In “We Are Well As We Are” the past is brought back to life and the Indigenous people are given a voice by author James P. Rhonda. He explains the missionary’s effort to convert all Indigenous peoples of the Huron and Montagnais to Christianity by force, causing many repercussions. Unfortunately, the missionaries were not as accepting of the Indigenous people’s beliefs as they were of the missionaries. Author James Rhonda identifies the major issues regarding the Indigenous and the Missionaries. This includes the sacrifices the Indigenous people had to make to become Christian, how the missionaries went about enforcing this new religion, and how the written history had bias attached to it.

The author paints the picture that the Indigenous peoples were willing to practice their spiritual beliefs while the missionaries practiced their own. Christianity seemed to intrigue some Indigenous people and sometimes enough to convert. But, becoming Christian was not an easy process as they were led to believe it would be. To convert to Christianity, the Indigenous people had to give up all characteristics and practices of their past life. Becoming a Christian meant they would essentially have to leave all their history behind and become European. “The Indian who embraced Christianity was compelled, in effect, to commit cultural suicide”.[[1]](#footnote-1) This statement points out the effect this would have on a community, all history would be lost, and traditions would no longer carry on.

Missionaries tried to influence their religion on the Huron and Montagnais so persistently and grudgingly, it drove the Huron and even political leaders to hatred. “Huron and Montagnais religious leaders employed the fear of baptism to diminish missionary influence”, this statement backs up the accusations of baptism being the cause of smallpox. The Indigenous also blamed the missionary’s presence for bringing long periods of drought to the region.[[2]](#footnote-2) The persistence to become Christian was so strong the Indigenous soon believed the missionaries were not men but demons. This strong statement had large impacts on the community. Soon it was believed the missionaries and Jesuits were sorcerers who brought evil to the lands.[[3]](#footnote-3)

At this point in time, conversations and all written documents were being recorded by Europeans. Because of this, there is much speculation as to if these events were recorded properly. This is the problem many historians are facing today when they are looking back on these events. James Rhonda includes this supporting evidence, “… Indian comments have been ignored or dismissed as the mere rantings of jealous Indian leaders”.[[4]](#footnote-4) With these events only being recorded by white people, the author suggests Indigenous peoples view is most probably misconstrued or not included at all.

The evidence James Rhonda give us in this academic journal suggested the more the missionaries wanted the Huron and Montagnais to convert to Christianity, the more they resisted. The authenticity of this journal makes you want to think missionaries misunderstood the cost of the Indigenous people giving up their beliefs and past would do to their culture, or perhaps they didn’t care.

1. Ronda, James P. ""We Are Well As We Are": An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (1977): 66-82. doi:10.2307/1922626 p 67 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Ibid* 72 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Ibid* 75 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Ibid* 67 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)