

The Inroads of Secularization in Eighteenth-Century New France: Church and People at Louisbourg

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The established traditions of monarchy in countries such as Canada have, over the centuries, fostered a close association between church and state which has influenced the religious character of society, although not always in the ways anticipated. The state which conceives itself as the transmitter of ordained patterns received from the past promotes religious development in a manner which societies which view their origins as a secular covenant of a sovereign, though amorphous, people cannot admit. The emphasis on the rights of man in these latter countries has entrenched the concept of the separation of church and state in a way unacknowledged in countries whose origins are viewed as continuing the tacit acceptance of inherited traditions and institutions. This essentially conservative vision of the Canadian nation, expressed most cogently and persuasively by W.L. Morton, has strongly influenced the writing of Canadian religious history, most profoundly concerning the French regime up to the coming of the British in 1760.

For a century Quebec's clerical-nationalist historians extolled the virtues of a simpler time in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when French Canadians, far removed from the disquieting effects of industrialization and urbanization, lived in harmony with their land and their clergy. This pastoral interpretation of New France was not essentially challenged by its Protestant protagonists like Max Eastman and W.A. Riddell because such historians confirmed the place of an "ecclesiastical control" however poorly defined or negatively viewed.¹ It was only a quarter of a century ago that neo-nationalist historian Guy Frégault, followed by iconoclast W.J. Eccles, began the assault on this pastoral interpretation. While Frégault concluded that the institutional strength of Roman Catholicism in New France had not been as

¹ William Alexander Riddell, *The Rise of Ecclesiastical Control in Quebec*, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, (New York, 1916). Max Eastman, *Church and State in Early Canada* (Edinburgh, 1915). On the evolution of the clerical-nationalist strain in Quebec historiography, see Serge Gagnon, *Québec et ses historiens de 1840 à 1920* (Quebec, 1978).

profound as generally assumed, Eccles questioned the portrayal of habitants as an excessively pious people.² About the same time, but unaware of these newer interpretations, Charles Edwards O'Neill's study of colonial Louisiana found that the more southerly colony did not exhibit the religious fervour that historians of Canada had depicted as characteristic of the more northerly region. Indeed, O'Neill concluded that religion in early Louisiana had been a "pervading, tempering but not a dynamic, decisive force."³

The experience in France's maritime colonies has generally been excluded from these discussions, although historians have shown a continuing interest in the difficult role performed by French missionaries in Acadia in the tense years leading up to the deportation in 1755. The subject of this paper is the place of religion in the two colonies founded on Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island by the French following their exclusion from mainland Nova Scotia and Newfoundland by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. In the former, which the French called *Ile Royale*, immigrants from France and Placentia in Newfoundland predominated because a sufficient number of Acadians could not be persuaded to leave their fertile farmland for the rocky terrain they were shown in Cape Breton. Similarly, some Canadians did move to the new colony but their numbers were never large because even during the French regime Canadian society looked more to the west than to the east. As at Quebec, voluntary migration was augmented by deported criminals (largely salt smugglers) from the mother country and small numbers of slaves, Protestants and foreigners. Settlement in Prince Edward Island, called by the French *Ile Saint Jean*, retained the same characteristics observed at *Ile Royale* of clinging to coastal locations, but not until the dislocation of the Acadians in the 1750's did its meagre population amount to much.

The capital for both islands, Louisbourg, dominated in a manner even more pronounced than did Quebec. As Louisbourg was the administrative, commercial, military, fishing and religious centre for the colony, it contained a major portion of the population. The last census of both islands taken in 1752 gave the total number of people as 8,814, almost half of whom lived in the capital. While life in Louisbourg may not have been sophisticated in the manner that it was in contemporary Philadelphia or Boston, it was still cosmopolitan. The port rapidly became the foremost in New France and

² Guy Frégault, "L'Église canadienne et la société canadienne," reprinted in his *Le XVIII^e siècle canadien: études* (Montreal, 1968), pp. 86-158. W. J. Eccles, *Canadian Society During the French Regime* (Montreal, 1968). Robert-Lionel Séguin presented a contradictory view in *La civilisation traditionnelle de l'habitant aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Montreal, 1967), pp. 41-7, 72-5.

³ Charles Edwards O'Neill, *Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana, Policy and Politics to 1732* (New Haven, 1966), p. 286.

fourth in colonial America. Along its quay during the shipping months any number of languages were spoken. As well, life was heavily influenced by a strong military presence and a disproportionate number of men to women which was also partially attributable to the fishing industry.

Although Louisbourg was officially erected into a parish in 1726, the colony as a whole remained a mission served only by regular rather than secular clergy. Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame of Montreal provided education for girls and young women while the Brothers Hospitaler of St. John of God (Brothers of Charity) operated the king's hospital which housed one hundred beds. Priestly functions within the community and the chaplaincy of the troops were shared by Recollets from two ecclesiastical provinces, Brittany and St. Denis (Paris), until 1730 when the former assumed all duties and the latter returned to France.

Each of these religious communities tried to keep six of their number in the colony at most times. This meant that there was always a shortage of priests, not just within the capital itself, but also to serve the outlying communities on both *Ile Saint Jean* and *Ile Royale*. The 1734 census revealed a priest-to-people ratio of 1/555,⁴ a figure much higher than even the rural areas of Quebec. One Recollet served as parish priest, another as military chaplain within the citadel of the fortress, and a third essentially combined the two roles by ministering both to the troops at the Royal Battery and people on the north shore of Louisbourg's harbour. Statistics for communities outside the capital would only be misleading as the population was both scattered and much of it highly transitory. In this regard it should be noted that one of the great strengths of the Recollets' ministry was their willingness to move around the island during the fishing seasons in order to provide an ambulatory service to the people. Due to the fact that there were only three priests involved there, their ministry was never as complete as the faithful hoped or those in authority advocated. One governor in the 1750's went so far as to recommend ten more priests for the colony, but this was a time when the Recollets were short-staffed and Acadians were fleeing their

⁴ Frégault, "L'Église canadienne," p. 146 estimates the ratios of priests to people in Quebec in 1713 for urban areas as 1/83 and in rural areas at 1/289. Riddell, *The Rise of Ecclesiastical Control*, p. 79 estimates that by 1754 the ratio in rural areas was 1,463. Jean Quéniart, *Les hommes, l'Église et Dieu dans la France du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1978), p. 15 notes how such ratios varied enormously in France from 1/400 in La Rochelle to 1/200 in the Parisian countryside, Saintonge and southwest Lorraine. Beauvais had one religious for each 28 people while in Marseille at the end of the century there was only one secular priest per 5,100 residents.

homeland for refuge within French territory.⁵ Nor were the Recollets ever able to provide a totally satisfactory service to the Basque fishermen who annually came to Canadian waters. After the colony's Basque priest was recalled in 1715, a replacement was never found. Instead, the Recollets tried to maintain in the colony one among them who understood the Basque language. Petitions from Basque fishermen attest to the fact that this solution was not as preferable in their eyes as the presence of a Basque priest would have been.

Not just the small number of religious in the colony, but also the character and conduct of the Brittany Recollets coloured religious life at Louisbourg and elsewhere. The general picture we have received of the clergy in New France is that they were "singularly well-behaved and disciplined, dedicated and devout."⁶ While some orders such as the Montreal Sulpicians or the Spiritans clearly conformed to this impression, the *Ile Royale* Recollets did not.⁷ They were known neither for their high theological standards nor for upright moral conduct. Bishop Saint-Vallier, in particular, disliked both their personal deportment and their priestly practice. He had not looked favourably on their earlier ministry at Placentia in Newfoundland and he found as little to like in the new colony. His views were confirmed by the Bishop of Vannes in Brittany who refused to allow members of that province of the order to enter his diocese. Indeed, the conduct of the Louisbourg parish priest after 1724, Benigne Le Dorz, led the bishop formally to remove him from office and to replace him with a young secular priest from Quebec. Although stern and aging Saint-Vallier did not consider Le Dorz to have been morally corrupt; he could not countenance his habits of drinking heavily in public, becoming boisterous and dancing freely. The bishop had first attempted to get the priest to abjure his ways, but Le Dorz's subsequent affront to canon law in three marriages he performed necessitated more drastic action.⁸

⁵ Société historique de l'armée, AI, 3393: 38, Memorandum on the Church at Ile Royale (Raymond), January, 1752. Gaston du Boscq de Baumont (ed.), *Les derniers jours de l'Acadie (1748-1758)* (Paris, 1899), pp. 74-75, Raymond to Rouillé, 24 November, 1752. *Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec pour 1935-36*, p. 384, l'Isle-Dieu to Pontbriand, April, 1753.

⁶ Cornelius Jaenen, *The Role of the Church in New France* (Toronto, 1976), p. 120.

⁷ See Louise Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1974), pp. 451-456 and Henry J. Koren, *Knaves or Knights? A History of the Spiritan Missionaries in Acadia and North America, 1732-1839* (Pittsburg, 1962), pp. 15-16.

⁸ This subject is discussed more fully in Terry Crowley, "Religion in New France: Church and State at Louisbourg," French Colonial Historical Society, *Proceedings 1984* (forthcoming).

Although the public removal of Le Dorz as parish priest during Mass one Sunday in 1726 was the most turbulent event in the colony's religious history, it was indicative of problems with the *Ile Royale* Recollets. Pierre de Soubras, the colony's first financial commissary, noted as early as 1716 that the morals and conduct of the Parisian Recollets were infinitely superior to those of their Brittany brothers. His successor charged that the friars thought only of amassing money in order to return to France. The Quebec episcopacy felt that the Louisbourg mission was in a pitiful state in 1731 and it was hoped that the coadjutor might visit it to settle disputes and directly instruct the Recollets. Another cleric went so far as to call the Recollet convent a tavern and denounce the drunken and debauched behaviour of the friars as scandalous. They neither preached, provided moral direction, nor taught catechism. The situation was so bad that it was claimed that "on y voit toute sortes de vices y tryompher Et la vertu peu cherye."⁹ The Recollets also bent easily to political pressure. In 1730 when Acting Governor Bourville refused to agree to the marriage of one of his military officers, the financial commissary Demese was able to persuade the priests to perform the marriage anyway."¹⁰

Civil and religious authorities found the situation little better in the 1750's. Governor Raymond concluded that religion suffered not only due to the limited number of priests in the colony but also because the Recollets were "presque tous très ignorants et qu'ils menent pour la plus part une vie déréglée."¹¹ In the outlying areas, it was maintained, only Mass was said without other priestly activity to enhance religious life. The Sisters of the Congregation were not happy with the friars and Abbé l'Isle-Dieu, the vicar general of the Quebec bishop resident in Paris, went so far as to conclude that "cette pauvre mission ne setablira jamais tandis quelle sera dans les mains des récollets."¹² Discussions about replacing this order with secular priests intensified during the decade of the 1750's but got no further than they had previously.

While ecclesiastical and civil authorities were frequently condemnatory of the Recollets, the order clearly was not as bad as these remarks alone

⁹ Archives du Séminaire de Québec, Missions 6, St. Vincent to Brisassier, 12 September, 1734. Archives Nationales, Colonies, C11B, 2: 54v, Council, 20 April 1717, letter by Soubras, 5 December, 1716.

¹⁰ AN, col, C11B, 11:30-41, 30 November, 1730; col. B, 55: 563, 10 July, 1731.

¹¹ See Footnote 5. Major Sularville held the same opinion of the Recollets as Governor Raymond and Abbé l'Isle-Dieu. He thought that they could all be returned to France except one, Father Cherubini.

¹² *RAPQ pour 1936-37*, p. 335, l'Isle-Dieu to Pontbriand, 9 July, 1753. Public Archives of Canada, Pichon Papers (MG 18, F12), p. 254, Description of French missions, 1753.

convey. Through their long association with the maritime colonies, the Recollets had become part of the local identity and they elicited local support. Both governors Costebelle and Saint-Ovide were complimentary towards them and their ministry, although it was charged that the latter was their only supporter at Court. The bishop's attempt to displace the Recollets as parish priests of Louisbourg sparked rare public petitions both from the capital and the outlying communities. Before the coming of the Recollets, it was maintained, there was an insufficient number of secular priests at Placentia and the Recollets were willing to serve the outports and the fishing industry despite the small amount of income they received. Although we know very little about actual religious practice, one of their number was praised for his preaching ability in the 1750's and other evidence shows that children were catechized. Nor can one help but be sympathetic to the argument put forward by one of the Recollets that minor irregularities quickly got blown out of proportion and individuals were transformed into "monsters" in the opinions of some.¹³

Nor was life easy for either the Recollets or colonists. Father Michel Le Duff wrote plaintively of how difficult conditions were. He had not acclimatized well to the island and had lost weight. He found the winters long and trips through the ice and snow most arduous. Like others, he complained as well about poor food and the lack of fresh meat.¹⁴ Le Duff stood in marked contrast to Father Isidore Caulet who served as chaplain to the troops for some thirty years. Although neither his intellectual capacity nor administrative skills were highly rated by others, he was a devoted servant of the Lord. Governor Raymond commended Caulet as "remply de Zèle, bon prêtre, bien charitable et a de bonnes moeurs," although he could not preach. Abbé l'Isle-Dieu was more pointed in his estimation: "'Ce bon religieux est aymé et estimé, mais fort vieux et a moitié sourd, sans aucune espèce de talent.'" ¹⁵

¹³ AN, col, C1 IA, 106: 409, Costebelle to the council, 1717; C1 113, 4: 127, Saint-Ovide and Demesi to Maurepas, (1726). Archives Départementales, Finistère, Serie 23, H4, Petition of Louisbourg residents, March, 1727; Saint-Ovide to Dirop, 26 October, 1727; Saturin Dirop to Demesi, 21 February, 1728.

¹⁴ AD, Finistère, Serie 23, H14, Michel Le Duff to Saturin Dirop, 13 November, 1727.

¹⁵ *RAPQ pour 1935-6*, p. 384, l'Isle-Dieu to Pontbriand, 1 April, 1753. On Caulet, see Blaine Adams, *The Construction and Occupation of the Barracks of the King's Bastion at Louisbourg*, Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History no. 18 (Ottawa, 1978), pp. 102-103. Adams fails to note that Caulet was himself recalled to France in the 1720's over problems concerning missionaries in Acadia.

For short biographies of two other Recollets (Zacherie Caradec and Athanase Guegot) see A.J.B. Johnston, "Deux Récollets de l'Île Royale," Province

The faithful chaplain ended his life in 1754 at Louisbourg where he had come as a young man.

Because not all the Recollets were like Father Caulet, episcopal authority attempted to discipline the order through the appointment of vicars-general in the colony. The Recollets responded forcefully because they were opposed to the imposition of any immediate ecclesiastical power outside their own order. After Saint-Vallier failed in his bid to make a secular priest the *curé* of Louisbourg, he appointed a Parisian Recollet as vicar-general but the bishop's death in late 1727 ended that appointment. His successor wanted to appoint a secular priest as vicar-general but argued that he needed government assistance which was refused. In 1740 Pierre Maillard, the apostle to the Micmacs, was made vicar-general. The Recollets reacted not only on grounds of principle, but because Maillard was better dealing with the Amerindians than Whites. He not only severely criticized the friars, but his new authority also went to his head and he acted inconsistently. The quarrels and divisions were such that Commandant Duquesnel and François Bigot, the financial commissary, supported the Recollets' request for the recall of Maillard. The minister of Marine intervened with ecclesiastical authorities, with the ultimate result that Bishop Pontbriand divided the powers of vicar-general between Maillard and the superior of the Recollets in 1744. There were further problems during the 1750's. When the well-known Acadian missionary Jean-Louis Le Loutre was made vicar-general in addition to Maillard, two Recollets were recalled to France. Pontbriand insisted that the Recollets obey the vicars-general and expressly forbade the friars to perform any marriages in the evening without their permission. In 1756 Father Girard on *Ile Saint Jean* was appointed vicar-general just for that island.¹⁶

The other two religious orders escaped the criticism directed at the Recollets. Although Sister de la Conception who founded the Sisters of the Congregation at Louisbourg was a contentious individual not universally admired, the nuns themselves were continually praised for their devotion to their calling and their contribution to the community. Not only did they educate, but they also cared for the sick and took in orphans in emergencies

franciscaine Saint-Joseph du Canada (Montréal), *Chroniques et Documents*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Jan., 1984), 1-8.

¹⁶ There is a lot of correspondence on these internal ecclesiastical matters. See in particular, AN, col. B, 77: 64, 2 March, 1743; C1 IA, 54: 61, 4 October, 1731, 56: 180, 8 September, 1731, 80: 350v, 20 October, 1743, 106; 304, Dec., 1731, 106: 78, 15 September, 1743, 107; 76, 7 November 1743. ASQ, séminaire le, 1.6, no. 3, 20 October, 1743. Archives de l'Archevêché de Québec, Ev.Q. I-51, 4 September, 1754. *RAPQ pour 1935-6*, pp. 33, 370, 384, 1936-7, pp. 397-8, 414, 434. AN, col, C11C, 9: 101, 9 October, 1744.

such as the smallpox epidemics of the early 1730's. Some criticism was directed at the Brothers of Charity but most of this can be interpreted as part of the objections directed towards any science as inexact as eighteenth-century medicine or any places as horrible as contemporary hospitals. In the 1750's Thomas Pichon went further to suggest that the Brothers were guilty of disobeying their vow of chastity:

Comme ils sont chirurgiens, medecins et apothicaires pour toute la colonie, ils sont perpetuellement à errer dans les maisons, et Dieu scait ce qu'ils font; je crois du moins que s'il y a des femmes qui ne s'en plaignent pas, il y auroit bien des maris qui auroient à plaindre.¹⁷

Are we to lend any credence to the innuendo of a man committed to the intellectual anticlericalism of the Enlightenment and who also became a traitor to his country? While it is tempting to dismiss this charge outrightly, other evidence does volunteer one example of sexual misconduct. In 1751 the superior of the order at Louisbourg, Brother Boniface, was sent back to France by the governor because of such activities.¹⁸ The action taken in this case belies Pichon's generalized statement and suggestion. It should be noted, however, that a Louisbourg woman was insulted in 1758 by a man who called her a beggar woman and a whore to the monks in the town.¹⁹ She took him to court where the assertion was not proven, but the remark indicated some degree of public scepticism about clerical celibacy in the same way that Pichon gave expression to Enlightenment anticlericalism in New France.

Not only have the clergy of New France been portrayed as exceptionally disciplined and devoted, so have her people. Even a scholar like Nive Voisine who notes the sources of institutional weakness for Roman Catholicism during the French regime still comes to the conclusion that during this period of history "les Canadiens baignent dans une atmosphère religieuse."²⁰ In trying to determine whether the experience in *Ile Royale* came closer to

¹⁷ Thomas Pichon, *Lettres et mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire naturelle, civile et Politique du Cap Breton depuis son établissement jusqu'à la reprise de cette isle par les Anglois en 1758* (London, 1760), p. 165.

¹⁸ ASQ, Polygraphie 56: 49, p. 13, Raymond, 1752. SHA, A1, 3393: 39 Memorandum on the Louisbourg hospital (Raymond), January, 1752. AN, col, C 1 113, 32: 193, Prevost to Rouillé, 15 November, 1752.

¹⁹ See Peter Moogk, "'Thieving Buggers' and Stupid Sluts: Insults and Popular Culture in New France," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 36 (1979), 546.

²⁰ Nive Voisine, *Histoire de l'Église catholique au Québec* (Montreal, 1971), p. 21.

this example or that of Louisiana which was at one time referred to as “veritable Babylon” that had thrown off the yoke of God,²¹ it should be remembered many of the generalizations for the religious history of Quebec are based on the seventeenth century when the influence of the Counter-Reformation was strongly felt, especially in adventures such as the founding of Montreal or the conversion of the Amerindians. In contrast, as Jacques Mathieu and Pierre Hurtubise have recently pointed out, studies of society in eighteenth-century New France are lacking and frequently deficient in analysis.²² In using the term “people”, we must as well remember La Bruyère’s reservations: “Qui dit le peuple dit plus d’une chose: c’est une vaste expression, et l’on étonneroit de voir ce qu’elle embrasse, et jusques où elle s’étend.”²³ We should be careful to differentiate military officers from soldiers, men from women, and Marine officials and the bourgeoisie from craftsmen, labourers, indentured servants, slaves, and both resident and itinerant fishermen.

The low level of institutional and commercial life in New France is readily apparent to all who study the French regime in Canada. This was especially true in the newer colonies such as *Ile Royale* where royal absolutism did not have to vie for power with traditional local authorities as it did in France. *Ile Royale* did inherit some institutions from the former colony at Placentia in Newfoundland and among these were the positions of captain of militia and churchwarden of the local parish. Although the wealthy Louisbourg merchant Guillaume Delort was identified in the early 1720’s as churchwarden, the existence of the local parish council was never more than ephemeral. At the beginning of the next decade Father Zacharie Caradet, superior of the Recollets, tried to breathe some life into the dormant institution by allowing the churchwardens to carry the posts to the canopy during religious processions, but in removing this privilege from the two most senior fishing captains, he produced a counter-reaction that took several years to pacify. His initiative failed in its purpose. Similarly, no religious confraternity is known ever to have existed in Louisbourg or elsewhere in the colony.

Nor even was the church predicted in Louisbourg’s official plan of 1723 ever constructed, although it was shown frequently on maps and views of the

²¹ O’Neill, *Church and State*, p. 100.

²² Jacques Mathieu in Jean Hamelin (ed.), *Histoire du Québec* (St. Hyacinthe, 1976), p. 211. Pierre Hurtubise, “L’origine sociale des vocations canadiennes de Nouvelle-France,” *La société Canadienne d’histoire de l’église catholique, Sessions d’étude 1978*, 41-56.

²³ Quoted in Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1978).

town. Even though chapels and churches were built in other locations on both islands, the faithful in Louisbourg attended the Mass firstly in the Recollet chapel and from 1735 in the royal chapel of the barracks of the king's bastion. Of the former, one official concluded that there was not in France "d'Ecurie qui ne soit plus belle and plus propre qui n'est l'Église de Louisbourg."²⁴ On several occasions Governor Saint-Ovide assembled local residents to encourage them to get on with building the needed structure, but to no avail. The royal engineer, Étienne Verrier, drew plans for the church but other construction took precedence in the royal timetable. In the 1750's when the town's population reached its highest point, the chapel was reported as overcrowded with four Masses being said on Sundays.²⁵ Church attendance was a sufficiently common activity that notices of upcoming auctions were always posted on the chapel door.

A variety of explanations were given to explain the institutional weakness of religion in eighteenth-century Cape Breton. Bishop Saint-Vallier attributed the absence of the parish church to the Recollets and he thought that secular priests would have erected a sanctuary for the community. The Recollets blamed the churchwardens whom they thought lacked the commitment to carry through the undertaking. The churchwardens, it was reported, said it was useless to amass money for the project as the Recollets would send it to France. The same financial consideration was given as the reason for the lack of a parish council. One Quebec cleric maintained that the Louisbourg people did not want the council because it would have been charged with collections. Others argued that the people of the colony were exceptionally poor and therefore could not afford any substantial financial commitment to the church. The last two officials to head the colony went so far as to maintain that "de tous les Colons, Celuy de l'Isle Royale est le plus pauvre, que l'habitant pescheur en général trouve à peine dans les bonnes années de quoy faire subsister sa famille."²⁶

Whom are we to believe? How are we to explain this seeming disinterest in religious matters? One argument that cannot be accepted is the poverty of the local population. To be sure, the colonies appeared to Frenchmen to be poor in comparison with France itself and the lot of the bulk of Louisbourg's population was as wretched as elsewhere, but the colony was a thriving commercial centre with numerous bourgeois fortunes and other adequate

²⁴ AN, col, C1113, 5:302v, Council, 28 January 1721, letter of Demesi, 3 December, 1720.

²⁵ Public Archives of Canada, MG 18, F12 (Pichon Papers), Account of the French Indian Missions, 1753.

²⁶ AN, col, C1113, Council, 28 January, 1721, letter of Demesi, 3 December, 1720. Also for this paragraph: AN, col, C11A, 106: 191, Saint-Vallier, 18 October, 1727; no. 49, p. 12, Raymond, 1752.

incomes derived from the fishing, shipping and related industries. *Ile Royale* never experienced either the currency or balance of payment problems that kept recurring at Quebec. Nor can it be maintained that the colony lacked any inherited traditions and was totally transitory in nature. People had come from the other French colonies and the mother country bringing their traditions with them. A core of prominent families provided a continuing presence both within the military and the merchant communities.

Too much can be made of this lack of religious dynamism and too great an effort to explain it away. Placed in a broader context, it loses some of its peculiarity. Louisbourg was not exceptional in failing to build a community church. Louisiana also developed for a quarter of a century without constructing a church edifice. In both France and New France the spread of secularization sapped the vitality of religious practice. Confraternities seemed to have failed to conquer new areas in France following the reign of Louis XVI and even recruitment for the most popular Quebec confraternity, that of the Holy Family which had been founded in 1664, fell off in the eighteenth century.²⁷

As we know very little about the role of parish councils at Quebec, it is more difficult to state with certainty what their role was there. In the Montreal area, parish councils were active during the later part of the seventeenth century, but Nive Voisine maintains that the parish was generally late in developing in New France and did not begin to emerge as a formative institution in French Canada until after 1725. In the majority of parishes the trustees do not appear to have been very active, leaving most affairs to the priest except for certifying the annual accounts. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the parish councils were vehicles for community democracy in action, at least in the rural areas.²⁸ During the French regime they seem to have varied in importance. In the small and isolated communities where people were forced to be self-reliant rather than depend on government, parish councils were more active. In a remote village such as Kaskaskia in the Illinois country, the business of local government was conducted after Mass on the steps of the church or in the home of leading citizens. In 1739 a syndic was even elected to take charge

²⁷ Marie-Aimée Cliche, "La confrérie de la Sainte Famille à Québec sous le régime français. 1633-1760," *La société canadienne d'histoire de l'Église catholique, Sessions d'étude 1976*, 79-93. Tacket, *Priest and Parish*, p. 195. Quéniart, *Les hommes, l'Église et Dieu*, pp. 294-7.

²⁸ Voisine, *Histoire de l'Église catholique*, p. 20. Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal*, pp. 456-65. Allan Greer, "L'habitant, la paroisse rurale et la politique locale au XVIII^e siècle: Quelques cas dans la vallée du Richelieu," *SCHEC, Sessions d'étude 1980*, 19-33.

of the fence around the village common.²⁹ This testifies to a form of co-operative activity seldom seen during the French regime. Individualism rather than co-operation was more often apparent. Whether this example or that of Louisbourg more exactly mirrored communal life in New France generally can only be determined through further research.

That the Church was not a strong influence in the lives of eighteenth-century Canadians can be ascertained with greater certainty by examining invaluable primary sources from the French regime: court and notarial records. Wills and inventories made after death allow the historian to go beyond the opinions of contemporaries. The number of wills extant does not permit us to chart religious sentiment over time in the manner that Michel Vovelle has examined increasing secularization or “dechristianization” in eighteenth-century Provence, but this source is suggestive in other ways.³⁰ Some 39 wills were examined, over three-quarters of which were written when the testator was sick enough to be in fear of imminent death.³¹ Of these, 7 (17.9%) were lying in the Louisbourg hospital under the care of the Brothers of Charity.

What is immediately apparent from these wills is the standard notarial formula which commended the individual’s soul to God as a good Christian and through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and, more infrequently, the person’s patron saint. The only testament not drawn by a priest or notary, that of Adam Boreau in 1715, did not contain this formula. A more profound degree of commitment to the faith, however, was more likely to be indicated by other references to religious or charitable ends. Just over half (20 in all) did make mention of such intentions outside the concerns of their immediate families. These references can be broken down further in the following manner:

²⁹ Natalia Maree Belting, *Kaskaskia Under the French Regime* (Urbana, 1948; repr. New Orleans, 1975). pp. 25-27.

³⁰ Michel Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1973).

Secularization as employed in this paper is a relative term denoting a turning away from religion in a manner not seen in seventeenth-century Canada. Secularization is not a state but a gradual process. It implies that more of society was expressing its hopes and fears in worldly terms, although many might continue to posit a religious meaning to their existence or merely give lip service to such a view.

³¹ The wills are found in the numerous volumes of AN, OM, G3, vols. 2036-2058.

Ile Royale Wills (N/39)

	Number	%
Reference to Masses, special arrangements for burial, prayers, or other indications of faith	10	25.6
Money provided for Masses	7	17.9
Legacies left to religious orders or parish church	6	15.4
Money left to charity (sometimes to be distributed by the church)	4	10.3

The deeper commitment to the Church as evinced by religious or charitable references in wills cut across class, occupational and sexual divisions. Women were only slightly more likely to make such affirmations: they represented 26% of the total sample and 30% of those making reference to things religious. While an analysis of the testaments by occupational categories is precluded by the lack of adequate information, a sufficient number of people can be identified from other sources to conclude that the faithful came from a variety of backgrounds. Anne Degas Barrer, widow of the wealthy fisherman Joannis Dastarit, was generous in a manner not thought of by merchant Guillaume Delort in his will but appreciated by a soldier of the Swiss Karrer regiment named André Auger who was as charitable with his more meagre resources as was the widow with her much larger estate. Where reference was made to the poor, it was still generally as the “shameful poor”, although one reference was to the “most needy poor”. One mother, Anne Guyon Depré, availed herself of the opportunity presented by making her will embarked on a sea voyage to Quebec in 1733:

Ladite Testatrice s'en raporte à ses enfans pour faire prier Dieu pour le Respos de son ame, leur recommandant Seulement de ne la pas oublier dans leurs prieres particulieres et de faire pour les oeuvres pieuses et prieres publiques ce que les enfans sont obligés de faire pour leurs pere & Mere.³²

Another means of gauging religious sentiment, though admittedly inexact, is to see what religious objets people possessed when inventories after death were made of their estates.³³ Of 82 inventories examined, only six (7%) readily revealed religious objects other than books. The objects themselves, who owned them, and their value varied enormously:

³² AN, OM, G3, 2038: I, Will of Anne Guyon Depré, 17 March, 1733.

³³ These inventories after death, culled from a variety of sources, have been typed and are available in four volumes in the Fortress of Louisbourg library.

Individual	Date	Occupation	Objects
Widow Dastaris	1735	Merchant	A gold Christ, framed; a gold Crucifix; a Holy Water basin with Crucifix; and a small framed picture of Mary Magdalen
Issac de Forant	1740	Governor	A tableau of Mary Magdalen
Pierre Henry Nadeau <i>dit</i> Lachapelle	1743	Master fisherman and innkeeper	Faience Holy Water Basin
Abbé Courtin	1743	Priest	A large number of small religious items intended for the Amerindians
Pierre-Jérôme Boucher	1753	Engineer	Two pictures of St. Peter and St. Paul which sold at auction for 35 <i>livres</i> 14 <i>sols</i> .
Michel Vallé	1756	Fisherman	Faience Holy Water basin

Sources: AN, Section d'Outre-mer, G2, 185; 119; 198: 171; 202: 287; 205: 395. AN, OM, G3, 2039/1; 66. AN, col, E96.

A small number of religious objects has also been found in inventories after death taken in Quebec and France. For Montreal, Louise Dechêne found a situation not unlike that in Louisbourg: a third of some forty-six inventories of merchants and officers revealed religious items but none were found for craftsmen or habitants. The attempt usually made to explain this situation by invoking the poverty of the latter or the lack of market value for these objects will not suffice.³⁴ Both the Louisbourg and Quebec inventories reveal items

³⁴ Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal*, p. 476. Micheline Baulant, "Niveau de Vie Paysan Autour de Meaux en 1700 et 1750," *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (Mai-Juin, 1975), 505-518. Robert-Lionel Séguin, *La civilisation traditionnelle de l'habitant aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Montreal, 1967).

So engrained was the importance of religious objects in French Canadian historical thinking that in the 1960's Jean Palardy, a noted authority on French Canadian furniture, purchased a prie-dieu for the bedroom of Commandant Duquesnel at the Fortress of Louisbourg even though there is no mention of such an object in the very detailed inventory made of Duquesnel's estate. That inventory is published in Adams, *The Construction and Occupation of the Barracks of the King's Bastion*, pp. 124-132.

of very little value. The faience holy water basin owned by Henri Nadeau *dit* Lachapelle, for example, sold at auction with a number of other non-religious items for only two *livres*. Although this is not the place to provide a detailed analysis of these inventories, it is readily apparent that the absence of religious items from estates of habitants and craftsmen cannot be explained by their lack of wealth or furnishings. The inventories clearly reveal that Louisbourg's artisans had begun to enjoy part of the rising standard of living that was slowly beginning to transform the Atlantic world. Not only did their estates usually contain significant amounts of pewter but also sometimes silver and faience ware. Fishing hands, to be sure, owned very little, but it is difficult to establish whether they were permanent residents or transients.

An analysis of books found in these estates confirms the impression that this was neither the time nor the place that was overly concerned with matters of faith, at least by standards that would be seen in the next century. Few people read and those who did were not especially concerned with religious or philosophical issues. Of 85 inventories examined, some 23 contained books and only 13 (15%) contained works in the areas of philosophy and religion.³⁵ These books were spread across all occupations and included the *Pensées* of Pascal, the lives of the saints, a prayer book, a catechism, and sermons. These books as well as the religious objects found at Louisbourg clearly reveal a post Counter-Reformation sensibility. The most popular religious books were the "Forty Hours" which provided daily devotionals. They had become increasingly widespread in the sixteenth century just as Mary Magdalene, pictured in pieces owned by Governor de Forant and the Widow Dastaris, grew in importance as a devotional figure after the Counter-Reformation.³⁶ Despite these characteristics of the age and the fact that religious and philosophical works were owned by more of those who held books than any other category (57%), the grouping was still relatively small and more scientific books were held than any other category. This does not appear to have been that different from what existed at Quebec, but it stands in contrast to the growing importance of religious publications in the nineteenth century.³⁷

About actual religious practices we know very little. The absence of primary sources has sometimes led historians to impute conduct from literature that was essentially prescriptive in nature or which dated from

³⁵ Gilles Proulx, "Les bibliothèques de Louisbourg," *Fortress of Louisbourg ms.*, pp. 1, 13-15, 56-7.

³⁶ Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, p. 232.

³⁷ See Jean-Louis Roy, *Édouard-Raymond Fabre, Libraire et patriote Canadien, 1799-1854: Contre l'isolement et la sujétion* (Montreal, 1974).

other eras. The destruction of the archives of the Sisters of the Congregation, for example, make it impossible to go beyond what the Swedish traveller Peter Kalm wrote: that the Sisters taught their pupils reading, writing, needlework “and other female education.”³⁸ Similarly, religious practice was prescribed in Bishop Saint-Vallier’s catechism and ritual for the diocese of Quebec, but we have no way of gaging how well people were catechized or what elements they accepted or rejected. Nor do we have any means of finding what components of folk belief were blended with Christian tradition, almost certainly an important strain in a society where there was so little formal education, especially for boys.

Such interpretative problems complicate our understanding of religious holidays. For the diocese of Quebec there were officially 37 holy days of obligation, but this number was reduced in 1744 by moving 17 feast days to Sundays. Just which feast days were regularly observed and in what manner is more difficult to determine. While the holy days were undoubtedly observed within the church, not all were shown the same attention or involved the larger community. Christmas passed with little fanfare but Easter was important enough for an old official like Joseph Lartigue to put aside his legal work until after the holidays.³⁹ Within the fishing industry the feast of St. Michael (September 29) was important as a payment and delivery deadline, while the feast of St. Barbe was observed officially by the local government in 1741.

Apart from these only the feasts of Corpus Christi and Saint Louis are known to have been observed regularly and with some fanfare year after year. The feast of Saint Louis (Louis IX) was celebrated on August 25 in the manner of a national holiday with social festivities, artillery volleys and a bonfire in the evening where the priest, governor and financial commissary each received a torch. The feast of Corpus Christi late in the spring assumed more fully a religious character since a procession involving the military moved through the town.⁴⁰ In 1727 Protestant officers of the Swiss Karrer regiment refused to place themselves at the head of their contingents or the guard during the procession that year as was their right by military regulation. As well, officials ordered the singing of the *Te Deum*, the ancient Latin hymn of rejoicing, on eleven occasions to celebrate the victories of France’s

³⁸ Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America*. . . , vol. 3 (London, 1771), pp. 304-305. In contrast, compare how A.J.B. Johnston reads back nineteenth-century practice into the eighteenth-century in “Formal Education at Louisbourg,” Parks Canada Research Bulletin no. 136 (August, 1980).

³⁹ AN, OM, G2, 194: 69, Inventory, Étienne Guerard, 1735.

⁴⁰ An, col. CI IB, 9:86-89v, 16 December, 1727; 23: 170, 180-80v, Statement of Accounts, 1741.

armed forces or events cherished by the royal family such as the birth of legitimate offspring.

It would appear that many other holy days of obligation were observed by few except the local religious communities and those of the faithful who attended Mass regularly. This was certainly the tradition inherited from Newfoundland where the Bishop of Quebec had at one time to request that the governor see that the Recollets and their flock at least observed the principal religious holidays such as Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. Fishermen there and in *Ile Royale* were not able to observe such holidays due to the exigencies of their business. The Recollets at Louisbourg argued that they should be exempted from such observance during the summer months and in 1716 Bishop Saint-Vallier complied with their request but added the proviso that they attend Mass before setting out after their catch.⁴¹ The bishop also required that fishermen continue to observe the main religious holidays which were stated to be Pentecost, Holy Sacrament, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, Christmas, and the feast of Saint John. While these feast days were observed with fewer activities than those of Saint Louis or Corpus Christi, the holy days of obligation were sufficiently embedded in the popular mind that some individuals used them to date events during court proceedings.

Official respect for the Sabbath was shown in several ways. Ships in the harbour were supposed to fly their flags on Sundays and on more than one occasion they were fined by Admiralty officials for failing to comply with this observance. Taverns and drink shops were also supposed to be closed during hours of divine service with fines payable to the parish church for contravention. Yet unlike Louisiana where there are records of infractions on this account, their absence at Cape Breton suggests that this regulation was honoured more in the breach than in the observance. This is further firmed by the number of times these regulations and indeed all regulations pertaining to taverns were re-issued by the local government. The state, however, did ensure respect for religious institutions as a court case in 1754 revealed. A drunken soldier broke into the royal chapel, crawled over the altar where he broke a crucifix and left blood, and then stole two candles and a purificator. The punishment exacted involved having the man walk bare-foot to the chapel clad only in a shirt and wearing signs that read “Profaner

⁴¹ AN, col, C II C, 4: 88-9v, Summary of a letter from the Bishop of Quebec, n.d., H. Tetu and C.O.O. Gagnon, *Mandements, Lettres Pastorales et Circulaires des Évêques de Québec*, vol. 1 (Québec, 1887), p. 489.

of Sacred Places,” and then asking forgiveness from God and the king. Thereafter he was banished from the colony.⁴²

Such examples serve to illustrate the ostensible Christian character of this society and the reinforcement given by the state to this self-conception. There can be no denying that there were faithful followers who attended Mass regularly and tried to exemplify Christian values. References to God and his mercy in the correspondence of such individuals confirms this impression. Yet it needs to be acknowledged that this was neither the time nor the place that held religion with special honour. One priest lamented that the clergy worked for the colonists

et on nest payé que d’ingratitude heureux encore si dans sa perte ce sortes desprit heritiques et peu chrestiens que nous vons plustot a menager qu’a gouverner se tenoient a ce seul point dereconnaissance de nos peines et fatigues.⁴³

What pastor has not at some time felt downhearted about the forces of irreligion in his midst and the lack of appreciation expressed for his labours? Yet in this lament the choice of words to describe the local population as heretical and not very Christian is telling. This was not unlike the description provided by two cousins wanting to marry in 1726 but lacking the requisite dispensation. They argued that such a dispensation was unnecessary because they lived “au milieu des infidèles et des barbares et des catholiques grossiers et peu instruits de la Religion.”⁴⁴ A local priest denied the allegation and retorted that the entire community stood in horror of a marriage involving cousins that had not received a dispensation.

Ile Royale was a bustling commercial colony with a high level of transiency and a large number of soldiers. The lives of its sailors, fishermen, merchant traders and many of its craftsmen were, by definition, itinerant. In this society the tavern and the drink shop vied successfully with the church as the centres for daily social activities. Life transmitted by the seas and the highways continued to assume a Rabelaisian air. The tavern alone provided equality and fraternity in a transient life. Such was the thirst for wine and spirits that the local government never succeeded in regulating taverns and

⁴² See T.A. Crowley, “The Forgotten Soldiers of New France: The Louisbourg Example,” French Colonial Historical Society, *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting* (Athens Ga., 1978), pp. 52-69.

⁴³ AD, Finistère, Series 23H14, Michel Le Duff to Saturin Dirop, 3 November, 1727.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Joseph Deny, Remarks on the dispensation for the Daccarrette marriage, 1726.

drink shops. There were no fewer than seventy-five officially sanctioned drinking spots within the town.⁴⁵ Impossible to count were the unlicensed facilities that frequently sprang up or the canteens maintained by the officers for their men. One government official despaired to the point of nearly suggesting prohibition but stopped short by acknowledging that “il faut que le soldat et le matelot boivent, ils ne travaillent que pour cela.”⁴⁶

Liquor was frequently associated with criminal behaviour and moral laxity. Court records attest to instances of wife beating and child abuse, but physical violence against women is more fully detailed in accounts kept by Major Lecourtois de Surlaville. These note eight instances of soldiers beating women in the two years from 1751 to 1753. Such cases were handled as military offences and subjected to discipline by officers rather than the courts.⁴⁷ This same source reveals a total of forty-three instances where soldiers transgressed on community mores through theft, rowdy behaviour in the drink shops, noisy disturbances in town, insulting civilians, extorting civilians while on patrol. In 1717 soldiers at Port Dauphin (Englishtown, N. S.) were so anxious to lay their hands on liquor before the end of carnival that they threatened the financial commissary who had refused to sell them anything. The commissary emerged from the house brandishing a gun and threatening to blow the head off anyone who attempted to break into his house. Only the intervention of the officers caused calmer heads to prevail. In another incident fifteen drunken soldiers arrived at the home of a man named La Jeunesse in the Louisbourg vicinity only to find the husband passed out in a stupor in front of the fireplace and his wife in bed with a soldier. Such behaviour was not just limited to certain groups or classes. Governor Raymond got a servant girl pregnant in the early 1750's but he was able to avert any public scandal. Nor did this era feel particular revulsion at the sight of the human body as slaves were auctioned nude so as to reveal their physical condition.⁴⁸

Far from making Louisbourg appear as an anomaly, these patterns fit it more closely into the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. Was this not the age of Hogarth in England and the campaign against the perils of cheap gin? Was this not a time when English squires prided themselves on being a

⁴⁵ See Gilles Proulx, “Aubergistes et cabaretiers de Louisbourg 1713-1758,” *Fortress of Louisbourg ms. report HF-19* (1972), pp. 1-5.

⁴⁶ AN, col, C11B, 5: 775, Council, 13 August, 1720, letter of Demesi, 17 June, 1720.

⁴⁷ PAC, MG 18, F30.

⁴⁸ Kenneth Donovan, “Debauchery and libertinage: Games, Pastimes and Popular Activities in Eighteenth Century Louisbourg. A Manual for Interpretation at the Fortress of Louisbourg,” *Fortress of Louisbourg ms. report* (1983), pp.4-7. ASQ. poly. 56/53 p. 71 Surlaville, 1752. AN, OM, G2, 199: 187, Inventory of Anne Guyon Despres, 1744: “nous avons fait exposée en public ladt. negresse.”

two-bottle or three-bottle a day man depending on how much wine they consumed? Was not the church losing ground to the tavern in France as well?⁴⁹ Such trends were also apparent in the neighbouring colony of Acadia. In 1742 Bishop Pontbriand felt constrained to inveigh publicly against drink shops remaining open on holy days of obligation and when Mass was being said. He condemned these establishments as a bad influence on youth and a source of family quarrels. At the same time he denounced other popularly accepted practices of which the church did not approve such as persons of the same sex dancing together, mothers sleeping with their children, working on Sundays and feast days, and private baptisms. Not mentioned in this long list of prohibited activities was the marriage *à la gaumine*, although it did occur in Louisbourg at least. Here the prospective bride and groom rose at the end of the Mass while the priest was facing the altar and exchanged their vows in the presence of the congregation.⁵⁰

The inroads of secularization were as apparent in the social life of *Ile Royale* as they were elsewhere. Gambling and games of chance were favourite pastimes although officially prohibited. Cards were found everywhere and James Johnstone observed at Louisbourg what Peter Kalm discovered at Quebec: society women were seldom to be seen without playing cards in their hands. Such activities were so common among the upper echelons that those not interested in such pursuits felt excluded from the social world of the military officers, government officials and merchants. One bookish army officer wrote of his alienation from Louisbourg society as “membre inutile pour des sociétés ou on ne scait que jouer, je ne suis pas recherché, puisque je ne veux ni ne puis jouer...”⁵¹ Carnival, the period stretching from just after the New Year until Lent, was the most festive season of the calendar. Not every year witnessed the constant round of dinners, balls, gambling and late night suppers experienced in the winter before the second fall of the fortress, but carnival was an integral part of popular culture in the colonies as it was in Europe, although in both the Church had succeeded in its efforts to strip the event of many of the excesses that had characterized it in previous centuries.

⁴⁹ Olwen Hufton, “The French Church,” in William J. Callahan and David Higgs (eds.), *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Eng., 1979), pp. 13-33. Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1982).

⁵⁰ Tetu and Gagnon, *Mandements*, vol. 2, pp. 15-17. Circular letter to Acadian parish priests, 20 April, 1741. For more on marriage *à la gaumine*, see Jaenen, *Role of the Church*, p. 138.

⁵¹ Gaston du Boscq de Beaumont (ed.), *Les derniers jours de l'Acadie (1748-1758)*, p. 182, DesBourbes to Sularville, 8 January, 1756. Charles Winchester (ed.), *Memoirs of the Chevalier Johnstone*, 3 vols. (Aberdeen, 1870-71), 2:178.

Sexual intrigues and violent moments also surfaced occasionally. Although no brothels are known to have existed, couples managed to find their own favourite spots to be alone. Louis Franquet identified the bar-rachois blockhouse as a place frequented by bad subjects of both sexes and recommended that it be torn down. Venereal diseases spread and were treated in the local hospital despite initial protests from the Brothers of Charity. Unwanted pregnancies sometimes erupted to disturb the normal course of social life. In 1730 when nobleman and military officer Michel de Gannes de Falaise came to wed the daughter of Gédéon de Catalogne, his mistress and mother of his first child stood up in the church and protested against the marriage. Only after de Gannes had settled with his mistress, Marie-Anne Carrerot, could he proceed with his marriage which would produce another seven children. Louise, an Amerindian slave, was not treated in the same manner as the daughter of a bourgeois family like Marie-Anne Carrerot was. Shortly after being purchased in 1727 by Louisbourg innkeeper Jean Seigneur *dit* La Rivière, Louise had begun to show signs of pregnancy. The parish priest was called in to inquire into this delicate matter and it was discovered that she had slept with the captain of the ship who had brought her to the colony. When her condition became apparent subsequently, the captain warned her not to reveal it to her new owner. Seigneur determined to get rid of Louise but allowed her to have her baby before selling both in Martinique and purchasing a boy slave to help him with his Louisbourg inn.⁵²

There is no need to continue enumerating such incidents which also occurred at Quebec.⁵³ What is more important is to posit the social context within which such events occurred. The significant feature is not that such things happened, but that they were clearly deviations from societal norms that surfaced because they were a source of public notoriety or were brought to the attention of the courts or royal officials. Sexual innuendo in swearing showed that community mores frowned on loose women, buggery and adultery. At the same time the near absence of religious insults suggest, I believe, that the church was not yet the formidable institution in French Canadian culture that it would later be.

Community consensus frowned on sex outside the marriage bed and on violence. The innkeeper Seigneur, for example, not only sought judicial

⁵² Donovan, "Debauchery and Libertinage," p. 8. Brenda Dunn, "Block 2, Fortress of Louisbourg," *Fortress of Louisbourg ms. report* (1971), p. 75. "Michel de Gannes de Falaise," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 3: 1740-1770 (1974), 235-6. De Gannes agreed to pay Carrerot support of 100 *livres* annually. AN, OM, G3, 2037: 147, Transaction, 21 November, 1730.

⁵³ Robert-Lionel Séguin, *La vie libertine en Nouvelle-France au XVII^e siècle* (Montreal, 1972).

remedy for damaged property but also felt compelled to sell Louise and her baby because they served as a bad example for his own daughters. The woman found sleeping with a soldier in the presence of her husband was known as wanton. In contrast the parish records attest to a low level of illegitimate births despite the large number of soldiers and high number of transients in the community.⁵⁴ Nor did venereal disease ever become rampant. Violence such as wife beating and child abuse came to the courts because the family and community acted as agents of social control unwilling to tolerate such conduct. When a man in the Dauphin suburb tried to kiss a young woman against her will, he was promptly hauled into court and fined 10 *livres* to the poor and 30 *livres* to the woman for damages. Simply put, such activities were the exceptions rather than the rule. Christian teachings set the tone for the community, although they did not directly influence all its members.

The church was an important institution of New France, but its influence in the eighteenth century was not as completely profound nor as widespread as often assumed. That there were many faithful followers is beyond dispute, but the inroads of secularization in New France were greater than have been acknowledged. Indeed, the influence of secular forces had been growing in Europe for several centuries and were clearly apparent in Louisiana as well as Cape Breton.

The experience of these two colonies is sufficiently different from what has traditionally been presented for Québec that it suggests the need for a reexamination of the role of religion in eighteenth-century Canada. How else are we to explain how the Church arrived at those extreme difficulties that it confronted at the turn of the nineteenth century? How else are we to appreciate the full significance of the Catholic revival of the mid-nineteenth century which affected Roman Catholicism in French Canada so significantly for more than a century?⁵⁵ While the zeal of the Counter-Reformation deeply influenced the early development of Canadian society, the extent and

⁵⁴ See Barbara Schmeisser, "The Population of Louisbourg, 1713-1758," Parks Canada Manuscript Report no. 303 (1976) and Christopher Moore, "Street Life and Public Activities in Louisbourg, Four Studies for Animateurs" (1978), Parks Canada Manuscript Report, no. 317, p. 30.

⁵⁵ See Jacques Monet, "French Canadian Nationalism and the Challenge of Ultramontanism," Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers 1966*, 41-55; René Hardy, "Note sur certaines manifestations du réveil religieux de 1840 dans la paroisse Notre-Dame de Québec," SCHEC, *Sessions d'étude 1968*, 81-98. Pierre Savard, *Aspects du Catholicisme canadien français au XIX^e siècle* (Montreal, 1980), 23-46; Voisine, *Histoire de l'Église catholique au Québec*, chap. 3. Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Religion and French Canadian Mores in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Historical Review*, 52 (1971), pp. 51-94.

the influence of secularization in the eighteenth century remains to be investigated. What may be found is that although the state officially supported religious institutions, popular acceptance of religious values and practice depended on a dynamic all of its own and that dynamic varied from place to place and over time.