

**CONFLICTING CHRISTIANITIES:
ANTI-CATHOLICISM AS A CASE STUDY OF DIVERGING RHETORIC IN
THE ANGLO-ATLANTIC WORLD, 1754-1780**

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ABSTRACT

Manifestations of strident anti-Catholic sentiment during the Seven Years' War (1754/56-1763)—a conflict seen in North America as being between “Protestant Britain” and “Catholic France”—reveal that discriminatory religious rhetoric was not based on religious sentiment alone. In the early modern era, the term “Catholic” often inferred other characteristics including ethnic, political, and imperial affiliations, as well as religious ones. In the post-Reformation era, it also evoked memories of violent clashes and wars between Protestants and Catholics. In British North America, elites used anti-Catholic tropes to hide political concerns behind religious language, implying that military conflicts were “divinely ordained” or motivated by religious imperatives. Focusing on the years between the Seven Years' War and Franco-American alliance (1778), this study explores how people manipulated Protestant and Catholic religious identities to accommodate changing political agendas. During the years of imperial crisis after the Seven Years War, British subjects, both in Britain and the colonies, grappled with the implications of absorbing tens of thousands of people into British America who were neither ethnically British nor Protestant. Indeed, the religious identity of many of these new members of the Empire was Catholic. Protestant leaders, both religious and political, clashed over how best to accommodate these religious “others” and significant divergences emerged between people who became citizens of the new United States and people who remained within to the broader Anglo-Atlantic world. Culturally specific praxes coalesced and hardened, praxes that continue to influence the form and function of religious rhetoric in the Anglo-Atlantic world, and particularly in Canada and the United States.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
I. “Artful, Insidious and Pernicious Pamphlets”: Diverging Approaches to Religious Rhetoric in Eighteenth-Century North America	1
Anti-Catholic Traditions in British North America	5
The Christian Binary in Eighteenth-Century America.....	13
Rhetoric, Religion, and Emotion in British North America.....	21
Method and Summary of Chapters	25
II. “You that love your Religion, enlist: for your Religion is in Danger”: French Papists in Myth and Memory during the Seven Years’ War	31
Presenting the Seven Years’ War as Holy War: The Sermons of Samuel Davies.....	38
Complicating the Binary: Other Catholic and Protestant Identities in 18 th -Century North America.....	42
Legacies of the Seven Years’ War.....	53
Conclusion	55
III. “It is the Glory of the British Soldier, that, he is the Defender, not the Destroyer, of the Civil and Religious Rights of the People”: Responses to the Quebec Act and the Rise of “Religious Tolerance”	56
Responses to the Quebec Act.....	60
Limited Accommodations: Responses to Indigenous Catholics.....	70
A New Binary: From Anti-Catholicism to Anti-Episcopatism.....	77
Conclusion	83
IV. “Towards the universal re-establishment of Popery through all Christendom”: Responses to the Franco-American Alliance	85
Limited Accommodation: New and Old Approaches to Catholics.....	91
Loyalists and Religious Rhetoric	99
Rebel Approaches to Indigenous Catholics and the Scottish Highlanders	105
Conclusion	112
Conclusion: Legacies	114
Afterword	121
Bibliography	126
<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	

I. “Artful, Insidious and Pernicious Pamphlets”: Diverging Approaches to Religious Rhetoric in Eighteenth-Century North America

In “answer to one of the most artful, insidious and pernicious pamphlets [he] had ever met with,” Charles Inglis, an Anglican minister at New York’s Trinity Church, hoped to reintroduce “cool reason and judgement,” to a heated debate in February 1776. Under the penname “a Loyal American,” Inglis responded to Thomas Paine’s infamous 1776 pamphlet, *Common Sense*, in which Inglis “[found] no *Common Sense*... but much *uncommon phrenzy*.” In *The Deceiver Unmasked*, Inglis rebuked Paine’s use of exuberant and hyperbolic religious rhetoric to argue for American independence, stating that *Common Sense* “addressed...the passions of the populace at a time when their passions are much inflamed.”¹ Indeed, Inglis’s criticisms were well warranted; in *Common Sense*, Paine advanced biblical arguments against monarchy and appealed to the national myth that imagined the “new world [as]... the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from EVERY PART of Europe.” In presenting the North American colonies in this way, Paine sought to erode, if not dissolve entirely, colonial American attachments to the “Mother country.”

As Paine wrote, “the phrase PARENT or MOTHER COUNTRY hath been jesuitically adopted by the king and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds.”² Paine adopted the terms “jesuitically” and “papistical” because they played into existing anti-Catholic prejudices

¹ Charles Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked; or, Loyalty and Interest United: In Answer to a Pamphlet Entitled Common Sense* (New York: Published by Samuel Loudon, 1776), iii–iv.

This pamphlet was also published under the title *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated* (Philadelphia, Printed by James Humpreys, jr., 1776).

² Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (Philadelphia, 1776; Portland, OR: The Floating Press, 2008), 38.

within British North America and could be read as synonymous with sentiments such as “deceitful” or “conspiratorial” in this period.³ British commentators, publicists, clergy, and politicians in both Britain and the colonies had long directed anti-papist sentiments at France and its allies, and tensions in the mid-eighteenth century had heightened the use of anti-Catholic rhetoric. But as unrest in the colonies increased, and Parliament passed the Quebec Act (1774) granting Catholic French *Canadiens* a distinct status in the British Empire, the use of anti-Catholic sentiments within Congress and among supporters, such as Paine, began to shift and they increasingly directed anti-papist rhetoric at the British, as shown in *Common Sense*.

This exchange between Inglis and Paine signifies a larger divergence in the use of religious rhetoric within the Anglo-Atlantic world that can be traced back to the passing of the Quebec Act in 1774 and the vitriolic debates that it triggered. American rebels upheld anti-papist traditions that had been popularly used to advance Francophobic sentiments during the Seven Years’ War (1754-1763) while the broader Anglo-Atlantic world adopted rhetoric that promoted the accommodation of religious “others.” The period between the Quebec Act and Franco-American Alliance (1778) saw traditional religious affiliations among Protestants “in flux” as clergy and political elites adapted religious language to changing circumstances. The rhetorical strategies of Britain’s supporters and the Continental Congress’s advocates diverged markedly in their responses to these events depending on their political leanings; however, and as Inglis

³ The terms “anti-Catholic,” “anti-papist,” and “anti-popery” are used interchangeably throughout this study. The terms have complimentary meanings. “Popery” refers to practices associated with the pope (not the pope himself). “Papist” refers to Roman Catholics, often specifically to Catholics’ dual loyalties to the pope and Crown, usually inferring that Catholics’ allegiances went first to Rome. “Popery” and “papist” are pejorative terms and my use of these phrases reflects the attitudes of the contemporaries considered in this study.

intonated, rebels more commonly used provocative language to elicit an anxious and defensive emotional response from their audience, while supporters of Britain sought to elicit an empathic response to Catholics from which Protestants leaders could urge accommodation to their new imperial “others.”

Nicole Eustace suggests that this “American emotional vernacular” matured in the decade prior to the Declaration of Independence and was influenced by the “religiously inspired, emotionally inflected political rhetoric” popularised during the Seven Years’ War.⁴ Though Eustace was not referring explicitly to anti-Catholic sentiment, this finding applies to Americans’ anti-papist reaction to the Quebec Act that borrowed from the fearful and defensive rhetoric that was advanced during the war. Rebel Americans turned that rhetoric against British officials and their policies to accommodate Catholic Canadians. Britons and political moderates also used an emotional vernacular, but with a different intention—they used emotional hooks to draw the public into the debate, but they did so to encourage critical thought about the issues. As Inglis explained in *The Deceiver Unmasked* “whilst our resentment is high, the advice which tends to gratify that resentment, may be the most welcome. But when our passions subside, our former affections will also return; and we shall then look upon him to be much more our friend who would calm our resentment, than him who would inflame it.” Inglis’s response, which had parallels in the writings of others, is a serious qualification of the “American emotional vernacular” noted by Eustace that was used to drive Americans to support the “Republican cause.”⁵

⁴ Nicole Eustace, *Passion Is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 233, 388.

⁵ Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked*, vii.

This split between American rebels and political moderates' rhetoric is apparent in how individuals engaged anti-Catholic arguments in the late eighteenth-century. The benefit of rallying North Americans against the Catholic "other" was clear until the British victory in 1763 caused France to forfeit its North American holdings, transforming Canada, the heart of New France, into the British colony of Quebec, and thereby removing the Catholic imperial threat to the Protestant colonies. Britons and British Americans emerged from the Seven Years' War with shared anti-papist traditions, but found themselves reconsidering these long-held prejudices in the following decades as they grappled with the reality that religious tolerance of Catholics might be a political necessity.

Under the Treaty of Paris (1763), Britain was obligated to grant rights, including religious rights, to the French *Canadiens* who chose to stay in Québec, as is discussed more fully in chapter three. The Quebec Act accorded Catholics the right to hold public office (a major qualification of the British Test Act), allowed the Catholic Church to collect tithes within Québec, and restored French civil law in the province, all rights which became constitutionally protected. The First Continental Congress and its supporters objected to the Quebec Act's protections for Catholics in Québec. In contrast, the Act's supporters in North America adopted rhetoric that humanised and empathised with French Catholics. Not only did these different responses to the Quebec Act mean that American rebels adopted tolerance later than others in the Anglo-Atlantic world, but also differences in the political uses of religious rhetoric are clearly discernable. American rebels' "tolerance" for Catholicism was necessitated by their increasing dependence upon French Catholics leading up to and after the Declaration of

Independence in 1776, rather than a genuine and long term interest in expanding religious freedoms in the United States. This instrumental approach did not seek to fully incorporate Catholics into American society, but rather, groomed Americans to embrace the Franco-American alliance rather than reject this political affiliation based on deeply held anti-papist beliefs.

Rebel Americans continued to promote anti-French Catholic sentiments until they recognised the geopolitical incentives of first drawing French *Canadiens* into the rebellion and later for garnering French aid and then a Franco-American alliance, both of which offered strong motivations to back away from strident anti-Catholic traditions. As Greg Frazer observed, “Many Patriots were concerned about a perceived plan by the British to promote Roman Catholicism in America” but they omitted this complaint from the litany of complaints in the Declaration of Independence because “they did not want to alienate their potential [French] Catholic allies.”⁶ In both Britain and North America, political necessity preceded religious tolerance. To fully understand the processes by which religious tolerance developed in British North America and the United States, the nature and pervasiveness of anti-papist sentiment must be considered.

Anti-Catholic Traditions in British North America

On the rare occasion that anti-papist traditions receive more scholarly attention than a passing reference, contemplations on the subject are often relegated to small sections within broader histories of the Catholic Church in North America, and particularly the United States. In 2002 Stephen Kenny acknowledged the paucity of

⁶ Greg L. Frazer, *God Against the Revolution: The Loyalist Clergy's Case Against the American Revolution* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2018), 189.

historical literature on anti-Catholic sentiment, writing that “Like their American colleagues, Canadian scholars are... skittish about using the word anti-Catholicism. Since the general historical literature rarely mentions it, readers may be tempted to conclude that it simply did not exist.” Kenny called on historians to take up the topic because “So long as historians neglect anti-Catholicism as a crucial and widespread societal phenomenon, the task [of understanding the extent to which hostility towards Catholics informed Canadian suppression of resistances in Lower Canada or Québec] cannot even be undertaken.”⁷ The history of anti-popery, like the history of all social phenomena, is not singularly a Catholic history—yet its historiography is largely contained within studies on the Catholic Church and is seldom mentioned in studies of North American Protestantism, even when it was a central part of Protestant identity.

John Gilmary Shea (1824-1892), a former Jesuit who studied law before turning his attention to history, is often called “the Father of American Catholic History” because his study represents the most comprehensive North American Catholic history of his time.⁸ Shea’s 1886 book, *The Catholic Church in Colonial Days*,

teem[s] with examples of the noblest and most heroic devotedness in the priesthood, of the beneficent action of the Church where she was free to do her work, of self-sacrifice in the laity, in generous adherence to the faith by the flock amid active persecution, insidious attacks, open violence, and constant prejudice, where Catholics were few amid a population trained in unreasoning animosity.

Nearly all examples of anti-Catholic behaviour to which Shea refers occurred in Maryland, including his discussion of Maryland’s 1652 act that prohibited Catholics from

⁷ Stephen Kenny, “A Prejudice That Rarely Utters Its Name: A Historiographical and Historical Reflection Upon North American Anti-Catholicism,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 4 (2002): 663, 665.

⁸ Peter Guilday, *John Gilmary Shea: Father of American Catholic History, 1824-1892* (New York: The United States Catholic Historical Society, 1926).

voting for or sitting in the House of Delegates and the 1654 charges laid against Luke Gardner for enticing a woman, Eleanor Hatton, to become a Catholic convert.

Shea explains that he focuses his discussion of anti-papistry on Maryland because even though “Anti-Catholic legislation and action were not confined to Maryland,” in most parts of British North America “Catholics were few and there were no priests or chapels, the enactments were comparatively harmless.”⁹ Shea argues that anti-papery’s affects were most felt in Maryland because the colony’s brand of religious prejudice targeted its own colonists, including the colony’s proprietor, Lord Baltimore, and his family. Although Catholics had composed a majority of the colony’s population after its founding in 1632, they increasingly became a minority, as the 1654 legislation suggests, and a target of the Protestant majority. By comparison, Catholics had always been a minority in the rest of British North America.

Maryland’s restrictive laws, as Shea describes, all turned on one theme: each sought to limit Catholic influence over Protestants, whether by limiting their ability to convert non-Catholics or to act on behalf of Catholic interests in government. As considered in the second chapter, which analyses anti-Catholic attitudes and the Seven Years’ War, behind Maryland’s restrictive legislation was the idea that Catholics would be inherently sympathetic to the French cause in North America, as a result of their common (and inferior) faith: by this logic, faith had a greater claim on one’s allegiance than subjecthood. By focusing on Maryland, nineteenth-century historians like Shea and historians who have followed his lead, risk overlooking the embeddedness of anti-

⁹ John Gilmary Shea, *The Catholic Church in Colonial Days: The Thirteen Colonies, The Ottawa and Illinois Country, Louisiana, Florida, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, 1521-1763*. (New York: Edward O. Jenkins’ Son, 1886), 10, 73–76, 356.

Catholic attitudes in British Protestant cultures, particularly among dissenter denominations which were prominent in British North America. Few Catholics lived in New England, but Puritans and Pilgrims were vehemently anti-Catholic, part of their culture that they brought with them to North America and which imperial conflicts with France and Spain only reinforced.

Neglecting to account for the role of anti-Catholic sentiment in the identity of colonial subjects and its impact outside of Maryland is even more consequential after 1713 when Acadia became part of British America, and then later, when Québec came under British governance. Most anti-Catholic discourses functioned to stir up prejudice against Catholic “others” in order to create a sense of cohesiveness among Protestants in the North American colonies. As Britain incorporated formerly French territories into British North America, anti-papist attitudes led British officials in former French regions to discriminate against these new British subjects. Using anti-papery as a rhetorical “common ground” for all British Protestants created an atmosphere that was inhospitable for British subjects who were ethnically French *Canadien* and Catholic. Shea described expressions of anti-Catholicism in those parts of North America that were overwhelmingly Protestant as “comparatively harmless.” These sentiments, however, functioned to sustain a collective Protestant identity in British America, with anti-Catholic sentiment in New England or the Carolinas, for example, buttressing a sense of righteousness among Maryland’s Protestants. As well, when New Englanders moved to Nova Scotia after the deportation of the Acadians they contributed to the implementation of harsh anti-Catholic legislation, testimony to the power of anti-Catholic sensibilities. They may have appeared dormant, if not absent and relatively harmless in New England,

but given scope to express themselves they were comparably harsh to Maryland's policies. Similarly, despite the lack of a visible, organised Catholic community in New York City during mid-eighteenth century, colonists still participated in anti-Catholic rituals like Pope's Night.¹⁰

In recent years, historians, particularly Richard Emmett Curran and Owen Stanwood, have added their voices to the history of anti-Catholic prejudice in North America as the topic's relevance has waxed again. In their work, as with Shea, Maryland receives a great deal of attention as a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic hub in British America. Despite their recent scholarship, Stephen Kenny's contention that most historians have little awareness of anti-Catholic sentiment in North America holds true to the present because most studies on anti-Catholic discourses in North America survey rhetorical tropes but do not present this rhetoric as a product of larger disputes. Scholarship tends to focus on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dropping off at 1763, and picking up again in the 1840s when anti-Irish Catholic sentiment became common. This emphasis allowed scholars like Joseph G. Mannard to overlook culturally-specific trends within anti-papist rhetoric.

Mannard's "American Anti-Catholicism and Its Literature," limits its discussion to common tropes in anti-papist documents, including motifs depicting the Pope as the Anti-Christ, Man of Sin, or Whore of Babylon, and does not seek to discern these sources' intentions.¹¹ Placing texts that use anti-Catholic tropes within a wider historical

¹⁰ Jason K. Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?: The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 24–26. Pope's Night, also referred to as Pope's Day or Guy Fawkes Day, is an annual celebration that recalls the failed Gunpowder plot of 1605 in which a group of English Catholics sought to assassinate King James I.

¹¹ Joseph G. Mannard, "American Anti-Catholicism and Its Literature," *Ex Libris* 4, no. 1 (1981): 2–8.

frame demonstrates that the imagined “Catholic enemy” was not a fixed category encompassing all who subscribed to the Roman Catholic Church. The meaning attached to anti-Catholic sentiment in texts depended upon the venue in which anti-Catholic tropes were used, an author’s aim, and the political contexts under which a text was composed. This interpretation of anti-papist discourses explains how Catholics of different backgrounds in eighteenth-century North America experienced religious prejudice in vastly different ways based on their imperial or racial identities and geographic factors.

The intensity of anti-papist sentiment, while never fading completely, varied through the eighteenth century. Anti-Catholic prejudices were encouraged in the colonies especially during periods of conflict, as Richard Emmett Curran writes, because the “Catholic enemy” became a “unifying force” that bound together various Protestant denominations who may have had little else in common.¹² In other words, shared anti-Catholic predispositions were one factor that allowed the Protestant “in-group” to form because, as the ancient proverb goes, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

To gain a better sense of eighteenth-century intellectual thought, these religious factors must be reintroduced into the historiography because, as Curran points out, anti-popery “persisted [in New England] largely because it had become an important factor for English identity.” Simply put, “to be English was to be anti-Catholic or, put positively, Protestant.”¹³ Anti-popery was an important part of British North American identity because, as Ruma Chorpá explains, British colonists understood themselves to be Britons in this period, even those several generations down the line from the last British

¹² Robert Emmett Curran, *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 202.

¹³ Robert Emmett Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies: Catholics in Protestant America, 1605-1791: A Documentary History* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 199.

birth. British North Americans maintained a common identity with Britons across the Atlantic by reprinting British texts in North America and upholding shared mythologies or traditions, including anti-Catholic ones.¹⁴ Anti-popery, as a result, was not limited to religious spheres but was pervasive and highly influential on eighteenth-century thought among British Protestants in England and North America alike.

Despite the Protestant religion's importance to an English identity, and the sense of “Britishness” or shared identity among colonists of different denominations in British North America, this does not mean that intolerance for other faiths was universal.¹⁵ As Stanwood has said, even “Protestants who believed in the existence of diabolical popish conspiracies could still do business with Roman Catholics or even be friends with their Catholic neighbors.”¹⁶ Intolerance and tolerance for religious “others” were not mutually exclusive in British North America in the eighteenth century. “Catholic” was a politically charged label, but Protestant colonists would not necessarily associate their Catholic neighbours or friends with the “dangerous other” that they rallied against in anti-French papist rhetoric on Pope’s Night. Even with this important distinction between personally knowing Catholics and only imagining them as the Catholic “other,” studies on anti-popery’s influence are collectively relegated to the realm of religious history and are not positioned as a worldview to be factored into political and intellectual studies at large.

Anti-popery was a social structure, as well as a religious category and was not limited to religious rhetoric. Though anti-papist sentiments were repeated in churches, the

¹⁴ Ruma Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013), 1–29.

¹⁵ For more on Protestantism’s importance to British identity, refer to: Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 6th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 11–54.

¹⁶ Owen Stanwood, “Catholics, Protestants, and the Clash of Civilizations in Early America,” in *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America*, ed. Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenada (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 221.

sentiments were informed by secular circumstances and supported with scripture, not derived from the Bible. In “A Prejudice that Rarely Utters Its Name,” Stephen Kenny distinguishes anti-Catholic sentiments between “thoughtful criticism” of the Catholic Church and “hoary prejudice.”¹⁷ Imagining these “hoary prejudices” as the “trickle-down” results of educated rhetoric rather than as distinct expressions of anti-Catholic sentiment offers a more accurate conception of how anti-papist ideas circulated in British North America during the eighteenth century. According to Joseph G. Mannard, these anti-Catholic traditions are best conceptualised as either “scriptural” or “political” arguments. Political anti-papal theories were popularised by intellectuals including John Locke, John Milton, John Trenchard, and Thomas Gordon. These theories built upon scriptural arguments from past centuries, largely drawn from the book of *Revelation*.¹⁸ Early modern scriptural arguments can also be considered political in nature, as they were written in response to perceived “Catholic threats,” even when their authors did not name them directly.

The Catholic identities described in anti-papist literature were imposed by Protestants and were based on Protestant political concerns rather than on Catholic nomenclature or self-claimed identity. Jacobites, for example, are largely remembered as Scottish Catholic rebels, and indeed, this is how they were positioned in rhetoric about them during and after the risings between 1688 and 1745. Yet, only about half of Jacobites were Catholic.¹⁹ Many practised traditional Celtic religions, a form of Protestant Christianity (dominantly Presbyterian), or hybrids of Christianity and

¹⁷ Kenny, “A Prejudice That Rarely Utters Its Name,” 640.

¹⁸ Mannard, “American Anti-Catholicism and Its Literature,” 2.

¹⁹ Joan Magee, *Loyalist Mosaic: A Multi-Ethnic Heritage*, ed. John S. Dietrich and Mary Beacock Fryer (Toronto and Charlottetown: Dundurn Press, 1984), 137.

traditional beliefs. The Scots rebels are remembered as bearing a Catholic religious identity because England suggested that they rebelled against the English Crown for religious reasons—they were unruly Catholics, not politically-informed protestors of diverse religious backgrounds.²⁰ In North America, British colonists had a similar tendency to describe conflicts in binary religious terms, ones that simplified and decontextualised political, economic, or military incentives for wars including the Seven Years' War and American Revolution.

The Christian Binary in Eighteenth-Century America

Anti-Catholic rhetoric depended upon and in turn reinforced an imagined binary that treated “Protestant” and “Catholic” as mutually exclusive, cohesive, categories. Simplistic binaries like “Muslim versus Christian” or “Protestant versus Catholic” are appealing because, by nature, humans like to break complicated problems into small, focussed categories of “cause” and “effect.” As Paul Clorke and Ron Johnston write, “To survive in the world we simplify it.”²¹ Collapsing complicated and nuanced identities into binary categories is one way that societies throughout history have made sense of their world. This tendency is especially apparent in periods of conflict, such as when Virginian Evangelist, Rev. Samuel Davies (1723-1761), described the Seven Years' War in binary religious terms, explaining that “*France* and her Allies are all *Papists*; and *Britain* and her Allies are all *Protestants*; and consequently, whatever Party fall, the Religion of that

²⁰ The Glorious Revolution of 1688 refers to the dethroning of the Stuart King, James II, who was exiled from England because he was a Catholic. The Jacobite rebellions referred to the Catholic Stuarts's attempts to reclaim the Crown, largely supported by Highland Scots. For more, refer to J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

²¹ R.J. Johnston and Paul J. Cloke, eds., *Spaces of Geographical Thought: Deconstructing Human Geography's Binaries* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2005), 1.

Party is like to fall too.”²² Henri Tajfel’s “minimal group paradigm” describes how binaries, like the Protestant—Catholic binary expressed by Davies, form and gain popularity.

Tajfel, a professor at Bristol University in England, and his colleagues from the University of Aix-Marseille, France introduced the “minimal group paradigm” to the field of social psychology in the 1970’s. In the formative study they produced, Tajfel and his colleagues sought to understand the minimum conditions necessary to establish a sense of group membership that would provide the basis for in-group—out-group behaviours, what is popularly known as an “us” versus “them” mentality.²³ They concluded that the base condition for discrimination between groups was the categorisation of the group itself. Earlier theories had held that pre-existing tensions were necessary to give rise to prejudice or discrimination. Tajfel’s study changed how nationalism, genocide, or simple distinctions like “coffee drinkers” versus “tea drinkers” should be understood.

In accordance with Tajfel’s paradigm, to be categorised as a “Catholic” or “Protestant” inherently offered both a sense of belonging—in this case, among Protestants in British North America—and alienation of the “other”—Catholics. This study on anti-Catholic sentiment applies Tajfel’s “minimal group paradigm” to eighteenth-century British North America to come to a fuller understanding of tensions between Protestants and Catholics (as presented by Protestants in the British North

²² Samuel Davies, *The Crisis: Or, The Uncertain Doom of Kingdoms at Particular Times, Considered With Reference to Great-Britain and Her Colonies in Their Present Circumstances*. (London: J. Buckland, J. Ward, and T. Field, 1757), 26.

²³ H. Tajfel et al., “Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1 (1971): 149–77.

America) as binary categories that carried significant sentimental and political influence across the Anglo-Atlantic far beyond mere matters of denominational difference. As noted by Jason K. Duncan in his study on Catholics in New York, it was not until after the American Revolution that Catholics were able to “depoliticize their religion and make loyalty to the state and republic a matter independent of religious affiliation.”²⁴ Anti-Catholic sentiment, for most of the eighteenth century, was a political issue as much as a religious concern.

North American colonies like Massachusetts and New York became “echo chambers” for anti-papist sentiments, but not all Catholics were a part of the “out-group” to which this rhetoric applied. Rather, Catholics who existed at an intersection with another ethnic or imperial “out-groups” were discriminated against, whereas Catholics considered within a political or cultural category shared by the majority population were less likely to be treated as an “other.” “French papists” were unknown and dangerous, but the British Catholic who lived down the street, who had a family, a name, and a relationship with the Protestants who lived in his neighbourhood, was not a threat. Religious belief, while not inconsequential, was of negotiable consequence to political and economic interests.²⁵ Colonists’ acceptance of the socio-political relevance and utility of Protestant and Catholic categories of identity and association often mattered more than adherence to the faith tenets on which they were based.

²⁴ Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?: The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821*, xvi.

²⁵ Within this study, I use the terms “rebel” and “loyalist” to refer to the individuals who ultimately supported the Continental Congress or Britain, while acknowledging that individuals who were traditionally categorized as “Whigs,” “Whig-Tories,” or “Tories” did not unanimously support either cause. Conversely, the terms “Patriot” and “Loyalist” refer to imagined concrete groupings.

As Johnston and Cloke have pointed out, “Almost all of the categories that we use are ‘social constructions’—they are created, not given.”²⁶ Social binaries are one type of categorisation that, as explained by Noora Kotilainen and Marja Vuorinen, stem from “a long tradition of dividing the world into two contrary poles—the *Us* and the *Other*.”²⁷ The term “binaries” “refer[s] to the primary mental division in two opposites relating to political, societal, ethnic and religious identity and enmity.”²⁸ These imagined orders exist because people consciously or unconsciously maintain binaries through their shared belief in mutually exclusive categorisations (Protestant—Catholic, French—British). “Categories of difference” are artificial and “binary” groups are not mutually exclusive in practice, but defining identities in binary terms remains an effective rhetorical tool because doing so creates a sense of belonging, even while being rhetorically exclusive. Canadians are *Canadians* precisely for the reasons they are *not* Americans, despite that these labels fail to account for dual citizens or regional identities.²⁹

James T. Kloppenberg explains that rhetoric creates borders that “exclude as well as contain.” Clean divisions between social groupings are manufactured for an intended purpose and presented back onto society, not derived from society. These borders “spring from and intensify feelings of superiority that foster... forms of arrogance that breed resentment and hatred.”³⁰ Binaries, as a result, hold and have historically held significant

²⁶ Johnston and Cloke, *Spaces of Geographical Thought*, 1.

²⁷ Aki-Mauri Huhtinen, Marja Vuorinen, and Noora Kotilainen, eds., *Binaries in Battle: Representations of Division and Conflict* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), vii.

By “social binaries,” I do not include biological categories that also function as social binaries, such as the “male—female” or “adult—child” binaries, which I do not have the space to adequately address here. Here I refer specifically to imagined binaries like “Patriot—Loyalist.”

²⁸ Huhtinen, Vuorinen, and Kotilainen, viii.

²⁹ For more refer to: Johnston and Cloke, *Spaces of Geographical Thought*, esp. 1-16; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

³⁰ James T. Kloppenberg, “Introduction,” in *The Worlds of American Intellectual History*, ed. Joel Isaac et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

influence—especially in periods of conflict. As Kotilainen and Vuorinen write, “In war, certain others become totally excluded from us, to the point of being perceived as less human, subhuman, or even non-human—in each case, a legitimate kill.”³¹ This effect is heightened when the “other” poses a perceived threat, as violence against them becomes a necessary defence.

“Categories of difference” are reinforced by many sources in our day to day lives, but historically, the Church was an important institution where this occurred. As Yuval Noah Harare wrote in his popular history *Sapiens*, “A single priest often does the work of a hundred soldiers—far more cheaply and effectively,” because they persuade their parishioners to abide by certain social codes without force.³² Miguel A. De La Torre, similarly, wrote that “Within different societies, various faith leaders have played the ‘whore,’ falling into the temptation of tailoring a religious message to sell a political ideology, a political party or a political candidate as ordained by God.”³³ In North America, religious leaders expressed political messages in published sermons, pamphlets, and as public speakers—a practice so common that their assistance would have been anticipated, if not actively sought out by political leaders who saw them as a valuable ally to advance an agenda.

Christians are presented with many mutually exclusive categories: people of the faith and non-believers, Protestants and Catholics, not to mention the many other denominational divides. In the mid- to late eighteenth-century, the Protestant—Catholic binary became popular because Britain’s most significant military threats were Catholic

³¹ Huhtinen, Vuorinen, and Kotilainen, *Binaries in Battle: Representations of Division and Conflict*, viii.

³² Yuval Noah Harare, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (McClelland & Stewart, 2014), 111.

³³ Miguel A. De La Torre, ed., *Faith and Resistance in the Age of Trump* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017), xxix.

empires. This binary's prominence was assisted by a sense of Protestant pluralism along North America's eastern seaboard, which was largely Protestant Christian by the time of the American Revolution.³⁴

“Protestant pluralism” is a term used to describe how Protestants moved across denominational boundaries, a trend that North American rhetoric increasingly appealed to through the eighteenth century as Protestants from different traditions began to migrate into colonies that were traditionally intolerant to all but a few denominations. Huguenot (French Protestant) migrants, for example, turned towards religious pluralism within two or three generations. Huguenot descendants who maintained membership in French Protestant congregations frequently became members of other denominations, likely to better blend into Protestant communities and stave off anti-French suspicions.³⁵

Richard Pointer's book *Protestant Pluralism and the New York Experience: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Religious Diversity* is one of the most comprehensive studies on Protestant pluralism to date. By considering the circumstances that made New York unique from the New England colonies and contrasting the experiences of Protestants in different parts of North America, Pointer describes the socio-ethnic conditions that allowed Protestant pluralism to flourish. In the early eighteenth century, a shortage of clergymen and increasing diversity in the colonies meant that most Christians attended whatever church was available and, ideally, offered services in their own language. Pointer argues that, because populations of German, Dutch, French, and British

³⁴ There were between 660 and 800 Congregationalist churches in the British colonies, over 500 Presbyterian churches, and more than 400 Anglican churches. The Anglican Church was growing rapidly at the time of the Revolution and an additional 300 Anglican churches would be founded by 1783. For more refer to: Frazer, *God Against the Revolution*, 19.

³⁵ Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks, *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 8; John Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 212.

migrants settled in the same areas, most migrants had very little control over their denominational affiliation for these practical reasons.³⁶

As Charles Inglis wrote in 1777, “The first inhabitants [of new settlements] are generally of various Denominations—Churchmen [Anglicans] are mingled with Dissenters, & others, as accident may direct.” Many new settlements were populated with only a few families, making it unlikely that there would be more than one minister sent to these small communities. According to Inglis, the growing dissenting churches commonly sent their younger ministers out to these small communities to provide services, meaning that “People of other Denominations, having no Clergymen of their own, nor places of public worship, are induced to subscribe & attend his preaching.”³⁷ Inglis saw this as a dangerous phenomenon that was advantageous for the rebels during the American Revolution because, according to his logic, the dissenters were inherently inclined towards rebellion by virtue of their religion, but scholars like Pointer have understood Protestant pluralism differently.

As the eighteenth century wore on, Protestant pluralism became less of a necessity, but encouraged a sense of Protestant unity or a shared identity. According to Richard Pointer, religious diversity:

became less monumental after mid-century with the spread of evangelical religion on the one hand and liberal rationalism on the other. For both these understandings of the Christian faith served to deemphasize denominational distinctions and to draw the spiritual dividing line elsewhere. In the process, they broke down much of the theological hostility to the mere fact of institutional

³⁶ Richard W. Pointer, *Protestant Pluralism and the New York Experience: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Religious Diversity*, Religion in North America (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1988), 9–32.

³⁷ Charles Inglis, “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion in America With a Short Sketch of the Methods Most Likely to Secure the Future Peace of the Colonies, Their Dependence on Great Britain,” 1777, 22-23, Inglis Family Journals and Letter Books: 1755-1849, Loyalist Collection.

diversity and even encouraged positive assessments of Protestant pluralism's religious and social consequences.³⁸

Pointer highlights the Protestant blending that occurred in New York by explaining that many colonists attended several churches, citing Mary Cooper's case, a woman who attended Quaker, Anglican, Baptist, and New Light Baptist services in her quest for religious fulfillment. Denominational differences were less significant among British North American colonists because, as Pointer explains, major denominations recognised each other's right to freedom of worship and that their "common Reformation heritage... left them mutually opposed to Roman Catholicism," even as each continued to perceive itself as the truest form of Christianity.³⁹ Therefore, each denomination carried common values that could be appealed to in light of a common Protestant cause, such as the defence of the colonies from a Catholic enemy.

Robert Emmett Curran notes that shared anti-Catholic sensibilities acted as "an effective unifying force, in both England and in British America" because it defined "an 'other' that contradicted all that that [Protestant] society stood for and whose very survival the 'other,' by its very presence, threatened."⁴⁰ Ruma Chopra similarly explained that, "The internal divisions within Protestantism were eclipsed by the pull of Protestant solidarity in the face of perceived Catholic threats from France."⁴¹ Rather than appealing to the sentiments of one colony or denomination, ministers, pamphleteers, politicians, and other public voices appealed to the sentiments of all "Good British Protestants" in one fell swoop.

³⁸ Pointer, *Protestant Pluralism and the New York Experience*, 142.

³⁹ Pointer, 34, 38.

⁴⁰ Curran, *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783*, 202.

⁴¹ Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America*, 7.

As Nicole Eustace described, although many ministers appealed to Anglo-Americans across denominational lines to fight to defend the “Protestant colonies” during imperial conflicts, this Protestant in-group did not encompass all denominations in British North America. Pacifist denominations, such as Quakers, were ostracised by pro-war ministers because they opposed eighteenth-century conflicts including King George’s War (1744-1748) and the Seven Years’ War.⁴² Protestant pluralism, as described by Pointer, helps to conceptualise why Protestants were able to imagine themselves as a unified group in opposition to Catholics. This shared identity did not, however, overrule the multiplicity of distinct denominational identities in North America or eclipse the fundamental differences between congregations with different values. The Protestant—Catholic binary to which rhetoricians appealed was ultimately an oversimplification that silenced those who did not conform.

Rhetoric, Religion, and Emotion in British North America

In J. R. Miller’s 1985 article on “Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada,” he explains that “to treat hostility to Romanism as simply a political sentiment is to misread and underestimate it.” Anti-papistry was a pervasive social attitude that infiltrated political thought. According to Miller, “it had a theological face and a social demeanour, as well as a political aspect. *Indeed a proper appreciation of the emotive force of anti-Catholic feeling requires an exploration and understanding of its several surfaces* [emphasis added].”⁴³ Shifting language about French Catholicism required Britons on

⁴² Eustace, *Passion Is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution*, 201–34.

⁴³ J. R. Miller, “Anti-Catholic Thought in Victorian Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (1985): 474.

either side of the Atlantic to combat deeply entrenched prejudices against Catholics with language that promoted reason and empathy.

Keith Grant's recent history of emotions contrasts the "unrestrained feelings and radical individualism" associated with American rebels to the "social affections" and reason promoted by loyalists like Charles Inglis. Grant's analysis contributes to better understanding diverging loyalist and rebel approaches to Catholics because religious rhetoric was deployed to encourage these differing emotional responses. Grant notes that, during the Revolution, "Reasoned loyalty and religion...provided a check on...turbulent, enthusiastic passions and fostered more social affections."⁴⁴ Americans, alternatively, "came to embrace more vehement emotions to fuel their resistance," as "tensions between Britain and the colonies further weakened the affectionate bonds of empire."⁴⁵ This is not to say that American rebels were disposed to more vehement emotions, but that the "turbulent passions" noted by Grant worked in favour of their early goals. Inglis's suggestion that Paine's *Common Sense* sought to stir up "the passions of the populace at a time when their passions are much inflamed" indicates his awareness that emotion was being used to engender support for the rebellion.⁴⁶

It is not surprising that appeals to emotion were common in eighteenth-century political discourses because this language has been found by social scientists to be extremely effective. Scholars have found that, in a modern context, emotionally-charged language is more likely to resonate with audiences or readers in opposition to statements that use neutral language. Jay Van Bavel, a psychologist and neural scientist at New York

⁴⁴ Keith Shepherd Grant, "Enthusiasm and Loyalty: Emotions, Religion, and Society in British North America" (Ph.D., Fredericton, University of New Brunswick, 2017), 2, 6.

⁴⁵ Grant, 13.

⁴⁶ Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked*, iii.

University, found in a survey of 560,000 tweets addressing contentious subjects that posts containing moral-emotional words (such as greed, blame, hate, shame) were more likely to be shared than posts viewed as objective.⁴⁷ In Van Bavel's opinion, this is a consequence of the human tendency towards "tribalism," or "in-grouping" because language that adheres to a specific moral-emotional code makes it immediately apparent with whom the speaker or writer identifies as the "out-group" or "other."⁴⁸ By evoking these moral-emotional codes, rather than relying on reason or logic, speakers are far more likely to succeed in gaining or rallying others to their position, according to Van Bavel's findings.

Van Bavel's conclusions, though derived from a study using a venue (social media) unique to the twenty-first century, offer further insight into why some eighteenth-century publications became extremely influential, while others remained relatively unknown. Van Bavel's findings are easily applied to Paine's *Common Sense*, a document that encourages an emotional reaction from its readers, and to Inglis's response to *Common Sense* which he himself described as based in "reason." Inglis recognised the effectiveness of Paine's rhetoric, stating that "The mind is easily imposed on, and the most violent measures will, *therefore*, be thought the most salutary." Inglis further acknowledged that "positive assertions will pass for demonstration with many, rage for sincerity, and the most glaring absurdities and falsehoods will be swallowed," and also

⁴⁷ "Messages with Moral-Emotional Words Are More Likely to go Viral on Social Media," *NYU News*, June 26, 2017; J.J. Van Bavel, Julian Wills, Joshua Tucker, John Jost, Susan T. Fiske, "Emotion shapes the dissuasion of moralized content in social networks," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 144 no. 28 (2017): 7313-7318.

⁴⁸ Eileen Reynolds, "Why Our Brains Love Fake News—and How We Can Resist It," *NYU News*, June 5, 2018; J.J. Van Bavel and A. Pereira, "The Partisan Brain: An Identity-Based Model of Political Belief," *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 22 no. 3 (2018): 213-224.

that, “The author of COMMON SENSE, has availed himself of all those advantages.”⁴⁹

The motifs Paine used depended heavily on a religiously defined moral order and an emotionally described threat that was mobilised with words like “tyranny,” and created a rhetorical binary.

Loyalists’ departure from rhetoric that used this emotional vernacular, including the anti-Catholic traditions that had worked in Britain’s interest just decades earlier, should be understood as a change in circumstance, not necessarily of underlying sentiment. Keith Grant has observed that loyalists “worried that the violent passions that their Patriot neighbours had embraced would only serve to desensitize them to those sympathies that knit diverse people together.”⁵⁰ Grant’s finding must be accepted with the limitation that many Britons and loyalists also willingly used moral-emotional language to spur up a response when it was in their interest. The period between the Quebec Act and Franco-American alliance included moments when loyal Britons defended French Catholics and moments when they criticised Americans for trusting their former Catholic enemies. The Quebec Act changed Britain’s relationship to French Catholics in Québec, just as the rebellion changed Americans’ situation by creating a need for French support. A significant difference between British engagement of moral-emotional language (in the form of anti-Catholic rhetoric) and American use of the same is that loyalist rhetoric, by virtue of circumstance, relied on readers to think critically about how they perceived French Catholics, whereas American rhetoric sought to suppress inconvenient details.

⁴⁹ Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked*, iii.

⁵⁰ Grant, “Enthusiasm and Loyalty: Emotions, Religion, and Society in British North America,” 16.

Method and Summary of Chapters

This study began as a survey of continuity and change within anti-papist rhetoric in Anglo-North America between the Seven Years' War and American Revolution. By expanding a former study on anti-Catholic traditions during the Seven Years' War into the era of the Franco-American alliance, I initially sought to determine how people who had expressed virulently anti-Catholic opinions during this conflict responded to France's changing position in America.⁵¹ I suspected that anti-French Catholic prejudice would diminish following the Seven Years' War, as suggested by notable scholars including Owen Stanwood, only to be confronted again with the Quebec Act and then resolved leading into the era of the Franco-American alliance.⁵² This did not occur in the way that I imagined it had in the early stages of this research—instead, and as described in the following chapters, British loyalists and American rebels approached acceptance for French Catholics differently, creating divergent rhetorical traditions in British North America and the United States.

Between the Seven Years' War and American Revolution, religious tolerance and intolerance were politically driven, inconsistent, and often divorced from reality. The “other” existed in rhetorical spaces that enabled political regimes to make broad appeals to emotions, like fear, to promote a sense of unity in the face of a common enemy. Shifts in anti-Catholic expression through this period demonstrate that conceptions of “otherness” adapted to changing political goals. Historians have traditionally positioned

⁵¹ The former study to which I refer argued that anti-Catholicism specifically targeted French Catholics during the Seven Years' War and must be understood as ethnically-charged rhetoric. Erin Isaac, ““They Who For Our Religion...Abhorred Us”: The Development and Maintenance of 18th-Century Anti-Catholicism in North America,” *University of Saskatchewan Undergraduate Research Journal* 4 no. 2 (April 2018). https://usurj.journals.usask.ca/article/view/327/pdf_1.

⁵² Stanwood, “Catholics, Protestants, and the Clash of Civilizations in Early America,” esp. 219.

the Franco-American alliance as a step towards religious freedom in the United States. I argue against the suggestion that Americans became more tolerant to Catholics leading towards 1778 and, rather, suggest that the alliance signified an expanding group of “exceptions” to anti-papery, not a retreat from those underlying religious sentiments. Furthermore, British and American authors used religious rhetoric differently in the period immediately following the Quebec Act; while Britons used reason to encourage Protestants to rethink their prejudices against French *Canadiens*, American rebels developed an emotional vernacular based in earlier anti-papist traditions that suppressed critical reflection.

The texts examined in the following chapters are derived from political and religious discourses, largely pamphlets and sermons. As Robert Scribner explains, though printed sources are invaluable to modern historians, the transmission of ideas cannot be understood without taking into account how messages were conveyed—including how ideas spread among illiterate or semi-literate populations.⁵³ Printed works were only one step in the process of disseminating information among the wider population that also included oral or visual mediums including word-of-mouth transmission and political cartoons. Print materials including broadsides, pamphlets, newspapers, dialogues, songs and verse, were widely sold and “shared over a wide range of social levels” in Britain and North America.⁵⁴ Broadsides were also posted on walls and doors throughout cities, through high traffic areas like churches or workplaces, and were not restricted to those

⁵³ Robert W. Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 1987), 49–69, 123–43.

⁵⁴ For more on how British texts circulated in North America, refer to: Alain Boureau, *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Roger Chartier (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 236–38.

who could read because “print culture permeated everyday discourse.”⁵⁵ An author’s influence, as a result, depended upon their ideas generating enough interest that they would be talked about or read aloud.

It should not be assumed that opinions expressed by politicians and clergymen, either orally or in print, can be conflated with the public’s beliefs.⁵⁶ Contemporary writers and speakers, like Charles Inglis, may have perceived their influence to be greater than it was in practice. In 1777 Inglis claimed that, whereas people “in Europe... do not conceive that Clergymen can have...much influence with the People...the Clergy of all Denominations in America, who are regular & exemplary in their Moral Conduct do *actually* possess this influence.” He explained his meaning, that “The Laity here [in America] in general place a large share of confidence in their Clergy: They look up to them for Direction in temporal as well as spiritual Matters; & the Advice or example of their Clergy will have great Weight with them.” This was a big deal for Inglis because, in his opinion, “The Conduct of the Clergy in this Rebellion [the American Revolution] generally determined that of the Laity—whatever side the former joined, they drew after them the Bulk of the latter.”⁵⁷ In practice, it is unlikely that clergymen held the kind of power over their congregants that Inglis claimed. As Paul A. Djupe and Christopher P. Gilbert’s describe in *The Political Influence of Churches*, clergymen are best understood as “information sources who can initiate the social influence process,” but are not “generals commanding an army ready to mobilize or as having a dyadic relationship with

⁵⁵ Georgia Cosmos, *Huguenot Prophecy and Clandestine Worship in the Eighteenth Century: The Sacred Theatre of the Cevennes* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2005), 128.

⁵⁶ Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*, esp. 122-124.

⁵⁷ Inglis, “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion in America,” 27–28.

individuals.”⁵⁸ Clergymen and political figures held social positions of power that could confirm or radicalise the public’s pre-existing opinions, but were unlikely to change someone’s mind completely.

Although elites’ abilities to change someone’s mind in the short term was limited, shifts in rhetoric, over time, impacted social attitudes. Attempts to alter private sentiments about Catholics may have been restricted but had significant long-term effects on cultural praxes, as explored in the following chapters.

This introductory chapter argues that anti-popery is best understood as part of a social binary (Protestant—Catholic) that simplified complicated political contexts into widely appealing emotional vernacular in eighteenth-century British North America. This binary contributed to an existing trend towards Protestant Pluralism in the colonies but was challenged by Catholic *Canadiens*’ religious rights granted under the Quebec Act and France’s changing position in North America after the Declaration of Independence.

The second chapter highlights that this rhetoric was not based on religious sentiment alone by examining how anti-papist attitudes manifested in sermons that Rev. Thomas Gibbons, Rev. Samuel Davies, and Rev. Aaron Burr composed during the Seven Years’ War. During this period, the term “papist” connoted a combination of religious, imperial, and often racial categories that often referred specifically to French Catholics. Considering sermons published and circulated in England and the North American colonies, I explore how Huguenot history bolstered anti-French sentiments among the British colonists by mobilising memory of the French Wars of Religion. Additionally, I

⁵⁸ Paul A. Djupe and Christopher P. Gilbert, *The Political Influence of Churches* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 243.

consider the ways that non-French Catholics and French Protestants challenged this binary worldview, and how contemporaries worked them into that framework.

The third chapter considers how the Quebec Act altered the boundaries of these categories by splitting the Protestant “in-group” between constitutionally informed persons and those who appealed to affections that echoed the prejudices that had worked in Britain’s favour during the Seven Years’ War. Examining texts produced for the public, mainly written by Rev. Charles Inglis, in addition to documents by Rev. Samuel Sherwood, Rev. John Lathrop, and Sir Thomas Bernard (an English politician), this chapter explores how writers contested or embraced anti-papist attitudes. Between the Quebec Act and Franco-American alliance attitudes about religious others were “in-flux.” Traditionally, historians have understood this as an era of increasing religious tolerance in North America, but this chapter highlights how anti-papist biases continued to influence rebel interactions with some Catholics, including Catholic members of the Wabanaki Confederacy.

In the final chapter, I describe how the French—former members of the “out-group” during the Seven Years’ War—became exceptions to the Protestant rebels’ anti-papist beliefs by becoming political allies. American rebels, like Cooper, disrupted the traditional order that posed Catholics against Protestants by positioning other Protestants as political rivals, breaking down and redefining the “other” to lie along political “in-groups” rather than religious identities. By comparison, loyalists, including Inglis, criticised the Franco-American alliance’s champions for overlooking the anti-papist arguments the rebels had advanced in response to the Quebec Act. This chapter then demonstrates that American intolerance to certain Catholic minorities, mainly Scottish

and Indigenous Catholics, and loyalist tolerance for these same groups was politically motivated. By examining loyalist Catholics' experiences, focusing on Father John McKenna and the Scottish Highlanders' case, I demonstrate that anti-Catholic rhetoric and policy were not enforced when politically inconvenient to maintain. In opposition to what these changes in the political rhetoric might suggest, Americans continued to behave according to underlying anti-Catholic sentiments.

In the conclusion, I explore why this "Protestant in-group" gradually became a "Christian in-group" in North America and the ways that diverging praxes in eighteenth-century religious rhetoric between the British world and Americans manifested in the following century.

II. “You that love your Religion, enlist: for your Religion is in Danger”: French Papists in Myth and Memory during the Seven Years’ War

“Like an insatiable Wolf, with its Jaws dropping with the Blood of its own Natives, [France] now casts its cruel Eye over to us [Britain], and grows even [more] wild and impatient till it can subdue us to its Power, an Event which must unavoidably be followed with... Havoc and Slaughter.”¹ This evocative line comes from an equally provoking sermon delivered by Rev. Thomas Gibbons (1720-1785), an English minister from Haberdasher’s Hall in London, several months before it was subsequently published in December of 1755: *Sympathy with our Suffering Brethren, and an Improvement of their Distresses shewn to be our Duty*. The sermon draws heavily on accounts about French Huguenots’ experiences during the French Wars of Religion and suggests parallels between their persecution in France and the fate that would await Britain and America should the French succeed in their conquests during the conflict that would become known as the Seven Years’ War (1754-1763).² Gibbons described his motivations for giving such a suggestive sermon within the text itself. He wrote that:

by alarming the Minds of any of my Fellow-Countrymen and Subjects with its [popery’s] real Horrors, and exciting them more highly to value, more piously to improve, and more strenuously to maintain their civil and sacred Privileges, such a Success will crown the Wishes of a true Friend to *Liberty*, and, he hopes, a true Lover of *Religion*.³

Gibbons suggests that the French only succeeded in recent battles in the Ohio Country because God was dissatisfied with the sins of Britons, and more pious devotion by

¹ Thomas Gibbons, “Sympathy with Our Suffering Brethren, and an Improvement of Their Distresses Shown to Be Our Duty, In Two Discourses; Occasioned by the Cruel Oppressions of the Protestants in France, And Enlarged with a Recent and Particular Account of the State of the Persecution in That Kingdom.” (London, 1755), iii–iv.

² Battles in the American theatre of the Seven Years’ War, often referred to as the French and Indian War in American publications, began in 1754. War began in Europe two years later, in 1756, from which the conflict’s name is derived (1756-1763).

³ Gibbons, “Sympathy with Our Suffering Brethren,” xiv.

Britons could turn the tide of the war in Britain's favour.

In his sermon, Gibbons used a common trope found in many surviving texts from the era of the Seven Years' War—references to sixteenth-century French Wars of Religion and Huguenot persecution in the seventeenth century. The French Wars of Religion consisted of eight civil wars fought between Calvinist Reformers and Roman Catholics that spanned the years 1562 to 1598.⁴ The wars ended when Henry IV, previously a Calvinist, became a Catholic and granted tolerance to Protestants in France with the Edict of Nantes (1598). In 1685, in the Edict of Fontainebleau, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in an attempt to force Huguenots to convert to the Catholic religion. Catholic violence on Huguenots became a popular topic within British anti-papery because these events not only pertained to papist atrocities against Protestants across Europe, but French Catholic cruelties, in particular.⁵ British allied writers and clergy popularly engaged imagery from violent massacres against Protestants, especially Paris's Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, to warn against the physical and spiritual threat that Catholics posed to Protestant Britain and her colonies.⁶

Rev. Aaron Burr (1716-1757), a Presbyterian Minister in Newark, New Jersey who was a founder and president of New Jersey College (Princeton University), directly referenced the 1572 massacre in his 1755 sermon *A Discourse Delivered at New-Ark, in*

⁴ For more on the French Wars of Religion, refer to: Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Allan A. Tulchin, "Massacres During the French Wars of Religion," *Past and Present* 214, no. 7 (2012): 100–126.

⁵ The Edict of Nantes was promulgated in 1598, effectively ending the Wars of Religion that had ensued for over thirty years from 1562. It granted legal recognition and protection, so its revocation was a direct threat to the Huguenot community which maintained a living memory of the Wars of Religion. For more refer to: Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks, *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 1–25.

⁶ Joseph G. Mannard, "American Anti-Catholicism and Its Literature," *Ex Libris* 4, no. 1 (1981): 2–8.

New-Jersey.⁷ Burr wrote that “THEIR [France’s] established Religion is *Popery*; which, beside all it’s [sic] other *Corruptions*, disposes them from Principle, to be cruel to *Protestants*...to suppress the *Reformation*...in 1572, there was the most *barbarous Massacre*, committed on the *Protestants*, at *Paris*... [where they were] *inhumanly butchered* by the *Papists*.”⁸ The French were not just the British colonists’ imperial opponents during the Seven Years’ War, they were “Catholics” whom Protestants associated with the bloody connotations of that identity. In contrast to the American Revolution—wherein Protestants fought other Protestants—this imperial conflict called all “Good Protestants” to defend themselves against a common Catholic enemy.

While memory of the French Wars of Religion dwelt heavily on Catholic massacres against Protestants, and indeed the most infamous massacres were perpetrated by the Catholics, the Huguenots are often incorrectly represented as unsuspecting victims in these tragedies. Thomas Gibbons wrote that Huguenots “amidst all their grievous Persecution, have behaved with great Submission to their Prince.” He continued, suggesting that this “submission” made “the barbarous Usage they have received from their cruel Oppressors doubly heinous and wicked, and alone affords a sufficient Evidence what an Inundation of Miseries would break in upon our Land was *France* to plant her triumphant Standard among us, and seize a despotic and uncontrollable [sic] Power.”⁹ Gibbons’s version of these events distorted the Huguenots’ role in the conflict

⁷ Mark A. Noll, “Burr, Aaron (1716-1757),” in *American National Biography Online* (Oxford University Press, 2000), <https://doi.org/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.article.0100121>, accessed 23 December 2019.

⁸ Aaron Burr, *A Discourse Delivered at New-Ark, in New-Jersey, January 1, 1755. Being a Day Set Apart for Solemn Fasting and Prayer, on Account of the Late Encroachments of the French, and Their Designs against the British Colonies in America*. (New York: Published and sold by Hugh Gaine, 1755), 19–20.

⁹ Gibbons, “Sympathy with Our Suffering Brethren,” ii–iii.

to play on British Protestants' fears about the nature of the Catholic faith.¹⁰ While it is true that most massacres during the French Wars of Religion were committed against the French Protestant population, eighteenth-century rhetoric did not address these events in context. Protestant discourses borrowing imagery from the French Wars of Religion do not mention that the Huguenots also massacred Catholics during these conflicts.

Alan A. Tulchin estimates that Catholics committed thirty-five massacres on Huguenots between 1561 and 1595, while Protestants were responsible for nineteen.¹¹ Based singularly on the rhetoric that circulated in Britain and America about the French Wars of Religion, one would be surprised to learn that the Huguenots were not unsuspecting victims of Catholic intolerance during the wars. Many were politically informed rebels who carried out insurrections in protest of the papacy's sway within the powerful Catholic Guise family and its influence over the French monarchy. The Guise-led massacre at Vassy in 1562, the event that brought tensions between Catholics and Huguenots to war, was in response to the Edict of Saint-Germain (1562) that granted limited tolerance for Calvinism in France.¹² The massacres were both politically and religiously motivated, but eighteenth-century rhetoric diminished them to mere displays of Catholic barbarity and positioned Huguenots as helpless victims in its version of the narrative.

¹⁰ It is unclear whether Gibbons intentionally reimagined the Huguenots' participation in the Wars of Religion, or (and more likely) he based his understanding of the events solely on the accounts of Huguenot refugees who emphasised their victimhood. According to Lisa Clark Diller, Huguenots in London often printed accounts of their persecution because they depended upon charity and it was in their interest to distance themselves from France, lest they worry their English hosts with excessive "Frenchness." For more refer to: Lisa Clark Diller, "How Dangerous the Protestant Stranger? Huguenots and the Formation of British Identity, c. 1685-1715," in *The Huguenots: History and Memory in Transnational Context: Essays in Honour and Memory of Walter C. Utt*, ed. David J. B. Trim (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 103–20.

¹¹ Tulchin, "Massacres During the French Wars of Religion," 106–8.

¹² Geoffrey Treasure, *The Huguenots* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 156.

This anti-French Catholic rhetoric, in some ways, came to a head in North America during the Seven Years' War and can be understood as a worldview that was cultivated over several centuries within and outside of the North American context. In Britain and British North America, anti-Catholic motifs often referenced the threat that popery posed to Protestant liberties and physical safety during "Bloody" Mary Tudor's reign (1556-1558), and to the threat that Jacobites posed to the Protestant monarchy after the abdication of James II in 1689.¹³ Memory of the atrocities committed against Protestants during the French wars complemented popular motifs in these British anti-Catholic discourses, especially during imperial wars like the Seven Years' War, because these narratives conveyed a French threat to Protestants' personal safety. Whereas threats on the British monarchy indirectly endangered religious liberty, French Catholic "tyranny" posed a direct threat to Protestant welfare, especially in the American colonies.

In British North America, the French *Canadiens* and Indigenous peoples living within the sphere over which the French claimed sovereignty were in near enough proximity to British colonists that they feared these French-affiliated neighbours might strike at any moment, especially along the frontier. Aaron Burr expressed this sentiment in 1755 when he proclaimed that:

They [the French] are in Possession of *two Forts* on the Lake *Ontario*, and have lately built two or three below the Lake *Errie* [sic], on a Branch of the River *Ohio*, that empties into the great River *Mississippi* [sic]; the Mouth of which they

¹³ Mary I reigned in England following the death of her brother, Edward VI in 1553. Mary rejected her Father (Henry VIII)'s break from Rome in 1534 and restored the Catholic Church in England. This transition, however, was not welcomed by English society at large, and Mary I is remembered for having burned approximately three hundred Protestant men who refused to convert to Catholicism, earning her the nickname "Bloody Mary." Mary's successor, Elizabeth I, responded to these tensions with her Religious Settlement of 1559, which granted more religious liberties under the Church of England's framework. Following the Tudor era of religious reformation in England, and the religious wars that followed, Catholic monarchs were rejected by English elites. For more, refer to J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

have long possessed. By the best Advices they have very much fortified, and well-manned these *Forts*; so that now they have actually surrounded the British Colonies, and are in Possession of a vastly extended Country, from *Cape-Breton* to the *Bay of Mexico*. Enough has been said of late in the *public Prints*, to render it indisputable, that their Settlements on the Ohio are within our *King's Dominions*... And if we suffer them quietly to possess what they have so unrighteously seized upon, and to go on fortifying themselves, there requires no Spirit of Prophecy to foretel [sic], that it must sooner or later prove *fatal* to these *Colonies*.¹⁴

The French settlements' breadth and their proximity to the British colonies threatened to encroach on British North America and endanger Protestant freedoms therein, in Burr's perception. Additionally, because Anglo-Catholics were believed to sympathise with or be easily manipulated by the French on grounds of common religion, British Protestants were wary of Catholics within their borders. Anti-papist actions and measures against Catholics in the British colonies, especially Maryland, intensified as a result of this suspicion.

Anti-Catholic rhetoric cropped up in response to secular concerns involving Catholics throughout post-Reformation Europe and North America, but during periods of heightened imperial tensions, such as the Seven Years' War, it was used to incite and justify violence against dominantly Catholic empires. As Miguel De La Torre has recognised, "the cry 'God is on our side,' is responsible for more bloodletting in the form of crusades, wars, colonialism, and genocide than any other human-caused catastrophe."¹⁵ Religious rhetoric provided the moral justification for murderous discrimination during the Wars of Religion in sixteenth-century, and in the eighteenth century, religious pretences undergirded the Seven Years' War, particularly in North

¹⁴ Burr, *A Discourse Delivered at New-Ark*, 17–18.

¹⁵ Miguel A. De La Torre, ed., *Faith and Resistance in the Age of Trump* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017), xxix.

America. When British American colonists used anti-papist rhetoric to reimagine imperial conflicts as immediate threats against Protestants, they, in turn, exhorted that all men of the “true faith” (Protestantism) had a duty to defend their faith against “tyrants” (papists). For them, it was God’s will. This expression of anti-Catholic sentiment was shared between Britain and British North America in the mid-eighteenth century and drew strength from the secular interests of conflicting monarchies, empires, or elites, thereby investing all Protestants in it: in the survival of their religion, their families, and themselves.

Imagery describing the Huguenots’ plight, like that featured in Thomas Gibbons’s *Sympathy with Our Suffering Brethren*, circulated in Britain and the American colonies as a warning about the cruelties that French Catholics might well perpetrate on Protestants. The pending war with France they construed as a holy war, a connection Gibbons made explicitly clear when he wrote that his reason for publishing *Sympathy with our Suffering Brethren* was to:

unite our Minds in the strongest Affection and Loyalty to his Majesty and Government, to open our Eyes to the Miseries we must expect, if God for our Sins should suffer the *French* Power to prevail against us, and animate us to stem, with the firmest Union and the most determined Magnanimity and Zeal, the dangerous Encroachments of our restless, ambitious, and cruel Enemies.¹⁶

On both sides of the Atlantic, ministers used anti-French Catholic rhetoric, adopting motifs from the French Wars of Religions and reinforcing Protestant memories of that conflict as a war of conflicting Christianities, rather than a war with political motives. Those transatlantic sermons, preached by revivalist ministers like Gibbons and his evangelist correspondent in America, Rev. Samuel Davies, were further circulated and

¹⁶ Gibbons, “Sympathy with Our Suffering Brethren,” ii.

mediated by printers and readers, often reprinted in newspapers, and certainly refashioned by other clergy. Meanings were shaped and tropes popularised, as Frank Lambert notes of revivalist sermons in general, by preachers, printers, and audiences.¹⁷

Presenting the Seven Years' War as Holy War: The Sermons of Samuel Davies

Prominent in that transatlantic parish of print were correspondents Rev. Thomas Gibbons in London and Rev. Samuel Davies, a Presbyterian minister in Hanover, Virginia. Gibbons and Davies began corresponding in 1752 in preparation for Davies's trip to England the following year to raise funds for the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University).¹⁸ They became close friends during Davies's 1753 sojourn in England. When Davies died prematurely in 1761, from an illness with symptoms that resemble those of tuberculosis, he bequeathed his papers to Gibbons, who published three volumes of Davies's sermons in 1762. These volumes soon began circulating in Britain and North America. So popular were Davies's sermons that Gibbons published at least six more editions that continued to be reprinted well into the nineteenth century, ensuring their survival and prominence in discourses about early North American theology and spirituality. In the preface to the collection, Gibbons referred to Davies as his "most esteemed and beloved friend."¹⁹

On 17 August 1755, Davies preached a sermon called *Religion and Patriotism: The Constituents of a Good Soldier* to a company of soldiers raised locally in Hanover

¹⁷ Frank Lambert, "Pedlar in Divinity": *George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737-1770* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 8–9.

¹⁸ Gibbons describes how he and Davies met in the preface to the second edition of Davies's sermons. Thomas Gibbons, "Preface," in Samuel Davies, *Sermons on the Most Useful and Important Subjects, Adapted to the Family and Closet.*, 2nd ed. (London, 1767), 3.

¹⁹ Thomas Gibbons, "Preface," in *Sermons on Important Subjects, by the Late Reverend and Pious Samuel Davies, A.M. Sometime President of the College in New Jersey*, by Samuel Davies, 5th ed., vol. 1 (London, 1804), 1.

County. He called attention to Virginia's happy "situation in the middle of the British Colonies, and our separation from the French, those eternal enemies of liberty and Britons." Davies acknowledged that the advent of conflicts with France in North America interrupted that "peaceful" settlement, mourning that "now the scene is changed... Our territories are invaded by the power and perfidy of France; our frontiers ravaged by merciless savages, and our fellow-subjects there murdered with all the horrid arts of Indian and Popish torture."²⁰ In doing so, Davies brought what may have seemed to be distant threats directly to the colonists of Virginia. Whereas the colony may formerly have felt secure by virtue of their distance from the Catholic French colonists to the north, Davies made this threat immediate, and warned about what would happen if the colonists failed to take arms against their immoral enemies.

Davies justified the conflict with France as both a moral and religious war in

Religion and Patriotism, saying:

We are engaged in a righteous cause; we are not urged on by an unbounded lust of power or riches, to encroach upon the rights and properties of others, and disturb our quiet neighbours: we act entirely upon the defensive, repel unjust violence, and avenge national injuries; we are fighting *for our people, and for the cities of our God.*²¹

In this, he placed the British cause in opposition to the French cause—the British fought for honourable reasons because they "act[ed] entirely on the defensive," whereas the French were guided by "an unbounded lust of power." Davies went on to clarify what the British fought for by making an appeal to emotions. He wrote:

We fight for our people; and what endearments are included in that significant word! our liberty, our estates, our lives! our king, our fellow-subjects, our

²⁰ Samuel Davies, "Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier," in *Sermons on Important Subjects, by the Late Reverend and Pious Samuel Davies, A.M. Sometime President of the College of New-Jersey. In Three Volumes.*, ed. Thomas Gibbons and Samuel Finley, 5th ed., vol. 3 (New York: Printed for T. Allen, 1792), 364.

²¹ Davies, 374.

venerable fathers, our tender children, the wives of our bosom, our friends, the sharers of our soul, our posterity to the latest ages! and who would not use his sword with an exerted arm when all these lie at stake? But even these are not all: we fight *for the cities of our God*. God has distinguished us with a religion from heaven.²²

The war was not just a defence against the abuses French Catholics were known to perpetrate on their enemies, in this context, but also a defence of the British colonists' very religion.

Davies sharply delineated these distinctions between French intention and British duty, reminding worshipers that the British cause was not only to “protect your brethren from the most bloody barbarities—to defend the territories of the best of kinds against the oppression and tyranny of arbitrary power—to secure the inestimable blessings of liberty, from the chains of French slavery” or to “preserve your estates, for which you have sweat and toiled, from falling a prey to greedy vultures, Indians, priests, friars, and hungry Gallic slaves.” This was also a cause “to guard your religion, the pure religion of Jesus, streaming uncorrupted from the sacred fountain of the scriptures; the most excellent, rational and divine religion that was ever made known to the sons of men.” In Davies's words, Virginians had a duty as Protestants to “guard so dear, so precious a religion... against ignorance, superstition, idolatry, tyranny over conscience, massacre, fire and sword, and all the mischiefs beyond expression, with which Popery is pregnant.” Davies ascribed a British Protestant identity to his audience, a fact laid bare when he appealed directly to “Virginians! Britons! Christians! Protestants!”²³ The significance of his appeal is that it powerfully reasserts the binary of French Catholic—British Protestant.

²² Davies, “Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier,” 374.

²³ Davies, 375.

In another 1755 sermon, *Virginia's Danger and Remedy*, Davies asked his listeners if they had “ever had the unhappy experience of a *French* government,—a *French* government over *Protestants*,—a *French* government over *conquered* *Protestants*,—over *conquered Britons*, their natural enemies.” Assuming the answer to be negative on all counts, Davies explained that “all these blessings are in danger.” He continued in the same persuasion, asking if his audience could “bear the thought, that *Indian Savages* and *French Papists*, infamous all the world over for treachery and tyranny, should rule *Protestants* and *Britons*, with a rod of iron.”²⁴

Davies reiterates these fears in later sermons, such as in *The Curse of Cowardice*, delivered May 8, 1758. In this sermon, Davies encouraged Virginians to enlist to defend their colony, which he considered their duty as Christians. Davies went further in this sermon than in *Religion and Patriotism*, intoning that with all that was at stake in the war, “even the God of Peace proclaims by his Providence, ‘To Arms!’” Davies claimed that “the *Sword* is, as it were, *consecrated* to God; and the Art of WAR becomes a Part of our *Religion*.”²⁵ To enlist, in the logic of his sermon, was not just in the interest of defending one’s life, property, or family; to enlist was one’s religious duty as a Protestant. As Davies said, “You that love your Religion, enlist: for your Religion is in Danger.”²⁶

Appeals to emotions, including fear, permeated anti-Catholic publications during the Seven Years’ War. In his preface to Samuel Davies’s 1757 sermon *The Crisis*, Rev. Thomas Gibbons wrote that:

²⁴ Samuel Davies, *Virginia's Danger and Remedy: Two Discourses, Occasioned by the Severe Drought in Sundry Parts of the Country; and the Defeat of General Braddock*, 2nd ed. (Glasgow: J. Bryce and D. Paterson, 1756), 41–42.

²⁵ Samuel Davies, *The Curse of Cowardice: A Sermon Preached to the Militia of Hanover County, in Virginia, at a General Must, May 8, 1758*. (London: J. Buckland, J. Ward, and T. Field, 1758), 4.

²⁶ Davies, 18.

The late cruel Persecutions in *France* of its innocent and inoffensive [sic] Natives [Huguenots], may well make us [British Protestants] tremble at the tremendous Fate of *Great-Britain*, should that aspiring and restless Kingdom annex these Lands to its Conquests, and pour in *Popery* upon us, that has proved by its Massacres and Inquisitions, how well it deserves the Name of the *Abomination that makes desolate*.²⁷

As in Gibbons's 1755 sermon, *Sympathy with Our Suffering Brethren*, he not only wrote about the papist threat to Britain and the empire, but also the threat to Protestants' personal safety. In the sermon that follows this troubling preface, Davies's language was comparable to Gibbons's language in *Sympathy with our Suffering Brethren*. Where in Gibbons's earlier sermon he suggested that Britain's sinfulness caused France's successes, Davies compared Virginia to Ninevah (a biblical city of sin) and the Seven Years' War to the end of times. He likened "this melancholy Time" to "the Year 1550, when the Persecution raged in *England* under Queen *Mary*, and the civil Wars in *France*, *Germany*, and the *Low Countries*, on account of Religion, seemed to threaten the utter Extinction of the Protestant Cause."²⁸ Gibbons and Davies, as correspondents and friends, used similar tropes in their writings about the Seven Years' War and helped perpetuate this rhetoric on either side of the Atlantic.

Complicating the Binary: Other Catholic and Protestant Identities in 18th-Century North America

This historically-rooted rhetoric, based upon a stark binary, was used to justify wartime actions against Francophones and Catholics, even those who were not directly

²⁷ Gibbons, foreword to Samuel Davies, *The Crisis: Or, The Uncertain Doom of Kingdoms at Particular Times, Considered With Reference to Great-Britain and Her Colonies in Their Present Circumstances*. (London: J. Buckland, J. Ward, and T. Field, 1757), V. The phrase "abomination that makes desolate" appears in the biblical books of Daniel and Matthew in reference to apocalyptic visions. For example, Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and Matthew 24:15-16.

²⁸ Davies, 24–25.

involved with French campaigns. Following the Acadian expulsion in 1755, an anonymous dispatch from Halifax explained that their mass removal from Nova Scotia was warranted because the “neutral French [Acadians]... have always been secret Enemies and have encouraged our Savages to cut our Throats.”²⁹ Under the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, Acadians were granted the right to stay and freely practice their religion. The Acadian settlements in Nova Scotia, in addition to the presence of Jesuit missionaries in the territory and their perceived influence over the Mi’kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet), had always made the British uneasy.³⁰

This anxiety was, in no small part, related to the belief that Catholics were automatically either ethnically French or French sympathisers—both of which threatened Protestants in the British colonies.³¹ As Samuel Davies said in his 1757 sermon, *The Crisis*, “*France* and her Allies are all *Papists*; and *Britain* and her Allies are all *Protestants*; and consequently, whatever Party fall, the Religion of that Party is like to fall too.”³² Davies vastly oversimplified North America’s complexities; in reality, Catholics and Protestants fought on both sides of the war. But such an oversimplified religious binary masked the complicated political contexts of the eighteenth century (and indeed, modern renditions of the same continue). During this conflict, the British “in-

²⁹ *Maryland Gazette*, 11 September 1755, in Robert Emmett Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies: Catholics in Protestant America, 1605-1791: A Documentary History* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 213.

³⁰ Owen Stanwood, “Catholics, Protestants, and the Clash of Civilizations in Early America,” in *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America*, ed. Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenada (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 235–37.

³¹ This equivalence of “Frenchness” and Catholicism did not apply to Huguenots living in North America because Huguenots were not perceived as ethnically French. Lisa Clark Diller has explained that Huguenots intentionally “blended” themselves into their host societies to avoid alarming their hosts with excessive “Frenchness.” Though her study was limited to cases in London, the same phenomena occurred among Huguenots in North America. For more refer to: Diller, “How Dangerous the Protestant Stranger?,” esp. 104-5.

³² Davies, *The Crisis*, 26.

group” or “us” was idealistically restricted to Protestants; the “out-group,” or “them,” included all French Catholics and Indigenous peoples believed to be under their influence.

This dichotomy seems straightforward, as presented in texts like *The Crisis*, but in practice, Protestants and Catholics were not cleanly divided between the British and French causes, as there were Catholics on either side of the conflict. Catholics’ experiences with anti-popery varied widely depending upon on their ethnicity, imperial identity, and location. Intolerance and tolerance were not mutually exclusive for Catholics during the Seven Years’ War, and the extent to which Catholic minorities were incorporated into the British Protestant “in-group” depended upon their proximity or distance (both real and rhetorical) from the “out-group” of French Catholics and the level of risk that their alienation posed to the British. The primary groups that were neither explicitly “British Protestants” nor “French Catholics” included Anglo-Catholics, French Protestants (Huguenots), the Catholic Irish and Scots who supported the British during the Seven Years’ War, and Indigenous Catholics.

Anglo-Catholics

In the overwhelmingly Protestant British world of the eighteenth-century, anti-popery was the rule of the day and any exceptions to this rule were made with purpose, and only when the cost of directly discriminating against a certain population outweighed the disdain, if not hate, that British Protestants bore for them. New Englanders, for example, could inveigh against Catholics with relative impunity because Catholics in

New England constituted only one percent of the region's population.³³ Additionally, because Anglo-Catholics were vastly outnumbered by Protestant New Englanders, they were unlikely to risk insurgent behaviour that could jeopardise their livelihood or their family's safety.

This rhetorical binary's effect on British America's Catholic minorities was most readily seen in Maryland, which had the highest proportion of Catholics compared to the other British eastern seaboard colonies. Anti-popery resurfaced in Maryland in 1756, largely in response to the suspected influence that French Catholics held over the Roman Catholics in the colony. Maryland Catholics, however, rejected this claim. In a 1756 petition to Governor Ogle, the Catholic petitioners responded to anti-Catholic invectives circulating in the colony that they felt unjustly targeted them. According to the petitioners, "his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in his foreign Dominions as far as we are informed equally partake of his favours and affection & in return pay him a sincere tribute of Love & duty." In response to the idea that their Catholic faith, by nature, made them a threat to the Protestant colonists, the petitioners asserted "That your excellency [Governor Ogle] is well acquainted that the Roman Catholics residing in this Province are in number very inconsiderable compared to the other Inhabitants." They continued, explaining that even if they were tyrants, the measures brought against them were unnecessary because "the Province [Maryland] is surrounded by Populous Protestant colonies & that therefore the Roman Catholics must be not only Fools but madmen to

³³ Robert Emmett Curran, *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 257.

It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of Catholics who lived in the British colonies prior to the American Revolution because Protestant-dominated colonies were openly hostile to Catholics and it was illegal for priests to offer mass in many of the colonies. For more refer to: Thomas Donohoe, *History of the Catholic Church in Western New York: Diocese of Buffalo* (Buffalo, New York : Catholic Historical Pub. Co., 1904), 108.

entertain any thoughts of disturbing the peace of the government.” The Catholic petitioners rejected the “black charges” laid against them because they were brought up “not only without proof but even without the shadow [of] probability.”³⁴ Neither proof nor probability, however, were needed (or wanted) to validate anti-Catholic theories because the purpose of anti-Catholic policy and prejudice was to generate fear and suspicion that would justify the war with France.

For non-French Catholics in British America, it was not simply a matter of their imperial attachment that was at stake; rather, the anti-Catholic sentiments of British Americans were a threat to the safety of their families, their religious beliefs, and their personal liberties. English Catholics in Britain were better able to weather anti-popery than their counterparts in the colonies because, although anti-popery targeted French Catholics specifically in this period, Catholics in Maryland were less able to distance themselves from the French than could Catholics in Britain. As Lisa Clark Diller suggests, “English Catholics... were generally able to distance themselves from complete association with subservience and irrationality. That sort of Catholicism was connected with the French and so all sides of English society tried to avoid any link with it.”³⁵ Catholics in the British colonies had more trouble due to their perceived proximity to French *Canadiens*, and due to the proportion of religious diversity in the colonies in contrast to in Britain.

³⁴ “Petition to Governor Ogle regarding a Double Tax, 1756,” Maryland Province Archives of the Society of Jesus, Box 3, Folder 11, Georgetown University Library Booth Family Center for Special Collections, in Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies*, 214–16.

³⁵ Diller, “How Dangerous the Protestant Stranger?,” 106.

Huguenots

One might suspect that French Huguenots living in British North America would also struggle to distance themselves from anti-French sentiments; however, as shown by Gibbons's sermon, British Protestants were actually expected to be sympathetic to Huguenots because they shared a history of Catholic oppression. According to Bernard Van Ruymbeke,

In North America, the Huguenot immigrant experience was incorporated into the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant model, and the French Protestant... became 'a French Puritan, substantially identical with the English Puritans...' Thus, the Huguenot saga admirably contributes to 'the most enduring American myth,' which purports that America was 'peopled largely by settlers fleeing religious persecution and yearning for the opportunity to worship openly and without fear.'³⁶

Along this line of reasoning, British Protestants incorporated these Huguenot emigres' experiences into the larger British Protestant identity, and Huguenot trials from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were appropriated into British anti-Catholic rhetoric during the eighteenth-century imperial wars with France. Writings about Huguenots in North American contexts in the centuries following took on new meaning and a life of their own—fueling anti-Catholic arguments that justified the imperial wars with France as a defensive imperative of the Protestant faith in the British North American colonies.

Despite this shared religious identity, Van Ruymbeke's assessment does not fully explain why British North Americans were able to overlook the Huguenots' French ethnicity. Common religion or a sense of Protestant pluralism and mutual opposition to the French Catholic religion did not supersede ethnic tensions between Huguenots and their Anglophone neighbours. To avoid being considered French, Huguenots living in

³⁶ Ruymbeke and Sparks, *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, 15.

British North America assimilated into their host communities. Lisa Clark Diller explains that Huguenot refugees in London intentionally “blended” themselves into their host societies in order to avoid alarming their neighbours with excessive “Frenchness” that might cause them to be less hospitable and charitable. Diller even found evidence that Huguenot church leaders would scold parishioners if they failed to “blend” into the host society to a satisfactory degree.³⁷ These strategies benefited Huguenots in North America because, as ethnic “others,” they were not welcomed by everyone, especially those wary of French infiltration into the British colonies. Huguenots that remained too ethnically French were frequently accused of being secret Catholics, a danger for French Protestants living among British colonists who held hostile anti-French Catholic attitudes.³⁸

These Huguenots adopted Dutch or English cultural traits that were more palatable to their Francophobic neighbours to avoid association with the French settled to the north. The DuBois family, who settled in New Paltz, New York in the 1660s, for instance, adopted Dutch cultural characteristics and changed the pronunciation of their name from the French “Du-Bwas” to “Du-Boyce,” to further remove themselves from being associated with the French.³⁹ While most historians understand Huguenot identity as a category unto itself, separate from their host society, the DuBois family’s history

³⁷ Diller, “How Dangerous the Protestant Stranger?,” 104–5.

³⁸ Diller, 118–20.

³⁹ A poem circulated in a family newsletter explains that:

“Not putting much trust in the Edict of Nants [sic], Our Huguenot ancestors ran out of France./ Old Chrétien’s offspring soon scattered afar, All firmly convinced that their name was DuBwa./ But some stayed in Leyden and then, oh my gosh, Translated their name to the Dutch Van den Bosch./ And some went to Scotland, the land of their choice/ Where the clansmen corrupted their label to Boice/ But Louis and Jacques came across to New York, Where Dutch, French, and English, all mingled their talk/ And ever since then, in this polyglot nation, Folks ask us, ‘Please, what’s the right pronunciation?’/ ‘Tis no longer DuBwa as so many suppose, And it’s not DuBoys, and of course not DuBoze./ DuBoy is not right, nor Dú Bois correct, For the accent is not what some people suspect./ Please read this out loud so the sound of your voice, By the rhythm records that our name is DuBóis.”

Reading DuBois, “The Du Bois Name,” *The American Descendants of Chretien DuBois of Wicres, France* 20 (1984), 1.

reveals that Huguenots intentionally adopted multifaceted identities. Historians, including Charles Littleton and Van Ruymbeke, have suggested that Huguenots passively assimilated into their “host societies,” especially in the generations following their emigration from France. Research by Lisa Diller and accounts from the DuBois family differ from this finding, and instead indicate that Huguenots *actively* adopted non-French ethnic identities following their removal from France in order to blend into their host societies, especially those historically hostile to the French.

Scots and Irishmen in the British Army

Irish and Scottish Catholics in the British Army presented yet another challenge to the Protestant British—Catholic French binary. Unlike Anglo-Catholics or French Protestants, however, their presence in North America went largely undiscussed in anti-papist discourses. Although their presences in the British Army was technically proscribed by law, by the mid-eighteenth century, the military was so overextended that officers quietly ignored the faith of Catholic recruits. In turn, many Scottish and Irish men desired military postings and the possibility of remaining in North America as settlers. In this way, they slipped silently into North America. As Wayne E. Lee notes about Irish soldiers, they “might never have been fully incorporated [into the British army] if not for a long fiction of recruiting ‘only’ Protestants in Ireland.”⁴⁰ The British army, needing manpower “brought more and more Irish Catholics into the British army,” because Britain took the soldiers available to her. By 1757, Irish soldiers comprised 27.5 percent of the British Army and although it cannot be said for certain how many of them

⁴⁰ Wayne E. Lee, “Subjects, Clients, Allies, or Mercenaries? The British Use of Irish and Amerindian Military Power, 1500-1800,” in *Britain’s Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds, C.1550-1850*, ed. H. V. Bowen, Elizabeth Mancke, and John G. Reid (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 180.

were Catholic, the high proportion of Catholics in Ireland suggests that many would have been.⁴¹ Similarly, Scotsmen composed a significant part of the British army during the Seven Years' War. Between 1756 and 1763, the British raised nine new regiments of Scottish Highlanders.⁴² Scholars debate the number of Scottish Catholics in the eighteenth century, estimating them at about 2 percent of Scotland's total population, but likely underreported as the Catholic Church had been outlawed in Scotland since the Scottish Reformation in 1560.⁴³

From a British vantage point, removing Catholic Scots and Irish from the British Isles, where they might be exploited or hired as mercenaries by the French or Spanish, might be desirable. For Scottish Catholics, serving in the British army may have actually reduced their encounters with anti-popery, which was severe in Scotland in this period as the dominant Presbyterian Church of Scotland was extremely intolerant. These factors pushed the British to make exceptions for Catholic Scots and Irish during the Seven Years' War by allowing them to serve in the British army, while officially maintaining that they recruited only Protestants.

Indigenous North Americans

Indigenous North Americans were ascribed the same religious leaning as the empire with which they most closely associated. Like the Scots and Irish in the British army who were presumed to be Protestants, Indigenous peoples, including members of the Wabanaki Confederacy and Wendats, who had relationships with the French, were

⁴¹ Lee, "Subjects, Clients, Allies, or Mercenaries?" 194-95.

⁴² Matthew P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America* (Yale University Press, 2015), 47.

⁴³ Clotilde Prunier, "Aliens and Outlaws Rather Than Subjects and Citizens;? (The Image and Identity of) Catholics in Eighteenth-Century Scotland," *Scottish Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 39-40.

assumed to be Catholics— albeit not necessarily “true” Christians, but associated closely enough that French priests were thought to influence in their decisions.⁴⁴ The binary that positioned French Catholics and British Protestants as mutually exclusive gave credence to the colonial worldview that Indigenous Catholic converts were controlled by the French, and that the French used missionaries to control Indigenous people.

Rev. Aaron Burr, for example, believed that the French generated religious influence among Indigenous North Americans as a means to gain control over their diplomatic relationships. In Burr’s 1755 sermon *A Discourse Delivered at New-Ark [NJ]*, he claimed that the French kept “Missionaries constantly among them [Britain’s Indigenous neighbours], to inculcate the distinguishing Principles of their Religion [popery]; and what appears still more important in their Eyes, to infuse into their Minds, Prejudices against the English, and attach them to the French Interest.”⁴⁵ By Burr’s logic, the French were using the pretense of sending missionaries to non-Christian peoples to draw Britain’s Indigenous allies away. It was a popular belief at this time that Indigenous religious practices correlated with diplomatic allegiances, amplifying suspicions about Britain’s Indigenous neighbours, including some members of the Haudenosaunee.

Burr believed that since the Treaty of Aix-la-Chappell in 1748, French missionaries “have been unwearied in their Pains . . . in alienating their [Indigenous peoples’] Affections from us.” As proof of this strategy, Burr noted that the French asked the British for “Liberty to send Missionaries among the *Six Nations*, and have lately sent

⁴⁴ It was held by many, though not all, that Indigenous peoples could never be “true” Christians because they could never be fully British, and some believed that only fully assimilated individuals could be considered “genuine Christians,” as explained by John C. Hawley. For more refer to: John C. Hawley, *Christian Encounters with the Other* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 1–16.

⁴⁵ Burr, *A Discourse Delivered at New-Ark*, 18.

them an *Invitation* to come and settle at *Canada*.” This French action made Burr uneasy because the British colonial “Frontiers [were] constantly exposed to all the *barbarous Cruelties*, which wo[e]ful Experience hath taught us, those *savage* People, under the Influence of *French Policy*, are capable of committing.”⁴⁶ Like French Catholics, Indigenous Catholics were understood to be Britain’s innate enemies, compounding erroneous assumptions about their culture and race.⁴⁷

The ways that contemporaries worked religious and ethnic “others” into their binary British Protestant—French Catholic worldview indicate that political allegiances mattered as much as religious identities in how they were presented in anti-papist discourses. Anglo-Catholics and Indigenous peoples were considered easily manipulated by French Catholics and conflating these categories of difference posed little risk for British Protestant critics. Huguenots escaped biases about their French ethnicity by strategically adopting British and Dutch cultural traits and emphasising their shared Protestant identity with other British colonists. Irish and Scottish Catholics serving in the British army escaped discrimination because Britons ignored their Catholic religion because to acknowledge it might prevent them from serving. This ability to make exceptions for political convenience would reappear as Britons and American rebels renegotiated their position on French Catholics after fighting started in 1775.

⁴⁶ Burr, *A Discourse Delivered at New-Ark*, 18.

⁴⁷ This assumption would be challenged following 1763 and leading into the era of the American Revolution, as many of the Catholic Indigenous communities that had military and economic relationships with France would develop relationships with Britain or the American rebels.

Legacies of the Seven Years' War

Despite the low probability that Catholics posed a real threat to Protestants in North America after the Treaty of Paris in 1763, British colonists continued to rail against tolerance for the Catholic religion. In the wake of the Seven Years' War, settlers from the ceded territories of Québec and Florida dramatically increased the Catholic populations within Britain's territories in North America, and official tolerance for their religion made Protestant North Americans uneasy.⁴⁸ During this period of relative peace between Catholic and Protestant colonies, anti-papists railed against supposed plots by Catholic French *Canadiens* to undo Protestant power in New England and the middle colonies. This strident anti-Catholic rhetoric, however, drew on memories of Catholic plots from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and the sixteenth century Wars of Religion, more than on evidence of contemporary plots. Indigenous peoples posed a more substantial threat to British Protestants, especially those who lived on the frontier and encroached unwelcomed into Indigenous territories.

One way the British sought to reduce this threat was by sending Protestant, usually Anglican, missionaries to Indigenous North Americans, especially those who had allied with France in the recent conflict. In 1770, Charles Inglis explained that the most effective way to ensure Haudenosaunee loyalty to the British would be by "proselytizing them to Christianity, as professed by the Church of England."⁴⁹ An aspect of these

⁴⁸ Curran, *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783*, esp. 226. Curran estimates that French Catholics from these former French territories tripled the Catholic population within British North America.

⁴⁹ Ruma Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013), 42.; Inglis, 15 June 1770, *Life and Letters of Charles Inglis: His Ministry in America and Consecration as First Colonial Bishop, from 1759 to 1787*, edited by John Wolfe Lydekker (London: Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, 1936), 101.

missions was sincere concern for the welfare and the salvation of Indigenous peoples, however, they also provided a moral justification that colonists found compelling for legitimating their presence in North America, and intruding unwelcomed into Indigenous territories.⁵⁰

Intolerance towards non-Indigenous Catholics continued, despite the lack of a serious Catholic enemy to British colonists. In Samuel Cooper's last explicitly anti-Catholic sermon, "A Discourse on the Man of Sin," delivered in September 1773, he reminded his fellow Protestants of the "Romish Bishop, and...Popish colony, not far from us." French *Canadien* Catholics were no longer a threat to British sovereignty in North America, yet Cooper warned that they were undermining the Protestant faith itself, because "instead of the advancement of protestant truth, since its [Canada's] subjection to the British government, numbers have been perverted from our own profession."⁵¹ In Cooper's estimation, Catholic priests remained a threat to the Anglo-American colonists because they had become proficient in converting good Protestants into papists. Scholars, including Owen Stanwood, suggest a lapse in anti-Catholic expression in the period following the Seven Years' War, but Cooper sought to reaffirm these sentiments, warning that "popery, deceitfully assuming a milder form, seems to be less dreaded and abhorred than it once was."⁵² He continued, encouraging Protestant colonists to "be upon our guard, and remembering it is popery still, be prepared to oppose it in every form."⁵³

⁵⁰ Hawley, *Christian Encounters with the Other*, 1–5.

⁵¹ Samuel Cooper, *A Discourse on the Man of Sin; Delivered in the Chapel of Harvard College, in Cambridge, New-England, September 1, 1773. At the Lecture Founded by the Hon. Paul Dudley, Esq.*, Second (Boston: Mills and Hicks, 1774), 57.

⁵² Stanwood, "Catholics, Protestants, and the Clash of Civilizations in Early America."

⁵³ Cooper, *A Discourse on the Man of Sin*, 57.

Cooper's warnings would be heeded when, just a few months later in June 1774, the Quebec Act received royal assent.

Conclusion

In surviving printed sermons from the years after 1763, Protestant clergy seem to have used less anti-Catholic rhetoric than in the former decade, a trend that other historians have interpreted to indicate a decline in anti-Catholic sentiments. The upsurge after the passage of the Quebec Act in 1774 offers a serious qualification to that assessment, as will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. What the rhetoric of the war years and afterwards indicates is how almost viscerally embedded anti-papist sentiment was in British North American culture. Indeed, the repeated references to murderous Catholic rampages against Protestants during the French Wars of Religion two centuries earlier, also suggests that it had become disconnected from its historical context. With the intensification of imperial tensions in the following decade, and the need for restive colonists to court the support of Catholics in North America, particularly French and Indigenous Catholics, religious and political leaders began to question how anti-Catholic rhetoric was being used.

III. “It is the Glory of the British Soldier, that, he is the Defender, not the Destroyer, of the Civil and Religious Rights of the People”¹: Responses to the Quebec Act and the Rise of “Religious Tolerance”

In 1775, an anonymous author identified only as “an Old Soldier” addressed a broadside to the British soldiers “about to embark for America,” in an attempt to persuade them not to venture out on a mission “to compel [their] Fellow Subjects there to submit to Popery and Slavery.” He warned his readers against the “Arts [that would] no doubt be used to persuade [them], that it [was their] Duty to obey Orders; and that [they were being] sent upon the just and righteous Errand of crushing Rebellion.” Seeing through these ‘mistruths,’ the author reminded the British soldiers that the Americans had been so “ill treated, as to make Resistance necessary.” Finally, he appealed to their “Honour... as Soldiers,” and their “Humanity as Men,” qualities that should preclude them from being “the Instruments of forcing Chains upon [their] injured and oppressed Fellow Subjects.”² While the text of this broadside suggests that it was published in Britain and was perhaps distributed to soldiers embarking for the colonies, the Library of Congress’s archivists place its origins in Massachusetts where it circulated among American rebels and the British soldiers posted there. The author invoked anti-Catholic tropes decrying British soldiers’ complacency in becoming “Instruments of Oppression.” In the words of the broadside’s author, soldiers were embedding Catholicism in British North America by enforcing the Quebec Act, and the preceding 1760 Capitulation of Montréal and 1763 Treaty of Paris, and thereby enforcing French *Canadiens*’ right to

¹ Title quote from: “Address to the Soldiers.,” 1775, Library of Congress, Broadside, leaflets, and pamphlets from America and Europe, Portfolio 38, Folder 30a, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.0380300a/?st=text>.

² “Address to the Soldiers.”

practice Catholicism. In the author's view, the "Establishment of Popery and Arbitrary Power in one Half of their Country," in other words, in Quebec and the Ohio and Illinois Country, was detrimental to Protestantism in North America because Catholics, by nature, would perfidiously seek to oppress and destroy Protestants.³

Provisions for the free practice of Catholicism in the former French territories of North America had been in place for over a decade before this address was written. The Capitulation of Montréal outlined the terms agreed to when the French command surrendered not just the city in 1760 but the entire jurisdiction of New France. The twenty-seventh article of the Capitulation guaranteed that "The free exercise of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Religion, shall subsist entire, in such manner that all the states and the people of the Towns and countries, places and distant posts, shall continue to assemble in the churches, and to frequent the sacraments as heretofore, without being molested in any manner, directly or indirectly."⁴ The fourth article of the 1763 Treaty of Paris that formally ended the Seven Years' War reinforced these terms and granted "the liberty of the Catholick religion to the inhabitants of Canada," such that "Roman Catholic subjects may profess the worship of their religion according to the rites of the Romish church, as far as the laws of Great Britain permit."⁵ The Quebec Act implemented statutory protection to Roman Catholicism in Québec and overrode the provision in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 that royally guaranteed an assembly in all settler colonies.

³ "Address to Soldiers."

⁴ "Articles of Capitulation Between Their Excellencies Major General Amherst, Commander in Chief of His Britannic Majesty's Troops and Forces in North-American, on the One Part, and the Marquis de Vaudreuil, & c. Governor and Lieutenant-General for the King in Canada, on the Other.," September 8, 1760, 14, Archives de Montreal, <http://archivesdemontreal.com/documents/2010/09/capitulationmtl.pdf>.

⁵ "The Definitive Treaty of Peace and Friendship between His Britannick Majesty, the Most Christian King, and the King of Spain. Concluded at Paris the 10th Day of February, 1763. To Which the King of Portugal Acceded on the Same Day. (Printed from the Copy.)," February 10, 1763, The Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris763.asp.

The danger in implementing that provision, however, was that Catholics did not have voting rights, and only incoming Protestant British settlers could be elected to the assembly. Imperial officials were concerned that these Protestant settlers would pass legislation that restricted the rights of Catholics as the Nova Scotia assembly did in its first assembly in 1758. Given the strident anti-Catholicism in the colonies, imperial officials thought that an assembly with only Protestants would violate other rights the Crown had also acknowledged *Canadiens* had, including religious rights and property rights. The 1791 Constitutional Act that divided Québec into the colonies of Lower Canada and Upper Canada would restore the Proclamation's provision for an assembly and grant Catholics voting rights, while at the same time creating colonies with Catholic and Protestant majorities, respectively, precisely because of concerns with possible tensions in inter-religious relations.

The Quebec Act marked a shift in British policy towards religious tolerance within the former French Catholic province.⁶ The Act made provision for “the [former] Subjects of *France*,” who chose to remain in the now British territories south of the Great Lakes along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, called the Ohio Country and Illinois Country [Pays des Illinois] by the French, that had not been provided for by the 1763 Royal Proclamation. Under this Act, Québec's expanded territory encompassed land that had been reserved for Indigenous peoples under the 1763 Royal Proclamation.⁷ The Act also granted “his Majesty's Subjects, professing the Religion of the Church of Rome of

⁶ Phillip Lawson, *The Imperial Challenge: Quebec and Britain in the Age of the American Revolution*, 1990, 127.

⁷ *An Act for Making More Effectual the Provision for the Government of the Province of Quebec in North America* (Quebec: Printed by William Brown, 1774), 6. The boundaries defined by the Quebec Act state that the Province was to be have a “Western Boundary strike the Ohio...[extending] to the Banks of the Mississippi, and Northward to the Southern Boundary of the Territory granted to the Merchants Adventurers of England, trading to Hudson's Bay.”

and in the said Province of Quebec,” the privilege to “have, hold, and enjoy, the free Exercise of the Religion of the Church of Rome, subject to the King’s Supremacy.” This Act also introduced an oath in Québec to replace the oath required by the Test Act of 1673 that barred Catholics from holding office in British dominions.⁸

Many British American colonists decried the Act. In line with the anti-papist traditions popularised during the Seven Years’ War, the legal practice and growth of Catholicism were considered dangerous to Protestants in British North America. The Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia in September 1774, contended the Quebec Act’s provisions to expand Catholic civil rights “in that extensive country now called Canada, is dangerous in an extreme degree to the protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America.” So great was the threat, Congress asserted, that “we are indispensibly [sic] obliged to take all proper measures for our security.”⁹ These anti-papist arguments made by the Continental Congress against the Quebec Act added fuel to growing resentment and fears about the long-term consequences of British rule in North America.

Whereas North Americans had formerly used anti-Catholicism to oppose Catholic imperial rivals and to spur Protestants to enlist to serve during the Seven Years’ War, anti-papist sentiments following the Quebec Act were directed against the British Ministry and Parliament. Not only did they give Catholics in Québec unprecedented statutory protections, but in the eyes of colonial critics, the British Ministry and

⁸ According to Donald Fyson, the Test Act was not enforced in Québec due, in part, to the vast imbalance between Protestant and Catholic subjects. Donald Fyson, “The Royal Proclamation and the Canadiens,” *Active History* (blog), October 1, 2013, <http://activehistory.ca/2013/10/the-royal-proclamation-and-the-canadiens/>.

⁹ “Proceedings of the General Congress of Delegates from the Several British Colonies in North-America, Held in Philadelphia, September, 1774,” 1774, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.10700600/?sp=1>.

Parliament were acting in ways that colonists considered arbitrary and capricious, ways that they associated with Catholic governing regimes. The territorial expansion of the British Empire with the Seven Years' War and the absorption of Catholic subjects forced a reconsideration of Catholic rights in the colonies, particularly in Québec. The Quebec Act effectively codified a policy that had until then been less visibly defined. In turn, it obliged all Protestant British subjects to reconsider the British Protestant—French Catholic binary that had defined their experience for most of two centuries. What resulted was a fracturing of that binary as different constituent groups in the British Empire crafted new framings of an old question. The metropolitan position was encapsulated in the Quebec Act; Catholics in Québec would have constitutionally protected religious and political rights. American rebels who considered the Quebec Act one of the “Intolerable Acts” and continued to use anti-papist language to oppose its terms, especially its sections that legally protected the practice of Roman Catholicism. American loyalists, exemplified by men like Charles Inglis, chose to temper their culturally embedded anti-Catholicism by humanising *Canadiens* and asked their fellow Protestants to imagine being in the position of the *Canadiens*, a minority people in an overwhelmingly Protestant world. Rather than fear their former Catholic enemies, they should realise they were no longer a threat and accept their presence in a transformed Empire.

Responses to the Quebec Act

Some of the Act's opposers, including John Lathrop (1739-1816), deployed anti-Catholic tropes regarding the British monarchy to rally their readers to defy its legitimacy. In a sermon delivered on June 6, 1774, Lathrop, a Congregationalist minister from the Second Church in Boston, used historical memory of the Glorious Revolution to

suggest that anyone unopposed to the Quebec Act could be equated with a Jacobite rebel, a supporter of the Catholic Stuarts. This loaded statement conflated multiple historic events, including James II's abdication during the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and various Jacobite uprisings and rebellions between 1688 and 1745. The Glorious Revolution replaced the Catholic British monarch, James II of England and VII of Scotland with his Protestant daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange, a Protestant Dutch prince. William of Orange's arrival in England with troops to intimidate his father-in-law into disavowing Catholicism, instead resulted in James fleeing to France. Commentators presented William's arrival to the British public as a revolution rather than an invasion and overthrowing of the monarchy to smooth the transition from a Catholic monarch, James II and VII, to his Protestant deposed, Mary II and William III. The Jacobite rebellions, occurring between 1688 and 1745, sought first to restore James II to the throne, and subsequently his direct Catholic descendants, following the 1701 Act of Settlement which barred Catholics from acceding to the English throne.

Lathrop said that it was "astonishing that the advocates for passive-obedience and non-resistance, [i.e., people who often became loyalists] can, with any tolerable countenance, profess their loyalty to George the III^d." In Lathrop's understanding, it was only by Parliament's militant stand "opposing the *Stuart* family, [that] the British crown was given to the House of *Hanover*."¹⁰ Without resistance, the British Crown would likely have become Catholic again, and George III's family line would not reign as English royalty. In Lathrop's view, those who supported passive obedience to the Quebec Act "would probably be the first to assist a Roman Catholic pretender on his way to the

¹⁰ John Lathrop, *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honorable-Artillery Company* (Kneeland & Davis for Webb, 1774), 23, Massachusetts Historical Society.

throne.” By this logic, anyone who did not openly oppose the Quebec Act would likewise have not opposed James II and VII, whose descendants were called “pretenders” because their claim to the throne was seen as invalid due to their Catholic faith.¹¹

British North Americans shared these vehement anti-papist sentiments widely and they were not limited to American rebels. Many who would remain loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution were critical of the Quebec Act’s tolerance to Catholicism—including Samuel Sherwood (1730-1783), a minister from Weston Connecticut. In 1774 Sherwood spoke against the “doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, so zealously preached up by some artful and designing men, who act as creatures of the state, and probably expect high honours and promotions from a corrupt ministry.” He called this doctrine “unfriendly and injurious to the king, as it is dangerous to the rights and liberties of his subjects.”¹² Similar to the language used during the Seven Years’ War, Sherwood called “all the good protestants in this land [North America]; notwithstanding lesser differences among them; that we may stand or fall together.”¹³ As in earlier eighteenth-century wars, anti-Catholicism became the banner under which all Protestant denominations could stand against the Quebec Act. In this instance, however, the Catholic threat was not the French empire or the continent’s northern inhabitants—the threat came from the British Parliament whose actions were perceived to endanger the Protestant colonists’ safety and security.

¹¹ Lathrop, *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honorable-Artillery Company*, 23.

¹² Samuel Sherwood, “Scriptural Instructions to Civil Rulers, and All Freeborn Subjects,” in *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*, ed. Ellis Sandoz, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), 396.

¹³ Sherwood, 405.

Sherwood's response to the Quebec Act, and echoes of it throughout the Protestant colonies, suggest that—while policy-makers in Britain were open to (limited) Catholic tolerance in North America—anti-papist sympathies remained deeply entrenched among Anglo-North Americans. The culturally embedded and widely perceived antithesis between British Protestant and French Catholic worldviews that had been important during imperial conflicts like the Seven Years' War continued to inform American beliefs about Catholicism even after the French imperial threat on the Protestant colonies diminished. Purveyors of this extreme rhetoric neglected to acknowledge that British lawmakers were legally bound to honour the tolerance for French Catholic religion that had been internationally negotiated under, first, the 1760 Capitulation of Montréal and then the 1763 Treaty of Paris. The Quebec Act did not threaten Protestantism, either in Quebec or elsewhere in British America; indeed, it explicitly made provision for the “Encouragement of the Protestant Religion, and for the Maintenance and Support of a Protestant Clergy within the said Province,” as deemed necessary by the King or his successors.

Political elites in Britain were unswayed by the widespread disapproval of the Quebec Act in the old seaboard colonies. They understood the Quebec Act as a necessary measure to honour British commitments to French *Canadiens* in the Capitulation of Montréal and Treaty of Paris and to define statutorily the Catholic Church's power. In no way was it a compromise of their Protestant values. Sir Thomas Bernard (1750-1818)—an English social reformer whose father, Sir Francis Bernard, had been governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay—was an advocate for the Quebec Act. In a speech, “An Appeal to the Public; Stating and Considering the Objections to the Quebec Bill,”

originally delivered in front of the British Parliament, Bernard spoke against the arguments raised in opposition to the Quebec Act.¹⁴ According to Bernard, his “endeavour [was] to oppose the popular *prejudices* which we have seen so potently to militate against this Bill, both with those who through ignorance have misunderstood it, or through malevolence have misrepresented it.” Bernard’s speech addressed myths circulated by anti-Catholics in North America by explaining several measures taken by the British Parliament to ensure Protestantism’s supremacy over Catholicism. According to Bernard, while the bill “grant[ed] a *toleration* of the exercise of their [the Catholic] religion,” this was “*subject to the King’s Supremacy*,” and did not eliminate the favour for or “encouragement of the *Protestant* religion there [in Quebec].”¹⁵ Tolerance for Catholics, he stressed, was not a compromise of the Crown’s Protestant values.

Bernard went on to clarify the Quebec Act’s details, including that it “does not, in infraction of the very *treaty* which ceded the country to us, compel these mistaken, yet believing, Christians to sacrifice the prejudices, the faith, the religion, they were born in, at the shrine of a superstitious and intolerant hierarchy.” The British were not simply granting privileges to the French Catholics in Quebec, as the sermons by Lathrop and Sherwood implied, they were fulfilling the obligations outlined by the 1763 Treaty of Paris. Bernard also made an appeal to emotion when he asked his readers to join him and “put ourselves, for a moment, in the situation of our conquered Canadian subjects.”¹⁶

Unlike the anti-Catholic rhetoric that dehumanised papists as an “other,” Bernard asked

¹⁴ The authorship of this speech is disputed—the speech is often attributed to Sir Thomas Bernard, though it has also been suggested that Sir Francis Bernard or Sir Robert Bernard authored it.

¹⁵ Thomas Bernard, *An appeal to the public; stating and considering the objections to the Quebec bill: inscribed and dedicated to the patriotic society of the bill of rights* (T. Payne, 1774), 9–10, Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹⁶ Bernard, 15, 35.

his readers to empathise with them. “To them,” Bernard continued, “*their laws, their usages, their rights, their possessions, are equally dear as ours are to us.*” Moreover, “*their religion is much dearer, through mistaken zeal, which unhappily misleads them.*”¹⁷ Bernard’s published speech presented French *Canadiens* as unfortunately misled, having been born into the wrong empire and unwittingly exposed to manipulative Catholic propaganda as a result—a strong step away from the rhetoric about French *Canadiens* that had been popular in prior decades.

While Bernard’s speech is loaded with emotionally charged language, it is language that cautions against a rush to judgement. Lathrop and Sherwood, in contrast, deployed words like “corrupt” or “tyrannical,” and thereby provided a judgement and an expectation that their readers would accept it uncritically. Bernard chastises critics like Lathrop and Sherwood for acting in “ignorance” and on their “prejudices,” and encouraged Americans to replace these biases with empathy. Bernard sought to bridge the divide between the “in-group” and “out-group” through appeals to empathy, whereas Sherwood and Lathrop reinforced the Catholic—Protestant binary and thus justified the hostility of Protestants for anything Catholic. In the polarised religious environment of eighteenth-century Anglo-North America, Bernard’s speech delivered a less appealing argument.

Despite calls for empathy to French *Canadiens*, many British Protestant colonists continued to be openly hostile to Catholics in the wake of the Quebec Act. In Charles Inglis’s New York, “No Popery” was the cry on the streets, as well as the motto displayed

¹⁷ Bernard, *An appeal to the public; stating and considering the objections to the Quebec bill*, 35-36.

on the first Liberty flag hoisted there.¹⁸ The widespread anti-Catholic rhetoric found throughout the colonies at this time was regularly freshened by Protestant clergy from their pulpits. Not all Anglo-North Americans, however, thought that the concerns raised in response to the Quebec Act were justified. Charles Inglis's 1776 pamphlet, *The Deceiver Unmasked*, addressed the myth that "the Quebec bill" was "proof of [the King's papistry]." One element of this rumour was that George III had violated his 1760 coronation oath in order to ensure "popery was established in Canada."¹⁹ For instance, in a meeting held on the 29th April 1775 Isaac Low, a merchant from New York who was active among the rebel leadership in the late 1760s-1770s, called George III "a Roman Catholic tyrant" who had "broken his coronation oath."²⁰ Inglis, in contrast, argued that "it is past any doubt, that the king did not in the least violate his coronation oath by assenting to that bill." After examining the oath itself, Inglis insisted that "the reader must see that it has no more relation to the state of religion in Canada, a conquered country, than to the state of religion in Minorca, a conquered island, the inhabitants of which are papists, and enjoy as great, if not greater privileges than the Canadians." Inglis clarified that he, like most Anglo-American colonists, "dislike[d] the bill," but that his objection was "chiefly because it vests the governor and his council with exorbitant power," whereas a significant proportion of Anglo-America's outcry had been to reject the bill's position on Catholicism and the extended territory it granted to the Province of Québec.²¹

¹⁸ "The Catholic Loyalist Highlanders of the Mohawk Valley," *The American Catholic Historical Researches* 4, no. 3 (1908): 233.

¹⁹ Charles Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked; or, Loyalty and Interest United: In Answer to a Pamphlet Entitled Common Sense* (New York: Published by Samuel Loudon, 1776), 53–54.

²⁰ In Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America*, 4; Jason K. Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?: The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 35.

²¹ Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked*, 53–54, 55.

Inglis considered the idea that George III had violated his coronation oath by granting rights to Catholics in Québec preposterous, but this notion was not as absurd as he suggested. Great Britain faced similar problems in Ireland. Ireland's population was approximately seventy-five percent Catholic, and the question of Catholic Emancipation became a pressing debate in the late eighteenth century. The Prime Minister at that time, William Pitt the Younger, proposed that Emancipation should accompany the Act of Union (1800). According to biographer Antonia Fraser, George III refused to support Catholic Emancipation in Ireland because he thought that doing so would violate his coronation oath in which he promised to protect the Church of England.²² This may at first appear inconsistent with his willingness to support the Quebec Act in 1774, but, whereas the Quebec Act honoured two international agreements, the 1800 Act of Union was solely a domestic policy. George III's promise to protect the Church of England applied differently in Ireland than it had in Québec because the former, in addition to being closer to England than Québec, was not necessitated by law as it had been in Québec's case. Thereby, even while Inglis interpreted the coronation oath's terms to have nothing within them that would prevent the King from granting Catholic rights in Québec, the King's interpretation of the oath was that it applied differently depending upon political circumstance and necessity. Interestingly, this provides an example where the British made accommodations for the Catholic problem they faced in North America following the Seven Years' War, but that the King was unwilling to make for Catholics when he was not legally bound to do so just a few decades later.

²² Antonia Fraser, *The King and the Catholics: England, Ireland, and the Fight for Religious Freedom, 1780-1829* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2018), esp. 111-155.

Inglis also challenged the inflammatory charge that George III could be considered a papist sympathiser. In his opinion, the Quebec Act was not overly favourable to French Catholics in Québec. Inglis explained this rationale, saying “the popish clergy of Canada, complain of the bill, and think themselves in a worse situation by it, than the articles of capitulation and surrender left to them.”²³ By Inglis’s logic, by statutorily defining the powers of the Catholic Church in Québec, the Quebec Act limited the more open-ended rights the British had acknowledged in the 1760 Capitulation of Montreal and 1763 Treaty of Paris. Rather than favouring French Catholicism in Canada in 1774, the monarch had contributed to limiting it. While John Lathrop and Samuel Sherwood made appeals to their congregants’ existing anti-Catholic biases and used moral-emotional language to push parishioners uncritically towards their conclusions, Inglis’s arguments were constitutionally informed and based on an understanding of Britain’s obligations to the *Canadiens*.

Despite the open anti-papistry that followed the Quebec Act, American rebels were forced to back away from anti-Catholic rhetoric in anticipation of an alliance with France and their intention of convincing Québec to join the rebellion. They intentionally primed their supporters for the Franco-American alliance by rejecting open displays of anti-French Catholic sympathies. George Washington, for example, attempted to ban the observance of Guy Fawkes Day—known in the colonies as Pope’s Day or Pope’s Night—in November of 1775, not coincidentally as Continental troops were marching to Québec in an attempt to secure that colony’s support for their cause.²⁴ Pope’s Day was an

²³ Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked*, 53–54.

²⁴ Robert Emmett Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies: Catholics in Protestant America, 1605-1791: A Documentary History* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 229.

annual celebration on November 5th when British colonists commemorated the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, an assassination attempt on King James I by a group of English Catholics. The celebration was extremely popular among the lower classes in both Britain and North America and is still celebrated in Britain to this day. In many former British colonies, like Newfoundland, this tradition survives as “Bonfire Night,” rather than Pope’s Night.²⁵

In 1775, Washington ridiculed the colonists for observing that “ridiculous and childish custom of burning the effigy of the Pope” and expressed “his surprise that there should be officers and soldiers in this army so void of common sense as not to see the impropriety of such a step at this juncture.” To put an end to this open display of intolerance was imperative, as Washington expressed, “at a time when we [the Congress] are soliciting, and have really obtained the friendship and alliance of the people of Canada...At this juncture and under such circumstances to be insulting their religion is so monstrous as not to be suffered or excused.”²⁶ Patriot attempts to back-peddle open displays of anti-popery began soon after the Quebec Act, according to Robert Emmett Curran, because the patriots were seeking not only to convince the French *Canadiens* to join their cause, but also because they had set their sights on an alliance with France.²⁷

Congress’s desire to back away from the strident anti-Catholicism of prior decades is shown in Washington’s instruction—that, “instead of offering the most remote insult, it is our duty to address public thanks to these our brethren, as to them we are

²⁵ For more on Pope’s Day refer to: James Sharpe, *Remember, Remember: A Cultural History of Guy Fawkes Day* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005): esp. 8-37, 107-137. Pope’s day is also referred to as Pope’s Night or Guy Fawkes Day.

²⁶ George Washington, General Orders, 5 November 1775, in *The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 2, 16 September 1775–31 December 1775*, ed. Philander D. Chase (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), 300–301.

²⁷ Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies*, 229.

indebted for every late happy success on the common enemy in Canada.”²⁸ As Curran suggests, Congress sought to assure Catholic *Canadiens* that the emerging nation would not be a “Protestant republic.” It would be to the benefit of rebels to outwardly demonstrate that Catholicism and French ethnicity would not be oppressed in the United Colonies.²⁹ The term “outwardly” is significant in this case because to “tolerate” does not necessarily mean to “accept.” Anti-Catholic prejudices did not evaporate with Washington’s injunction to suppress expression of these sentiments. *Vis-à-vis Canadiens* and the French government which had begun surreptitiously aiding the Americans, it applied. But for Catholic religious “others” who fell outside the rebels’ tactical objectives—Indigenous, Scots, and Irish peoples—tolerance was not a priority, and indeed those groups became targets for Protestants’ deep-seeded cultural antipathies to Catholics.

Limited Accommodations: Responses to Indigenous Catholics

Despite a show of tolerance for French *Canadien* Catholicism among American rebels, they objected to the presence of Catholic missionaries among Indigenous nations throughout the duration of the American Revolution. Rebel commissioners denied Indigenous nations within the territories they controlled access to priests and sought to place Protestant missionaries from their own ranks among Indigenous nations, especially those that had formerly associated closely with the French in North America. In a conference between the Wolastoqiyik and Mi’kmaq and rebel commissioners on July 10, 1776, the Indigenous representatives made it clear that they wanted “a Father or French

²⁸ George Washington, General Orders, 5 November 1775.

²⁹ Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies*, 229.

Priest.” They repeated this sentiment and specified that “we want a French house of a Priest.” Rebel delegates responded that:

We are glad to see you have such a regard for Religion, and are ready to furnish you with a Priest to assist you in your prayers, and teach you the true Religion, but we do not know that we can get a French Priest. If one of our Priests would be agreeable to you, we will endeavour to get you one and will take care he be a good Man.³⁰

Importantly, the commissioners almost certainly intended to provide the Wolastoqiyik and Mi’kmaq with an Anglican or Congregationalist priest, not a Catholic priest.³¹

This suspicion is justified by the commissioners’ choice of words. They agreed to provide a “priest” to the Wolastoqiyik and Mi’kmaq delegates to teach them the “true religion,” implying that the Mi’kmaq had been exposed to an “untrue” religion, referring to Roman Catholicism, Indigenous spirituality, or both. This wording suggests that the commissioners were willing to provide them with a Protestant minister, not a Catholic priest. Similar language was used previously when the Penobscot appealed to the Governor of Massachusetts Bay regarding the same issue on September 17, 1763. Toma, the delegate from the Penobscot, stated “Brother I want you to help me on account of religion... it is a Friar we want.”³² The Governor responded with a question: “will no

³⁰ “A Conference Held at Watertown in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay between the Honorable the Council of the Said Colony on Behalf of the Said Colony and of All the United Colonies on the One Part and the Delegates of the St. Johns and Mickmac Tribes of Indians in Nova Scotia on the Other Part,” July 10, 1776, 502, 505, 511, Massachusetts Archives Collection Database (1629-1799), Massachusetts State Archives.

³¹ While many Episcopalians, the American branch of Anglicanism, still call their clergy priests, most Protestant denominations now prefer the term “pastor” or “minister.” In the eighteenth century it should not be assumed that “priest” refers to a Catholic clergyman as it could refer to either Protestant or Catholic clergy.

³² “A Conference Held at Fort Pownall on Saturday Sep 17, 1763 between His Excellency the Governor & Toma,” September 17, 1763, 489, Massachusetts Archives Collection Database (1629-1799), Massachusetts State Archives, <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ArchivesSearch/RevolutionaryDetail.aspx?VolNbr=014&Page=713>.

Priest do but a Romish Priest,” which is to say, a Catholic priest.³³ In both these meetings, commissioners sought to place a Protestant minister among Indigenous neighbours, seemingly intending to reduce, if not replace, Penobscot, Wolastoqiyik, and Mi’kmaq connections to Canada.

Commissioners’ meetings with the Penobscot on July 20, 1776, just ten days after the July 10 conference with the Wolastoqiyik and Mi’kmaq, gives further substance to this suspicion. The Penobscot delegates asked to be allowed to “get a Priest to our liking” from Canada, explaining that they were grieved to “have been destitute of a Priest these Twenty Years” because they couldn’t “pray to God as we used to do” and their “young people have not been baptized.” The commissioners refused to give them a direct response. On July 22, 1776, the Penobscot renewed their requests to be allowed to go to Canada to choose a priest to live among them. They stated: “All that we want to be satisfied in is the assurance from you that we might have a Priest to set down quietly among us. We have repeatedly pray’d for one and could not obtain our Request.” They continued, saying, “the Consequence will be if there is no Jesuit sent among us the Young People will go to Canada and they might be brought over to act against the Colonies.” The threat behind this statement is clear: either the commissioners would let the Penobscot obtain a French priest, or they may lose them as a peaceable neighbour. The Penobscot representatives reassured the commissioners, “but haveing [sic] a Priest among us they [the young people] should be quiet.”³⁴ The Penobscot’s response indicates

³³ “A Conference Held at Fort Pownall on Saturday Sep 17, 1763 between His Excellency the Governor & Toma,” 489.

³⁴ Benjamin Greenleaf, “Conference with the Penobscot Tribe, July 1776,” July 20, 1776, 505, 530, 534, Massachusetts Archives Collection Database (1629-1799), Massachusetts State Archives.

that they were aware of Protestant assumptions about Indigenous peoples' politics and knew how to use them to their advantage in negotiations.

The commissioners' response appears to have been carefully concocted. Rather than rejecting the Penobscot's ultimatum, they stalled their response. They refused to directly answer the Penobscot's demands for a priest by saying that they: "Desire that all Men may live in the full enjoyment of all their Rights civil and religious [but] however just and reasonable the above mentioned Requests may be it is not in our Power to grant full Relief as the General Court is not sitting and we are only a Part of the Legislature." They promised to put the matter forward at the end of the following month on behalf of the Penobscot, eager to "promote your Peace, pleasure and happiness, and to live by you as Friends." Rather than waiting for the General Court to agree to the plan proposed by the Penobscot, the Indigenous delegates again asserted their intentions, saying that "We are satisfied and we will go to Canada and get a Priest."³⁵ This exchange demonstrates that the Penobscot asserted their autonomy in the light of settler attempts to suppress their Catholicism. While settler authorities ascribed political significance to religious affiliations, Indigenous Catholics rejected the idea that their religion gave the French or British control over them.

Following the Seven Years' War and entering the era of the American Revolution, rebel Indian Affairs commissioners worked to remove French Catholic missionaries from among their Indigenous neighbours, along with the priests' supposed influence over Indigenous allegiances.³⁶ They sought to place their own Protestant

³⁵ Greenleaf, "Conference Proceedings between Benjamin Greenleaf on Behalf of the Council, and the Penobscot Indians," 535.

³⁶ It is important to distinguish between British Indian Affairs Commissioners and the Continental Congress's Commissioners because their approach to Catholicism was different. William Johnston was the

missionaries among Indigenous nations instead; according to Edward E. Andrews, Protestant missionaries were considered a weapon in a war against French influence and the priests that perpetuated it.³⁷ The Penobscot, however, rejected settler assumptions that their Catholicism and desire for a priest would unduly influence their decision on whether to provide military support to one or another side; rather, they asserted that if the Americans continued to impede their ability to choose their own religion and ministers that this would have the exact effect the commissioners sought to prevent. One might assume that these concerns would have dissipated in light of the Franco-American alliance in 1778, but this was not the case. Indigenous Catholics, even those supporting the patriots, such as the Penobscot, continued to be treated as both an ethnic and religious “other,” and colonial authorities cited both of them as reasons for distrust.

Rebel intolerance for Indigenous Catholics may have contributed to the Wolastoqiyik and Mi’kmaq choice to quit supporting the rebels in 1779. That summer, the British had secured control of Penobscot Bay and surrounding territory in Maine, making visible to Wabanaki in the region that the British still had naval and military superiority in some theatres.³⁸ As Ruma Chopra has said, while the American Revolution can be imagined as a civil war between Euro-Americans, for the Indigenous nations that participated in the conflict it was largely a war for survival.³⁹ The Indigenous peoples who participated in this conflict made agreements with the settler or imperial forces that

Indian Commissioner for the northern district at this time and it appears that he and the British were agreeable to having Catholic priests among Indigenous nations, unlike their American neighbours. (William Johnson in the north and John Stuart in the south; Guy Johnson succeeded his uncle William Johnson as northern superintendent when the elder Johnson died in 1774.)

³⁷ Edward E. Andrews, *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 154.

³⁸ Daniel N. Paul, *We Were Not the Savages: A Mi’kmaq Perspective on the Collision Between European and Native American Civilizations* (2nd ed.) (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000), pp. 169–170.

³⁹ Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America*, 3.

appeared to offer a more favourable outcome for their continued autonomy and protection for their way of life—and it would be surprising if religious freedoms were not a factor in their choices.

Conversely, settler suspicions about Indigenous Catholics were almost certainly related to speculations about Indigenous morality and the belief that Indigenous peoples were susceptible to manipulation. The French government, in contrast, held the upper hand in their negotiations with the American rebels. Settlers might also have felt more secure in their dealings with Indigenous peoples due to their confidence in white supremacy. Whereas tolerance of Catholics became necessary in some circumstances, mainly in the settlers' dealings with French and British Catholics, traditional religious intolerance was perpetuated in dealings with Indigenous North Americans. The rebel commissioners' responses to Indigenous Catholic religion offers clear evidence that they did not move fully towards tolerance for Catholicism—rather, they were willing to make accommodations for Catholics when it was politically necessary to do so, but underlying attitudes towards Catholics remained largely unchanged. Whereas responses to the Quebec Act and changing approaches to French Catholicism imply that there was a shift in attitudes towards Catholics in this period, rebel approaches to Indigenous peoples' Catholic faith are inconsistent with that conclusion.

British commissioners appear to have been more accommodating of Indigenous Catholics, likely because tolerance for Indigenous Catholicism had been introduced alongside tolerance for French Catholicism. Article forty of the Capitulation of Montréal specified that “The Savages or Indian allies of his most Christian Majesty... shall have,

as well as the French, liberty of religion, and shall keep their missionaries.”⁴⁰ This agreement was honoured when, for example, General James Murray granted the Huron [Wendat] of Lorette the right to freely practice their religion in 1760. Murray explained that “the chief of the Huron Tribe of Indians... has been received under my protection with his whole tribe, and have faith no English officer or party is to molest or intercept them in returning to their settlement at Lorette and they are received upon the same terms with the Canadiens, being allowed the free exercise of their Religion.”⁴¹ While British commissioners appear to have been more accommodating of Indigenous Catholicism than their American counterparts, contentions between rebels and Indigenous Catholics indicate that ethnic categories and perceived political leverage effected how these religious identities were understood and treated. Among Protestant European settlers, the Quebec Act upended the traditional political significance ascribed to conflicting Christian denominations, leaving them reeling. The relatively simple binary of British Protestants and French Catholics (or Spanish Catholics) no longer applied, and instead would remain influx and contested into the nineteenth century.

A new religious order did not emerge to replace former imperial categories, though this did not stop advocates for the Continental Congress or Britain from attempting to make sense of changed contexts in this way. Rev. Charles Inglis, for example, believed that the religious roots of the American Revolution were clear-cut, as

⁴⁰ “Articles of Capitulation Between Their Excellencies Major General Amherst, Commander in Chief of His Britannic Majesty’s Troops and Forces in North-American, on the One Part, and the Marquis de Vaudreuil, & c. Governor and Lieutenant-General for the King in Canada, on the Other.,” 20.

⁴¹ John Cosnan, Private agreement bearing the certification of General Murray (Murray Treaty), September 5, 1760. Archives Nationales du Québec, CA ANQ-Q CN301 S99.

he explained in his 1777 pamphlet “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion in America with a short sketch of the methods most likely to secure peace of the colonies.”

A New Binary: From Anti-Catholicism to Anti-Episcopalism

According to Rev. Charles Inglis, “The Emigrants to New England were infected with those [Republican and anti-episcopal] principles” that were natural to dissenting religious denominations, “in a high Degree.” These anti-episcopal inclinations “chiefly led them to this distant continent [America], which they have always affected to consider as their peculiar inheritance, assigned to them by Heaven, & to which they had an exclusive Right & Title.”⁴² This is how Charles Inglis conceptualised the American Revolution, as well as former anti-imperial sentiments in the colonies including the response to the Quebec Act. By this logic, Inglis painted the rebellion as a dispute between misguided dissenters and the Church of England, not the colonists and imperial authority.

Historians of the American Revolution have long understood that religion played a role in the war, but—and as demonstrated by William Nelson in his 1961 study *The American Tory*—religious values did not define political leanings during the American Revolution.⁴³ According to Greg L. Frazer, “Though religious affiliation clearly played a role, it may not have been the decisive factor for many,” because “though the religious lines dividing Whigs and Tories were ‘quite clearly drawn,’ they were not drawn on

⁴² Charles Inglis, “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion in America With a Short Sketch of the Methods Most Likely to Secure the Future Peace of the Colonies, Their Dependence on Great Britain,” 1777, 40, Inglis Family Journals and Letter Books: 1755-1849, Loyalist Collection.

⁴³ William H. Nelson, *The American Tory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 81–108.

denominational borders.”⁴⁴ Ruma Chopra, similarly, concluded that even though “the Church of England supplied more loyalist spokesmen than any other single denomination, it must also be observed that the signers of the Declaration of Independence included more men of Anglican faith than any other.”⁴⁵ Additionally, Anglican representation among the loyalists must also be understood bearing in mind that many, like members of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), had sworn oaths to the King as the Church of England’s head. According to Frazer, this is why ninety percent of the SPG’s members remained loyal to the British Crown.

While there was no decisive factor that would determine how individuals aligned themselves in the American Revolution (and, indeed, many switched between rebel and loyalist leanings over the course of the war), geography seems to have played a more significant role than religion. Few Anglican ministers remained loyal in the southern and middle colonies. Less than a quarter of the Anglican ministers in Virginia and South Carolina and about forty percent in Maryland remained loyal to the Crown.⁴⁶ As for Catholics, those in Maryland almost entirely sided with the rebels, whereas Catholics in New York largely aligned with Britain, and those in Pennsylvania appeared nearly evenly divided between declaring for the rebels, loyalists, or remaining neutral.⁴⁷

The question, therefore, remains: If religious rhetoric was popularly used to justify and promote both rebel and loyalist causes, but this choice was not based on religion, what was the purpose of this religious rhetoric? Applying Tajfel’s “minimal

⁴⁴ Greg L. Frazer, *God Against the Revolution: The Loyalist Clergy’s Case Against the American Revolution* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2018), 5.

⁴⁵ Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America*, 27.

⁴⁶ Frazer, *God Against the Revolution*, 5–31.

⁴⁷ Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies*, 231.

social paradigm” would suggest that religious rhetoric was used to unify the “in-group” as morally justified while simultaneously discounting the opposing side’s reasoning. The manner in which religiously based rhetoric adapted to changing circumstances within rebel and loyalist groups offers a fascinating glimpse into the function of religious appeals to secular concerns during the Revolution as both sides made accommodations for the “other” when it suited their best interest, while condemning their opponents for doing just that.

Though the British became more tolerant of some religious “others,” Inglis’s 1777 pamphlet “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion,” reveals that he transferred some traditionally anti-Catholic tropes to Protestant dissenters. For instance, where anti-papist literature traditionally positioned Catholics as disloyal subjects because their loyalties went first to the pope, then to their king and country, Inglis suggested that dissenters were inherently inclined to rebel against Britain, just as they rejected the Church of England (and thereby the King who was its head).⁴⁸ In his 1777 pamphlet he wrote that “The Disaffection of some Colonists... [arose from their] strong Passion to realize their Republican Schemes... [and] the Views of Dissenters finally to establish their religion—for on *their* part, this is a Religious War.”⁴⁹ Inglis explained that “Nothing is further from my Inclination or Design than to throw Blame on any worthy Man, or Body of Men, of whatever Denomination, who in these Times of Trial have adhered to the

⁴⁸ Belief that Catholics could not be “faithful citizens” on the basis that their loyalties went first to the Pope was commonly espoused in anti-papist literature. For instance, in Samuel Cooper wrote in 1774 that “Popery is incompatible with the safety of a free government. It sets up a foreign head, superior to all civil rulers; a spiritual power that reaches to every thing upon earth, and can brook no control.” Samuel Cooper, *A Discourse on the Man of Sin* (Boston: Mills and Hicks, 1774), 58.

⁴⁹ Inglis, “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion in America,” 6–7.

cause of their King & Country.”⁵⁰ Despite this sentiment, in Inglis’s view, several denominations were principally responsible for the War for Independence.

As Inglis explained, the dissenters who were more inclined to betray the Crown and were principally responsible included the “Presbyterians & Independents, who... agree exactly in Political Sentiments.”⁵¹ In Inglis’s view, Republican politics were inherent to the dissenters who had started the rebellion because it was the nature of their religion. Or, in Inglis’s own words: “The whole System of Dissenters is of a Republican cast” which naturally made their entire “Ecclesiastical Polity...perfectly adapted to Democracy.”⁵² This is similar to the sentiment expressed by Rev. Samuel Davies in his sermon *The Crisis* during the Seven Years’ War, when he simplified the war using polarised religious terms saying that “*France* and her Allies are all Papists; and Britain and her Allies are all Protestants.”⁵³ Just as the dissenters had rebelled against the Church of England, Inglis believed that they were inclined to break away from England herself.

In doing so, Inglis also clarified which denominations, in his opinion, were not as at fault for the rebellion, stating that “There are many other sects in the Colonies, not so numerous as these; such as Lutherans, Calvinists, Moravians & Mennonists [sic], consisting of Foreigners, & their Descendants.” Additionally, Inglis observed that there were also “Quakers, Anabaptists, & Papists... chiefly of British Extraction,” that could not be said to be fully for or against the rebellion. Unlike Presbyterians and Independents, Inglis believed that “these [denominations] are much divided in the present contest,

⁵⁰ Inglis, “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion in America,” 12.

⁵¹ Inglis, 12.

⁵² Inglis, 9–10.

⁵³ Samuel Davies, *The Crisis: Or, The Uncertain Doom of Kingdoms at Particular Times, Considered With Reference to Great-Britain and Her Colonies in Their Present Circumstances*. (London: J. Buckland, J. Ward, and T. Field, 1757), 26.

having no uniform plan, nor fixed Object in view.” Whereas “Lutherans in general have joined with Churchmen on the side of Government; Calvinists, Papists & Anabaptists, with Dissenters, [were largely] against it.”⁵⁴ In this way, Inglis continued to frame this secular conflict in terms of religious difference.

Indeed, the language Inglis used to describe rebel ministers in his 1777 pamphlet rings very familiar to the anti-Catholic texts that circulated during the imperial wars of decades prior, except that the issue at hand regarded “Independency” and the perpetrators were “dissenters” rather than “tyranny” and “Papists” respectively. Inglis wrote that these “seditious Leaders, who aimed at Independency from the Beginning, & dextrously employed every Art of Seduction & Violence that could serve their Designs—brought forth the Rebellion.”⁵⁵ In this way, Inglis aligned religion and politics just as ministers like Gibbons and Davies had understood imperial allegiances through a religious binary during the Seven Years’ War. Inglis makes this connection clear, writing that “their [dissenters’] System of peculiar notions, which prevail in full vigour through the Colonies, are unfriendly to the Monarchy & the established Church.” According to this logic, dissenters positioned “the English Hierarchy & Ceremonies as so many Anti-Christian Remnants of Popery—as Badges & Instruments of Despotism.”⁵⁶ By pointing this out, Inglis did not refute or undermine anti-Catholicism, but suggests that Anglicans had been unjustly equated with Catholics.

Within Inglis’s framework, dissenters were not only more inclined towards rebellion, but were also responsible for manipulating others towards joining their cause.

⁵⁴ Inglis, “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion in America,” 12.

⁵⁵ Inglis, 6–7.

⁵⁶ Inglis, 9–10.

According to Inglis, not only was it “unquestionably true that in Consequence of this [Republicanism], Dissenters in general through all the Colonies, have joined in the present Rebellion” but also that they were “the active, zealous fomenters & promoters of it.” Inglis (somewhat hypocritically) wrote that it was an egregious misuse of their ministers’ position to have “exerted their whole Influence, constantly employing even their Pulpits, to poison the minds of their people, rouse them to Arms, & keep up their flagging spirits under any Discouragement or Disaster.”⁵⁷ In doing so, Inglis overlooked not only his own tendency to exert his influence to draw his congregants and readers towards to the British cause, but also the numerous British aligned ministers acting in the same way.

While Inglis’s logic did not accurately reflect the circumstance in North America, it is interesting that he conceptualised the American Revolution in this way. Chiefly, Inglis’s pamphlet offers an example of how religious ministers continued to understand their secular conflicts through religious frameworks. It was obvious to Inglis that the rebellion should be understood through denominational differences because this is what had always been done—though the North American context had changed from a “Protestant—Catholic” binary to something less straightforward. Leading towards to Franco-American alliance, however, it would become more complicated to continue framing the conflict in terms of a religious binary as there were Catholics and Protestants on either side of the war. In the period between the Quebec Act and Franco-American alliance, politically-informed religious rhetoric experienced shifts and was inconsistently applied. Even as some circles distanced themselves from anti-Catholic rhetoric, however,

⁵⁷ Inglis, “A Brief Inquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion in America,” 10–12.

anti-papist discourses would continue to circulate and be discussed in the wake of the Franco-American alliance.

Conclusion

Imperial upheavals in the years after the Seven Years' War fractured the unity of the British Protestant—French Catholic religious binary that had shaped British colonists' identities since the seventeenth century and had facilitated a shared transatlantic British imperial identity. Disagreements over the political and religious integration of Catholics into British America were never reconciled, and by the time of the outbreak of fighting in April 1775 at least four distinct religious binaries were discernable in the British world: one rebel, one loyalist, one metropolitan, and one imperial. Thus ministers like Charles Inglis continued to frame political positions within a religious binary, but the community that was receptive to the rhetorical register within which he framed Protestant—Catholic issues had shrunk dramatically. Among British Americans, the rebel use of anti-Catholic rhetoric operated on a different rhetorical register from that of loyalists like Inglis. In response to the Quebec Act, Americans called George III a papist or papist sympathiser. Britons and loyalists, in turn, called the rebels hypocrites after they negotiated a treaty with the papist Louis XVI and his government.

Rebels, loyalists, and Britons' understandings of the implications of tolerance for Catholics also diverged in ways that resembled their divergent responses to the integration of French *Canadiens* into the Empire. Britons and loyalists shared a tendency to counteract anti-papist prejudices against the *Canadiens* identifying specific prejudices and countering them with appeals to empathy, thereby humanising their former Catholic enemies. Rebels, in contrast, were more instrumental in their tolerance, not trying to

humanise *Canadiens* so much as understand how they could be made useful parts of the revolutionary agenda. The rebels implemented “tolerance” for their ally’s Catholic faith by suppressing outward expressions of anti-papistry, rather than addressing and seeking to change Anglo-American biases about Catholics. This approach to “tolerance” was partially driven by the rebels’ time-sensitive transition from long standing anti-French Catholic sentiments, expressed as recently as the 1774 Quebec Act, to a policy of “tolerance” espoused in advance of the Invasion of Québec, one that was intensified in anticipation of the Franco-American alliance. This approach to toleration mirrored their anti-papist sentiments, in that both were concerned with defending themselves in the face of danger, one by fighting Catholics, one by pulling them close. In contrast, the loyalist approach of humanising Catholics as fellow imperial subjects fostered a slower but more substantive inclusion of Catholics in the body politic.

IV. “Towards the universal re-establishment of Popery through all Christendom”: Responses to the Franco-American Alliance

In 1779, Rev. Charles Inglis recognised in his published *Letters of Papinian* that if “the Independency of America could be established, this must be done by the assistance of your French alliance.”¹ He continued, asking “Do you really imagine that the liberties of America, or the Protestant religion, would not be thereby endangered?”² Inglis’s concerns evoked the virulent anti-papist sentiments that had fuelled the British cause against the French during the Seven Years’ War (1754-63). In stark contrast, Rev. Samuel Cooper (1725-89) of Boston’s Brattle Street Church wrote in his *Sermon Given on the Commencement of the Constitution* (1780) that “The treating of alliance and friendship between HIS MOST CHRISTIAN MAJESTY [King Louis XVI of France] and the states, is engraved on every bosom friendly to the rights and independence of America.”³ The disparity between Inglis and Cooper’s sentiments highlights how North America’s changing political climate influenced anti-Catholic rhetoric following the February 1778 Franco-American alliance—wherein France formally recognised the United States and promised to help “to maintain effectually the [union’s] liberty, Sovereignty, and independence.”⁴ Should France become a combatant in the war, the two countries promised mutual military support. Since the outbreak of fighting in April 1775, American rebels had been increasingly self-silencing in their public statements of anti-

¹ Charles Inglis, “Letter V. To the People of North America,” in *Letters of Papinian in Which the Conduct, Present State, and Prospects of the American Congress Are Examined* (London: J. Wilkie, 1779), 67.

² Inglis, 67.

³ Samuel Cooper, “A Sermon on the Day of the Commencement of the Constitution,” in *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*, ed. Ellis Sandoz, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), 42.

⁴ Article 2, “Treaty of Alliance Between The United States and France; February 6, 1778,” accessed on The Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fr1788-2.asp.

popery, curbing the vitriol that had been common just a few years earlier. In turn, many loyalists expressed surprise that the rebels would turn to France for aid and then a formal treaty of alliance.

According to Greg L. Frazer, “Because ‘popery’ and concerns about the expansion and tolerance to the Catholic faith were among the expressed causes of the Revolution, and because France was a historic enemy of England—and the American colonists were Englishmen—no one could have predicted such a development [as the Franco-American alliance].”⁵ In reality, however, many loyalists knew that representatives of the Continental Congress had been negotiating with the French since 1775 for military aid. What surprised loyalists was France’s willingness to negotiate a treaty of alliance. Charles Inglis acknowledged the necessity for rebels to court French support, even as other rebels undermined George III’s stature in North America by insinuating he had papist sympathies. Inglis, pondering the new United States’ financial situation, explained that the war would not be feasible without foreign aid and that the “only European power from which we can receive assistance is France.” Contemplating the possibility of a Franco-America alliance in his 1776 response to *Common Sense*, Inglis expected that post-Seven Years’ War France, being “at peace with Great-Britain” was unlikely to “interrupt that peace, and hazard a war, with the power which lately reduced her so low [Britain].”⁶ Loyalists including Inglis foresaw the necessity of the alliance with France, but sought to persuade fellow North Americans that the likelihood of such an agreement coming to fruition was slight.

⁵ Greg L. Frazer, *God Against the Revolution: The Loyalist Clergy’s Case Against the American Revolution* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2018), 212.

⁶ Charles Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked; or, Loyalty and Interest United: In Answer to a Pamphlet Entitled Common Sense* (New York: Published by Samuel Loudon, 1776), 78–81.

A December 1777 essay in the loyalist newspaper, *The Royal Gazette and Mercury Weekly*, spoke directly to rebels and likewise argued that an alliance with France was an unfounded hope. The writer argued that “They [the Continental Congress] have amused you with hopes of a declaration of war on the part of France. Believe me, from the best of authority, it was a fiction from the first.” Like Inglis, the author of this piece believed that France’s straitened financial circumstances that had persisted since the Seven Years’ War would cause it to refrain from entering into another conflict with Britain so soon. As argued in the essay, “the state of her finances, years to come will not put them [the French] in a situation to enter upon a breach with England.”⁷ Such sentiments testify to loyalist observers being aware of the attractiveness of a Franco-American alliance for the rebels and thus were not caught off guard by the rebels’ willingness to ally with their former papist enemies. Rather, loyalists expressed surprise that France would risk deepening its financial troubles with a Franco-American treaty, which indeed helped precipitate a declaration of war by Britain just a few weeks after its signing. Loyalists also called the Continental Congress hypocritical for its readiness to rely on French Catholic aid and then an alliance given its vehemently anti-papist rhetoric as recently as the fall of 1774 when it excoriated the British Parliament for passing the Quebec Act.

An editorial in the *Pennsylvania Ledger* published 13 May 1778 critically observed that, “The Congress have wonderfully altered their tone of late.”⁸ According to

⁷ *The New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, 1 December 1777, in Ruma Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013), 111.

⁸ *Pennsylvania Ledger*, 13 May 1778, in Robert Emmett Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies: Catholics in Protestant America, 1605-1791: A Documentary History* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 256.

the *Ledger*, the time had barely passed “when the bare toleration of the Roman Catholic religion in Canada, though stipulated for by the articles of capitulation [referring to the Quebec Act’s enforcement of the 1760 Capitulation of Montréal’s terms], was treated as a wicked attempt to establish ‘a sanguinary faith, which had for ages filled the world with blood and slaughter.’” Yet, the Congress was now willing, with the inauguration of the alliance with France, to strengthen “the most powerful and ambitious enemies of the Reformation to such a degree as must do more than all the world besides could do, towards the universal re-establishment of Popery through all Christendom.” The *Ledger* invited its readers to “Judge then what we have to hope or expect from such an alliance!”⁹ Similar criticisms ricocheted within rebel and loyalist camps alike. Although many rebels, including Samuel Cooper, recognised that the alliance with France was a military and economic necessity for the Continental Congress, this need did not eliminate underlying prejudices about Catholic France among the general public. Residents of the United States who supported Congress were uneasy about the possibility that in order to secure victory over Britain they might need to accept aid from, if not an alliance with, Catholic France.

Some historians, including Robert Emmett Curran, present the shift from the vehement anti-papist sentiments of the Seven Years’ War era towards pretenses of tolerance to French Catholics leading up to and after the Franco-American alliance as a relatively clean transition. Curran suggests that in the wake of the Franco-American alliance, Protestant Americans no longer saw that “There was no longer an inherent conflict between being a good Catholic and a good citizen. For the present, Catholics

⁹ *Pennsylvania Ledger*, 13 May 1778.

were no longer ‘intestine enemies.’”¹⁰ His assessment largely fits Congress’s stance on Catholics of French or English ancestry, but Curran neglects to account for the experiences of other Catholics, including Scottish, Irish, and Indigenous Catholics. Additionally, Curran’s conclusion only addresses the shift in the official *public* sentiment and ignores widespread *private* anti-papist attitudes that persisted through the era of the American Revolution.

Congress’s tolerance of Catholics was not embraced by rebels at large. As Thomas S. Kidd remarks, “The French Catholics of Canada remained an ominous presence to many Protestant Americans throughout the war, even though in 1778 France would ally with the Americans and enter the war against Britain.”¹¹ Significantly, in Article 6 of the treaty, France promised to renounce any ambitions to retake territory in North America that it had ceded in the 1763 Treaty of Paris. Congress outwardly tolerated Catholics in Maryland and particularly Québec as a ploy to entice the *Canadiens* into an alliance but did not encourage Protestant Americans to change their attitudes towards the Catholic faith long term. In short, this tactical tolerance by Congress did not translate into substantive tolerance. Rather intolerance and xenophobia among Protestant Americans largely continued *de facto*, as Catholic Indigenous nations, including Wabanaki peoples, and the Scottish Highlanders from the Mohawk Valley could testify from their experiences. Many loyalists, in turn, vocally opposed the Franco-American alliance because the rebels’ willingness to tolerate France’s Catholic faith conflicted with their former intolerance to the Quebec Act’s protections for the Catholic

¹⁰ Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies*, 264.

¹¹ Thomas S. Kidd, *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 4.

religion. Loyalist spokesmen, like Inglis, re-appropriated anti-Catholic language and turned it not against Catholics but against the hypocrisy of Protestant Americans and their deeply held prejudices about French Catholics. The British, meanwhile, continued to make their own exceptions to anti-Catholic laws and attitudes, such as by allowing Catholic priests to minister to Indigenous peoples.

The shifting diplomatic terrain between rebel Americans and France, combined with revolutionary aspirations, nudged many Protestant Anglo-Americans to outwardly adopt limited accommodation for Catholics, including policies of religious liberty in states such as Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland in 1776. Virginia's Declaration of Rights on 12 June 1776, for example, declared "that religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love and charity towards each other."¹² Even Massachusetts, a hotbed for anti-papist sympathies, declared in its 1780 Declaration of Rights, that "no subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping GOD in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience."¹³ Diplomatic pressures and revolutionary ideology compelled rebels to outwardly adopt religious tolerance in formerly hostile anti-papist states.¹⁴ Although scholars like Curran have documented cases of increased tolerance for French Catholics

¹² J. J. Patrick, *Founding the Republic: A Documentary History* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995), 54.

¹³ Patrick, 67–68.

¹⁴ Robert Emmett Curran, *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 268–70.

among rebels, this tolerance should be considered limited. It is useful to remember that in the same way that the Declaration of Independence's lofty language avowing that "all men are created equal" did not mean rebel Americans believed, much less practiced, such equality, neither did the state declarations of rights espousing religious toleration mean that rebel Americans had abandoned their anti-papist beliefs or suspicions.¹⁵

Limited Accommodation: New and Old Approaches to Catholics

In 1998, the Library of Congress created an exhibit on religion's impacts on the United States' founding era. In their reflections on Maryland's Catholics, the exhibit's curators wrote that "Until the American Revolution... [they] were dissenters in their own country, living at times under a state of siege, but keeping loyal to their convictions, a faithful remnant, awaiting better times."¹⁶ Significantly, the Library of Congress presented the American Revolution as the breaking point for anti-Catholic traditions in Maryland, yet the reason that an apparent "tolerance" arose out this period was that it was advantageous for the Continental Congress, not necessarily because a spirit of religious toleration developed. In the years leading towards the Declaration of Independence, Catholics from Maryland became important emissaries for the Continental Congress in their dealings with the *Canadiens* and France. Catholics including John Carroll (an ex-Jesuit) and his cousin, Charles Carroll (the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence), allowed themselves to manifest Congress's religious tolerance. In 1776, the Carrolls were two of four delegates sent to Québec to try to persuade French

¹⁵ Curran, *Papist Devils*, esp. 246-274.

¹⁶ Library of Congress, "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic: America as a Religious Refuge: The Seventeenth Century, Part 2," accessed 14 May 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel01-2.html>.

Canadiens that if they joined the rebellion and made Québec the fourteenth united colony their Catholicism would be protected.¹⁷

Leading towards to invasion of Québec in 1775, and following the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress and its supporters backed away from anti-Catholic rhetoric and behaviour, largely for self-serving reasons. If they continued to be hostile to Catholics, their prejudices could impact their chances of securing an alliance with the *Canadiens* or Catholic France. As well, they recognised that they needed to groom Protestants in the United States—who had been trained to despise popery—to tolerate Catholics and be receptive to increasing religious freedoms. If the colonies continued to be hotbeds for anti-papist sympathies, it was unlikely that their supporters would accept an alliance with France, their traditional Catholic enemy. Congress's attempts to step away from public expressions of anti-popery, whether in speeches and sermons or in the pamphlet literature did not go unnoticed.

Charles Inglis observed cynically in his response to the 1779 pamphlet sponsored by the Congress, *Observations on the American Revolution*, that, in addition to their “prostitution of scripture,” “sophistry, and artful application to the passions of the people,” the pamphlet’s authors had “cautiously avoided that passage in their Address to the people of Great Britain, dated September 5, 1774.”¹⁸ Inglis referred to the section of this address where Congress told “their loving Friends and Fellow Subjects, ‘nor can we suppress our astonishment, that a British Parliament should ever consent to establish in that country (Canada) a religion (meaning Popery) which has deluged your Island in

¹⁷ Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies*, 229–31, 269–71.

¹⁸ Charles Inglis, *The Letters of Papinian: In Which the Conduct, Present State and Prospects, of the American Congress, Are Examined*. (New York, 1779), 43–44.

blood, and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder, and rebellion, through every part of the world.” In Inglis’s estimation, Congress intended the *Observations* “to ... reconcile the Americans to the criminal conduct of the Congress, in rejecting the liberal overtures of Government for an accommodation.”¹⁹ Inglis surmised that Congress had intentionally ignored its former objections to the Quebec Act because these statements reflected poorly on their newfound dependence upon Catholic France, for whom they made their own accommodations.

Inglis correctly noted that Congress’s anti-papist reflections on the Quebec Act were missing from *Observations on the American Revolution*. References to the Quebec Act and tolerance for the Roman Catholic religion were not, however, entirely absent. Rather *Observations* deftly positioned religious toleration in Québec as a British betrayal of the terms laid out in the Treaty of Paris rather than as a direct threat to Protestant safety, as had been the standard complaint in 1774. According to the pamphlet’s authors:

an act was passed for changing the government of Quebec, by which act the Roman Catholic religion, instead of being tolerated, as stipulated by the treaty of peace [1763 Treaty of Paris], is established; and the people there are deprived of a right to an assembly, trials by jury, and the English laws in civil cases are abolished, and instead thereof, the French laws are established, in direct violation of his majesty’s promise by his royal proclamation, under the faith or which many English subjects settled in that province; and the limits of that province are extended so as to comprehend these vast regions that lie adjoining to the northerly and westerly boundaries of these colonies.²⁰

Unlike initial responses to the Quebec Act, which positioned religious toleration in the former French territory as inherently dangerous to Protestants in the rest of British America, in this new critique, Congress actively dismissed the statute as a British

¹⁹ Inglis, *The Letters of the Papinian*, 44, note.

²⁰ Gouverneur Morris, *Observations on the American Revolution. Published According to a Resolution of Congress, by Their Committee. For the Consideration of Those Who Are Desirous of Comparing the Conduct of the Opposed Parties, and the Several Consequences Which Have Flowed from It* (Philadelphia, 1780), 14.

parliamentary attempt to stir up prejudicial behaviour against the religious “other.” *Observations* argued that “The authors of this arbitrary arrangement flatter themselves, that the inhabitants deprived of liberty, and artfully provoked against those of another religion, will be proper instruments for assisting in the oppression of such as differ from them in the modes of government and faith.”²¹ This interpretation of the Quebec Act suggests that British lawmakers intentionally sought to set ethnically English subjects and Britain’s new Catholic *Canadien* subjects at odds with each other. Morris’s phrasing is ambiguous, but his larger meaning is clear, that the British were attempting to use rights for Catholics to manipulate divides among colonists to their advantage, in part to get both sides in Québec to act against Protestants in the rebellious United States, and implies that this tactic was unsuccessful. As Inglis noted, the anti-papist tenets of Congress’s former opposition to the Quebec Act are not reflected in *Observations on the American Revolution*.

Not only did *Observations*’ narrative of the imminent war downplay American opposition to French Catholics, but it also claimed that “previous to the last war [the Seven Years’ War] [only] a few acts were passed in England infringing on the liberties of America...Because the possessions of the French enabled them to give such effectual aid in case of rupture, that it was imprudent to tempt us [Anglo-Americans] too far.”²² Congress’s mythologised history in *Observations on the American Revolution* not only neglected to mention American opposition to tolerance to French Catholic religion in Québec, but also imagined French settlers to have been the British colonists’ friendly

²¹ Morris, *Observations on the American Revolution*, 14.

²² Morris, 6.

neighbours, who would have aided British colonists “in case of rupture” in the era before the Seven Years’ War.

In addition to recreating Anglo-Americans’ historical relationship with the French to discourage traditional depictions of French Catholics as papist enemies, Congress depended upon influential public figures, including Rev. Samuel Cooper, to help smooth this transition from anti-popery towards support for French involvement in the rebellion. Cooper’s case suggests that his personal sentiments towards Catholics were overtaken by the secular advantages associated with the French alliance. One significant factor contributing towards Cooper’s advocacy for Franco-American friendship was the annual stipend he received from the French Consul, Joseph de Valnais, for promoting the French cause in North America.²³ At Boston’s Brattle Street Church, Cooper had the attention of some of America’s most influential political leaders, including John Adams, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock.²⁴ As an ardent anti-papist, Cooper previously preached and then published several explicitly anti-French Catholic sermons during the Seven Years’ War and the period that followed, including “A Sermon Preached in the Audience of His Honour Spencer Phips, Esq” in 1756 and “A Discourse on the Man of Sin,” in 1773. Cooper’s sudden support for the French in 1778 should not, therefore, be described as a step away from his anti-Catholic beliefs, but rather, a political and financial choice.²⁵ It was in Congress’s interest for Cooper to abandon his former anti-Catholic tone, so he did just that.

²³ Curran, *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783*, 268.

²⁴ *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States*, s.v. “Samuel, Cooper.”

²⁵ Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies*, 255.

Knowledge about Cooper's financial arrangement with the French should impact the way historians read his post-1778 sermons. Within the context of his other sermons, it becomes clear that Cooper's public preaching was heavily influenced by political sentiment. During the Seven Years' War the French were his enemies, which his sermons conveyed; during the American Revolution the British were his enemies, the French were a means of financial and military support, and his sermons reflected these facts. Historians do not agree, however, about how or even if knowledge of his working for the French and for Congress should change the way that we read his sermons. Charles W. Akers suggests that the French commission simply emboldened Cooper's existing sentiments.²⁶ Others, including Robert Emmett Curran, imply that the commission was likely the reason that Cooper's rhetoric changed so significantly between the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution.²⁷ Many scholars, Glenn A. Moots among them, appear to simply ignore or are ignorant of Cooper's status as a French agent and present his changing perspective on France as a progression in his theological understandings.²⁸

Studies that have sought to determine Cooper's beliefs about Catholics by examining his sermons, including Charles W. Akers's work, neglect to consider the significant secular reasons for Cooper to support toleration of Catholics publicly.²⁹ Financial incentives to endorse tolerance for Catholics, particularly French Catholics, make Cooper's public discourses unreliable representations of his personal sentiments.

²⁶ Charles W. Akers, "Religion and the American Revolution: Samuel Cooper and the Brattle Street Church," *William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (1978): 295.

²⁷ Curran, ed., *Intestine Enemies*, 255.

²⁸ Glenn A. Moots, "Samuel Cooper's Old Sermons and New Enemies: Popery and Protestant Constitutionalism," *American Political Thought* 5 (2016): 391–420.

²⁹ Akers, "Religion and the American Revolution: Samuel Cooper and the Brattle Street Church."

Cooper's private values were not the primary factor in his choice to support the Franco-American alliance, if they had any bearing at all. It is unlikely that historians will ever be able to prove whether Cooper sincerely believed that popery posed a threat to Anglo-Protestants, as he vehemently argued in the mid-eighteenth century, or that his opinions genuinely changed over time. Regardless of Cooper's personal beliefs, his choice to support openly the Franco-American alliance demonstrates that he and likeminded Americans publicly celebrated the political advantages gained from their alliance with the French but hesitated to speak directly on their ally's religious beliefs.

In Cooper's "A Sermon on the Day of the Commencement of the [Massachusetts] Constitution," delivered in Boston in 1780, he proudly touted the attributes of Congress's French allies. He described France as "the nurse and protector of free republics" and celebrated the "personal and royal accomplishments of Louis the Sixteenth," suggesting that "the friendship of such a monarch must be valuable indeed!" Within the text, Cooper positions himself as a strong proponent for religious liberty, tolerance, and the "happy union of all denominations in support of a government... founded on the broadest basis of liberty, and affords equal protection to all."³⁰ The language Cooper used in his sermon suggests that what appeared to be increasing tolerance for Catholics may more accurately be presented as increasing tolerance for the *French*, tolerance for their religion being a limited collateral consequence of the rebels' need for naval support in America and a military distraction in Europe.

Andrew Taber's recent work on depictions of the Dutch in English print during the seventeenth century demonstrates a similar phenomenon. During the first decades of

³⁰ Cooper, "A Sermon on the Day of the Commencement of the Constitution," 650–51.

the seventeenth century, the descriptions of the Dutch in the English press were largely positive because the two countries shared a common Catholic enemy: Spain. As the Spanish threat to England subsided and Anglo-Dutch relations declined through the mid-seventeenth century, however, anti-Dutch sentiment took hold—mainly concerning Dutch religious plurality.³¹ In Taber’s example, as in the case of North American anti-papery, religiously motivated propaganda waxed and waned as political convenience dictated. Anti-Dutch rhetoric, like anti-papist sentiments in North America, shifted without disappearing depending on secular influences, and with political allies often becoming “exceptions” to religiously motivated antipathies. Factoring in political motivations offers more powerful explanations for fluctuations in patterns of religious toleration and hostility that often happened in relatively short periods of time. This observation is reflected in expressions of religious hostility and toleration. Anti-Catholic traditions were not always directed at a specific papist nation, while expressions of toleration for Catholics were almost always limited to Catholics who were viewed as ethnically and politically acceptable allies. In eighteenth-century revolutionary America, it applies to rebels’ toleration of English and later French Catholics, a toleration they did not generalise to all Catholics, especially Indigenous Catholics and other minority European Catholics.³²

Taber acknowledges that anti-Dutch propaganda faded with the third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-74) and the Toleration Act in 1689, which granted freedom of worship

³¹ Andrew Taber, ““You May Be What Devil You Will”: Depictions of Dutch Religious Plurality in English Print, 1609-1699” (Fredericton, University of New Brunswick, 2018), 58–118.

³² Owen Stanwood, “Catholics, Protestants, and the Clash of Civilizations in Early America,” in *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America*, ed. Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenada (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 219.

to Protestant dissenters in England, including the Dutch. Taber's assessment that political motives fuelled religious rhetoric falls in line with Owen Stanwood's suggestion that "Britain's victory in 1763" eclipsed the long-standing colonial political order of "good Protestants fighting for control of North America against popish rivals."³³ In the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, Stanwood discerns a shift towards toleration of Catholics, one that helps to explain Congress's decision to seek the aid of France, including the 1778 treaty. Stanwood, however, fails to appreciate how the hotly contested question of toleration to Catholics, particularly *Canadiens*, reflected more profound splits over religion, toleration, and political accommodation in the Anglo-Atlantic world. Charles Inglis's skeptical critique of the rebels' sincerity in their tolerance for the French and their Catholicism were not the testy utterances of an Anglican loyalist priest but reflected broader trends.

Loyalists and Religious Rhetoric

In 1776, Rev. Charles Inglis expressed what he believed would occur if America separated from Britain in a pamphlet called *The Deceiver Unmasked*. In the pamphlet, Inglis suggested that he "should not in the least be surprised, if, on such a prospect [as] the independency of America, she [France] would parcel out this continent to the different European powers." This possibility threatened Protestant Americans because "Canada might be restored to France, Florida to Spain, with additions to each—other states also might come into in for this portion," placing Protestant settlers under Catholic regimes or within reach of them. Inglis thought that "any man [could] figure to himself

³³ Taber, "You May Be What Devil You Will," 2, 58–118.

the situation of these British colonies, if only Canada were restored to France!”³⁴ This injunction suggests that Inglis believed that the reintroduction of the French empire into North America would create the circumstances for a military sequel to the Seven Years’ War.

Inglis intended his alarming speculations on the consequences of allying with France to draw Anglo-Americans into remaining loyal to Britain because he believed that independence would make the United States vulnerable to French manipulations. Ironically, the Franco-American alliance made the threat of French rule in North America more immediate. In the early years of the war, the British believed that the conflict could be resolved with quick and decisive battles. The Franco-American alliance changed the war’s odds, with possible fronts in Europe and in the West Indies, if not elsewhere in the world. France’s public embrace of the United States was a serious blow to Britain and its supporters, who had calculated that France would be more circumspect in supporting the Americas and thus avoiding the possibility of another war while still dealing with the Seven Years’ War’s economic aftermath. From the perspective of loyalists like Charles Inglis, the Franco-American alliance was an invitation to France to interfere again in North America.³⁵

To protest the Franco-American alliance, loyalists revived rhetoric about French tyranny, echoing sentiments expressed during the Seven Years’ War. Three years after the alliance, in November 1781, loyalists published a response to the Continental Congress’s Declaration of Independence called the “Declaration of Dependence” in New York City’s *The Royal Gazette*. Among the grievances stated against the Congress’s

³⁴ Inglis, *The Deceiver Unmasked*, 66.

³⁵ Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America*, 30–31.

“most licentious...abuses” was the fact that they had “combined with France, the natural and hereditary enemy of our civil constitution, and religious faith, to render us dependant on and subservient to the views, of that foreign, ambitious, and despotic monarchy.” The authors of the loyalist Declaration that this was particularly oppressive because “In ‘774, they declared themselves concerned for the honour of Almighty God, whose pure and holy religion, our enemies were undermining” by “the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Canada.” The loyalist authors pointed out that, not only had the rebels retracted their earlier abhorrence of the Catholic Church, but “leagued with the eldest son of this bloody, impious, bigoted, and persecuting church [France], to ruin the nation from whose loins we sprung [Britain].”³⁶

Rev. Charles Inglis repeated these sentiments in a letter to John Jay, expressing his opposition to the “palatable contradiction” and “inconsistency” of making an alliance with France when an “alledged [sic] cause for your entering into this rebellion was the legal toleration of Popery in Canada.”³⁷ Inglis publicly expressed anti-Catholic sentiments both prior to and following the 1778 alliance. In a sermon delivered to loyalist soldiers in 1777, Inglis wrote that it was with “astonishing Infatuation and Madness” that the usurpers would place those good British subjects “under the Iron Rule of our inveterate and popish Enemies—the inveterate Enemies of our Religion, our Country and Liberties!”³⁸ In doing so, Inglis recalled the tradition of referring to Protestant North Americans’ collective interests against a common Catholic enemy.

³⁶ *The Royal Gazette*, November 17, 1781 in Chopra, 117–20.

³⁷ Charles Inglis, “Letter IV. To John Jay, Esq.,” in *The Letters of Papinian: In Which the Conduct, Present State and Prospects, of the American Congress, Are Examined*. (New York, 1779), 42.

³⁸ Charles Inglis, *The Christian Soldier’s Duty Briefly Delineated: In a Sermon Preached at King’s-Bridge, September 7, 1777, before the American Corps Newly Raised for His Majesty’s Service. / By Charles Inglis, A.M. Rector of Trinity Church, New-York; Published by Particular Desire*, 2008, 20.

Inglis's reaction to the Franco-American alliance expressed prejudices against *France* more than against *Catholics*. In a 1779 letter to John Jay, Inglis explained that France "would as soon break her treaty with you [the United States] as with Britain, if she could gain by it; and you must be conscious, that it was not from affection to you, or to the rights of mankind, but to serve her own ambitious purposes, that she joined your cause." Inglis warned Jay that, "By duplicity, intrigue, perfidy, and violence, France has gained more provinces in Europe than you had to bestow in America; and she gained them without a claim half so plausible as you gave her to the *Thirteen United States*." Inglis believed that France had allied with the United States with the intention of taking them over in the event of rebel victory, but without offering financial aid during the war, as expressed when he told Jay that France, "for his own preservation, must abandon you, and leave you to your fate. With all the infamy of a French faction, yet without French assistance, you must struggle against your 'gigantic adversary [Britain];' who, besides superior strength, has right and justice on his side, and the cause of Liberty and the Protestant religion to animate his exertions."³⁹ In this interpretation, Inglis understood Americans' choice as being between putting themselves under British rule or as putting themselves under French authority. Like many loyalists, Inglis interpreted French rule as equivalent to submission to "popery and slavery." According to Greg L. Frazer, Inglis's position was that America had become a vassal of France.⁴⁰ Rather than freedom of religious choice, in loyalist rhetoric, tolerance to French Catholics would bring intolerance to Protestants to North America, as had once played out in France.

³⁹ Inglis, "Letter IV. To John Jay, Esq.," 53–54.

⁴⁰ Frazer, *God Against the Revolution*, 212–15.

Inglis also recognised a change in New England attitudes towards popery. Contrasting Americans' previous hatred of the Catholic faith and arguments against the Quebec Act's imposition of popery into North America, by 1778, Inglis suspected that Americans no longer saw anything "amiss or erroneous in them [Catholic doctrines]."⁴¹ Indeed, Inglis was appalled to hear that John Jay, President of the Continental Congress and other honourable Members of Congress "went, by invitation from the Honourable Minister of France, to the Roman Catholic chapel, where the great event was celebrated by a well adapted discourse pronounced by the Minister's Chaplain; and Mass and *Te Deum* solemnly sung." Inglis reminded his readers that "CHARLES I was called a *Papist* for permitting his Queen, who was bred a Roman Catholic, to attend mass" and asked his fellow Americans what they were "to think of American rulers, who not only permit their wives to attend mass, but attend it themselves in person! And offer up their *devout* orisons in the language and service of Rome!"⁴² Inglis, recalling anti-papist responses to the Quebec Act, sought to convince rebels that their leaders' actions were more egregious than Britain's religious tolerance in Québec, in addition to being highly hypocritical.

Benedict Arnold, after joining the British cause in 1779, objected to the same event Inglis mentioned. Arnold wrote that he had lately seen the "mean and profligate Congress at mass for the soul of a Roman Catholic in Purgatory, and participating in the rites of a Church, against whose antichristian corruptions your pious ancestors would have witnessed with their blood."⁴³ For loyalists like Inglis and Arnold, the Congress had

⁴¹ Inglis, "Letter IX. To the People of North-America," in *The Letters of Papinian*, 113–15.

⁴² Inglis, 117-118.

⁴³ Benedict Arnold, "By Brigadier-General Arnold, A Proclamation To the Officers and Soldiers of the Continental Army Who Have the Real Interest of Their Country at Heart, and Who Are Determined to Be No Longer the Tools and Dupes of Congress, or France," 1780, Library of Congress.

crossed a new line by attending a Catholic mass so soon after exciting their supporters' anti-papist prejudices in response to the Quebec Act.

In an open letter to the people of America, Inglis asked if, in the event that a Catholic state becomes a political ally, "is popery then changed? Is it purged from error and become less persecuting? No—it is now the very same as formerly."⁴⁴ Inglis explicitly stated that the Continental Congress had allied with France for political expediency and overlooked their faith because it benefitted them politically. Recalling French intolerance to Protestants in centuries past, Inglis questioned if Americans could expect to continue to freely practice their religion if France seized the vulnerable United States from their independence, in the event of rebel victory over Britain. Arnold similarly expressed concerns about the security of Protestant religious liberties, asking "should the parent nation cease her exertions to deliver you [from the rebels and her Catholic allies], what security remains to you even for the enjoyment of the consolations of that religion for which your fathers braved the ocean, the heathen, and the wilderness?" Staunch loyalists drew on existing vernacular about French Catholic tyranny to persuade neutral or questioning Americans to reconsider their allegiances.

In 1780, Benedict Arnold wrote that it was his "wish to lead a chosen band of Americans to the attainment of peace, liberty, and safety (that first object in taking the field) and with them to share in the glory of rescuing our native country from the grasping, hand of France." Seeking to persuade even a few rebels to align themselves with the British, Arnold wrote that they were fortunate that they could "still become the fellow-subjects of Great-Britain, if you nobly disdain to be the vassals of France."⁴⁵ By

⁴⁴ Frazer, *God Against the Revolution*, 215.

⁴⁵ Arnold, "A Proclamation to the Officers and Soliders of the Continental Army."

positioning Americans' choice as a dichotomous decision between allying with France or Britain, Arnold appealed to anti-French papist sentiments of the sort expressed during the Seven Years' War.

As explained by Greg L. Frazer, the loyalist clergy's arguments following the 1778 Franco-American alliance were based on suspicions about France's intentions and the conclusion that France could not be trusted. These suspicions were informed by deeply entrenched anti-French Catholic prejudices that loyalists including Charles Inglis fanned following the alliance. By focussing on writings by clergy, including Inglis, Frazer demonstrated that many loyalist clergymen were worried about the diplomatic control France had over the Continental Congress under the terms of their alliance.⁴⁶ The arguments loyalists, including Inglis and Arnold, used to oppose the Franco-American alliance were informed by anti-Catholic traditions but did not discriminate against Catholics wholesale. Arnold and Inglis sought to create suspicion about French government intentions specifically and raised doubts about the United States' safety given France's history of intolerance towards Protestants. Loyalists continued to make their own exceptions for Catholics—mainly, Scottish, Irish, and Indigenous Catholics, as well as *Canadiens*. Neither rebels nor loyalists became tolerant towards all Catholics, but both made accommodations for their Catholic allies.

Rebel Approaches to Indigenous Catholics and the Scottish Highlanders

The presence or absence of anti-papist sentiment did not determine how Catholics participated in the American War for Independence because tolerance and intolerance were not mutually exclusive among rebels or loyalists. Rebel intolerance for Indigenous

⁴⁶ Frazer, *God Against the Revolution*, 213–15.

Catholics complicates the argument of some historians that American rebels willingly overlooked their allies' Catholic faith. Indigenous Catholics were less easily assimilated into the British Protestant "in-group" than French Catholics had been because settler assumptions about their race exacerbated antipathy about their faith. Settlers were also far less dependent on Indigenous military aid in the 1770s than they had been in the decades before 1763.⁴⁷ Rebel tolerance for French Catholics was necessitated by their need for France's aid, but no comparable urgency forced rebels to accommodate Indigenous religions. Settlers considered Indigenous North Americans easily manipulated, like "children who needed a firm guiding hand."⁴⁸ Commissioners assumed that, like children, Indigenous peoples could be converted as Protestants without much effort, rendering accommodation for their faith unnecessary.⁴⁹

Rebel attempts to convert their Indigenous neighbours, including members of the Wabanaki Confederacy, were motivated by the desire to remove perceived British influence over them, as demonstrated by a letter written by Colonel John Allan on April 21, 1779. Addressed to the President of the Continental Congress John Jay, Allan expressed his concern that the British, having recently "Erected a Fort at the Mouth of the River St. John's," were taking "Every Possible step... to Gain the Indians." Chief among his complaints was that "a Priest was employed" at the fort and that the Wabanaki people there, "being afraid to Offend the Priest" were under British control.⁵⁰ Allan's concern

⁴⁷ Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America*, 42.

⁴⁸ John C. Hawley, *Christian Encounters with the Other* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 7.

⁴⁹ For more refer to: Andrews, *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British Atlantic World*; Richard W. Pointer, "Native Freedom? Indians and Religious Tolerance in Early America," in *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America*, ed. Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenada (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 169–94.

⁵⁰ John Allan, "John Allan to John Jay, President of Congress," April 21, 1779, 3, John Allan Papers 1777-1784, Massachusetts Historical Society.

exposed a common assumption among settler authorities who wrote about North American Indigenous Christians in the eighteenth century—that they were passively subject to their missionaries’ political allegiances.

George Washington laid bare the same assumption in a letter to his commissioners of Indian Affairs. In 1778, he told them that he was interested in “procuring” several hundred Onyota'a:ka (Oneida) individuals to serve as “scouts and light troops, mixed with our own Parties,” if they could be divested of their “Savage customs.” Washington wrote that “Their Missionary Mr Kirkland seemed to have an uncommon ascendancy over that tribe and I should therefore be glad to see him accompany them.”⁵¹ Washington assumed that, because the Onyota’a:ka had a rebel missionary among them, Kirkland would be able to persuade them to do as he directed.

The Onyota’a:ka were initially neutral but then sided with the rebels, unlike other Haudenosaunee nations, which tended to support the British. Samuel Kirkland, the Presbyterian minister Washington mentioned in his letter, had worked among them since 1764. The impetus to place the rebels’ own ministers among Indigenous groups directly related to this assumed control; Catholic ministers simply were not as trustworthy as Protestant missionaries. Rebel refusal to provide Indigenous communities with Catholic priests likely contributed to many Wabanaki groups’ choice to support Britain in 1779, followed shortly by a split among Onyota’a:ka in their diplomatic relationships with settler and imperial groups. Many Onyota’a:kas felt that their commitments to the

⁵¹ George Washington, “George Washington to the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 13 March 1778,” *The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 14, 1 March 1778–30 April 1778*, ed. David R. Hoth (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 167–168.

Americans had been abrogated when rebels destroyed the village of Kanonwalohale in 1780 and they left to live under British protection at Fort Niagara.

Rebel tolerance for Catholics seldom applied to Indigenous Catholics, suggesting that “tolerance” for Catholics was limited to powerful allies or potential allies, particularly the French and Spanish. Had rebel Americans truly become more tolerant of Catholic religion itself, religion would not have played a significant part in their dealings with Catholic Indigenous North Americans. Congress’s commissioners, however, actively sought to convert Indigenous Catholics to the Protestant religion and limited the Wabanaki Confederacy’s access to Catholic missionaries.

Rebel intolerance to popery was not limited to their dealings with Indigenous peoples, though experiences with anti-papist attitudes varied widely depending upon ethnic and geographical factors. Catholics from the Scottish Highlands living in New York’s Mohawk Valley, for example, largely supported the British due to New Englanders’ reputation for intolerance towards Catholics. According to J. S. McGirven, most Catholic loyalists were in the King’s Royal Regiment of New York (also called the Royal Green’s or Royal Yorkers), the two battalions of the Royal Highland Emigrants (Royal Highlanders), and Butler’s Rangers, composed largely of Highland Scots, along with some Irishmen and Canadiens.⁵² Father John McKenna (1743-89) and the Catholic Highland Scots from New York’s Mohawk Valley were among these numbers.

⁵² J. S. McGivern, “Catholic Loyalists in the American Revolution A Sketch,” *CCHA Study Sessions* 48 (1981): 91–99; Jason K. Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?: The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 37.

McKenna was ordained in Scotland in 1768 and settled in Johnstown on the Mohawk River in New York in 1773 with 300 other Catholic migrants.⁵³ At this time, an increasing number of Highlanders chose migration to America as a viable way to re-establish their lives on a more stable footing after the upheavals of the Jacobite uprisings earlier in the century. Jacobites were political rebels who had sought to re-establish the Stuart royal line on the English throne. Discontent in the Scottish Highlands rose between 1768 and 1773 when the English government attempted to break down the Scottish clan system, a recurring agenda since the Jacobite defeat at Culloden in 1745. In 1768 a large group of Highlanders migrated to the Carolinas where they bought 100,000 acres of land, led by the tacksmen Macdonald of Sleat.⁵⁴ In the years that followed, many more followed, compounded by violent weather conditions and famine between 1771-1772 that drove about 1,000 more out of Scotland, and at least 3,169 more followed in 1773. Between 1768 and 1776, over 23,000 Highlanders migrated to America. Most Scottish Highlanders migrated to North Carolina, Nova Scotia, or to the Mohawk Valley in New York, as John McKenna did in 1773.⁵⁵

Although some might assume that the Highland Scots supported the Jacobite rebellions for religious reasons, this was not the case. Only half of Charles Edward Stuart's supporters during the Jacobite rebellions were Catholic. Many Jacobites were Protestants, including Fionnghed nighean Raonuill 'icAonghais Oig (1722-1790), better known by her anglicised name: Flora Macdonald. In 1774, Macdonald, her husband,

⁵³ William L. Smith, *Irish Priests in the United States: A Vanishing Subculture* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004), 52.

⁵⁴ Joan Magee, "Flora Macdonald (1722-1790) A Loyalist from the Scottish Highlands," in *Loyalist Mosaic: A Multi-Ethnic Heritage*, ed. John S. Dietrich and Mary Beacock Fryer (Toronto and Charlottetown: Dundurn Press, 1984), 144–46.

⁵⁵ Magee, 146–48. According to Magee, the records were not kept up, so the recorded numbers are likely low.

three of their children, her son-in-law, two grandchildren, and eight indentured servants sailed to North Carolina where they settled on a piece of land they called Killegray.

Flora, who had helped Prince Charles escape from Scotland after the Jacobite rebels' defeat at the Battle of Culloden Moor, married Alexander Macdonald, who had supported the Hanoverians during the uprising.⁵⁶ Therefore, though it may not be surprising that the Macdonalds supported the English Crown during the American rebellion, taking Alexander Macdonald's earlier political leanings, one may question why other former Jacobites supported the English during the war.

For Catholic Scots, religion was almost certainly an influential factor. The American rebels' intolerance to Catholics was well known among the Scottish migrants, as exemplified by an encounter between the Highlanders settled in New York's Mohawk Valley and the rebels. When rebel troops, under the command of General Philip Schuyler, marched into the Mohawk Valley to disarm and plunder the immigrant Highlanders living there, they attempted to persuade the inhabitants of that area to join their cause. According to historian Jason K. Duncan, however, Father McKenna warned the Scottish settlers that the New Englanders were hostile towards Catholics, contributing to their choice to refuse Schuyler's request.⁵⁷ Despite the rebels' apparent tolerance for Catholics as a result of their alliance with France, Catholics like McKenna believed that the British would treat them more favourably in light of the Americans' history of hostility towards religious "others."

⁵⁶ Magee, 137–54. Bonnie Prince Charles was the grandson of James Stuart the I and IV, the deposed Catholic king of England. The Jacobite rebellions sought to reinstate the Stuart family as English royalty. For more, refer to J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁵⁷ Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?: The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821*, 37.

McKenna and his Highlander flock, therefore, made the same choice that most Catholic Scots did during the American Revolution when they supported Britain.

McKenna served as chaplain to several Scottish military units in the British Army, and a German Hessian unit, and was the first Catholic priest at Fort Stanwix in over fifty years when he resided there briefly in 1777.⁵⁸ British policy-makers tolerated the Highland Scots' Catholic religion because they recognised that they needed Catholic soldiers to support their cause, despite official policies that prohibited Catholics from joining the British Army during the American Revolution.⁵⁹

According to a 1908 article on the Loyal Highlanders produced by The American Catholic Historical Researchers, rebels considered Scottish migrants who did not join them as enemies, even if they remained neutral, because they remained loyal to their oath of non-hostility to England. The Catholics among them garnered special attention, in contrast to their non-Catholic neighbours, as a result of ingrained prejudices against papists among Protestant New Englanders. According to The American Catholic Historical Researchers' article, rebels "especially [despised] those who were Roman Catholics, against whose religion they began their revolt by vigorous denunciation."⁶⁰ The article argues that the Scots did not leave New York as a result of their religion, even though it was not legal for priests to practice in New York until 1784, and anyone found harbouring priests were subject to New England's penal laws.⁶¹ Rather, they were driven

⁵⁸ Smith, *Irish Priests in the United States*, 52; McGivern, "Catholic Loyalists in the American Revolution A Sketch."

⁵⁹ McGivern, "Catholic Loyalists in the American Revolution A Sketch"; Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?: The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821*, 26-27.

⁶⁰ "The Catholic Loyalist Highlanders of the Mohawk Valley," *The American Catholic Historical Researches* 4, no. 3 (1908): 249.

⁶¹ Thomas Donohoe, *History of the Catholic Church in Western New York: Diocese of Buffalo* (Buffalo, New York: Catholic Historical Pub. Co., 1904), 108.

to Canada because “they would not uphold the ‘Rebellion’ and take the part of the Colonies.”⁶² Although this article is dated, its conclusion remains accurate—the Scottish Highlanders’ religion was secondary to their politics, but, because their politics did not favour the rebel cause, their Catholic faith became a more significant factor.

Ultimately, the Scottish Highlanders’ experiences, in addition to the experiences of Indigenous groups like the Onyota’a:ka and members of the Wabanaki Confederacy, demonstrate that the politics of tolerance and intolerance changed depending upon multiple factors, including political alignment, power relationships, and race during the American Revolution. It would be presumptuous for academics to neatly conclude that either the loyalists or rebels became more tolerant than the other because, as these cases show, Catholics were not a cohesive unit and tolerance was spread unevenly across this diverse category.

Conclusion

In response to the Franco-American alliance, loyalists like Charles Inglis and Benedict Arnold argued that Congress’s inconsistent attitudes towards French Catholics and willingness to ally with France, a long-standing and traditional enemy of British Americans, endangered Protestants. Rebels including Samuel Cooper, in contrast, muted their anti-Catholic sentiments to accommodate and promote public acceptance for the Franco-American alliance. Despite the outward display of rebel tolerance for Catholics, including declarations of religious freedom in several states, underlying anti-papist biases remained largely unchanged in the United States. The Catholics who became “tolerable”

⁶² “The Catholic Loyalist Highlanders of the Mohawk Valley,” 249; Duncan, *Citizens or Papists?: The Politics of Anti-Catholicism in New York, 1685-1821*, esp. 19-29.

between 1774 and 1778 were limited to those whose interests that intersected with rebel interests.

Public expressions of increased religious tolerance among Americans during this period were instrumental responses to political needs. Despite bills promoting religious tolerance in principle, religious leaders continued to use ethnic and denominational rhetoric to divide or exclude religious others, particularly many Catholic groups. Academics like Glenn A. Moots have argued that increasing expressions of tolerance among rebels was the product of a decrease in anti-papist literature leading into the era of the Franco-American alliance.⁶³ This observation is not wrong, but it conflates changed rhetoric with changed sentiment and ignores the political incentives that drove shifts in sentiment—in particular that open expressions of anti-papist sentiments might have damaged the rebels' success in forging an alliance with France. Only with the French Revolution would rhetoric about French Catholic tyranny fade from Americans' repertoire of the religious other, only to revive anti-French sentiment after French revolutionaries disestablished the Catholic Church and distanced themselves from Christianity altogether.

⁶³ Moots, "Samuel Cooper's Old Sermons and New Enemies: Popery and Protestant Constitutionalism."

Conclusion: Legacies

In October 1792, George Washington, now President of the United States, wrote that, “Of all the animosities which have existed among mankind those which are caused by a difference of sentiment in Religion appear to be the most inveterate and distressing and ought most to be deprecated.” Washington continued, explaining that he had hoped “that the enlightened & liberal policy which has marked the present age would at least have reconciled Christians of every denomination so far that we should never again see their religious disputes carried to such a pitch as to endanger the peace of Society.”¹ Washington’s words in his letter to an Irish Protestant friend, Edward Newenham, were surely oblique advice to a member of the Irish Parliament grappling with debates on expanding rights for Catholics in Ireland. They also reflected his concerns that intolerant attitudes towards religious “others” would continue to disrupt his aspiration of national harmony and unity in the United States.

In post-1783 British North America, the majority of Roman Catholics continued to be French-Canadians, but the harsh antipathies to them had subsided. The centuries-long assumption that French Catholics posed a spiritual, if not mortal, threat to Protestants was supplanted by a Protestant confidence that Catholics were primarily wrong-headed and thus could be tolerated. If sufficiently exposed to enlightened Protestant influences, they would come to their senses. Until that happened, Protestants tried to impose policies of parsimonious toleration, limiting public resources in areas such as education, that would reinforce Catholic or French culture. As new political and

¹ George Washington to Edward Newenham, 20 October 1792, in Christine Sternberg Patrick, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, vol. 11, 16 August 1792-15 January 1793 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 246–47.

ethnic “rivals” emerged, French Catholics ceased to be the predominant “out-group” by which English-speaking Protestants felt threatened.

While Washington’s aspirations for religious toleration bear a marked similarity to those in British North America, his concerns reflected the reality that militant religious opposition to people considered others marred civic discourse in the United States. The diverging approaches to accommodating religious “others” that had manifested themselves so vocally in response to the Quebec Act and Franco-American alliance had continued after the American Revolution. The rhetorical registers that Americans, British North Americans, and Britons used to address the place of religious others had permanently diverged in the years after the Quebec Act and would never return to a shared Anglo-Atlantic rhetoric. These divergences would have long term impacts on the Anglo-Atlantic cultures of civility and civic belonging that would subtly, but powerfully, distinguish Americans from British North Americans and Britons.

Although the framework that positioned French Catholics specifically as dangerous to Protestants gradually lost its influence in the United States in the decade following the American Revolution, this shift did not occur, as many scholars have argued, as a result of a “growth of toleration” born of the Franco-American Alliance. Rather, Americans stopped inveighing against French Catholics because the political incentives to define them as enemies and discriminate against them faded. The French Revolution (1789-1799) again changed American attitudes about French Catholics. As François Furstenberg notes in *When the United States Spoke French*, America’s French population increased considerably during the French Revolution and Haitian Revolution (1791-1801), especially in states that historically had higher Catholic populations. These

French refugees “transformed the Catholic Church of Philadelphia. What had been a principally Irish, German, and English congregation suddenly joined with thousands of French-speaking and multiracial parishioners.” In Maryland, “refugees from Saint Dominigue doubled Baltimore’s Catholic population” and French priests became bishops in American dioceses.² Increased exposure to French Catholics, in addition to Americans’ support for and perceived kinship with French revolutionaries, contributed to a decline in anti-French papist sentiment. This does not mean that Americans accepted French Catholics or believed that religious freedoms should extend to Catholics. But, because the French were no longer considered an imperial threat, there was little incentive to publicly warn against French Catholic tyranny.

Some Americans, including Noah Webster (1758-1843), the famous lexicographer, perceived the French Revolution as threatening to the United States. Webster’s concern was not that French Catholics fleeing the Revolution posed a threat to Protestant America, as would fit the traditional French Papist—British Protestant binary. Rather, Webster feared that events in France would inspire Americans and create a desire for “free government” in the First Republic’s likeness. Webster warned, “Americans! be not deluded. In seeking liberty, France has gone beyond her.”³

Webster’s 1794 reflection on *The Revolution in France* refashions the construction of Catholic identity formerly imposed on the French by celebrating their initiative in throwing off “the hierarchy of Rome [that] had established, over the minds of

² Francois Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees Who Shaped a Nation* (Penguin Publishing Group, 2015), 107.

³ Noah Webster, *The Revolution in France, Considered in Respect to its Progress and Effects*, (New York, 1794), in Ellis Sandoz, ed., *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), 1299.

its votaries, a system of errors and superstition, that enslaved their opinions and plundered their purses.” By disestablishing the Catholic Church, Webster wrote, the French liberated themselves from a corrupt and despotic institution. Webster conceived that the French revolutionaries had erred, however, by attributing the Catholic faith’s flaws to all of Christianity. In Webster’s estimation, because the French started “from the extreme of superstition,” they failed to find the Protestant faith and instead “vibrated to the extreme of scepticism.” In response to their scepticism about the Catholic Church, the French “waged an inveterate war with christianity... [and] established... atheism and materialism.”⁴ For Webster, French atheism had become the new threat to the United States during the 1790s. At the same time, he did not contest a resurfacing of anti-Catholic sentiment increasingly directed at new immigrant groups.

For much of the nineteenth century, anti-Catholic xenophobia was redirected at Irish migrants coming to the United States, superseding former anxieties about French Catholics. Cities that had become epicenters of French Catholic culture in America, as described by Furstenburg, would share in intolerance towards religious “others” even as they seemed to tolerate their French residents. Philadelphia, for instance, experienced a series of nativist or “bible riots” in 1844 in protest of the large number of Irish Catholics migrating into the city.⁵

The diverging registers of religious rhetoric in the Anglo-Atlantic world found voice in British and American movements to abolish the slave trade. Religious arguments made to support abolishing the slave trade in Britain in 1807 and slavery in 1833, and

⁴ Noah Webster, *The Revolution in France*, 1251-3.

⁵ Katie Oxx, *The Nativist Movement in America: Religious Conflict in the 19th Century* (London: Routledge, 2013), 53–82.

arguments to uphold slavery in the American south, reflect these divergent rhetorics. In William Pitt the Younger's speech to the British House of Commons on 2 April 1792, he argued for abolishing the slave trade on the grounds that it was unjust and that men who sought to uphold the trade were guilty of "acts of perpetual violence and perfidy against his neighbor." Just as Bernard and Inglis sought to humanise French *Canadiens* to British Protestants with empathetic rhetoric, Pitt called Africans "neighbours" and asked the House to recognise the slave trade's human cost.

Do you think nothing of the ruin and the miseries in which so many other individuals, still remaining in Africa, are involved in consequence of carrying off so many myriads of people? Do you think nothing of their families which are left behind? Of the connections which are broken? Of the friendships, attachments, and relationships that are burst asunder? Do you think nothing of the miseries in consequence that are felt from generation to generation?⁶

Pitt's rhetoric asked Britons to reconsider their relationship to enslaved people and re-evaluate their justifications for enslaving Africans. Conversely, rhetoric that sought to justify slavery's continuation in the American South upheld a racial binary to argue that the incorporation of free Blacks into American society was dangerous for white Americans. Thomas Jefferson, for example, believed that freed Black men and women would need to migrate out of the United States, in exchange "for an equal number of white inhabitants" because:

Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances will divide us [white and Black Americans] into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race.⁷

⁶ William Pitt the Younger, "British Statesman William Pitt the Younger Urges Abolition of the Slave Trade," in *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History*, ed. William Safire (Newburyport: RosettaBooks, 2014), 479.

⁷ Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on Virigina: Query XIV," in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, ed. Joyce Oldham and Terence Ball (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 474–75.

American rhetoric about enslaved people used exclusionary language that emphasised differences between whites and Blacks. Pitt's arguments, by comparison, emphasised their common humanity to argue for abolition.

In the United States, outward tolerance to "others" including enslaved people or Catholics, seldom dismantled prejudices against or enmity for them, which had political and social ramifications. In British North America, by contrast, discrimination became increasingly unacceptable in civic culture, even as social intolerance continued.

Intolerance to Irish Catholics, especially as espoused by radical Protestants in the Orange Order, existed in British North America as well. Scholars like Mark G. McGowan, however, have indicated that English-speaking Catholics, using Toronto's Irish Catholics as an example, "embedded themselves in the [city's] social, occupational, economic, and political structures" by the late-nineteenth century. New histories about Irish Catholic experiences in nineteenth-century Canada, like McGowan's, dispute the idea that they were "downtrodden" as traditionally described, arguing that this interpretation often casts Irish American experiences onto Irish Canadians indiscriminately. McGowan argues that Irish Canadians, especially Canadian-born generations, had vastly different experiences than Irish Americans and are better understood as enthusiastic Canadians who existed in multiple socio-economic groups.⁸ The legacies of divergent approaches to incorporating Catholics in the United States and the rest of the Anglo-Atlantic world during the late eighteenth century also influenced how Americans and Britons accommodated other non-Catholic "out-groups" in the following decades and centuries. The rhetorical divergences that appeared during the American Revolution quickly became rhetorical conventions.

⁸ Mark George McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1999), 5, 1-25.

British Atlantic rhetoric promoted empathy for ethnic or religious “outsiders” while American rhetoric perpetuated a language of defensive anxiety about people of a different faiths or ethnicities.

In Canada, religious “others” often participated in political culture much earlier than in the United States, in part because they stressed that their common Canadian identity superseded ethnic or religious differences. As Sir Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine, the first French Canadian elected to a seat in English Canada, said in his address to the electors of Terrebonne, delivered 25 August 1840, “Canada...is our country as it must be the adopted country of the various populations which come from diverse portions of the globe, to make their way into its vast forests as the future resting place of their families and their hopes.” Despite their different origins, LaFontaine stressed that “Above all their children must be like ourselves, Canadians.”⁹ This civic unity allowed French Canadians to be politically successful, even while the Protestant majority disliked or protested French language and education rights.

Highlighting the growth and propagation of different religious traditions in the United States as compared to the rest of the Anglo-Atlantic begins to unpack how such different civil cultures around the language of “otherness” developed. The techniques used to incorporate “outsiders” in each context, and the success or limited effect of each approach, have profound implications for the tactics used in the Anglo-Atlantic world today. Additionally, recognising the significant legacies of these divergent approaches to religious “others” in the eighteenth century asserts the impact that American loyalists, whose political import is often overlooked, had on North American intellectual thought.

⁹ Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, “Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine on Self Government, 1840” *Toronto Examiner*, September 16, 1840.

Afterword

The legacies of different British, Canadian, and American approaches to religious “others” explains, in part, why Canadians elected their first Catholic Prime Minister, Wilfrid Laurier, in 1896 whereas Americans did not manage the same until John F. Kennedy’s election in 1961. Even in the 1960s, the response to Kennedy’s campaign was rife with anti-papist propaganda.¹ Anti-Catholic sentiment did not go extinct in Canada, but did not prevent Catholics from serving in civil roles as it did in the United States for the nineteenth century, much of the twentieth century, and into the present era. As Miguel A. De La Torre says in his introduction to *Religion and Resistance in the Age of Trump*, the worldview that positions “the pope as Antichrist, leading the Catholic Church as whore [as in, the whore of Babylon] into apostasy... has remained a popular interpretation among some present-day Christians [in the United States], especially fundamentalists, dispensationalists, and alt-right leaning evangelicals.”² Stephen Kenny, similarly, argues that “what changes from time to time is the nature, depth and extent of the virulence of anti-Catholic attitudes,” not the presence or lack of those sentiments.³

Binary religious rhetoric, however, changed to suit modern contexts, mainly by reframing “in-groups” and “out-groups.” In the twenty-first century, the division is often between “Christians” and “non-Christians,” rather than “Protestants” and “Catholics.”

¹ For more on modern anti-Catholicism in the United States and anti-papist responses to Kennedy’s presidential campaign, refer to: Philip Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. 23-43.

² Miguel A. De La Torre, ed., *Faith and Resistance in the Age of Trump* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017), xxviii. In this interpretation of the Whore of Babylon from the book of Revelation, De La Torre explains that the term “whore” “had less to do with any sexual transgression and was more a reference to the act of idolatry; specifically, ‘whoring’ the church to serve the political interests of secular rulers” (xxviii).

³ Stephen Kenny, “A Prejudice That Rarely Utters Its Name: A Historiographical and Historical Reflection Upon North American Anti-Catholicism,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 4 (2002): 639.

This shift coincided with a perceived increase in North American religious diversity, particularly with an increase in Canadians and Americans of Middle Eastern descent. North America is still a predominantly Christian continent, with the majority of Canadians and Americans continuing to self-identify with a Christian denomination.⁴ One reason that self-reported religious affiliations continue to be very high, even as North American society appears to be trending towards “secularisation,” is that there is immense social pressure to identify as Christian. As noted by Jordan P. LaBouff and Annie M. Ledoux, this social pressure probably inflates religious data in demographic statistics.⁵

Even though the majority of North Americans identify with either a Protestant or Catholic denomination, tension between these groups has decreased. In this age of ecumenism—or the effort for Christian denominations to unify—denominational differences are understood as less defining than they were in centuries past. Christian majority nations have moved from a Protestant “in-group” to a Christian “in-group” that often includes Catholics. Increasingly, rhetoric places Christianity wholesale into a binary contrasted with other religious identities, such as Islam or atheism. Kevin Starr explains that anti-Catholic rhetoric now frequently appears to support “a larger warfare against Christian belief,” not Catholicism in particular.⁶ Modern anti-Catholic rhetoric is distinct

⁴ In Canada’s 2011 National Household Survey, about 67 per cent of Canadians reported that they were Christian, and Catholics composed the most significant percentage of this group, about 37 per cent of the total population. In the United States, Christians make up about 75 per cent of the with Catholics making up only 23 per cent as of 2016. Statistics Canada, “Canadian Demographics at a Glance, Second Edition,” June 19, 2014, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-003-x/2014001/section03/33-eng.htm>; Frank Newport, “Five Key Findings on Religion in the U.S.,” Gallup, December 23, 2016, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/200186/five-key-findings-religion.aspx>.

⁵ Jordan P. LaBouff and Annie M. Ledoux, “Imagining Atheists: Reducing Fundamental Distrust in Atheist Intergroup Attitudes,” *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 8, no. 4 (November 2016): 330–40.

⁶ Kevin Starr, *Continental Ambitions: Roman Catholics in North America: The Colonial Experience* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2016), xi.

from earlier sentiments because most prejudices are against the institution of the Catholic Church rather than its adherents. This shift has influenced both how religious binaries are understood in modern contexts and how “outsiders” are empathised with or discriminated against.

British propensity to use empathetic discourses to bring “outsiders” into the “in-group” continues to be seen in how the broader British Commonwealth approaches acceptance and accommodation of Muslims. Although tolerance and intolerance coexist and are not mutually exclusive, rhetoric advanced by leaders in countries like New Zealand and Canada regarding their nation’s Muslim population fall in line with traditions established in the eighteenth century. In response to the attacks in Christchurch that occurred March 15, 2019, New Zealand’s Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern responded to anti-Muslim rhetoric by breaking the “us versus them” binary used to create fear and suspicion about the religious “other,” stating that “they”—Muslim New Zealanders—“are us.” The perpetrators and those who share their ideologies, oppositely, are expelled from the “in-group.” As Ardern said, they “may have chosen us [New Zealand]—but we utterly reject and condemn you.”⁷ In doing so, it is not the religious “others” that are the threat in Ardern’s speech, it is those who propagate and act on extremist ideologies.

In Canada, similarly, empathetic approaches to Muslim migrants is standard in civic culture—even while intolerance to migrants is reported to be high among Canadians.⁸ In response to a concern expressed at a town hall in Regina, Saskatchewan

⁷ Bianca Britton, “New Zealand PM Full Speech: ‘This Can Only Be Described as a Terrorist Attack,’” CNN, accessed March 15, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/15/asia/new-zealand-jacinda-ardern-full-statement-intl/index.html>.

⁸ Martin Patriquin, “How Canada’s Far Right Is Using Anti-Muslim Propaganda to Target Trudeau,” *The Guardian*, October 4, 2019, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/04/canada-far-right-anti-muslim-propaganda-targeting-trudeau>.

on January 10, 2019, that “Islam and Christianity” “don’t mix” and that too many migrants have been welcomed to Canada recently, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau explained that migrants are just “people who are looking for nothing more than the opportunity to work hard and build a better future for themselves and their kids.”⁹ Trudeau and Ardern’s responses to racist behaviours and attitudes incorporate Muslims into the “in-group” and seek to inform and inspire empathy in their own nations.

The rhetoric coming out of the White House, in contrast, fear mongers and perpetuates hateful rhetoric about Muslims to advance political schemes. As Corey Robin argued in *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, tactics like those employed by President Donald Trump are more about influencing an audience than they are about creating awareness.¹⁰ Trump’s rhetoric about a “Muslim threat” to Americans, especially American Christianity, has had a clear effect. Violence has surged since Trump took office in 2017, and there has been a documented increase in hate crimes and anti-Muslim hate groups.¹¹

In seeking to understand the trend away from one binary (French Catholic versus British Protestant) in North America, I have imposed a framework that could be perceived as binary on British Atlantic and American rhetoric (empathetic accommodation versus exclusionary language). This framing is not to suggest that British, Canadian, or American rhetoric historically applied or contemporarily relate

⁹ “Christianity and Islam ‘Don’t Mix,’ Man Says at Trudeau Town Hall. People Booed, but the PM Engaged,” *Global News*, January 10, 2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/4836561/trudeau-town-hall-regina-immigrants-islam/>.

¹⁰ Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), esp. 1-27.

¹¹ Sam Levin, “‘It’s a Small Group of People’: Trump Again Denies White Nationalism Is Rising Threat,” *The Guardian*, March 16, 2019, sec. US news, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/mar/15/donald-trump-denies-white-nationalism-threat-new-zealand>.

exclusively to one context or the other, but rather, denotes trends. The tendency of many American politicians to perpetuate a language of difference, contrasts with the trend for Canadian politicians to seek to humanise the “other,” is evident in historical and modern approaches to religious “out-groups.” These differences should not be understood to exist in a stark binary as other frameworks functionally insist. Eighteenth-century rhetorical practices, and the British Atlantic’s divergence from established traditions that can be discerned in the responses to the Quebec Act in 1774, informed cultural climates that continue to influence American and Canadian approaches to “outsiders.” This predisposition is not, however, a sentence for these societies to respond to contemporary events in line with the attitudes established in decades and centuries past. Xenophobic attitudes about Middle Eastern migration into Britain, which became a significant political issue in the lead up to the British-exit vote, demonstrate that populations can push civic cultures to diverge from long established trends.

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Curriculum Vitae

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2020 Master of Arts, Department of History, University of New Brunswick

Areas of Specialization: Colonial North American History, The Seven Years' War, American Revolution, History Theory and Methods

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Publications:

- 2019** Isaac, Erin and Kapri Macdonald. "Bewitching Environments in 2016's *The Witch*." Network in Canadian History and Environment, 31 October 2019. <https://niche-canada.org/2019/10/31/bewitching-environments-in-2016s-the-witch/>

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Conference Participation:

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2019 “Migrations and Mobilized Memory: Huguenot Storytelling and Identity in Diaspora, 1562-1763.” Presented at the 20th Annual University of Maine and University of New Brunswick History Graduate Student Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick, October 2019.

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