Missionaries in Pre-Confederate Canada

Missionaries of pre confederation Canada had an important role of transforming the way the Native American’s way of life. In this article by James Ronda we learn the role of the missionary in New France. We also get a glimpse into how the Native Americans responded to the missionaries. The missionary introduced the European beliefs and way of life the Natives in New France.

Missionaries came to New France to spread the beliefs of the Europeans. When we think of groups of people that had a significant impact on contact and culture change in New France, we think of politicians and traders. However the missionaries demanded nothing less then culture change.[[1]](#footnote-1) The goal of the missionaries was to change who the Natives Americans were. They would do this by going to native tribes and teach the natives of European ways of life and beliefs. However the missionaries contact with the natives spread diseases.[[2]](#footnote-2) This did not help the missionary’s goal at all. The natives were unimpressed and confused with the ideas the missionaries.[[3]](#footnote-3) They could not understand the concepts because they were explained using European material terms.[[4]](#footnote-4) The native religious leaders denounced Christianity as a dangerous, alien ideology, and stressed the value of cultural unity.[[5]](#footnote-5) The natives rejected the beliefs of the missionaries. One Native American said, “I am content being damned.”[[6]](#footnote-6) They found Christianity as a threat to their culture.

Missionaries transformed the way the Native American’s way of life. We learnt the role of the missionary in New France. We learned that the natives had a negative response to the missionary’s teachings. The missionary introduced the European beliefs to the Native Americans.

1. James P. Ronda, “We Are Well As We Are: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions”, *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 34, 1, (1977) pg. 67 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. James P. Ronda, “We Are Well As We Are: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions”, *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 34, 1, (1977) pg. 72-73 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. James P. Ronda, “We Are Well As We Are: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions”, *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 34, 1, (1977) pg. 69-81 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. James P. Ronda, “We Are Well As We Are: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions”, *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 34, 1, (1977) pg. 7o [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. James P. Ronda, “We Are Well As We Are: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions”, *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 34, 1, (1977) pg. 80 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. James P. Ronda, “We Are Well As We Are: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions”, *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 34, 1, (1977) pg. 71 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)