aragon.<sup>13</sup> Loyola received a basic education while living with Cuéllar and joined the military after he left his house in 1517.<sup>14</sup> A revolt broke out at Najero, where he was stationed. While he was in the process of giving a speech to increase the morale of the soldiers, his leg was injured by a cannon ball.<sup>15</sup> While he was recovering, Loyola found God, and decided to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Unfortunately, he could not undertake this journey because of the fighting between the Moors and the Christians.<sup>16</sup> In 1521, Loyola began his academic career.<sup>17</sup> Originally Loyola went to the University of Alcalá in Spain before he moved to the University of Paris.<sup>18</sup> While he was at university, Loyola became disenchanted with all of the scandals of the papacy, and attempted to reform educational practices from within the university.<sup>19</sup> Loyola gathered followers who felt the same as he did. They also felt that the church had amassed too much wealth which resulted in clerical corruption. Therefore, they determined that they would live like the first apostles.<sup>20</sup>

In 1540, Loyola and his followers founded the Society of Jesus with the approval of Pope Paul III.<sup>21</sup> The initial goal of the Society was to protect the Church from those

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<sup>13</sup> John O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 23.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>15</sup> René Fülöp-Miller, *The Power and Secret of the Jesuits* (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1930), 36-37.

<sup>16</sup> O'Malley, 27.

<sup>17</sup> John Cedric Hugh Aveling, *The Jesuits* (London: Blond & Briggs, 1981), 57.

<sup>18</sup> O'Malley, 28.

<sup>19</sup> Aveling, 95.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Chapple, ed., *The Jesuit Tradition in Education and Missions: A 450-year Perspective* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1993), 18.

who were corrupting it by setting an example and going out into the world as poor men saving lost souls. Loyola believed that he was a close friend of God and therefore believed that what he was doing with the Society was what he was put on earth to do.<sup>22</sup> The Society had determined from the very beginning that they would be men who travelled wherever they were needed, and felt that any followers that they collected should also be prepared to travel for the Society.<sup>23</sup> Because of his close connection with God, he knew it was his mission to save souls for Catholicism. During the sixteenth-century Protestantism had begun gaining popularity in many European countries. Protestants, like Jesuits, found too much corruption in the Catholic Church, but unlike Protestants, Jesuits chose to fight for the reformation of Catholicism. As a result, the Society of Jesus felt as though they were fighting for God and his Kingdom.<sup>24</sup> God was Catholicism's ultimate General, and the Society regarded themselves as his warriors on earth.

The term "Jesuit" was derived from the Latin word *Jesuita* which means "a good Christian, a follower of Jesus."<sup>25</sup> Loyola, considering himself a follower of Jesus, wanted to live like the first apostles, and the Society's constitution reflected this. There were four basic principles that Jesuits had to follow. The first step was to go out into the world and "seek out persons in need."<sup>26</sup> The second principle was to "preach the

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<sup>22</sup> Aveling, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>24</sup> Fülöp-Miller, 11.

<sup>25</sup> O'Malley, 69.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 86.

Gospel.”<sup>27</sup> In order to do so, Jesuits had to be well educated in the Gospel so that they could adapt their arguments to their audience. The third principle was to “heal the sick.”<sup>28</sup> The spiritually sick, however, were sinners, and the way to heal them was through confessions. The final principle was to live without “financial recompense.”<sup>29</sup> During the initial years of the Society, Loyola and his fellow members considered themselves to be the bridge between the corrupt Catholic Church and the heretical Protestants; therefore, they situated themselves as the alternative.<sup>30</sup>

In order to fight the spread of Protestantism, the Jesuits had to be disciplined, focused and united. Due to his time in the military, Loyola had experienced the harsh realities of the world and warfare. “Far beyond the barren walls of the town on a barren, desolate and rocky plateau, the infantry drilled to the monotonous commands of officers; they executed in endless repetition the same steps, holds and evolution.”<sup>31</sup> Loyola was in the military for four years before he entered university. The Society of Jesus was established based on a military hierarchy. At the top there was the General, who was Loyola himself.<sup>32</sup> The superiors, who were appointed by the General were the next in line. They were also called the Provincials.<sup>33</sup> There were also the novices, who were also ranked from simple novice to Commanders-in-Chief. The simple novice had

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<sup>27</sup> O’Malley, 86.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>31</sup> Fülöp-Miller, 36.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 23.



just completed his education, but had not yet taken his vows.<sup>34</sup> The Commander-in-Chief had taken his vows. The ranks within the Commander-in-Chief rank were: rector, collateral, and promoter.<sup>35</sup> The rector and collateral were primarily the professors at the universities, and promoters were the ones who travelled from city to city promoting the Society to young men and their families.<sup>36</sup> At the lowest level were the coadjutors who were deeply devout to God and the Society, but lacked a formal education. They learned skills such as cooking, gardening, and building in order to help the Jesuits with menial tasks.<sup>37</sup>

Obedience was one of the key evangelical counsels,<sup>38</sup> along with poverty and chastity.<sup>39</sup> While the Society was very strict on their poverty and chastity, they prided themselves on their obedience to God, and their General. Loyola stated,

although all orders hold obedience to be necessary, we ought to desire particularly that the members of our Company should be distinguished by this virtue, because we do not match many other orders, either in the austerity of our dress, or in fastings, or in the mortifications of our common way of life. Therefore we desire much in our Lord we shall all be truly distinguished by obedience and real abnegation of our own will and judgment.<sup>40</sup>

When the General issued a command he expected his subordinates to follow the orders.

There was, however, a “General Congregation” which could depose the General if he

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<sup>34</sup> Fülöp-Miller, 23.

<sup>35</sup> O’Malley, 52.

<sup>36</sup> Fülöp-Miller, 23.

<sup>37</sup> O’Malley, 60.

<sup>38</sup> The three Evangelical counsels were pillars for obtaining perfection. O’Malley, 60.

<sup>39</sup> Fülöp-Miller, 21.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Van Dyke, *Ignatius Loyola: The Founder of the Jesuits* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927), 225.

was no longer fit to lead the Society.<sup>41</sup> Obedience was necessary because the general was in charge of large numbers of Jesuits engaged in missionary work all over the world. Furthermore, Jesuits had to be so committed to their faith that they were willing to die for the cause of saving souls while on their missions.

In a somewhat contradictory manner, the Society also borrowed the concept of individualism.<sup>42</sup> Loyola understood that his Jesuits were often in remote areas, cut off from all communication. The Jesuits would not be able to wait for a decision from the General because there was a chance of the order coming too late or not at all. Therefore, the Jesuit had to be able to think for himself and do what he thought was best for the Society, and the souls under his care. The Society had to be deeply invested in the personalities and qualities that its members possessed because they had to send their Jesuits on missions that played to their strengths.<sup>43</sup>

Selection of Jesuits for missions depended largely on the qualities and characteristics they displayed while they were in school. Qualities such as skills in linguistics and sincere piety were preferred.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, reliability and being personable were equally important because Jesuits were often faced with resistance, and had to be able to navigate their way out of difficult situations while still gaining souls.<sup>45</sup>

Universities were important to the Jesuits because they enabled the Society to select the best Jesuits from a wide variety of young men. Moreover, Loyola recognized the

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<sup>41</sup> Fülöp-Miller, 23.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>44</sup> Aveling, 147.

<sup>45</sup> Van Dyke, 259-260.

importance of education because while he was at university he came to the conclusion that there was a great deal of corruption in the Catholic Church and resolved to change it. Therefore, he determined that the best way to create a strong Society was to have all Jesuits educated according to his standards.<sup>46</sup> In 1548, the Society of Jesus opened their first college, which admitted both lay and ecclesiastical pupils in Messina, Sicily.<sup>47</sup> Loyola had learned very early on that education was the key to expanding the society's membership because they began training boys at a very early age according to Jesuit standards. The Jesuits also established small feeder schools in the larger towns, hoping that those schools would supply students for the universities and colleges that were being established throughout Europe. Their assumption was correct, so from 1548 until 1556 there was a marked increase in Jesuit numbers because of the local feeder schools.<sup>48</sup>

Initially, Jesuits welcomed both rich and poor to attend the schools, with the prerequisite established in 1551 that the boy could read and write before entering.<sup>49</sup> As a result, a large portion of the applicants were turned away because they were unable to read. The invention of the printing press in the 1450s, however, resulted in some members of lower class society being able to read because certain books could be obtained cheaply, and instruction resided with those who were already slightly literate. Moreover, tuition at Jesuit colleges and universities was free. But in order to operate

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<sup>46</sup> Chapple, 20.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>48</sup> Aveling, 107.

<sup>49</sup> O' Malley, 211.

they relied on endowments from wealthy patrons.<sup>50</sup> Due to a lack of funds in some areas, Jesuits had to turn away potential students. Wealthy parents often offered to pay a significant dowry in order to have their son accepted, but Loyola was determined that everyone deserved an education, not just the wealthy.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Loyola was attempting to distance himself from the corruption of the Catholic Church because the upper echelons of the Church were dominated by the wealthy elite.

By 1551, four or five colleges and universities a year were being established by the Jesuits throughout Europe.<sup>52</sup> Not all schools would prosper, however. Some lost their endowment because of their remote locations and were forced to close their doors. By the time of Loyola's death in 1556 there were thirty-nine more schools preparing to open.<sup>53</sup> The education of potential future Jesuits was of utmost importance to the continuation of the Society. Loyola knew that without the free universities the number of members in the society would continue to diminish as the original members began to grow old. Consequently, Loyola demanded that more and more members of the Society take their solemn vows, so that they could move up in the hierarchy and assist the Jesuits accordingly.<sup>54</sup> The Jesuit constitution had not yet been completed by the time of Loyola's death, so some of the laws were enacted by his predecessors. From 1556 until 1580 the title of General was given to three different men. But in 1581 when Jesuit Acquaviva became the fifth General, Society members found him to be a dictator

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<sup>50</sup> O'Malley, 211.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>53</sup> Chapple, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Aveling, 107.

because he wrote out his expectations for the education of young men. For example, in 1599 he created the *Ratio Studiorum*, or plan of studies, which would be applied to all schools in all provinces at all times.<sup>55</sup> The disputes among Jesuits almost resulted in a near collapse of the Society. But the Society survived. The restrictions Acquaviva applied to the constitution also encouraged growth among the schools and eventually the Society.

While Loyola was alive, the education that young boys received was based on an “apostolic motive,” meaning that they learned a great deal of philosophy and theology as well as Latin.<sup>56</sup> By the time of his death, Loyola realized that he had to embrace the Renaissance and humanism in order for his schools to continue to have high enrollment.<sup>57</sup> Humanist education consisted of grammar, rhetoric, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, subjects for boys just entering Jesuit schools because they were the foundation for everything else that they were going to learn.<sup>58</sup> Unique to Jesuit schools was their continued scholastic curriculum, which included logic, metaphysics, ethics, and sciences, math, and theology. Typically, boys learned these after they had completed their humanist education.<sup>59</sup> Once they had completed their humanist and scholastic education the boys were then permitted to specialize in law, medicine or theology.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> John Patrick Donnelly, ed. and trans., *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period, 1540-1640* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006), 193.

<sup>56</sup> Chapple, 20 and 26.

<sup>57</sup> Christopher Hollis, *The Jesuits: A History* (New York: MacMillan, 1968), 31

<sup>58</sup> O'Malley 209; Fülöp-Miller, 45.

<sup>59</sup> O'Malley, 211.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

Education at the Jesuit schools was regarded by society as incredibly rigid and demanding, but the prestige that men earned due to their education placed them in places of authority and power.

In an attempt to make Jesuit education more attractive, the Society determined that the education boys received should match their “capacities and interests.”<sup>61</sup> The typical life of a Jesuit student followed a fairly specific timeline. Jesuit schools began for boys around the age of ten, which meant that they had to obtain their early education elsewhere. From the ages of ten to thirteen, when their brains were considered the most malleable, they received their humanist education.<sup>62</sup> Boys were expected to perfect their languages before they could transition to the next level. From the ages of fourteen to sixteen boys began their scholastic education of philosophy, logic, physics, metaphysics, moral science, and math.<sup>63</sup> Basic education was complete by the time the boy reached sixteen. But he could choose to continue on and join the faculty of theology, law, or medicine from the ages of seventeen to twenty.<sup>64</sup> After completion of studies in the faculties of law and medicine, the student had finished his formal education and could begin looking for employment. Those who went into the faculty of theology could continue on with their education and take their Doctor of Theology, from ages twenty-one to twenty-three, or could choose to become an ordained priest.<sup>65</sup> The emphasis on theology was crucial for the Society of Jesus because they wanted their men to be able

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<sup>61</sup> Fülöp-Miller, 195.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 45.

to preach of Catholicism in any situation, which came from a deep understanding of religion.

The Society's adaptability and lack of conformity to the established Church was a source of controversy from the time of its inception. The Jesuit attacks on the upper Catholic clergy, and their public opposition to Protestantism, placed them in a position where they had to mix religion with politics. Fortunately, they had the support of the Pope. The Society's promotion and support of the sciences further added to their controversial reputation. The scientific education that boys received in Jesuit schools was an asset for international missionaries. "The result which Ignatius aimed to produce in the students was manifestly a carefully reasoned and therefore scientifically grounded, Catholic outlook on life which would enable and inspire them to contribute intelligently and effectively to the welfare of society."<sup>66</sup> At the time of the foundation of the Society there were two scientific views: the Augustinians and the Thomists. The Augustinian view was that there was wisdom in science, meaning that by using science certain truths could be revealed. The Thomists' view was that there was science in wisdom, meaning that there is a discovery process to wisdom which needed to be understood before knowledge could be obtained. The Jesuits prescribed to the latter. That world-view shaped how Jesuits behaved when they entered new land.<sup>67</sup> When the Jesuits arrived in New France, missionaries first made observations about the indigenous people before they attempted to convert them to Christianity.

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<sup>66</sup> Fülöp-Miller, 54.

<sup>67</sup> Henry Phillips, *Church and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 161.

Missions were initially established in western Europe. Jesuits sought out remote locations where Catholicism had been neglected.<sup>68</sup> Missionaries were met with relative success because they helped supply the local parishes with a better Christian education. Moreover, they were able to persuade some young men to join their schools. European exploration opened the doors for Jesuit missionaries. Catholic monarchs often invited missionaries to establish missions in territories that they had conquered. Highly dangerous global missions were established in India, China, Japan, and Brazil during the sixteenth century.<sup>69</sup> Unlike in New France, the only information regarding these early missions could be found in travel journals and letters, which were incredibly useful for training new missionaries. Through reading the journals, Jesuits learned that they had to have a basic understanding of the people they were attempting to convert to Catholicism and try to live in a way that the indigenous found acceptable. Christopher Hollis states the missionaries' greatest accomplishment was, "treating oriental beliefs as imperfect hints of truth rather than as total errors, as the first missionaries had done."<sup>70</sup> By writing letters and keeping travel journals, new missionaries learned a great deal from their predecessors.

One of the most influential Jesuit missionaries was St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552).<sup>71</sup> He was initially sent to India to help the Portuguese King John III convert pagans, but decided to extend his work all the way to Japan. While he was on

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<sup>68</sup> O'Malley, 126.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>70</sup> Hollis, 56.

<sup>71</sup> Donnelly, 64.



his missions, Xavier wrote many letters back to Loyola detailing the conditions and asking for more missionaries. Xavier was quite detailed in his ideas of who should be sent on missions. His opinions of what made an effective missionary were used on subsequent missions to China, South America, and North America. Primarily, Xavier wanted preachers sent to India and Japan. “The King [of Portugal] would do a very great service to God our Lord if he sent many preachers of our Society to India, since the people of India, as you should know, are very poorly instructed.”<sup>72</sup> He felt that they were the ones who could motivate and compel pagans to convert because they could effectively deliver the message of Christianity to masses of people. In a request for more missionaries to be sent to India, Xavier stated,

I also earnestly beseech you for the love and service of God our Lord that when you arrange for the sending of some of the Society who are not preachers to these regions of India to convert the infidels, they be persons who have been well tried in the Society and have had much experience in gaining victories over themselves during the course of some years, and that they be not of poor health, since the labors in India require physical strength, even though spiritual strength is more important.<sup>73</sup>

Xavier also stated that “there is a need for trained scholars, especially for good *artistas*, to answer their questions, and for those who are *sophistas* to catch them [Indians] up as soon as they contradict themselves.”<sup>74</sup> Generals also wanted missionaries who were gentle, personable, obedient, affable, and strong.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Donnelly, 74.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

<sup>74</sup> *artistas* means philosophers and *sophistas* means logicians. Donnelly, 81.

<sup>75</sup> Van Dyke, 259-260.

Missionaries, like Matteo Ricci, were sought after for their mathematical, scientific, and linguistic abilities. Scientifically and mathematically, Ricci was able to infiltrate the Chinese court by impressing them with his knowledge, and his linguistic skills enabled him to translate treatises and information back and forth.<sup>76</sup> Unlike China, North America was not scientifically advanced, and the North American societies were not deemed to be civilized, but language, logic, and strength proved to be vital for the missionaries' survival.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, a missionary's ability to study the cultures he was inhabiting and observe the indigenous people proved to be exceptionally useful to all successful missionaries. Obedience to superiors and dedication to missions, which at times meant dying for religion, were also important. Pagan territories, such as that of North America, tested the obedience of Jesuit missionaries because of the separation from religious authority. Jesuit schools trained men to be intelligent, but international missions required more than just intelligence. They required obedient men who had the ability to adapt to the cultures they were joining.

The Society of Jesus was founded at a time of exploration, so when the Jesuits started their missions they looked globally for souls, not just locally. Missions were difficult because they often involved complete separation from one's own culture and language. Jesuit Fathers such as Paul Le Jeune, Jean de Brébeuf, and Simon le Moyne were all North American missionaries. When they arrived in North America, the Jesuits remembered their academic training. They followed the four basic principles of seeking

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<sup>76</sup> Donnelly, 88.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Goddard, "Science and Scepticism in the Early Mission to New France," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 6, no. 1 (1995): 48.

out those in need, preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and living a life without financial recompense. Additionally, they remembered the lessons of previous global missionaries, like Xavier and Matteo.

Chapter Two:  
France in the Seventeenth Century

France, like the rest of Europe, was in a state of transition during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Traditionally, European countries had one official religion, which was Catholicism, but when Protestantism gained in popularity from mid-1500s onward, tensions arose because Catholics and Protestants believed the two religions could not exist together.<sup>78</sup> The Huguenots, as French Protestants were known, exercised a significant amount of power during the Reformation, having their own political and military organizations within the state.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, Huguenots had infiltrated the upper and lower echelons of French nobility, thus retaining regional power bases. In an attempt to reconcile the Protestant and Catholic factions, Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598.<sup>80</sup> The edict was an attempt to establish toleration between Protestants and Catholics. Henry IV agreed that Protestants could worship publicly, or if they were of the nobility, at court. They were also given their civil rights, “with free access to the

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<sup>78</sup> Robert Knecht, *Richelieu* (London: Longman, 1991), 64.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

professions and to the universities.”<sup>81</sup> However, Protestants continued to feel discriminated against because they were not Catholic.

The Huguenots experienced times of prosperity in France. Politically, Queen Regent Catherine de Médici (1519-1589) aligned herself with the Huguenots in an attempt to keep the Catholic Spanish out of France. Her distrust of Catholic Spain resulted in the banishment of the Society of Jesus from France in 1594.<sup>82</sup> In 1603, shortly after his conversion to Catholicism, the king brought the Society back to France.<sup>83</sup> Henry IV restored the Jesuit order in France as a sign of good faith and to demonstrate that his conversion was legitimate.<sup>84</sup> The terms of the Jesuits’ return, however, had a profound impact on how Jesuits in France saw themselves. The king had demanded that all Jesuits in France be naturalized Frenchmen, meaning they had to take an oath promising that they “would plan nothing against Church and state.”<sup>85</sup> In order to ensure that Jesuits remained faithful to the crown, there had to be one Jesuit at court at all times to answer for the actions of his brethren.<sup>86</sup> By naturalizing the Jesuits in France, Henry IV essentially formed his own Society of Jesus, one that was loyal to him and supported his imperial agenda.

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<sup>81</sup> G.R.R Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France* (London: Rivingtons, 1966), 14.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>84</sup> Bronwen Catherine McShea, “Cultivating Empire Through Print: The Jesuit Strategy for New France and the Parisian *Relations* of 1632 to 1673,” *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (PhD diss., Yale University, 2011), 39.

<sup>85</sup> Treasure, 86.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

Throughout the period of Reformation and Counter-Reformation the Society of Jesus posed a threat to both the Huguenots and the traditional Catholic Church. Their motto was to “intervene in the world, not to withdraw from it, to fight for the souls of men, not merely to pray for them.”<sup>87</sup> Their physical appearance in society and among the French elite was a constant reminder of the power of their Society. Their most powerful ally, however, was King Henry IV, who had taken Jesuit Father Pierre Coton as his confessor.<sup>88</sup> Having the ear of the king was crucial to the Jesuits’ selection for missions to North America. Coton was able to exert his influence over Henry IV to convince him that Jesuits would be the perfect missionaries in North America. The King’s close connection with French Jesuits, compounded with the international success of their missions and their universities, made French Jesuits the prime candidates to begin the missions to New France.

The first Jesuit missionaries to reach the shores of North America were Pierre Biard and Ennemond Massé, who arrived at Port Royal Acadia in 1611.<sup>89</sup> Attempts by fur traders and early settlers to christianize the indigenous populations at Acadia were already underway before the Jesuits arrived. But conversion of the indigenous was only done as a means to establish a positive relationship between missionaries and the indigenous. When Biard and Massé arrived in Acadia they were shocked by the lack of Christian education the converts had received. The missionaries took issue with the

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<sup>87</sup> Treasure, 85.

<sup>88</sup> J.H. Kennedy, *Jesuits and Savage in New France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 1.

<sup>89</sup> James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982), 1.

secular priest in Acadia because he had not even bothered to learn the native languages so that he could educate the indigenous. Moreover, the men who had been converted knew very little about their new Catholic faith, were unable to remember their new Christian name, and continued to practice polygamy.<sup>90</sup> Biard and Massé set to work to learn about the indigenous culture and language as per their Jesuit training. They were unable to begin their work, however, because they were captured in 1613 by an English captain, Samuel Argall, who also wrecked Port Royal, sending the missionaries back to France on two separate ships.<sup>91</sup>

From very early on in colonial history English colonies posed a great threat to the French. Jamestown was an English colony established in the first decade of the seventeenth-century. The purpose of the colony was to extract valuable resources for the English crown. Dominance of the continent as well as of the indigenous people in order to make a profit was the crown's primary ambition. The establishment of Acadia and Quebec put French interests in direct competition with English interests, resulting in immediate tensions between the colonies. Moreover, Virginia was Anglican and New France was Catholic. At the time they were captured, Biard and Massé had been on a southward journey, attempting to convert the indigenous people to Christianity. Their close proximity to Virginia was considered a threat, so they were captured and sent back to France. The journey back to France was a lengthy one in good weather. But the missionaries suffered delays among the English.<sup>92</sup> Ultimately, missionaries faced a great

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<sup>90</sup> Moore, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Gustave Lanctôt, *A History of Canada: From its Origins to the Royal Régime, 1663*, vol. 1, trans. Josephine Hambleton (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1963), 138; Moore, 6.

<sup>92</sup> Moore, 6.

deal of opposition from their European counterparts, which slowed the process of conversion of the indigenous.

France had changed in the short time that Biard and Massé had been away. King Henry IV had been assassinated. Louis XIII was too young to rule, so his mother Marie de Médici was the country's regent. French explorer Samuel de Champlain, later known as the father of New France, was a favourite of Marie de Médici.<sup>93</sup> Champlain was an ambitious and deeply religious man who wanted "the lily of France and the Catholic religion to flourish side by side in New France."<sup>94</sup> In 1615, Champlain requested that the King, under his regent mother, send more missionaries to New France.<sup>95</sup> This time the Recollets, a reformed order of the Franciscans, were invited to North America as missionaries.<sup>96</sup> The Recollets had a difficult time in New France due to a lack of funding and a lack of manpower. Tragedy struck in 1624 just as the Recollets were settling into the mission and gaining in numbers. Two missionaries died, the Huron mission collapsed, and money ran out.<sup>97</sup> The Recollets reached out to other missionaries, hoping that they could procure some help. Jesuits had made tremendous headway in France since 1613, gaining legal recognition in 1618.<sup>98</sup> Their legal recognition and their prior experience in New France made them the obvious choice to provide assistance.

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<sup>93</sup> Kennedy, 28.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 33.



The endorsement of Cardinal Richelieu on behalf of the Jesuits was crucial for their French acceptance. Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) had also come into power as a member of the King's council.<sup>99</sup> In 1624 Richelieu had become the King's chief minister, the Grand Master, and the Chief and General Superintendent of Navigation and Commerce.<sup>100</sup> Part of Richelieu's policy was to consolidate and expand the lands that France held overseas.<sup>101</sup> In order to take control of the colonies, however, Richelieu had to put an end to the strife between Catholic and Protestant factions in France and in the overseas colonies.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, in 1627 Richelieu claimed complete control of Canada by having the wealthy landowners sell their land to the crown, and revoking all trading privileges, especially those of the Huguenots.<sup>103</sup> Richelieu also effectively established a commercial monopoly for himself, which he then turned over to the Hundred Associates, a company that barred Huguenot participation.<sup>104</sup>

Before the crown could give the Hundred Associates their full support, however, the terms of their contract had to be established. The first and most important matter was that of payment. Each Associate had to invest 3,000 livres.<sup>105</sup> Of the investors, one-third were government officeholders, twenty were merchants, and the rest were nobles and

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<sup>99</sup> Anthony Levi, *Cardinal Richelieu: and the Making of France* (London: Robinson, 2000), 7.

<sup>100</sup> Lanctôt, 128.

<sup>101</sup> W.J. Eccles, *The French in North America: 1500-1783* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 29.

<sup>102</sup> Kennedy, 34.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>104</sup> Kennedy, 34; Eccles, 29.

<sup>105</sup> Eccles, 29.

clergymen.<sup>106</sup> The Associates also had to promise to send at least four thousand French Catholic men and women to Canada within fifteen years, which breaks down to about two to three hundred people a year.<sup>107</sup> Each of the settlers were to be given foodstuffs and supplies for the first three years of settlement.<sup>108</sup> In exchange, the crown gave the Associates a monopoly over trade, and the discretion to distribute lands.<sup>109</sup> Richelieu, the Hundred Associates, and the Jesuits wanted all Huguenots either removed from New France or converted to Catholicism.

A key component of the French colonial enterprise in North America was the religious conversion of the indigenous people. Richelieu also “intended to lead the natives to a knowledge of the true God, civilize them, and instruct them in the true faith.”<sup>110</sup> Therefore, when the Jesuits returned to New France they had the full support of the monarchy. In 1625, Jesuit Father Jean de Brébeuf, accompanied by Jesuit Charles Lalement and Recollet Ennemond Massé arrived in North America.<sup>111</sup> Immediately upon arrival, Brébeuf wintered with the Montagnais before setting out to establish a residence with the Huron.<sup>112</sup> Brébeuf’s initiative to spread Christianity beyond the settlements of New France was indicative of the official royal policy to take possession

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<sup>106</sup> Eccles, 29.

<sup>107</sup> Eccles, 29; Lanctôt, 131.

<sup>108</sup> Lanctôt, 131.

<sup>109</sup> Eccles, 29; Lanctôt, 130.

<sup>110</sup> Kennedy, 34.

<sup>111</sup> Moore, 8.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 8.

of North America. Under the Hundred Associates and King Louis XIII, New France appeared as though it had the support it required to prosper and grow.

Ultimately, the successful establishment of a French colony in North America threatened English imperial ambitions on the continent. Charles I of England, who had already declared war on France, encouraged his subjects to “engage in combat against the enemy.”<sup>113</sup> Jarvis Kirke, a shipowner, and his son David had developed a plot to send ships laden with supplies up the Saint Lawrence River to Quebec.<sup>114</sup> The Kirkes carefully planned their invasion, engaging the assistance of French and indigenous traitors along the way.<sup>115</sup> By 1629, Champlain had reached an agreement with the Kirkes that he would peacefully surrender Quebec.<sup>116</sup> The agreement stated that safe passage back to France would be given to Champlain, the leaders, the soldiers, and the missionaries had to leave New France; however, the rest of the French settlers could stay.<sup>117</sup> France was determined to regain their lands in New France, but England was unwilling to relinquish control over Port Royal in 1631.<sup>118</sup> Finally, in 1632, Richelieu ordered a fleet of ships to sail around England, as a threat, forcing Charles I to sign the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye, giving all lands taken back to France.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Lanctôt, 132.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 146.

The English, having already signed an armistice with France, had to return Quebec and Port Royal to the French.<sup>120</sup> The French resumed possession of Quebec in 1632. When the Jesuits returned that same year their authority as missionaries was undisputed. The French population that had been allowed to remain in New France welcomed them.<sup>121</sup> As veterans of many global missions in India, China, Japan, and Brazil, the Jesuits understood that much work was yet to be done in North America. In order to do their job effectively, however, Jesuits had to please the monarchy, which meant serving the French crown and Cardinal Richelieu.

Religiously, France was divided into Protestant and Catholic factions, which created tensions for both the monarchy and the citizens. There were also the tensions between the French and the English, which also emerged across the ocean in North America. The training that the Jesuits received at their schools helped their Society to prosper not only in France but also in New France because it enabled them to deal with tense political and religious situations.

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<sup>120</sup> Moore, 9.

<sup>121</sup> Kennedy, 38; Moore, 9.

## Chapter Three:

## New France in the Seventeenth Century

In 1632, Father Paul Le Jeune (1591-1649) wrote *Briève Relation du Voyage de la Nouvelle-France*. Annual reports sent home to France were crucial for missionary progress. The *Jesuit Relations* informed France of indigenous cultures, languages, and conversions as well as settlement, conflicts, and conditions in North America. The *Relations* were highly popular with the French aristocracy.<sup>122</sup> Because of the *Relations*' popularity, wealthy donors, looking for salvation, came forward to help with the Jesuit missions in New France.<sup>123</sup> The Jesuits suggested that aristocratic readers of the *Relations* could help primarily with land, money, and buildings, such as hospitals.<sup>124</sup>

The popularity of Le Jeune's initial account resulted in the creation of annual reports which were to be sent back to France.<sup>125</sup> Born a Huguenot, Le Jeune converted to Catholicism at the age of sixteen. When he was twenty-two he entered the noviciate at

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<sup>122</sup> Edna Kenton, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in North America (1610-1791)* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1954), li.

<sup>123</sup> W.J. Eccles, *The French in North America: 1500-1783* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 42.

<sup>124</sup> Peter A. Dorsey, "Going to School with Savages: Authorship and Authority among the Jesuits of New France," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no.3 (July 1998): 405.

<sup>125</sup> Yvon Le Bras, *L'Amerindien dans les Relations du père Paul Lejeune (1632-1641)* (Sainte-Foy: Les Éditions de la Huit, 1994), 14.

Paris.<sup>126</sup> When he was studying at La Flèche, France, he encountered Ennemond Massé who told him as well as other noviciates about his experiences in New France.<sup>127</sup> He was forty when he volunteered to go to North America. When he was accepted for the mission, he felt it was a privilege to save indigenous souls for God.<sup>128</sup> Le Jeune was innovative and imaginative when it came to his indigenous policies, making him an exceptionally excellent superior for North America.

Upon his arrival in North America, Le Jeune established a seminary in order to train priests *in situ*.<sup>129</sup> He was superior at Quebec from 1632 to 1639 and worked closely with the Montagnais who lived around Quebec.<sup>130</sup> The Montagnais belonged to the Algonquian linguistic group. Primarily, they lived in small, mobile bands and relied on hunting and foraging year round.<sup>131</sup> Consequently, Le Jeune felt that in order to convert the Montagnais he had to first settle them on the land and then teach them how to live like Europeans.<sup>132</sup> In his 1634 relation, Le Jeune stated his two-part plan for First Nations conversions to Catholicism. Le Jeune asked the king to send over more men to help clear the land for the settlement of First Nations. He claimed that “our wandering Savages would soon range themselves under their [nearby French town’s] protection;

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<sup>126</sup> Le Bras, 13.

<sup>127</sup> J.H. Kennedy, *Jesuits and Savage in New France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 39.

<sup>128</sup> Allan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2000), 20.

<sup>129</sup> Kennedy, 40.

<sup>130</sup> Le Bras, 11.

<sup>131</sup> Greer, 7.

<sup>132</sup> *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791* ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1897), 1635, vol VIII, 1.

and, being rendered sedentary by our example, especially if they were to be given some help, they would easily be instructed in the Faith.”<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, Le Jeune states “as to the stationary tribes farther back in the interior, we would go in great numbers to succor them; and would have much more authority, and less fear, if we felt that we had the support of these Towns or Villages.”<sup>134</sup> Le Jeune did not just look to convert indigenous people, but rather he hoped they would embrace the French culture.

Jean de Brébeuf (1593-1649) did not hold the same beliefs on how to convert First Nations as Le Jeune. He had been in North America as a missionary from 1625-1629, and understood the difficulties of rendering nomadic tribes sedentary.<sup>135</sup> He had watched the Recollets attempt to assimilate the First Nations and their failure.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, Brébeuf had spent a significant amount of time during his first mission alone with the Huron learning their customs and religions. The approach that he hoped to take was “to eliminate, or replace, only those customs that did not accord with Christian teaching and morality.”<sup>137</sup> This statement very closely resembles Loyola’s missionary intentions to “accept Jewish and native customs that did not directly contradict church teaching, to introduce changes gradually and by popular means, and to provide technical and material assistance.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1635, vol VIII, 15.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>135</sup> Rene Latourelle, *Jean de Brébeuf* (Quebec: Bellarmin, 1993), 14; James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter*, 8.

<sup>136</sup> Michael Pomedli, “Beyond Unbelief: Early Jesuit Interpretations of Native Religions,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 16 (1987): 281.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>138</sup> Loyola was writing before the missions to North America began, but his intentions for how missions were to be conducted could apply for First Nations people. Dorsey, 399.

Brébeuf was born into the Norman nobility.<sup>139</sup> He entered the noviciate at Rouen when he was twenty-four.<sup>140</sup> René Latourelle describes him as, “built like a massive athlete, with a soft face and heart, but also possessed an all-consuming zeal.”<sup>141</sup> Brebeuf’s physicality was a desirable trait because he could endure the rigours of North America, such as canoeing and portaging, better than most missionaries. Brébeuf was the natural choice to head back into Huron country. After a long and arduous journey, he arrived among the Huron and described his arrival as follows: “some one cried out, 'Why, there is Echom come again' (that is the name they give me); and at once every one came out to salute and welcome me, each calling me by name and saying: 'What Echom, my nephew, my brother, my cousin, hast thou then come again?'”<sup>142</sup> Brébeuf was given a Huron name. He used it to demonstrate his acceptance among the First Nations. Moreover, he informed Le Jeune, in his letters, of the terms of endearment the Huron used to welcome him home as a member of the family. Huron were of the Iroquoian linguistic group, and lived in year-round sedentary camps subsisting on corn.<sup>143</sup> However, they were not part of the Iroquois confederacy, which consisted of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Kennedy, 33.

<sup>140</sup> Latourelle, 9.

<sup>141</sup> “ce géant au physique d’athlète, au visage et au cœur si doux, mais d’un zèle si dévorant” Latourelle, 3.

<sup>142</sup> Kenton, 105.

<sup>143</sup> Greer, 7.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 7.



The Jesuits desired to enter Iroquois territory because they were a sedentary, agricultural people. Samuel de Champlain, however, had made conversion of the Iroquois exceptionally difficult. When Champlain first landed in the New World he chose to side with the Huron against their enemy the Iroquois.<sup>145</sup> From that point forward, Huron and the French became lifelong allies while the Iroquois and French became enemies. The Dutch and then the English aligned themselves with the Iroquois, giving them access to guns, which the French did not condone. European tensions between the French and the Dutch or the English were often carried over to North America. The Iroquois were encouraged to harass French allies.<sup>146</sup>

Iroquois attacks on the French kept Jesuits out of Iroquois territory, but the Iroquois were unable to keep Christianity out. As per indigenous custom, Iroquois people took captives after battle, but while some were executed others were adopted by the Iroquois to take the place of a fallen warrior. Many of the Huron captives that the Iroquois took in the 1640s had converted to Christianity prior to their kidnapping. They created a Catholic network, keeping their religion strong and also promoting it among the Iroquois. Jesuit Father Isaac Jogues (1607-1646), and his two *données*, or assistants, were kidnapped by the Iroquois and taken hostage. While Jogues and *donnée* Guillaume Couture<sup>147</sup> were in Iroquois territory they worked towards converting the Iroquois. Jogues was unable to establish a mission within Iroquois country. But during his time as

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<sup>145</sup> Kenton, xl.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>147</sup> Guillaume Couture (1617-1701) was one of the *données* traveling with Father Jogues when they were captured by the Iroquois. Jogues and Couture, along with some Huron, were taken back to Iroquoia. Couture was adopted due to his bravery. Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 317.

a captive he was able to convert many prisoners to Catholicism.<sup>148</sup> Many Catholic converts retained their faith between the time of Jogues' capture and Le Moyne's mission.<sup>149</sup>

Father Simon Le Moyne (1604-1665) was the first missionary to establish a mission in lower Iroquois territory. Le Moyne entered the Society in 1623 at Paris, and was a teacher at Rouen and La Flèche until 1638 when he went to North America.<sup>150</sup> Le Moyne had previously been a missionary in Huron territory from 1638 to 1649. However, his greatest accomplishment was as an ambassador of peace between the French and the Iroquois, bringing a period of peace between the two rivals.<sup>151</sup> Beginning in 1654, Le Moyne began making trips into lower Iroquois territory, also known as *Agnieronnons*, in the hopes of establishing a permanent mission. The mission to the lower Iroquois was, by this time, referred to as the mission of the Martyrs because Jesuits did not intend to return from Iroquois territory once they arrived there.<sup>152</sup> Even though a peace had been brokered while Le Moyne was in Iroquois territory, Jesuits were still apprehensive about journeying to lower Iroquois territory.

Because Le Moyne had close connections with the Iroquois and was well liked by them, the Superior at Quebec felt that Le Moyne was the best suited for the dangerous job. "It is a marvel to see a Lamb among ravenous Wolves without being

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<sup>148</sup> Kenton, 191.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>150</sup> James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982), 209.

<sup>151</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne, 1653-54, vol XLI, 117.

<sup>152</sup> Thwaites, compiled by Le Jeune, 1656-57, vol XLIII, 209.

eaten by the Wolves; but it is a greater marvel to see Wolves changed into Lambs by Lambs. We have witnessed the first marvel in the person of Father le Moyne; I know not when we shall see the second.”<sup>153</sup> Being considered a "lamb" sent on a mission of martyrs was the ultimate compliment for a Jesuit missionary. In light of the martyrdoms of Fathers Jogues in 1646<sup>154</sup> and Brébeuf in 1649, dangerous missions to the Iroquois became desirable for Jesuits arriving in North America.

From 1632 until 1672 there were between thirty and forty missionaries in North America. The numbers of missionaries tended to fluctuate due to conditions in Europe and in other missions throughout the world.<sup>155</sup> The *Relations* that Le Jeune wrote and sent back to France were important for communications with the monarchy. While there were many Jesuits in North America, Fathers Paul Le Jeune, Jean de Brébeuf, and Simon Le Moyne were the most significant to the missions in North America. Paul Le Jeune was the first Superior in Quebec. He began the *Jesuit Relations*. Jean de Brébeuf was a veteran in North America by the time the 1632 missions began. He was well liked in North America and his death at the hands of the Iroquois has made him a legend. Simon Le Moyne was not a prolific writer nor was he as prominent in the missions as the other two men, but his importance to the Iroquois missions and role as an ambassador makes him a vital missionary.

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<sup>153</sup> Thwaites, compiled by Le Jeune, 1656-57, vol XLIII, 209.

<sup>154</sup> Father Isaac Jogues was the first Jesuit missionary in Iroquoia, albeit as a captive. After spending more than a year in captivity and enduring a significant amount of torture that left him disfigured. Jogues escaped and made his way to France. Shortly after his arrival in France, Jogues returned back to New France and the Iroquois. In 1646, he received a hatchet to the head, which killed him instantly. Gustave Lanctôt, *A History of Canada: From its Origins to the Royal Régime, 1663*, vol. 1, trans. Josephine Hambleton (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1963), 189.

<sup>155</sup> Greer, 11.

## Chapter Four:

### Early Experiences in New France

Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne, were sent to Canada because each one had a different set of skills necessary for the effective conversion of indigenous people. Furthermore, the French government, as well as the Jesuits, were concerned with the colonists' faith, so they had to divide their focus between field missions and French villages. Veteran missionary Brébeuf preferred to spend his time in Huronia because he felt that conversions would be easier if he lived among the Huron. On the other hand, Paul Le Jeune only spent one winter with the Montagnais before determining that conversions would be more successful if the indigenous people lived in close proximity to the French. As Superior in Canada, Le Jeune was in charge of all religious institutions in New France. Simon Le Moyne was the last of the three missionaries to arrive in North America. After the fall of Huronia, he took on a role as negotiator between New France and the Iroquois. He spent a lot of time in hostile territory, having to make decisions for the well-being of the French colony, empire, and Jesuits.

Having been to New France once before, Brébeuf knew that the missionaries would be opposed by the indigenous people despite Richelieu's support in France. Brébeuf followed Loyola's advice by learning about Huron culture and then using the

commonalities between the Huron's beliefs and Catholicism to argue in favour of the latter. Because the Jesuits were not allowed into Iroquois territory, they had to begin conversions elsewhere. Brébeuf preferred Huronia because they lived a more sedentary lifestyle than the Montagnais or the Algonquins.<sup>156</sup> To support his decision to travel to Huronia, Brébeuf wrote that there were "twenty Towns, which indicate about 30,000 souls speaking the same tongue, which is not difficult to one who has a master [of the language]. It has distinctions of genders, number, tense, person, moods."<sup>157</sup> He also stated that there were twelve other nations similar to that of the Huron, so once he had managed to convert the Huron he would travel to the other nations.<sup>158</sup> Unlike Brébeuf, Le Jeune detested the winter that he spent with the Montagnais, and allowed his initial experience to shape the way he worked in North America. In 1634 Le Jeune stated, "it seems to me that not much ought to be hoped for from Savages as long as they are wanderers; you will instruct them today, tomorrow hunger snatches them away."<sup>159</sup> Le Jeune felt that the best option for conversion was to have the indigenous living among the French. Clearing the land, however, would take a while to do. The last of the three missionaries to New France was Le Moyne who arrived in 1638, four years after the first missions had been established, so by the time he arrived in New France the languages and cultures of the French allies were better understood. Moreover, many

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<sup>156</sup> James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982), 8.

<sup>157</sup> Jean de Brébeuf, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791* ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1897), 1635, vol VIII: 115.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>159</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1634, vol VI, 147.

Huron had already successfully converted to Catholicism. Le Moyne enthusiastically claimed that, “after eight or nine months, we count in this barbaric region two or three Churches of Gatherings of Neophytes.”<sup>160</sup> Although he applauded the indigenous for their religious efforts, he described Huron as “patient, liberal, hospitable; but importunate, visionary, childish, thievish, lying, deceitful, licentious, proud, lazy; they have among them many fools, or rather lunatics and insane people.”<sup>161</sup> Ultimately, Le Moyne, was very paternal towards the Huron.

From 1635 to 1638 Jesuits set up numerous missions throughout Huronia and New France. In 1635, Brébeuf recounted his journey to Huronia, comparing it with the trip he took in the mid-1620s. In a very detailed manner, the Jesuit describes the amount of work he contributed on his journey. Brébeuf stated that he was “compelled to paddle continually,” as well as carry all his own packages at each portage.<sup>162</sup> The journey to Huronia was so physically exhausting that when they made camp for the evening the father was too tired to work.<sup>163</sup> Brébeuf stated of the elements that, “[one] must walk in water, in mud, in the obscurity and entanglement of the forest, where the stings of an infinite number of mosquitoes and gnats are a serious annoyance.”<sup>164</sup> He continued on to describe the “long and wearisome silence” travelers are reduced to if they have not yet mastered the language.<sup>165</sup> Jesuits went to North America knowing that there was a

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<sup>160</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne, 1638-39 vol. XV, 193.

<sup>161</sup> Thwaites, in a letter from Father F. Du Perron, 1638-1639, vol. XV, 155.

<sup>162</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1635, vol. VIII, 79.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 79.

chance of dying for the cause, a theme that featured prominently in the *Relations*.

Brébeuf stated “I resigned myself as far, as everything else was concerned, to the will of God, ready to die for the honor of his Son, our good Lord, and for the salvation of these poor Peoples.”<sup>166</sup> Missions all over the world were dangerous and many Jesuits became martyrs globally So when Jesuits arrived in New France they were fully prepared to suffer and potentially die for their cause.

Le Jeune spent time with the nomadic Montagnais. The impression that he had of the indigenous lifestyle was one of extreme suffering. He could not understand why they would choose to live in such a manner. The title of Le Jeune’s winter experience with the Montagnais was “What One Must Suffer in Wintering with The Savages,” indicating that the conditions were unbearable.<sup>167</sup> He stated that the houses were “prisons” where the inhabitants slept on the ground, encountering four discomforts “- cold, heat, smoke, and dogs.”<sup>168</sup> He continued on to state that the smoke is “martyrdom. It almost killed me, and made me weep continually, though I had neither grief nor sadness in my heart.”<sup>169</sup> However, Le Jeune speaks of the food that the Montagnais eat, explaining that they share half of their food with the sick. He states, “if they have fresh meat they give him his share, if he wants it.”<sup>170</sup> When Le Jeune returned to Quebec he was of the opinion that converting indigenous people was going to be more difficult than was previously thought, unless there was a greater French presence.

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<sup>166</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1635, vol. VIII, 83.

<sup>167</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1634, vol VII, 35.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 53.

When Father Le Moyne was sent to Iroquois territory in 1653 to negotiate peace he also described his journey. He wrote in a style that made the missions appear daring and exciting. His journey to the country of Onnontaechronnon Iroquois to broker a peace agreement appealed to Le Moyne's adventurous personality. Le Moyne, like the other two Jesuits, believed that God had a hand in all of the suffering. It was a test of his devotion. He embraced the hardship because he believed that it would bring him closer to God. Of the difficulties of the journey, Le Moyne stated that "In the evening, a swarm of troublesome mosquitoes gave us warning of rain, which drenched us all night long. It is a pleasure, sweet and innocent beyond conception, to have, under these conditions, no shelter but the trees planted by nature since the creation of the world."<sup>171</sup> Moreover, the father appears to have very few worries about the potential dangers he could have faced if he was not successfully able to negotiate a truce. In contrast to Le Jeune and Brébeuf's bleak outlooks on sleeping on the barren earth, Le Moyne states "It rains all night, and the bare rocks serve us as bed, mattress, and everything else. He who has God with him, rests calmly anywhere."<sup>172</sup>

Jesuits knew the importance of education for the conversion of indigenous people. All three missionaries took a different approach to the conversion of the First Nations. Brébeuf believed that the Huron's beliefs were similar to those of Catholicism. By drawing on those similarities he felt that he could convince them of their misguided beliefs. Le Jeune wanted French and indigenous boys to be educated together at a seminary. In addition to educating First Nations boys about Catholicism they would

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<sup>171</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne, 1653-54, vol XLI, 91.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 93.



also learn to speak French. Although they were allowed to baptize women, Jesuits were not permitted to educate them in Catholicism.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, the missionaries' plan was to convert indigenous women through their husbands, fathers, and male children.<sup>174</sup> Le Moyne focused less on the unbaptized Huron, so he preferred writing about the Neophytes who were dedicated to helping the missionaries.

Brébeuf was extremely interested in Huron culture. After he learned their language, as well as their creation stories, he began to see that there were parallels between Catholicism and indigenous culture.<sup>175</sup> Brébeuf concluded the Huron must have at one point embraced Catholicism, but had turned their backs on God in favour of fables.<sup>176</sup> The father believed that the Huron's superstitions were deeply entrenched in their daily lives. "Some of them are obstinate, and attached to their superstitions and evil customs."<sup>177</sup> Huron adults tended to be confrontational with Brébeuf when he tried to push his religion on them. But because of his training as a Jesuit he was well experienced with difficult non-believers. He recounts in the *Relations*; a Huron creation story about a woman named *Aataentsic* who fell from Heaven, and landed on earth. The Jesuit, being a cunning well-trained Catholic asked the Huron, "who created the Heaven in which this woman could not stay?"<sup>178</sup> The Huron were unable to answer the question,

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<sup>173</sup> Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984), 20.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>175</sup> Allan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2000), 41.

<sup>176</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1636, vol X, 125.

<sup>177</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1635, vol. VIII, 145.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

but Catholicism provided Brébeuf with the answer. God created Heaven and everything else.<sup>179</sup>

Brébeuf wanted to live among the Huron while converting them, but Le Jeune wanted to bring the indigenous people closer to French influence. The establishment of the Sillery mission was considered one of Le Jeune's greatest achievements. In 1637, Noël Brulart de Sillery sent 13,000 livres and twenty workmen to establish Sillery, a residence to protect the Montagnais from the Iroquois.<sup>180</sup> In total, Mr. Sillery sent 20,000 livres for the on-going maintenance of the settlement.<sup>181</sup> By 1641, the Superior boasted thirty families living at Sillery, and by 1645 there were 167 converts living in a manner that pleased the Jesuits.<sup>182</sup> Le Jeune kept detailed records of all of those people who donated to the mission so he could publicly announce their contributions in the *Relations*. In 1636 Lejeune wrote, "It is necessary to pay the annual tribute which is exacted from us not only by Your Reverence but also by many persons of virtue, merit, and rank, who continue to interest themselves in the affairs of New France as in those of God."<sup>183</sup> By thanking those who donated funds for missionary efforts, Le Jeune ensured future donations.

Le Jeune took a European approach to the education of indigenous children by placing the children in boarding schools, believing that the best course of action for

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<sup>179</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1635, vol. VIII, 147.

<sup>180</sup> Gustave Lanctôt, *A History of Canada: From its Origins to the Royal Régime, 1663*, vol. 1, trans. Josephine Hambleton (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1963), 164.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>182</sup> Marcel Trudel, *The Beginning of New France, 1524-1663*, trans. Patricia Claxton (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 233.

<sup>183</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1636, vol VIII, 215

Jesuits was to convert children and raise them French. Seminaries were established to educate both French and indigenous boys. However, the young indigenous boys were not accustomed to being away from their parents. As a result many of the boys escaped from the seminaries and went back to their parents. One Jesuit observed to Le Jeune that, “The savages love their children above all things. They are like monkeys - they choke them by embracing them too closely.”<sup>184</sup> However, death left many children without parents. By 1637, some parents who had been working towards conversion had left their children to Jesuit seminaries. Le Jeune recounts, in his own words, a conversation he had with a dying woman whose husband had been baptized before his death three days prior. She said, “The love that you bear me makes me believe that I cannot do better than to leave my two little sons in your hands; since you have cherished the father, cherish the children. I give them to you, rear them in your belief; and baptize me, for I am dead.”<sup>185</sup> After the woman’s death, the young boys joined the Huron where Le Jeune described them as “two little germs of a Seminary.”<sup>186</sup> The seminary was able to expand because parents cared about their children and wanted to provide for them even in death. The willingness to convert to Catholicism was highly praised by missionaries.

Le Moyne had all the benefits of working alongside converted Huron, also known as Neophytes. Neophytes were indigenous peoples who fully embraced

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<sup>184</sup> Carol Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 12.

<sup>185</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1638, vol XIV, 181-3.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

Catholicism and followed its teachings as closely as possible.<sup>187</sup> They also became *données* for the Jesuit priests.<sup>188</sup> Le Moyne told Monsieur the Curé, his cousin, that the neophytes visited the “bark chapel” at least every morning, if not every evening.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, Le Moyne also told his cousin of the effectiveness of their translations, stating that “most of them [neophytes] adults and aged men - recite after me, on all sides, with much feeling.”<sup>190</sup> The father was incredibly pleased that the neophytes had embraced the Catholic religion so much that they felt uplifted and moved by the prayers. The father left out a lot of information about the actual education of Huron, but instead chose to focus on those who have already converted.

Conversion was more difficult in Huronia than previously anticipated. Disease spread quickly among the villages that the Jesuits visited. The Huron thought that the Jesuits were to blame because sick converts and children often died following baptism.<sup>191</sup> As a result, Brébeuf and his fellow Jesuits were forced to leave or were denied entry to many of the villages.<sup>192</sup> The local medicine men, or “sorcerers,” were the greatest source of opposition to the Jesuits because of their conflicting religious views. As death continued to spread, the Huron medicine men began to claim that the Jesuits

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<sup>187</sup> Adam Stueck, “A Place Under Heaven: Amerindian Torture and Cultural Violence in Colonial New France, 1609-1730” (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2012), 123.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>189</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne, 1639, vol XV 193.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>191</sup> Lanctot, 165.

<sup>192</sup> Lanctot, 165. Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1637, vol. XIII, 209.

were not bringing salvation with them but death.<sup>193</sup> Brébeuf stated that the sorcerers “accused us of being the cause of this epidemic.”<sup>194</sup> Brébeuf and Le Jeune often stated in their letters that it was easier to make a convert than it was to keep one.<sup>195</sup> Some Huron who were sick with smallpox thought that they were being blamed for not converting to Catholicism, but after their illness had passed many survivors chose to return to their indigenous beliefs.

While Le Jeune agreed with Brébeuf about the difficulties of converting indigenous people when they kept dying, he did not believe that the nomadic First Nations had any previous knowledge of God. During his winter with the Montagnais he learned a great deal about their religious beliefs, stating that they were “bereft of words for piety, devotion, virtue, the language of theologians, philosophers, mathematics, and physicians.”<sup>196</sup> Prior to 1634, some Montagnais and Algonquins began to establish permanent residences around French posts of Quebec and Trois Rivières. Being influenced by their close proximity to the French, the Montagnais and Algonquins adopted French Catholicism. Realizing the impact of the indigenous people living around the ports, Le Jeune wrote in 1640 that “The knowledge of God, and intercourse with the French of Kebec, has rendered the latter [Montagnais] more supple and docile.”<sup>197</sup> However, Le Jeune lamented that there were only “four little houses, on the

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<sup>193</sup> Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 205.

<sup>194</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1637, vol. XIII, 213

<sup>195</sup> Parkman, 227.

<sup>196</sup> Michael Pomedli, “Beyond Unbelief: Early Jesuit Interpretations of Native Religions,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 16 (1987): 278.

<sup>197</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1642-1643, vol XXIII, 305.

French plan [seigneurial system],” but there were plans that more would be built in the spring.<sup>198</sup> Consequently, Le Jeune felt that the missionaries, and *donnés*, as well as men around the posts, should start clearing land for more houses to be built. Troubles with the Iroquois and with rebellious Huron slowed progress for Le Jeune.

Until peace could be obtained, settlement of indigenous people was difficult. One of Le Moyne’s greatest achievements in North America was the 1653 truce that he negotiated between the French and their indigenous allies, and four of the five Iroquois nations. While the peace did not hold for a long period of time, it did allow for missions to be set up among the Iroquois. Establishing missions all over North America was important to missionaries. In 1653 Le Moyne set out for his meeting with all the Iroquois but the Mohawks.<sup>199</sup> The father held a lavish gift-giving ceremony where he offered nineteen gifts of peace, forgiveness, sorrow and apology to the Iroquois.<sup>200</sup> After the Iroquois made their speech and thanked the French for their help with their enemies, the Iroquois promised to never wage war again with the French.<sup>201</sup> The Iroquois finished by saying, “We conjure you to choose a site that will be advantageous to yourselves, on the shores of our great lake, in order to build thereon a French settlement. Place yourselves in the heart of the country, since you are to possess our hearts. Thither we will receive instruction, and thence you will be able to spread out in all directions. Show us Paternal care, and we will render you filial obedience.”<sup>202</sup> The opportunity for the

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<sup>198</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1642-1643, vol XXIII, 305.

<sup>199</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne, 1653-54, vol XLI, 109.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 109-113.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

Jesuits to convert Iroquois had been coveted from very early on in the missions. After many Jesuit martyrs had been made at the hands of the Iroquois, Father Le Moyne had finally achieved the missionaries' goal.

Before missionaries could enter the hostile Iroquois territories, they first had to understand how indigenous people travelled. Prior to a truce being established with the Iroquois, missionaries had other difficulties to contend with. Brébeuf wrote a revealing submission for the *Relations* in 1637 entitled "Instructions for the Fathers of Society who Shall be sent to the Huron." Brébeuf characterized the relationship between the missionaries and the Huron as a paternal one. He advised the prospective Jesuits to "provide yourself with a tinder box or with a burning mirror, or with both, to furnish them fire in the daytime to light their pipes, and in the evening when they have to encamp; these little services win their heart."<sup>203</sup> He also listed mundane tasks that the missionaries should know before they embark on a journey to Huronia. Things such as "be prompt in embarking and disembarking" and "tuck up your gowns so that they will not get wet" are mentioned as duties, but do not give any information of the true hardships that future Jesuits would encounter.<sup>204</sup> Brébeuf, if anything, downplayed the difficulties of an expedition to Huronia, by using a matter-of-fact style of writing.

Furthermore, Brébeuf compared the indigenous peoples with the French, particularly in terms of morals. He stated that, "the Hurons are lascivious although in two leading points less so than many Christians."<sup>205</sup> The first had to do with public

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<sup>203</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1637, vol XII, 117.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 119

<sup>205</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1635, vol VIII, 125.

displays of affection, which Brébeuf felt should be kept a private matter. The second was the Huron's work ethic even though they may not have eaten for several days. Brébeuf acknowledged that "you will see them still paddling, carrying loads, singing, laughing, bantering, as if they had dined well."<sup>206</sup> Ultimately, Brébeuf determined that although the indigenous people possessed a significant number of flaws, particularly in terms of religion, they have many redeeming qualities that would put many French Catholics to shame.

In his 1634 *Relation* entry, Le Jeune recounted a discussion he had with a Montagnais sorcerer about Frenchmen "He has no sense, he gets angry; as for me, nothing can disturb me. Let hunger oppress us, let my nearest relations pass to the other life, let the Iroquois, our enemies, massacre our people; I never get angry."<sup>207</sup> In seventeenth-century France, there was a discussion about how the enlightened French Catholic society should treat its less fortunate.<sup>208</sup> Likewise, Jesuits found similarities between the lower class people of France and the indigenous people of North America. The Superior, Le Jeune, however, differentiated between the French villagers, who knew the language and religion, and the recently settled indigenous people, who were more clever.<sup>209</sup> He stated, "I confess they evince a great deal of intelligence, but I would not

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<sup>206</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1635, vol VIII, 127.

<sup>207</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune. 1634, vol VI, 231.

<sup>208</sup> Bronwen Catherine McShea, "Cultivating Empire Through Print: The Jesuit Strategy for New France and the Parisian *Relations* of 1632 to 1673," *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (PhD diss., Yale University, 2011), 134-5.

<sup>209</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune. 1634, vol VI, 231.



have believed that they could reason so well, especially in the matter of our belief.”<sup>210</sup> By drawing comparisons between the lives of the French and the indigenous people, the Jesuits were able to discuss the failings of French society. In a similar letter between the two Jesuit fathers, Le Jeune recounts what an indigenous person said to him: “You [the French] are covetous and are neither generous nor kind; as for us, if we have a morsel of bread we share it with our neighbour.”<sup>211</sup> When it was to his benefit, Le Jeune juxtaposed the idea of the “noble savage,” ignorant and simple, with the decadent and corrupt elite.<sup>212</sup> He stated, “For there are two tyrants, ambition and avarice, who distress and torture so many of our Europeans but have no dominion over these great forests.”<sup>213</sup> Le Jeune admired specific virtues in the indigenous people because they highlighted those problems in French society that the reforming Catholic Church would like to correct.

Le Jeune used the *Relations* to reflect upon French society. Le Moyne approached the *Relations* in a different way. While he was in France, Le Moyne learned of the popularity of the *Relations*. In a letter he wrote to his cousin, the Curé of St. Martin, he stated, “Until such time as you have the satisfaction of reading our *Relation* of this year, which will be published, I think, at Paris, I send to my Brother the Jesuit what will serve to whet rather than to satiate your curiosity.”<sup>214</sup> These lines point to the

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<sup>210</sup> Peter A. Dorsey, “Going to School with Savages: Authorship and Authority among the Jesuits of New France,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no.3 (July 1998): 403.

<sup>211</sup> Devens, 15.

<sup>212</sup> Greer, 18.

<sup>213</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1634, vol VI, 231.

<sup>214</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne, 1639, vol XV, 195.

importance of the annual *Relations* and how they were eagerly anticipated each year. The father was writing his letter with his audience in mind, enticing his reader with a preview of what was to follow. Conversions of the people and living in the wilderness among the dangers of an uncivilized world are topics that Le Moyne focuses on in his brief letter.

Le Moyne arrived in North America at a time when Jesuits were just starting to convert local indigenous people. Death and disease worked in two ways. Fear of death, and the belief that the Jesuits were the ones bringing the destruction, led many indigenous people to ban Jesuits from their homes. Other indigenous people thought that conversion would save them from death. But in the event that they should die, many Huron, Montagnais and Algonquin parents wanted their children to be raised in seminaries. Reducing nomadic tendencies helped Jesuits educate indigenous people on a consistent basis. Settling tribes also diminished the amount of traveling that the Jesuits had to do.

Entries in the *Jesuit Relations* reflect the different times, and situations in which the three different Jesuits Brébeuf, Le Jeune, Le Moyne were writing. The early experiences, prior to the fall of Huronia in 1649, of the Jesuits demonstrate the success as well as the necessity for the continuation of missions. But they also provide the reader with insight into the challenges that missionaries faced when they arrived in New France. Brébeuf faced the challenge of being accepted among the Huron. After learning the language and the culture, however, he was able to make progress despite an increasing threat from the Iroquois and diseases. Le Jeune's first priority was to establish

a community for the indigenous people to settle the land, but first he needed funding from French aristocracy. Once the funding arrived Le Jeune was able to build a church, seminary, and houses. Indigenous people were initially reluctant, but by the 1640s, indigenous allies of the French were seeking refuge from the Iroquois attacks. Le Moyne initially wrote about Huron neophytes and the joys of having Huron converts. After the fall of Huronia, however, Le Moyne became an ambassador, embarking on dangerous journeys to hostile territories to establish missions and negotiate for the French. All three fathers described their experiences in North America in great detail, but they focused on their own challenges based on their situations.

## Chapter Five:

### Illness, Beliefs, Conflicts and Politics

In the correspondence of the three Jesuits, Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne, there are similar patterns between their entries regarding First Nations, though focused on different aspects of indigenous societies and their interpretations and observations differed. This chapter will explore the three missionaries' treatment of four separate topics: illness, beliefs, conflict and politics of war, and the characterisation of indigenous people. Although the three Jesuits received the same education in France, their experiences in New France, as described in the *Jesuit Relations*, reveal what was most important to each individual missionary. Brébeuf, in North America from 1625-1649,<sup>215</sup> was focused on learning about the Huron culture and language in order to convert First Nations people to Catholicism. As a result, he set to work learning about Huron society before he began attempting conversions. Le Jeune, a North American missionary from 1632-1649,<sup>216</sup> was less interested in learning native languages than he was in establishing permanent residences for indigenous people to live sedentary, Catholic lifestyles. Le Moyne arrived later in 1638 and stayed until his death in 1665.<sup>217</sup> He benefitted from having pre-established missions in Iroquoia where the indigenous

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<sup>215</sup> James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982), 206.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

were already Catholic converts. The individual efforts of the three Jesuit missionaries and their ability to adapt to the constantly changing conditions in North America contributed greatly to the survival of the missions, despite attacks from the Iroquois.

Because Le Jeune and Brébeuf came into contact with the Iroquois at a time of conflict, they knew very little about the Iroquois people. In his role as an ambassador to the Iroquois at a time when they had established a peace with France, Father Le Moyne spent a significant amount of time in the Iroquois nations, learning a great deal about the distinct nations and their cultures. The entries that we have from Brébeuf during the Iroquois attacks on the Huron missions are sparse in comparison to his earlier entries. What can be gleaned from the remaining entries indicates that Huron lived in fear of Iroquois and that this fear affected every part of their life. In comparison, Le Jeune and his followers were established near French forts, with access to hospitals, schools, and soldiers, so they were slightly more secure.

The missionaries' work throughout New France was perpetually hampered by epidemics that killed large portions of the indigenous populations. During times of epidemics in Huronia, many First Nations peoples believed that the Jesuits

had a secret understanding of the disease, since we alone were all full of life and health, although we constantly breathed nothing but a totally infected air, - staying whole days close by the side of the most foul-smelling patients, for whom every one felt horror; no doubt we carried the trouble with us, since, wherever we set foot, either death or disease followed us.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>218</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791* (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1897), 1640, vol XIX, 93.

That opinion, however, changed over time. In 1653, at the time of peace with the Iroquois, Le Moyne found that the Iroquois and Huron refugees sought aid from the missionaries. “I was regarded as a great medicine-man, although I had, as my sole remedy, only a bit of sugar to give to those feeble creatures.”<sup>219</sup> Jesuits offered to provide remedies of sugar and raisins for the sick.<sup>220</sup>

Catholic hospitals established by French nuns also helped secure conversions for those who recovered.<sup>221</sup> Le Jeune wrote of a young boy who was sick, and the care that he received at the hospital. After the boy recovered he converted to Catholicism: “The poor boy was so well cared for that he recovered. Charity works miracles; it changes Savages into children of God.”<sup>222</sup> Noel Negabamat, an indigenous man, said, “they relieve us in our sicknesses.”<sup>223</sup> Le Jeune stated, “I saw some infirm old women and some children, who may give the Hospital mothers and the Ursuline mothers more occupation.”<sup>224</sup> The proximity of hospitals to Sillery was useful for Le Jeune. While illness continued to be a problem for Huron, Brébeuf’s later accounts, from 1643-1648, make no mention of illness. His primary concerns were the threat that the Iroquois posed to the Huron. On the other hand, Le Moyne’s reports from the Iroquois territories are similar to those of Le Jeune in that they were also concerned with treating the sick. Le Moyne makes multiple observations about the sick in Iroquoia, including both young

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<sup>219</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne 1653-54, vol XLI,99.

<sup>220</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1637, Vol XIII, 115.

<sup>221</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1640, vol XVIII, 137.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 95-97.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 93.

and old. He states, “I received calls from different quarters to administer my medicine to some weak and emaciated children, and I baptized some of them.”<sup>225</sup> In cases where children did not appear as though they would survive they were baptized. “I baptized some little skeletons who, perhaps, were only waiting for the drop of the precious blood of Jesus Christ.”<sup>226</sup> Le Moyne also draws the reader’s attention to the fact that Jesuits were now being allowed to convert and tend to the children: “The time is now past when these little innocents are hidden from our sight.”<sup>227</sup>

In addition to dealing with problems associated with epidemic disease, the first missionaries complained of significant amounts of opposition from the medicine men as they attempted to convert First Nations peoples to Catholicism. As time progressed and missionaries gained a foothold among the Huron, sorcerers posed less and less of a problem for the missionaries as many people converted to Catholicism. Brébeuf remarked that by 1643, “they scarcely practice[d] their former superstitions.”<sup>228</sup> Even though the sorcerers did not accept conversions for themselves, they no longer impeded others from converting to Catholicism. There were, however, those who chose not to accept the new faith, “which not only hinder[ed] our work, but seem[ed] even to threaten the ruin of the whole mission.”<sup>229</sup> Some had converted and then rejected the faith. But others simply did not trust the Jesuits. Brébeuf stated in 1648 that, “the hatred

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<sup>225</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne, 1653-54, Vol XLI, 101.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>227</sup> Edna Kenton, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in North America (1610-1791)* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1954), 248.

<sup>228</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1642-43, vol XXIII, 251.

<sup>229</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1647-48, vol XXXII, 61.

toward us of certain infidel Hurons,” had “grown to the degree that a few days ago they killed one of our domestics.”<sup>230</sup> One Jesuit, recounting the death of Brébeuf at the hands of the infidels and Iroquois, stated “The barbarians, took a kettle full of boiling water, which he poured over his body three different times, in derision of Holy baptism.”<sup>231</sup>

Huron refugees of the Iroquois attacks arrived at Sillery to discover that there was a much greater Catholic influence than existed in Huronia because Sillery was smaller and closer to French settlements. In 1640, Le Jeune wrote, “We are living now in profound peace; the Faith is respected even by the Pagans, and the new Christians are fervent.”<sup>232</sup> Similarly, Brébeuf remarked that in times of “great peace and union” for the Huron “Religious discipline [was] not only observed, in fact, as in great colleges, - but the punctual observance of all the rules is also increased from day to day.”<sup>233</sup> Moreover, the indigenous residents of Sillery accepted Catholicism to such an extent that Le Jeune began to propose that marriage be conducted in the Catholic manner. He states “Now that they have become Christians, they must bend their heads under the yoke of single marriage.”<sup>234</sup> While Brébeuf had difficulty keeping converts from turning against the faith, Le Jeune was optimistic about Christian marriages.

Temporal Catholicism, the earthly benefits of practicing Catholicism, was the focus of Le Jeune’s entries describing belief, but Le Moyne’s entries written while among the Iroquois focused on the indigenous teaching one another as well as on the

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<sup>230</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1647-48, vol XXXII, 61.

<sup>231</sup> Thwaites, Regenant, 1649, vol XXXIV, 29.

<sup>232</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1640, Vol XVIII, 125

<sup>233</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1640-41 Vol XX, 103.

<sup>234</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1640, Vol XVIII, 125.



necessity of living a pious life in preparation for death. Le Moyne recounts the story of a Catholic Huron woman named Terese and a young captive Neutral girl: “she had instructed her so well in the mysteries of the faith and in sentiments of Piety, in the prayers that they repeated together in that holy solitude.”<sup>235</sup> All of the training was done before Jesuits were welcomed in the Iroquois territories. Le Moyne was surprised to learn that the education the young girl received was so complete that she could be baptized right away.<sup>236</sup> Le Moyne also recounts another young woman who was dying of an illness, and sums up her understanding of Catholic beliefs. In a speech to her sister, Catherine Skouatenhré said, “I am going to heaven, my sister, for Jesus is good and will show me mercy. As for thee, if thou desire to follow me, so that we may meet again in heaven, cherish thy faith more than life.”<sup>237</sup> The guidance that the young woman gave to her sister was exceptionally pious, and indicating that she understood the Jesuit teachings.

While Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne wrote about the challenges they faced in confronting First Nations beliefs, they also focused on the conflicts between the Iroquois and the alliance of Huron and French colonists. Brébeuf, who was destined to become a legend after he was tortured and killed by the Iroquois while in Huronia in 1649, was on the ground in Huronia when the Iroquois attacks began to intensify in the 1640s.<sup>238</sup> He states that the “incursions of the enemies” were “uninterrupted throughout

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<sup>235</sup> Thwaites, *Le Moyne, 1653-1654*, Vol XLI, 103.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-7.

<sup>238</sup> Moore, 206.

th[e] summer.”<sup>239</sup> As a result, most of his entries focused on Iroquois danger. There were, however, brief periods of peace between the Huron and the Iroquois, so Huronia had time to recover from the continual onslaught of Iroquois attacks. In 1645, a peace was negotiated between the Mohawks and the French. Then in 1646 another peace was negotiated between the remaining four Iroquois nations and the French.<sup>240</sup> The peace, however, only lasted a few months before it was broken. In 1646 at Ossernenon, Father Jogues, a Jesuit captured by the Iroquois who escaped after more than a year in captivity only to return back to the Iroquois, was struck by an Iroquois with a hatchet and was killed instantly.<sup>241</sup> Reflecting on those times of peace, Brébeuf wrote,

the condition of our affairs appears to be most excellent, - because at home the utmost peace, union, and tranquility flourish among ours and those of our household, and all apply themselves most diligently to piety, virtue, and perfection; and because the interests of Christianity make very satisfactory progress, the Christians increasing more and more, not only in number but also in virtue.<sup>242</sup>

This passage indicates how important peace was for missions.

The entries that Le Jeune compiled in Paris as editor included a focus on politics, particularly how to maintain good relations with the Iroquois who had recently invited missionaries in to their territories. The initial meeting in 1653 with Onnontaé, or Onondagas, appeared to go well. The fathers reported that the indigenous “listened to [them] with applause and good will.” Given the extensive damage that the Iroquois did

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<sup>239</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1642-43, vol XXIII, 249.

<sup>240</sup> Gustave Lanctôt, *A History of Canada: From its Origins to the Royal Régime, 1663*, vol. 1, trans. Josephine Hambleton (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1963), 188.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>242</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1648, vol XXXII, 59.

in Huronia, however, the Jesuits were cautious. Throughout the 1640s and the early 1650s, different Iroquois nations had negotiated peace with the French. However, the treaties were generally short-lived. In 1657, despite the treaty with the French, it was reported that there was a massacre of Huron even though the Iroquois “made a thousand avowals of good will and a thousand oaths, - such as they are wont to make.”<sup>243</sup> The French alliance with the Huron and Algonquins was a part of French politics. At a council on the 21st of October, 1657 the chief men in New France decided three things. First, “we must not take the initiative in irritating the Iroquois.”<sup>244</sup> The second agreement was “that we were always to treat as friends the Huron and Algonquins, our allies.”<sup>245</sup> The final agreement was “we must prevent Iroquois, whether upper or lower, from doing them any injury in sight of our settlement.”<sup>246</sup> The focus among Jesuits in New France was how to balance an untrustworthy alliance with the Iroquois while keeping their indigenous allies safe.

Le Moyne believed that the alliance with the Iroquois, was a necessity for their missions despite the danger. His fellow missionaries stated that “a Missionary among the Iroquois is a Lamb among ravenous Wolves.”<sup>247</sup> He asserted that there were three reasons why the Jesuits made the journey to Iroquois villages. The first reason he gives is that, “We go there in the interest of the public welfare, and for the preservation of the peace, which is so frail a matter among these peoples, that the mere omission to pay a

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<sup>243</sup> Thwaites, *Le Jeune*, 1657, vol XLIV, 187.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>247</sup> Thwaites, 1656-57, vol XLIII, 209.

visit which they expect from their allies is sufficient to break it.”<sup>248</sup> His second reason was to “go there to seek every means to make that peace general among all the Nations.”<sup>249</sup> His final reason was to, “go there to prevent the jealousy which might arise between the upper and the lower Iroquois, if while residing with the former, we failed to visit the latter.”<sup>250</sup> Le Moyne understood the importance of being an ambassador for the French because positive relations with the Iroquois meant that the missions could grow and expand.

Le Moyne’s work among the Iroquois also provides more information about who the Iroquois were as a people. Brébeuf had clearly described the Iroquois in a negative light and the Huron, who were allies of the French, in a positive light. Of the Huron Brébeuf had previously written, “We see shining among them some rather noble moral virtues.”<sup>251</sup> Brébeuf described the Iroquois, by contrast, as “the barbarians” and wrote that their character was “inconstant and fickle, their inclinations were changed, after a few days.”<sup>252</sup> Brébeuf’s opinion of the Huron had improved as he spent time with them and some converted to Catholicism. But he had a poor opinion of those nations who had not embraced Catholicism.

The subject of the character of indigenous people was common with Le Jeune. As editor in Paris, there were times when the *Relations* did not reach France, so Le Jeune had to create entries based on personal letters and his own personal

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<sup>248</sup> Thwaites, 1656-57, vol XLIII, 211.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>251</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1635, vol VIII, 127

<sup>252</sup> Thwaites, Brébeuf, 1643, vol XXIII, 251.

experiences.<sup>253</sup> In the preface to the 1657-58 edition Le Jeune reflects on all the tragedies that had befallen the Jesuits up to that point. “We have been taken for Imposters, Sorcerers, Magicians, and for Men who make the grain crops freeze and die, who poison the rivers, cause diseases, and kill the people. Then we were murdered, burned, broiled, roasted, and eaten alive.”<sup>254</sup> Le Jeune discusses how the French prepare for a difficult death and how that differs from the indigenous. He states, “They [indigenous] sing amid dangers, in torments, and at the approach of death; while the French usually preserve a deep silence on all such occasions.”<sup>255</sup> Further on in the *Relation*, Le Jeune describes the death of a Christian Huron at the hands of the Iroquois, “When he was being burned, he never lost his self-control: his eyes were turned Heavenward most of the time. He manifested such joy, that even the enemy said that faith imparted courage and took away the fear and pain of torture.”<sup>256</sup> Le Moyne, likewise, shares Le Jeune’s observations on death: “I learn that several, who were cruelly put to death over a slow fire, consoled themselves, at the heights of their agonies, with the sacred name of Jesus, which was both on their lips and in their hearts up to their last breath.”<sup>257</sup>

Entering a new territory gave Le Moyne the opportunity to remark on the character of the Iroquois. During his very first visit to Onnontagé, Le Moyne remarked on the welcome he received upon his arrival, stating “Two Captains made me their

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<sup>253</sup> Thwaites, Le Jeune, 1657-58, Vol XLIV, 139.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>257</sup> Thwaites, Le Moyne 1653-54, vol XLI, 105.

harangue upon my entrance, but with a joy and a light in their countenances that I had never seen in savages. Men, women, and children, - all showed me respect and love.”<sup>258</sup>

The description he gave of the Iroquois differed significantly from those of other Jesuits who had never been to the Iroquois territories. He was impressed with how the captive Catholic Huron influenced their Iroquois captors. He states, “we are indebted to the Piety of a Huron woman.”<sup>259</sup>

Not all people wanted to convert, despite Le Moyne’s best efforts. While he was among the Iroquois he recounts a meeting he had with a man who had been shot and was sick from infection. “I spoke to him about God, the hopes of an eternal life, and the truths of the Faith. But alas! The words of heaven found no entrance to that heart, all swelled up as it was with pride; he was thinking only of the present life, and, although he showed me some affection, he could not conceive any for God.”<sup>260</sup> Le Moyne does not give any more information regarding the sick man, or his choice not to convert, but his judgement of the man is not severe. In a separate entry, Le Moyne recounts the story of a Catholic Huron who was being executed, and while he was dying he was preaching about God. Le Moyne had hoped that speeches given to the Iroquois “would be sufficient to soften their hearts and to incline them to the Faith,” but then continues on to state that their hearts were “harder than stones.”<sup>261</sup> Even though Le Moyne was in

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<sup>258</sup> Thwaites, *Le Moyne 1653-54*, vol XLI, 99.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>261</sup> Thwaites, *Le Moyne 1656-57*, vol XLIII, 219.

Iroquois territory, it appears he had greater success converting Huron and other captives, but struggled with the Iroquois.

The survival of the missions from the 1640s onwards was uncertain. Missionaries struggled against European illness, which claimed the lives of many converts and distracted Jesuits from their ultimate goal of creating converts. Jesuit missionaries relied on the influence of Catholic converts. Brébeuf noticed less resistance to missionaries from those who did not want to convert because there was an abundance of neophytes living in the villages working alongside the Jesuits. Le Jeune had hoped that converts would help refugees when they arrived at Sillery. Le Moyne discovered that his acceptance among the Iroquois nations stemmed from captive Huron converts who preached the faith to anyone who would listen. Conflict and politics were common topics discussed by missionaries, as they impacted every facet of the missionaries' lives. The results of the conflicts with indigenous people also had an effect on how missionaries saw different nations, which was related in their entries of the *Relations*. Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne discussed topics that were relevant to missionaries in North America. Illness, beliefs, conflicts and politics shaped how missionaries observed, interacted with, and wrote about the First Nations peoples. There are, however, discrepancies between Jesuit entries. Their *Relations* entries varied based on time, situation, location, and First Nations peoples.

## Conclusion

The *Jesuit Relations* entries written by Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne indicate that converting indigenous people was a primary concern for missions. But each missionary took a different approach based on their different interactions. The Jesuits had a world-view derived from their education and missionary training. The intention of this thesis was to demonstrate, by focusing on these three missionaries - Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne - that their entries in the *Relations* reflected each individual's situation and circumstances. Furthermore, their opinions, based on their observations, changed over the course of time as new challenges supplanted the old. Brébeuf focused on converting the Huron to Catholicism. He was one of the first missionaries, arriving in 1632. He had much to learn about their languages and their cultures before he could begin converting. Le Jeune, who also arrived in 1632, focused on settling the nomadic tribes close to New France. As a Jesuit, Le Jeune was unable to purchase land for a settlement. The *Jesuit Relations* were created, in part, to seek donations from wealthy patrons. Having arrived in 1638, Le Moyne benefited from missions already established among the allies of the French. He took on an ambassadorial role brokering peace and establishing missions with the Iroquois. Peace with the Iroquois, however, was difficult to maintain, so Le Moyne was constantly working towards keeping the peace. As per



their training, missionaries were expected to do what they could to convert indigenous people.

The Society of Jesus, as established by Loyola, was based on two principles: obedience and individualism. Military-like obedience was crucial for maintaining order within the growing society. At the top of the order was the General, Ignatius Loyola. He required that all members of the society obey him regardless of personal ambitions. However, the concept of obedience had its limits. Jesuits traveled extensively for their missionary work, making correspondence between missionaries and their superiors extremely difficult. Independent agency in terms of making decisions while they were isolated from others of their order was encouraged by the superiors to accommodate the lack of communication. Missionaries were chosen for specific missions based on the strengths they demonstrated at school.

All Jesuits had to follow three basic ideals: seek out persons in need, preach the Gospel, and heal the sick. Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne all received the same education at Jesuit colleges, focusing on the three ideals of missionary work. As their writings suggest, all three men sought out people who they thought were in need. Brébeuf went to Huronia, Le Jeune stayed around Quebec, and Le Moyne went to Iroquoia. Preaching the Gospel to indigenous people was slightly more difficult than these Jesuits initially anticipated because it took a while to learn the languages well enough to preach. Healing the sick also proved challenging as early missionaries did not have the infrastructure or medicines to help the sick. Smallpox, however, could not be cured, so the best missionaries could do was to help ease the pain of those dying. During

times of providing for the sick, missionaries took it upon themselves to preach and convert. Tending to the sick also increased the number of people in need, creating more work for missionaries.

Through the *Jesuit Relations*, missionaries were able to seek help from those in France. The *Relations* publicized the ideals and the practice of the missionaries to a wider audience. They not only revealed the success of missions, but also revealed what further missionary work was necessary. It is also clear that there was a reciprocal relationship between French readers and Jesuit writers, and that they impacted one another. The aristocracy became primary investors in North American missions. Their contributions financed Sillery, a residence for indigenous people, but also went towards building hospitals and churches. As a result, the Jesuits wanted to show that the contributions were adding to their increased success. Moreover, missionaries wanted a public forum in which to thank their patrons, while at the same time encouraging others to provide funding for missions.

The *Relations* were not solely written to pay lip service to the financiers of the missions. Missionaries were expected to carefully observe First Nations societies and relay the findings of the different world to their uninformed readers. The careful, meticulous observations would help inform French readers of what was happening, and provide future missionaries with a basic understanding of the indigenous cultures they would encounter. The detailed observations recorded by the missionaries also allow historians to make note of changes within First Nations societies over time. From the *Relations*, historians gather a wealth of knowledge regarding alliances, warfare, peace,

languages, beliefs, and culture. First Nations societies, however, were altered as indigenous peoples evolved to changes that occurred as they increasingly interacted with Europeans, including Jesuit missionaries. This is evident in a close reading of entries in the *Jesuit Relations*.

Similar topics were discussed by different Jesuits in their *Relations* entries.

Father Brébeuf, like Le Jeune, noted the extreme conditions in which the Huron and Montagnais lived, in comparison to the French. However, their reactions to their observations of how the indigenous societies lived were quite different. Brébeuf was determined to gain a better understanding of the Huron by learning their traditional way of life as well as the language. Over time, Brébeuf was accepted by the Huron and given the name *Echom*. Le Jeune, on the other hand, reacted quite differently. He believed that the indigenous people should embrace a French lifestyle. He wanted the nomadic hunters to become settled farmers. He also wanted the indigenous people to live in French homes, not nomadic shelters. As a result, he used donations from a French aristocrat to found Sillery, a mission that resembled a small French town.

The way Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne dealt with illness also differed from one Jesuit to another. Illness was a danger at all missions. Smallpox and other European diseases would roll through North America in waves, wiping out populations. When missionaries first arrived, smallpox was not understood by indigenous populations. What they knew was that people died after the Fathers touched them with water, which led many of the indigenous to believe that the Jesuits were killing them. Consequently, baptisms of sick children were often performed secretly. The arrival of nuns to the

French forts helped missionaries, like Le Jeune, to care for the sick. Hospitals were not established in Iroquoia, so Father Le Moyne traveled to visit the sick and help them in any way possible. He gained many converts, but not all the sick embraced Catholicism. Le Moyne's entries from the mid 1650s show that there were an abundance of sick people in the Iroquois territories. He tended to many of them personally.

Indigenous beliefs tied directly into how they perceived illness and European religion. Brébeuf embraced the Huron's beliefs to an extent. He found that there were some similarities between indigenous beliefs and Catholicism. Those similarities, Brébeuf argued, proved that God existed and had a hand in the lives of the indigenous people. Sorcerers and medicine men were skeptical, arguing that the new religion would destroy their traditional way of life. They used the example of converts dying shortly after baptism. As time progressed, however, most indigenous people became accustomed to the Jesuits. When he arrived in Iroquoia, Le Moyne had the benefit of encountering many captive Huron converts who retained the Catholic faith. The captive converts had made tremendous progress among other captive nations as well as with the Iroquois. Similarly, Le Jeune worked among the indigenous people who resided close to the French forts, so they already understood the French language, customs, and Catholic religion. Many of the indigenous around the forts accepted conversion as a way to continue the trading alliance.<sup>262</sup> The addition of Sillery and the increase of hospitals, and schools for indigenous people, further helped Jesuit missionaries to attract potential converts to missions.

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<sup>262</sup> Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984), 253.

Potential converts were also attracted to missions, hoping that they would provide safety from the increasing conflicts. Conflicts, such as the Iroquois attacks, affected all three of the missionaries, albeit differently. Brébeuf lived in constant fear as the attacks escalated in intensity. He watched as converts were kidnapped or killed. The attacks, however, also resulted in an increase of Catholic converts who were hoping that the French would provide protection. Brébeuf's *Relations* entries reflect the severity and intensity of the attacks. Le Jeune, likewise, gained converts from the Iroquois attacks. Sillery became a refuge for indigenous people fleeing from the Iroquois. Le Jeune had intended for the refugees to learn from the native inhabitants. Eventually, they would convert and join the permanent residents at Sillery. Le Moyne, who helped to broker a truce between the French and the Iroquois, was invited by several Iroquois nations to establish missions in their territories. He desired to go into the Iroquois nations for religious reasons, but he also hoped that he could maintain the fragile peace.

Treaties, peace, and alliances between indigenous peoples and the French changed Jesuit attitudes towards the First Nations societies willing to establish missions. First Nations peoples were described in a variety of ways. The Iroquois were enemies of the French since Champlain formed an alliance with the Huron and the Algonquins, and were a persistent problem for missionaries. As a result, the early Jesuits characterized the Iroquois as evil compared to the Huron. Le Moyne portrayed the Iroquois differently than Brébeuf or Le Jeune. He found the Iroquois to be welcoming and open to their Catholic teachings. Catholic converts were the most accepted of the indigenous people. They were considered extensions of missionaries, able to translate different

languages and convince unwelcoming populations that the missionaries meant no harm. They preached and prayed with regularity without the prompting of missionaries. Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne all appreciated the power of the converts.

In their individual *Relations* entries, Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne all encountered similar obstacles such as illness, differences in beliefs, and conflicts. But each wrote about them differently based on their individual circumstances. Time also affected missionary perspectives, as did their interactions with different societies, in different places, at different times. The entries of Brébeuf, Le Jeune, and Le Moyne, in the *Jesuit Relations*, indicate that missionaries, despite strict training and a shared French Catholic world-view, adjusted their approaches to conversions depending on the nature of their interactions with Huron and Iroquois between 1632 until 1672.

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