

11. DISCUSS THE JESUIT RELATIONS (3/11/04)

What seem to have been the goals of publishing the Relations? How might the goals have shaped, even distorted what wrote?

How are the Relations structured? What are the characteristic events? What are the high points, successes? Low points?

How did the situation of the Jesuits in Canada differ from the situation in e.g. Paraguay? No military force or ability to coerce. No pressure from slave traders to drive into arms of missionaries. What aspects of situation favored Jesuits? desire of Huron for trade, alliance with French against enemies.

What methods did the Jesuits use to sell Christianity and establish their own influence over the Huron?

-How did they get their foot in the door? Give a little food/game. Tend to sick, gratitude even if don't cure.

-How tried to overawe? clock, writing, eclipses, etc.

-What can say about writing? What does Wogan say?

-Use of images.

-What about shamans or sorcerers? Contest over spiritual power. Saw as rivals, counterparts. Probably were their greatest opponents, but also Jesuit mindset.

-Disputation, argue theology---Why? Came naturally from own training.

-In understanding Jesuits, one approach is to look at characteristic events. What events used by Jesuits? Meetings, catechizing. What did in meetings? little games, contests. Recitation, having boys repeat things.

What was the politics of illness and epidemics? Belief in witchcraft meant sometimes search for culprit, could be Jesuits. But also pushing baptism and amulets as protection.

Aside from its place in the politics of illness, what was the importance of baptism to Jesuits? Way of measuring success. Body count.

What were the dynamics, causes of conversion? How different or same as what Sweet said about the Spanish missions?

How did they see God working in the world? Not only intervening to support mission, but in very detailed ways--micromanaging. "Just punishments". God gives one a chance, then gets angry.

They write of "rational" and irrational Indians. How is rationality defined? By willingness to convert. So is in effect circular argument.

How do they characterize resistance, the struggle? Any resistance is perverted, caused by devil. Not true of all Jesuit missionaries, e.g. in China. But Huron are savages.

How do the Relations characterize the Hurons?

-acknowledge virtues as well as vices. What does that say to reader? e.g. generosity, patience, stoicism.

-What do they say about focus/preoccupation/mindset of Indians? Here and now, and their stomachs, not big, ultimate questions. Very different from today's stereotypes about spiritual Indians, as in film. Improvident. How could you answer the charge that improvident? Why do Jesuits insist on this point?

-intelligent but irrational.

-docile, flexible, readily accept, except on issues of divorce and polygamy. Was this realistic? Were they reading potential converts correctly?

-wickedness. Stories to illustrate how in Satan's grip. Give lists of vices.

What was the significance to the Jesuits of torture and suffering? First, of Indian torture--attempts to convert Iroquois being converted. Great opportunity. No danger of back-sliding. But also salient for Jesuits because of symbolism and theological importance of suffering.

What of suffering of Father Jogues and other missionaries, e.g. when Iroquois overrun missions? Sainthood, suffering like Christ. Highly stylized stories---"*hagiography*". Jogues and others made saints, but not until 20th century. Even so, modeled on lives of saints. From one perspective, failure with Indians didn't matter, so long as lived saintly life, died in right way. Indians merely as backdrop.

Indians mostly excluded from sainthood, with a few exceptions. Female religious much more circumscribed---less culminating death than long-term abnegation, service.

What sources in the Relations can you find for scenes, characters, other elements in "Black Robe"?