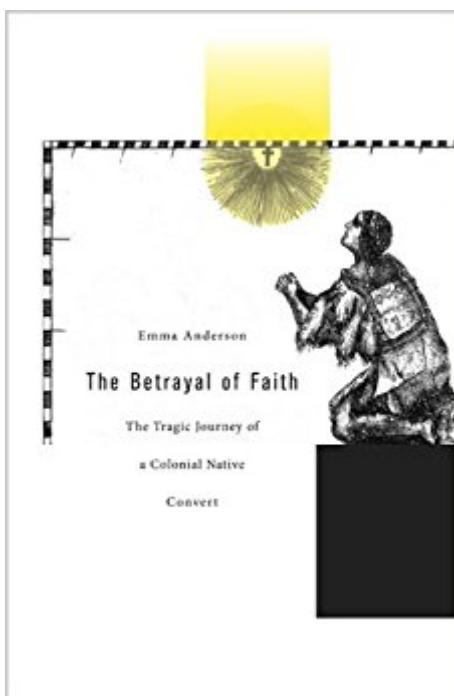


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The Betrayal Of Faith: The Tragic Journey Of A Colonial Native Convert (Harvard Historical Studies)



Synopsis

Emma Anderson uses one man's compelling story to explore the collision of Christianity with traditional Native religion in colonial North America. Pierre-Anthoine Pastedechouan was born into a nomadic indigenous community of Innu living along the St. Lawrence River in present-day Quebec. At age eleven, he was sent to France by Catholic missionaries to be educated for five years, and then brought back to help Christianize his people. Pastedechouan's youthful encounter with French Catholicism engendered in him a fatal religious ambivalence. Robbed of both his traditional religious identity and critical survival skills, he had difficulty winning the acceptance of his community upon his return. At the same time, his attempts to prove himself to his people led the Jesuits to regard him with increasing suspicion. Suspended between two worlds, Pastedechouan ultimately became estranged--with tragic results--from both his native community and his missionary mentors. An engaging narrative of cultural negotiation and religious coercion, *Betrayal of Faith* documents the multiple betrayals of identity and culture caused by one young man's experiences with an inflexible French Catholicism. Pastedechouan's story illuminates key struggles to retain and impose religious identity on both sides of the seventeenth-century Atlantic, even as it has a startling relevance to the contemporary encounter between native and non-native peoples.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A gorgeously written and richly imagined study of the fate of the Innu Pastedechouan, caught between the ambitions of French priests and his own kin in colonial New France. Anderson's vivid

portrait belongs in the company of Carlo Ginzburg's Menocchio and Natalie Zemon Davis's Martin Guerre. Like these authors, she reveals herself to be a graceful and gifted historian of the inner worlds of people in the past. This is a compelling and deeply moving work of religious history. (Robert A. Orsi, Northwestern University)A remarkable and innovative book on a fascinating subject. Anderson brilliantly illuminates the tensions inherent in a religious identity divided between two worlds. This nuanced book underscores the multifaceted nature of the contact between native peoples and Europeans. It deserves to be widely read. (Martin Pâcquet, Universit e Laval)A gripping tale of personal dislocation in early modern North America. Left dangling between cultures, the Innu convert Pastedechouan oscillated between devotion and apostasy. His story challenges accepted narratives of conversion and resistance. This excellent work will be of great interest to readers in religion, American and Canadian history, and Native American studies. (Allan Greer, author of Mohawk Saint)Pastedechouan's story, sensitively told by Anderson, reveals the human tragedy underneath the clash of Amerindian culture with that of the French missionaries. It is a good read and, further, a morality tale relevant to efforts today to impose values on peoples not particularly yearning for them. (John W. O'Malley, author of *The First Jesuits*)Innovative and impressively researched, *The Betrayal of Faith* is a moving story that forces us to reflect on the relationship between ethno-cultural identity and religious commitment. Among its important contributions are an examination of the phenomenon of apostasy, both Catholic and shamanistic, and an empathetic and imaginative engagement with individuals in a distant time and place. (Cornelius J. Jaenen, University of Ottawa, emeritus)

Emma Anderson is Associate Professor of North American Religious History at the University of Ottawa.

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