



NUI MAYNOOTH
Ollscoil na hÉireann M^a Nuad

*An Irish Missionary in France,
Thomas Gould (1657-1734),
Irish Migrant, Catholic priest and Missionnaire du Roi*

Submitted by

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THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF MLITT

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October 2011

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Summary	iii
Maps	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	13
Chapter 2	38
Chapter 3	65
Chapter 4	97
Conclusion	131
Bibliography	138
Appendix I	151
Appendix II	169

Acknowledgments

I am heartily grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Thomas O'Connor, whose encouragement, guidance and generosity in terms of time and advice proved invaluable to the completion of my studies.

Thanks are also due to the staff and students of both the History department and An Foras Feasa, for providing the warm and studious environment that constituted my time at NUI Maynooth.

Summary

Thomas Gould (1657-1734) was a native of Cork who achieved an impressive, although not unusual level of success as an Irish man in the employ of the French state and Catholic Church during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries in France. As well as being an Irish migrant on the Continent, Gould was an ecclesiastic, a Catholic missionary and religious polemical writer, and above all as this study will highlight, an agent of the Bourbon monarchy, a uniquely titled *Missionnaire du Roi*. Leaving his bridled Catholic life in Ireland Gould became involved and indeed achieved a high level of renown in the proscription of the religious lives of Protestants in Bourbon France. His missionary activities to the Protestants in Poitou formed part of the French state's final attempt to impose religious unity upon its religious dissenting community, the Huguenots.

The hermeneutical merit in focusing on Gould in this period is evident in the dynamism of his life, the study of which allows one to weave together the many differing contextual fabrics of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that constituted the many backdrops to Gould's activities in Poitou. Centrally placed as he was in Poitou at the vanguard of the Bourbon state's advance against the Huguenots, Gould provides an insight, not just into the complex workings of the relationship that existed between the Bourbon monarchy and its ecclesiastical allies, the Catholic Church, but more importantly, and that which forms the central thesis of this study, how both institutions attempted to subdue and convert its Protestant Huguenot community to Catholicism.

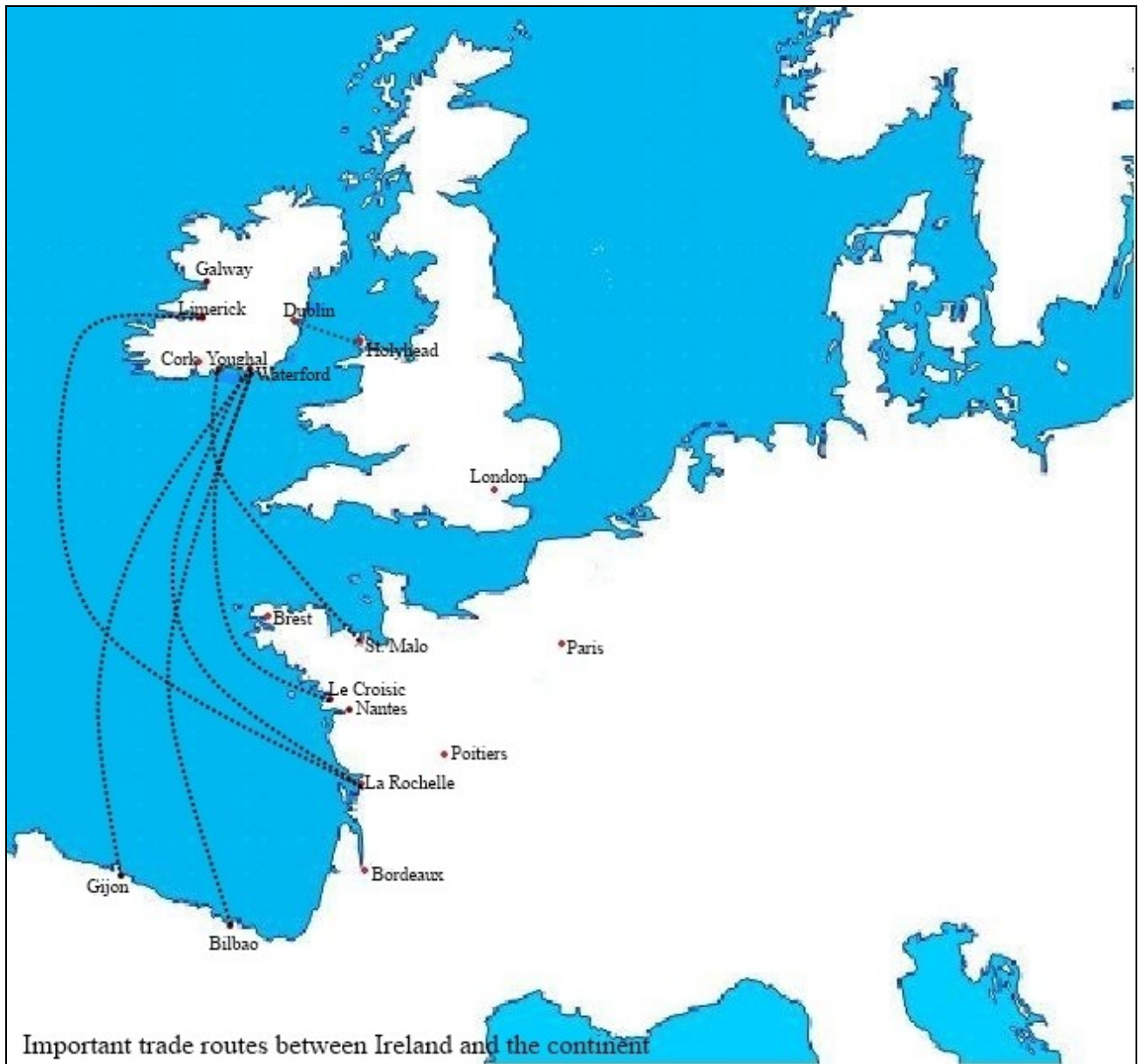


Fig. 1 Map showing early modern trading routes. As well as ferrying goods along these routes, ships also brought with them human cargo, military, economic and religious migrants seeking their fortunes abroad in places such as France, Spain and central Europe.

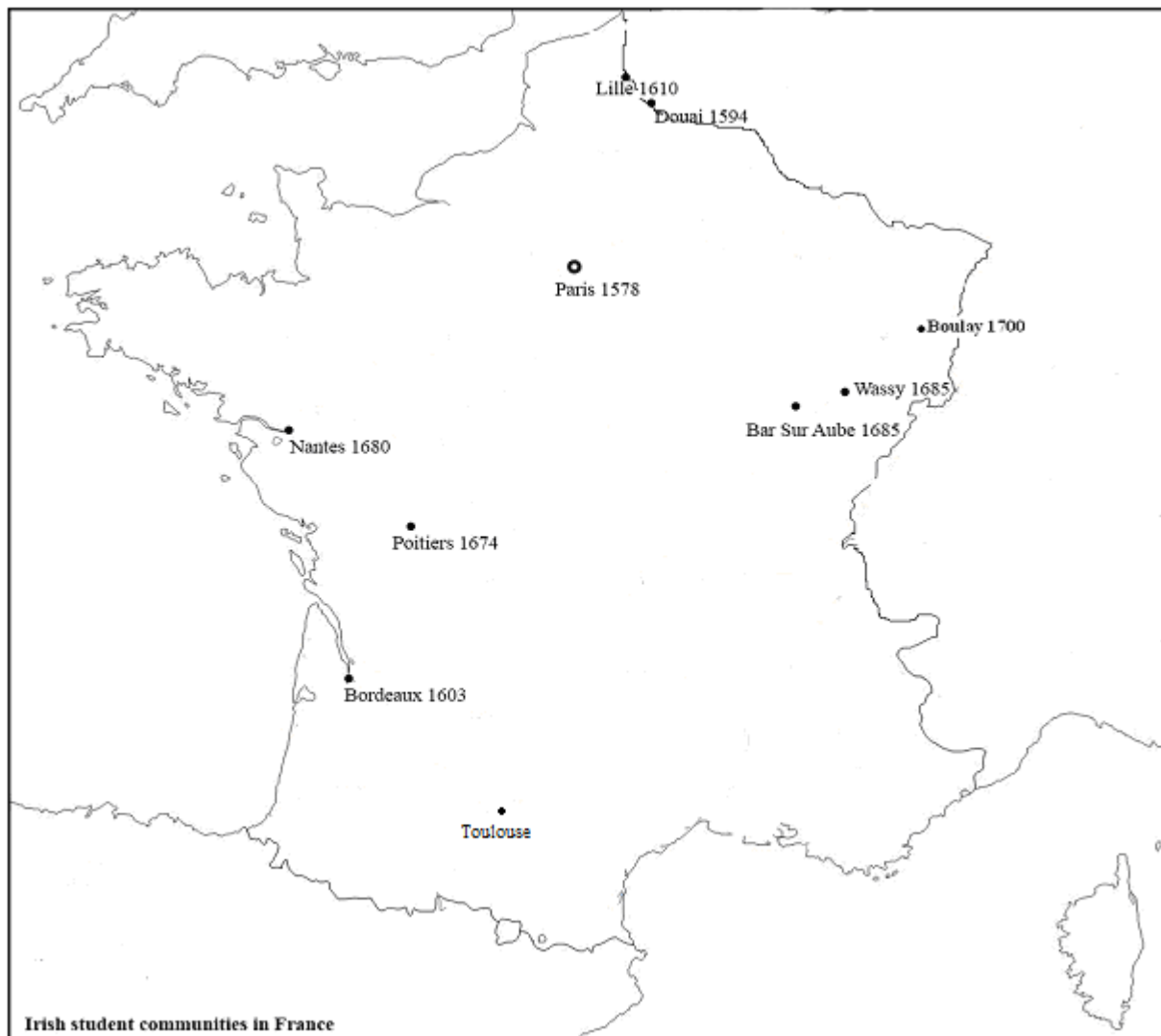


Fig. 2 Map detailing the network of Irish educational institutions in France by 1700, by which time there was a considerable number of institutions geared towards educating Irish migrants both laity and clerical.



Fig. 3 Map detailing the principle towns of Poitou. From 1678 Poitou became Gould's new home; the province was also home to a sizable population of French religious dissenters, the Huguenots.

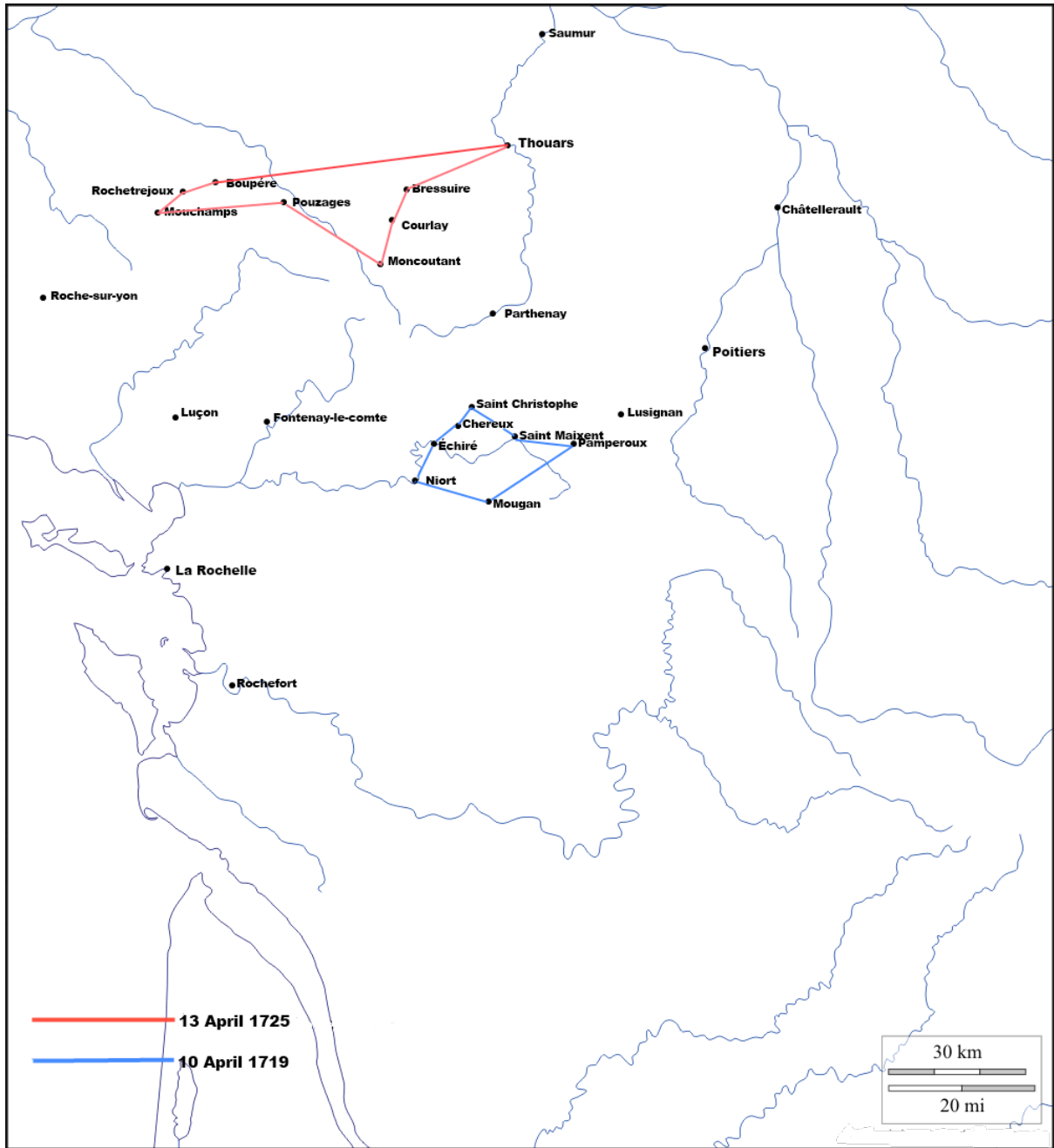


Fig. 4 Map showing the parishes visited during Gould’s missions of April 1719 and 1725. These missions or *tournées* were carried out over periods of two to three weeks, and saw the *missionnaire* along with his companion visiting up to eight different parishes throughout Poitou and neighbouring provinces.

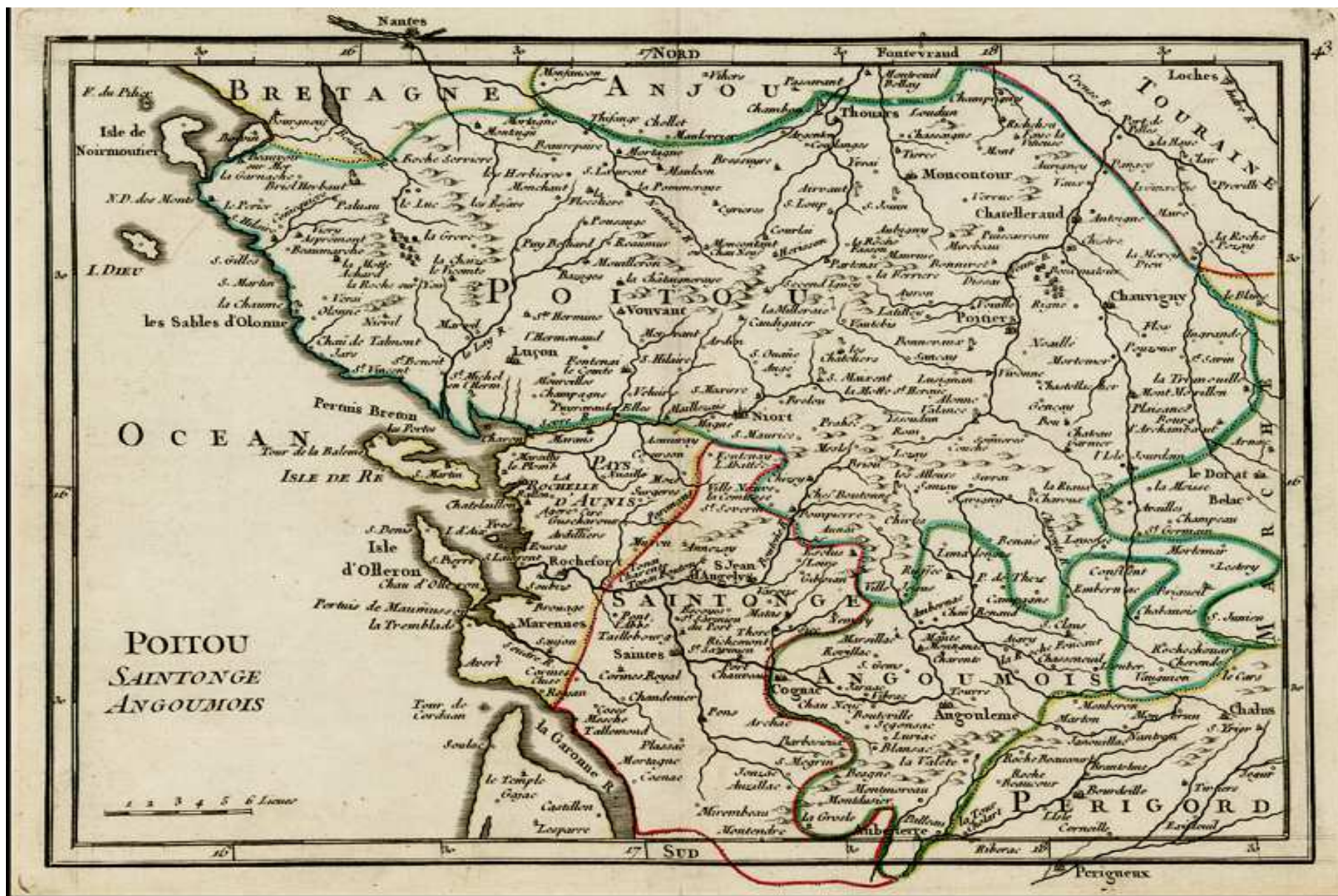


Fig 5. Map of Poitou, Saintonge and Angoumois by George Louis le Rouge. Paris 1756.

Introduction

In Dublin's south city centre, situated on Merrion Row are the grounds of a small Protestant cemetery dating from 1693, overlooked by most passersby in today's multicultural city. This cemetery is representative of an earlier Diaspora to the island of Ireland that occurred during the seventeenth century. Interred on the grounds in Merrion Row are the remains of some of Dublin's Protestant Huguenot community. They were religious exiles, who fled their native France due to the persecution of the Catholic Bourbon Monarchy. Leaving France they were forced to seek refuge in Protestant jurisdictions such as England, Holland and Ireland, where they established new lives and communities. This exile had its origins in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, which created a religious conflict in France that lasted until the eighteenth century and found bloody expression, in some French towns, notably Nîmes, during the Revolution. Of particular interest to this discussion is the seventeenth-century phase of this religious conflict. During the seventeenth century the French state understood as both the Catholic Church and the Bourbon Monarchy made a united, consistent effort to remove the Protestant community, through mixed strategies of conversion, persecution and migration. The Huguenots, as they were called, were members of the Reformed Church and, religiously, were of Calvinist orientation. They were pejoratively termed *La Religion Prétendue Réformée* by the administration. Involved in strategies and events that forced so many Huguenot French men and woman to flee their native homes and seek shelter abroad was an ecclesiastic of Irish extraction, the central protagonist of this story, Thomas Gould (1657-1734).

The early seventeenth century was a formative period in European history, particularly with regard to religion. Within France, the centralising policies of the Bourbon monarchy and its pursuit of a Roman Catholic religious unity resulted in a large scale forced migration of those refusing to relinquish their Reformed beliefs. Those who left France had chosen their religion over their king and country, bringing with them to their host countries a strong attachment and awareness of a religious identity that had been beaten and forged on the anvil of persecution. The evidence of this can still be seen today in the monuments they left in the many European cities that welcomed them. Yet France was not the only country in Europe of the period to impose religious conformity on its subjects. The

extension of English Common Law and its concomitant policy of plantation in Ireland resulted in a state-sponsored harassment of Catholics, who witnessed a diminution of their access to power and patronage as the centralising authority of the English crown increased on the island. Just as the French policy drove Huguenots to places like Ireland, its English equivalent drove Irish Catholics in the opposite direction, seeking their fortunes abroad in Catholic territories of the Hapsburg and Bourbon empires. Gould formed part of this migratory phenomenon, leaving his native Cork for the continent in 1678. Once in Europe he could avail of the vast and complex network of contacts which linked Ireland to its European neighbours and opened up the country to a host of new influences. A key element in this complex of contacts was the network of continental seminaries. Gould established himself at the Irish Jesuit College in Poitiers France where he became involved in the implementation of state policy towards Huguenots both as a man of the establishment and as an agent of the Bourbon monarchy, a *Missionnaire du Roi*. The story of his position in the employ of the crown at the vanguard in the state's advance against the Huguenots in Poitou, provides a window through which one can examine not just the details of his success as an Irish man on the continent but also a particular aspect of *ancien régime* France, that of the state policy of conversion regarding its minority Protestant community, the Huguenots. This was a policy that alternated between pacific and violent conversion strategies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

As is well known, the Huguenots formed a cohesive group in early-modern France, existing in the period after 1598 under the Edict of Nantes. The Edict was an attempt by Henry IV to regulate religious difference in France and to enable peaceful coexistence. For over eighty years the Huguenots were protected and enjoyed a limited freedom of worship under this edict, until Louis XIV revoked it in 1685. The revocation heralded a period of more active state persecution of the Huguenots and ultimately rendered them an isolated, heretical sect, under pressure until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the winds of Enlightenment ensured them more favourable treatment from the French state. The policy in which Gould became so energetically involved had two tiers. The first, represented by the legal restrictions placed on the Huguenots, involving the use of coercion and at times the use of violence, epitomised by the *dragonnades* to force conversions. The second involved a more pacific approach, utilising tactics of inducement and persuasion. Over a hundred years after this

policy was implemented the French Reformed Church was still in existence, albeit on a reduced scale, indicating that attempts to bring them back into the Catholic Church had very often failed. The examination of Gould's unique position as an employee of the French state and church in Poitou allows one to provide a more contextualised understanding of the consequences of the French Counter Reform, both in success and failure. In the present work this examination will be achieved by focusing on the activities of a particular group of French state officials charged with the conversion of the Huguenots of the Poitiers area and led by Thomas Gould. Above all it will be an investigation into the life of an Irish migrant who came to be regarded as one of the most famous missionaries in France of his time.

The literature abounds with biographies of Irish men and their endeavours to make their way on the continent during the *ancien régime*. Gould's story forms part of this commentary, yet the unique dynamic surrounding Gould's origins and the eventual position singles him out as a worthy subject of study in the context of the historiography of Irish in Europe. Research conducted in the last ten years on the subject of early modern Irish migration to the continent has shown that Gould was one amongst a multitude of men and women who constituted a large network of Irish expatriates across Europe. The examination of their experience adds much to our knowledge of migration across Europe in the early modern period.

Collections of research published by the Irish in Europe Project, NUI Maynooth (*The Irish in Europe 1580 1815* (2001), *Irish migrants in Europe after Kinsale 1602 – 1820* (2003), and *Irish Communities in early modern Europe* (2006)¹ detail the establishment and influence of Irish communities in countries right across Europe. Contributions to this field have been greatly enhanced by the research carried out by Éamon Ó Ciosáin, which includes examinations on Irish migration to western France and Irish communities in areas such as Brittany.² As well as revealing a large number of communities and Irish networks active on the continent this literature highlights how open and in

¹ Thomas O'Connor and Mary Ann Lyons (eds.), *The Irish in Europe 1580 1815* (Dublin, 2001). *Irish migrants in Europe after Kinsale 1602-1820* (Dublin, 2003). and *Irish Communities in early modern Europe* (Dublin, 2006).

² See Éamon Ó Ciosáin, 'Regrouping in exile: Irish communities in Western France in the seventeenth century', in R. Armstrong and T. Ó hAnnracháin (eds.), *Community in Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), pp. 133-53, and also 'A hundred years of Irish migration to France, 1590- 1688' in Thomas O'Connor, (ed.), *The Irish in Europe, 1580-1815* (Dublin, 2001).

tune with greater Europe the people of early-modern Ireland were as a direct result of this movement. These links were to a large extent serviced and maintained through a diverse network of Irish religious and educational institutions existent on the continent, of which Gould was a beneficiary in Poitou. L.W.B Brockliss and Patrick Ferté's statistical study '*Irish Clerics in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*' remains an important work regarding these Irish students and their relation to these institutions.³ The merit of the work lies in the author's concentration on higher education in France and their analysis of those Irish men that passed through the universities of Paris, Toulouse and Cahors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The work, however, only provides details of a limited number of universities. Nonetheless, the trends and data presented provide a template that can be applied to Gould and his studies in Poitiers. This is presented in chapter one. Brockliss and Ferté provide a canvas on which one can place Gould within his correct migratory context, one that formed part of the much larger Irish presence on the continent.

Traditionally, less is known about the topic of conversion and Bourbon monarchy's pursuit of religious unity than about the Protestant experience of it. This has much to do with the traditional historiography of the period which tends to stress the Huguenot experience. Scholarship regarding the Bourbon religious policy is generally concerned with expressing the view of the French Protestants and their reaction to state persecution. The best contemporary descriptions that survive were written by *temoins oculaires*, Huguenots who had suffered firsthand the effects of the state's refusal to accept their religion. Examples are accounts such as the *Journal de Jean Migault ou malheurs d'une famille Protestante du Poitou victime de la révocation de l'édit de Nantes. 1682- 1689*, and Elie Benoist *Histoire de L'Édit de Nantes* (1695).⁴ Written in a climate sharpened by violent persecution, they provide some of the best historical descriptions in terms of the Huguenot experience. There are contemporary criticisms of the monarchy, especially works like Phillipe de Limiers *Histoire du*

³ L.W.B. Brockliss, and Patrick Ferté, 'Irish clerics in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: a statistical study' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature, Vol. 87C (1987), pp 527-572

⁴ Elie Benoist *Histoire de L'Édit de Nantes, contenant les choses les plus remarquables qui se sont passées en France avant et après sa publication, à l'occasion de la diversité des Religions : Et principalement les Contraventions, Inexécutions, Chicanes, Artifices, Violences, et autres injustices, que les Réformez plaignent d'y avoir souffertes, jusques à l'Édit de Révocation, en Octobre, 1685. Avec ce qui a suivi ce nouvel Edict jusques a présent*, 5 vols. (1695) (hereafter cited as *Histoire de L'Édit de Nantes*) and Jean Migault, *Journal de Jean Migault ou malheurs d'une famille Protestante du Poitou victime de la révocation de l'édit de Nantes. 1682- 1689* (Paris, 1995).

Règne de Louis XIV, Roi de France et de Navarre (Amsterdam, 1719). Louis's treatment of the Huguenots is compared to Diocletian's strike against defenceless Christians in ancient Rome.⁵ These works went on to characterise much of the discourse and subsequent historiography of the period. They shaped how Huguenots themselves viewed their religious identity in relation to the state. It is thus unsurprising then that current historiographical treatment of this period tends to give a more Protestant-centred account of the dynamic between the Huguenot community and the French state. Twentieth-century historians often viewed Louis XIV's reign through the prism of fascism and dictatorship. Hence absolutism became a pejorative term denoting the oligarchic tendencies of a seventeenth-century state. In a similar vein is Janine Garrisson's *L'Édit de Nantes et sa révocation. Histoire d'une intolérance*, (Paris, 1985), the author analyses the span between the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes in 1598 and its revocation in 1685, charting the increase in intolerance. She assesses the revocation clearly as a political decision, and compares it to what one would nowadays term totalitarianism.⁶ In Labrousse's '*Une Foi, une loi, un roi?*' *La Révocation de L'Edit de Nantes* (1985) the historical and ideological impetus behind this decision is presented, detailing both the religious and political factors that were at play. In Jacques Solé's *Les Origines intellectuelles de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes* the author examines the more doctrinal aspects of the debate between the faiths in the seventeenth century and their application to the political developments leading up to the Revocation.⁷ These works provide accurate presentations of the Huguenots from the toleration of 1598 to the climate of sanctioned intolerance in 1685. Yet the subject matter treated is very often seen solely in terms of a Protestant persecution, with little concern for the role of the state apparatus of persecution. The relative neglect of the state's role needs to be remedied by taking a closer look at the Huguenots from the point of view of the religious agenda of the centralising state. Recent scholarship has done something to attempt to rectify this imbalance, highlighting how the excesses suffered by the Huguenots were the work of overzealous and ambitious *intendants* who defied royal orders, rather

⁵ Phyllis Leffler, 'French Historians and the challenge to Louis XIV's Absolutism', in *The Society for French Historical Studies*, 14, 1 (spring, 1985), pp 1-22, p. 20.

⁶ Janine Garrisson, *L'Édit de Nantes et sa révocation. Histoire d'une intolérance* (Paris, 1985), p. 8.

⁷ Elisabeth Labrousse, *Une Foi, une loi, un roi ? Essai sur la révocation de l'Édit de Nantes* (Paris et Genève, 1985), Janine Garrisson, *L'Édit de Nantes et sa révocation. Histoire d'une intolérance*, (Paris, 1985) and Jacques Solé, *Les Origines intellectuelles de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes* (Saint Etienne, 1997).

than part of crown policy of systematic violence.⁸ The predicament of contemporary scholars is to understand and not to judge the actions of the Bourbon state, which may seem to modern eyes to have been intolerant when compared with the extremes of authority that pepper modern experiences of twentieth-century history but in fact is not so. In spite of a plethora of literature on all aspects of *ancien régime* France, and in particular its religious policy, there remains ground to be covered in assessing the state's role in the treatment of Huguenots. The problem in historiography is not so much one of range but of depth. To an extent most aspects have received some treatment, yet certain areas still require more study in order to sharpen our image of the period.

A more localised account of how this religious policy was implemented is presented in *Les Protestants du Poitou au XVIIIe siècle 1681-1789* (Paris, 1998) by Yves Krumenacker.⁹ Despite the more focused scope of the work the author sets himself an ambitious task, to detail the political, social, cultural and religious responses of the Huguenots of the Poitou region, during attempts by the state to enforce confessional unity. The author shows how the initial suppression of the religion was aimed at the more external displays of worship and develops the work through an examination of state policy's effect on the social make-up of the Huguenots, their demographics and leadership. Throughout the work the author maintains that the animosity that existed between the two confessions was not consistent, and the fact that many of the edicts leading up to and following the Revocation of Nantes had to be reissued points to a failure to implement them by those charged with the task. The author contends that the attempt to convert the Huguenots, although it did find support on the ground was, however, a largely top down, state-directed policy, with poor local implementation. In Krumenacker's section on converting the Huguenots he devotes a certain amount of attention to Gould,¹⁰ particularly to his methods of persuasive conversion, dependent on both crown and church collusion. This is unsurprising given the ecclesiastic's role in the region, yet it is one of the few references to Gould's activities in contemporary historiography (excluding biographical dictionaries), which relates to this particular topic. This relative neglect is surprising given Gould's pastoral and published output over a

⁸ Jacqueline, Gratton, 'The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the role of the *Intendants* in the Dragonnades', in *French History*, 25, 2 (2011), pp 164-187.

⁹ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou au XVIIIe siècle 1681-1789* (Paris, 1998)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 198-214.

career that spanned forty years. Like so much of the scholarship, *Les Protestants du Poitou* provides an account of how the Poitevin Huguenots lived under a legal system that outlawed their belief during the period 1681 to 1789, but neglects the state apparatus. Thus while the work remains one of the most up to date and comprehensive studies of the period and region, it does not give a complete picture of Gould and his activities.

A sizable amount of work exists on the Catholic episcopate and Church reorganisation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many of these works deal with structural changes that occurred after the wars of religion and the reforming ethos of late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Ample treatment has also been given to the spirit and impetus that drove the movement against the reformed communities. In another work by Krumenacker, *L'école française de spiritualité; des mystiques, des fondateurs, des courants et leurs interprètes*,¹¹ the author analyses the work of early reformers such as Bérulle, Vincent de Paul and Jean Eudes, dominant ecclesiastics of the French Counter-Reformation that gave the overall spiritual overhaul of the people its shape and direction, as well as detailing how this reforming spirit percolated down to the lower levels of episcopal and lay life. The work details the development of the Counter-Reformation against the background of the vicissitudes of the seventeenth century, especially the excess of absolutism and the complexities of Jansenism.

Joseph Bergin's *Crown, church and episcopate under Louis XIV* (London, 2004),¹² gives an in-depth account of the character and *mentalité* of the French church and the evolution of the Catholic episcopate under the personal rule of Louis XIV. Bergin details the tense relationship between the crown and church and investigates the background, recruitment and management of the episcopate. Bergin traces the episcopate's origins, almost all of which were of noble birth. His study is devoted mostly to ecclesiastical patronage, one that was exercised through the crown. The author does speak of Louis XIV's desire to send the bishops to the Huguenot heartlands, and argues how Roman obstinacy was seen by the French crown as hampering the conversion of the adherents of the

¹¹ Yves Krumenacker, *L'école française de spiritualité; des mystiques, des fondateurs, des courants et leurs interprètes* (Paris, 1998).

¹² Joseph Bergin, *Crown, church and episcopate under Louis XIV* (London. 2004).

Reformed Church. Forestal's *Fathers, Pastors and Kings*,¹³ is constructed in the same mould and charts the reform of the episcopacy from the Council of Trent to the reign of Louis XIV. Forestal looks at the role of the French prelates and argues that they were far more conciliatory to Huguenots than the traditional historiography points out. She also demonstrates that the reform of the Church was a response to the increasing threat of Protestantism. However she deals more specifically with the internal restructuring of the Church hierarchy, which was one of its responses to this 'heresy' rather than treating of the actual policy employed to remove it from the state. She speaks at length of the role and influence of such French ecclesiastical reformers such as Jacques Olivier, Pierre de Bérulle and Saint Vincent de Paul, and also of how the bishops and priests reformed their roles to emulate that of Christ in the early church. Like Bergin, Forestal highlights the relationship that existed between the crown and the church. The Church saw itself as independent and distinct from Rome. However, its relationship with the state was at often times a strained alliance. Despite the lamentations of French reformers regarding the inadequacies in religious belief and practice among the French population, the reformers at least had the satisfaction of knowing that there was no real danger that Protestantism would ever again challenge the position of the Catholic Church.¹⁴ These works contribute significantly towards providing the background for Gould's evangelical role and the origins of his mandate to convert the Huguenots. They provide a firm background as to the origins of the coupling that occurred between Church and state resources in their mutual rejection of heresy. The scholarship seems to falter somewhat when one turns to the application of these resources, particularly in relation to the physical process of conversion by the Church and state agents. In other words, how the state and its ecclesiastical partners went about converting a Protestant to Catholicism, the time and resources required, the mechanics of a program with the elasticity needed to compete with a temperamental religious community. Scholarship does exist, however, on the concepts and ideas behind conversion, the reasons as to why those who converted did and the ramifications for those who

¹³ Alison Forrester, *Fathers, pastors and kings; Visions of episcopacy in seventeenth-century France* (Manchester, 2004).

¹⁴ *Idem* p. 144.

did not.¹⁵ This topic of research overlaps with the historiography concerning missionary activity which in the French context has much to do with the organisation of religious institutions. It was these institutions that provided the Church with most of their *missionnaires*, among them many Capuchins, Jesuits and Vincentians. The subject is treated in the current literature as part of a larger examination of the religious congregations that were charged with conversion and reform. In Elizabeth Rapley's *The Dévotes*¹⁶ the author elaborates on the organisation and role of women in these institutions, particularly the Ursulines, a congregation to which Gould was attached at the beginning of his career. Overall the aim of the work is to examine the role of women in the counter reform and their relative importance therein. A richer assessment of this topic and its relation to the religious instruction of Huguenots is found in Catherine Martin's *Les Compagnies de la propagation de la foi (1632–1685)*.¹⁷ Through her examination of the role of the *Compagnies de la propagation de la foi*, the work addresses the lesser known networks of societies involved in evangelical work. Beginning in the 1630s Martin looks into the social constitution of these institutions, aristocratic and predominantly female. She also devotes a great deal of attention to the process of conversion, one of main functions of the institution. The merit of the work is the light it sheds on how these Catholic institutions developed in the face of the Protestant threat, how they viewed the Huguenots, and how they developed along lines aimed at the ultimate deconstruction of the Edict of Nantes. This stemmed from a more religious and spiritual source rather than crown directives. Martin's work provides a wider examination of the network across France expanding on the work carried out by Odile Martin in *La Conversion Protestante à Lyon 1659 -1687*.¹⁸ Here the author deals with the origins of *La Compagnie de la propagation de la foi* in Lyon and the basis for its foundation and the conversion of Lyon's Protestant community.

Although Gould was not attached to any of the religious institutions mentioned in the foregoing survey, he did work closely alongside the Ursulines in Poitou. His position as chaplain with

¹⁵ Nicolas Brucker (ed.), *La Conversion: expérience spirituelle, expression littéraire: actes du colloque de Metz* (5-7 juin 2003) (Bern, 2005); Peter van der Veer (ed.), *Conversion to modernities; the globalisation of Christianity* (New York, 1996).

¹⁶ Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes, Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Québec, 1993).

¹⁷ Catherine Martin, *Les Compagnies de la propagation de la foi (1632–1685) Paris, Grenoble, Aix, Lyon, Montpellier. Étude d'un réseau d'associations fondé en France au temps de Louis XIII pour lutter contre l'hérésie des origines à la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes* (Genève, 2000).

¹⁸ Odile Martin, *La Conversion Protestante à Lyon 1659-1687* (Genève, 1986).

them and his relationship with them in the pursuit of his work provides an insight into how the crown availed of this readymade institutional framework to facilitate conversion, especially after the revocation of Nantes. The current historiography provides images of the several contexts in which Gould found himself: a migrant; an ecclesiastic of the French Church; a crown agent active in a policy of persecution in the pursuit of religious unity. Gould's asset as a hermeneutical device of historical enquiry lies in his position within these differing contexts, the study of which allows one to weave the fabric of these many settings together. He provides in brief compass a means of remedying the deficiencies already identified in the historiography, particularly in furthering our understanding of the actual process of conversion. Common views taken of this period are generally associated with terms like 'persecution' and 'intolerance', expressions that are closer to an understanding of how the Huguenots viewed the policy aimed against them. They are descriptors that, although integral to our understanding of the religious conflict, ought not dominate or prejudge the discussion. As will be demonstrated, Gould, the Church and the state's interpretation of the Huguenots had much to do with notions articulated in a lexicon which used terms such as heresy, dissension, conformity and submission to royal will. The standard view taken by the state and the Church in France was that Protestantism constituted a subversive, heretical sect, one that went against the natural order of state and established religion. To a large extent it was these views that dominated and guided state policy against the Protestants and indeed Gould's approach to his work. The story recounted here will develop within this context, and thus present the image of how a state reacted to what it believed was a danger to the established order of society. The points of inquiry that will mark the advance in our discussion will converge on the levels of success enjoyed by Gould in his peaceful approach to conversion within a climate that was plagued with problems of religious insincerity where many Huguenots who had converted to Catholicism privately remained Protestant. The discussion will also examine the many other difficulties encountered by Gould in his work with the Huguenots and how these can be taken to reflect the failure of the overall policy of religious reform in France.

The source material on which this examination is based consists largely of the correspondence of *Secrétaires d'état*, royal dispatches sent from the *Secrétaire d'État du Maison du Roi* in Versailles, to the various individuals involved in the conversion of Huguenots in the provinces, including Poitou.

The repository for these is the Archives Nationales in Paris, (Maison du Roi 1701-1734), catalogued under sub series O/ 369- 380. These dispatches as well as demonstrating the royal policy regarding issues of religious reform in Poitou and elsewhere, detail the extent of the network of people involved in what was an extremely large scale operation. Two main weaknesses attend the use of this source: the first is the considerable lacunae between 1706 -1718, which not only closes one off to Gould's activities during this time but also obscures our view of the direction of crown policy. The second is the somewhat limited scope of the *Maison du Roi* correspondence which only goes one way and was sustained by three people during Gould's career. Despite this the content of the letters describes the crown policy rather than that of the secretary , and the direction of the policy coming from Versailles in these letters after 1718 can be assumed to be reflective of that practiced before 1706. This is based on the reasonable assumption that little changed during this period affecting how the state dealt with its Protestant minorities. The letters also contain enough information to allow researchers to say something of the topics being treated and to highlight what the principal concerns were for those involved in the policy, and how the crown wished them to carry it out. This source is complemented by Gould's reports, housed at the Archives departementale de la Vienne Poitiers contained in catalogue C series 57-59. These sources are extensive and give detailed descriptions of his evangelical tours of Poitou between 1719 and 1727, in the form of reports to crown administrators such as the *intendant*, the procureur general and the bishops. They are essentially measurements of the levels of religious adherence existent amongst the Reformed communities in Poitou. When compared with those from the *Maison du Roi* the royal direction of Gould's remit and how he implemented it during his activities in Poitou becomes apparent. As well as providing the many names of those who populated his network, these reports reflect Gould's understanding of his relationship with the Protestants with whose conversion he was charged. It is these reports that will provide the foundation of the discussion and an insight into Gould's life as well and the religious workings of *ancien régime* France.

The structure of the work will be guided by that of Gould's career in Poitou. The discussion will begin with an examination of why Gould chose to travel to France to attend the Irish Jesuit College in Poitiers. It was centrally located in the region of Poitou and home to a large population of

Huguenots, the contextual aspects of whose chequered and volatile relationship with the crown will be discussed in the period leading up to Gould's arrival in the late seventeenth century. This was the period of the Revocation of Nantes. This examination allows us to address the salient contextual backdrops of Gould's life, a man who stood on both sides of religious controversy, a victim of persecution in Ireland and agent of reform, conversion and religious persecution, however irenically understood, in France. The second chapter provides a closer look at the networks that comprised Gould's professional activity in Poitou and France, the people of influence who facilitated his rise as well the 'evangelical clients' who allowed him success. This chapter takes us from the Huguenots in Poitou to the policy makers in Versailles, with Gould acting as something of a go between. As he occupied this position Gould carried out his primary function, the conversion of the local Huguenots. It is the examination of the *déroulement* of this process which forms the principle portion of chapter three. This is where Gould applied a specific irenic technique that was integral to his success. Building on his long experience in the field of conversion Gould also launched a published career as an able polemical and religious controversialist. The content, publication and distribution as well as the international aspects of his literary output form are examined in the final chapter. From his arrival to his death Gould seemingly had an enduring ability to convert Huguenots and to please his superiors. He provides a perfect example of what an Irish man of his origins, given the right attainments and contacts, could achieve in his period. Yet his success in the particular policy of imposing religious uniformity contrasts starkly with this policy's ultimate failure. This turns out to have been the overriding theme of the story of Gould's life in Poitou. It will be discussed in greater detail in the concluding remarks. Let us begin however with the early opportunities and domestic restraints that provided the impetus for a person such as Gould to leave his native Cork to seek his fortunes on the continent.

Chapter 1 :

From Irish migrant to *Missionnaire do Roi*, origins and early activities of Thomas Gould (1657-1734)

The Stuart Kingdoms in the second half of the seventeenth century witnessed the transition from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy. This shift began in earnest in the 1640s with the execution of Charles I and was confirmed by the Glorious Revolution and the adoption of King William of Orange as the new monarch. In France a largely opposing evolution occurred. Royal power triumphed over parliamentary tradition, with the upheaval of the Fronde in the 1640s resulting in a strengthened Bourbon monarchy victorious over the political ambitions of the nobility.¹ Despite the disparity in forms of governance between the two kingdoms, comparisons can be drawn between these two states as to how they controlled their religiously dissenting communities. At the close of the seventeenth century both England and France had developed forms of legal apparatus in order to monitor and control their respective heterodox religious communities. In Ireland, for instance, the majority Roman Catholic denomination existed within a set of laws and restrictions imposed by their Protestant masters. In France it was the Catholic administration which sought to control and monitor the local Protestant or Huguenot community.

One of the results of the Reformation was that every new 'hydra' of religious difference had political implications for early modern states. As these new denominations gathered strength and imposed themselves, they gained political weight and in many states they became the dominant confession. Geneva, for instance, became early on in the Reformation, a centre and haven for the version of reformed Protestantism called Calvinism. Some of the German states were home to Lutheranism while England developed its own brand of Protestantism, Anglicanism. Spain and France could be said to have maintained their roles as defenders of the old traditional faith, Roman Catholicism. In fact, both became homes to vigorously distinct versions of what might be called reformed Catholicism. In all these states religious conformity was a means of ensuring and maintaining loyalty to the political establishment as well as regulating social conformity. This was particularly true in the case of England and France, where the monarch was regarded as the *de facto*

¹ Gwynne Lewis, *France 1715-1804: power and people* (Harlow, 2005), p. 10.

head of the established church. This commonplace of early modern monarchical rule proved unfortunate to the congregations of the dissenting faithful, who suffered the consequences of the religious promiscuity that was rife within the royal families of Europe. This holds for both England and France. Despite living by different interpretations of the scriptures, the established faiths in both states were the obligatory means by which one's relationship with the ruling elite was defined and articulated. The monarchy used the state religion to help govern and control. In this regard both the monarchies of England and France had same the agenda. The difference was not in the state's objective use of the established religion but in the way subjects were required to identify with it. In France those who were members of any Protestant community were deemed heretics and dissenters. In England this rejection was reserved for Catholics (and to a lesser extent to Presbyterians). The abusive term 'Papist' summed up for their detractors, the basic flaw in Catholic loyalty, which was divided, allegedly, between that due to the king and to the pope.

It is upon this very colourful yet complicated religious and political canvass that one can begin to paint the picture of Thomas Gould's early life and origins, during which he moved from one climate of religious persecution to another. Gould epitomised the fact that without changing an iota of one's religious belief one could move from being a heretic to a member of the true faith simply by crossing a political border. Gould's choice to travel to France is also demonstrable of how the lifting of restrictions upon one's religious expression through migration could be beneficial. Leaving his bridled religious life behind in Ireland Gould was freed, in a Catholic jurisdiction like France, to embark upon a career that would bring him renown amongst members of French ruling elite, including the Sun King himself. Yet he would achieve this fame through his participation in a programme that placed religious and social restrictions on French Protestants, similar to those restrictions placed upon Gould's co-religionists back in Ireland. Care must be exercised when drawing comparisons between Catholics under the Penal laws in Ireland and Protestants around the period of the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685. The distinction is drawn that in France the laws were directed against a religious minority, whereas in Ireland the popery laws restricted the majority of inhabitants. More important than this obvious dissimilarity was the fact that, although the laws proscribed many aspects of Catholic life and worship, at no point in Ireland, and certainly not in the

eighteenth century, was Catholic worship, as such, illegal. In France all worship other than that of the established Catholic Church was proscribed under the articles of the Edict of Fontainebleau 1685. The distinctions continue when one moves beyond the letter of these laws. There was a considerable gulf between what was written on the statute books and how these legal terms applied to situations on the ground. In Ireland there seemed to be a general sense of apathy when it came to converting the popish natives to the established faith, due to a number of factors such as lack of resources and, of course, the barrier that the Irish language posed. There was little attention for voices calling for translations of the Book of Common Prayer into Irish. The sentiment among policy makers was that the Irish language should be discouraged rather than propagated.² In France the gulf was much narrower. There was almost complete concord amongst the government and Catholic clergy that members of the reformed community should be reintegrated back into Catholic Church. The situation in France diverges from that in Ireland when one looks at other marks of identity. In Ireland Catholics were generally regarded as the Popish natives, as 'Irish', distinct from those of the Anglican faith who saw themselves as 'English'. In France issues of ethnic identity were less a factor. Huguenots were 'French'. Between these two forms of religious persecution stands the protagonist of this story and one cannot ignore the interesting dynamic between his country of origin and what was to become his home after 1678.

The most striking parallel to be drawn between the official religious policies in France and Ireland concerns their provisional, improvised character. Although driven by a government and church desire for religious unity, the programmes themselves lacked systematic structure and coherent, consistent implementation. In France the Counter-Reformation constantly varied in both intensity and effectiveness. In Ireland, government and church attitudes towards the conversion of Catholics was complex and ambiguous. In both countries the corpus of legislation affecting religious communities developed over a number of decades, whose implementation varied according to changes in the wider European political context. In the seventeenth century one must view anti-Catholic legislation through the prism of the Confederate Wars, the Cromwellian conquest and the period that is traditionally referred to as the Protestant Ascendancy following the Glorious Revolution in 1690s. The 1680s in France was a time of official religious retrenchment as the Nantes arrangement of 1598 was set aside.

² S.J. Connolly, *Religion, law and power; the making of Protestant Ireland 1600-1760* (Oxford, 1992), p. 294.

It was also a time of great international stress with its backdrop of the Dutch war 1672-78, the disastrous wars of the League of Augsburg, 1689-97 and the Spanish War of Succession 1701-1714, which saw the France pitted against England, Austria, Portugal and the Dutch. This was the volatile religious universe in which Gould came to adulthood.

A Gould of Cork and the Irish Diaspora to Europe

Gould was born on the eve of the Stuart Restoration in Cork in 1657³ at a time when the possibility of a Stuart restoration gained strength. With the Restoration came a more relaxed or at least indifferent attitude to Catholics in Ireland. In Cork, families named Gould were quite prominent. The name 'Gowles', from which one derives 'Goold', 'Gold' and 'Gould', had been, since the fourteenth century, intimately associated with Cork.⁴ The Goulds were among the leading families in this region, with a person of this name being mayor of Cork no less than thirty times between 1442 and 1640. Members of this family were to the fore commercially, politically, militarily, and as the subject of our discussion demonstrates, religiously. This was particularly evident in the seventeenth century, both in Ireland and on the Continent.⁵ The census of Ireland circa 1659 records a number of variations of this name for Cork, including Gold, Goold and that of our subject here, Gould. The only Goulds recorded in the census for Cork came from three different town lands: Patrick Gould from Inishonane, Francis Gould from Ballineboy and a George, Robert and Peter Gould from Inneskene in the parish of Kennegh.⁶ The returns for this source do not, however, give the names of every person in each parish, only those people of standing who are listed under the term 'Titulado', referring to the principal person or persons of standing in any locality. This ranged from a nobleman, baron, gentleman, esquire, military officer, or adventurer downwards. These results give one a sense of Gould's origins but no hard information. Given the paucity of records for this area during the 1650s and the abundance of

³ H. Imbert, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Laon de Thouars* (Niort, 1876), p. xxxv.

⁴ Edward MacLysaght, *More Irish Families* (Dublin, 1982), p. 115, and John O'Hart, *Irish Pedigree: or the origin and stem of the Irish nation* (Dublin, 1888), pp 225-226.

⁵ Richard Goold another man of the cloth was professor of theology in Spain. He was postulated for several sees in Ireland by the king of Spain. See Edward MacLysaght, *More Irish Families* (Dublin, 1982), p. 115.

⁶ Séamus Pender, (ed.), *A census of Ireland circa 1659, with supplementary material from the poll money ordinances; 1660-1661* (Dublin, 1939), pp 202-215.

Goulds in the region it is difficult to pinpoint our ecclesiastic's exact origins. From Cork however Gould travelled to France where he was to make a name for himself. In 1703 Jérôme Phélypeaux the *comte de Pontchartrain* and *secrétaire de la Maison Du Roi*, wrote to Monsieur Anne Pinon *intendant du Poitou* detailing the condition of those who had been newly converted to Catholicism. Pontchartrain had mentioned a '[Monsieur] Gould prestre Irlandois estably a Tours qui a jusques a présent parfaitement reussy a l'instruction des nouveaux catholiques'.⁷

Gould was part of the migration which took so many Irish to the Continent under the *ancien régime*. Part of this migration was ecclesiastical in nature and indeed by the end of the eighteenth century some thirty Irish ecclesiastical colleges were in existence across Europe to cater for a growing number of Irish men who wished to return to the Irish mission or seek their fortunes abroad. Migration routes to the Continent followed medieval trade patterns; this was obvious in the case of migration to France,⁸ where merchants settled in ports to increase the scale of their trade and facilitated migrant inflow.⁹ There were a number of reasons why the Irish travelled to the Continent. Motivation factors included domestic food shortages, social upheaval, war, economic hardships as well as political unrest and problems associated with religious reformation. Unfavourable situations at home were not the only catalyst for this migration; pull factors were just as important as push factors. Among the most important of these in the French context were the economic, social and political changes caused by the Thirty years War, the Counter-Reformation and Bourbon-Habsburg rivalry. These religious, political and military factors on the Continent attracted many men seeking to join European armies, for instance. So the pull factors must be understood in conjunction with domestic push factors in order to form an accurate picture of motivation for migration to the Continent and to France in particular. One of these push factors already mentioned is more easily understood in this international context: the extension of English monarchical rule on the island with its concomitant legal restrictions placed on Catholics in the form of the Penal Laws.

⁷ Jérôme Phélypeaux to Anne Pinon, 25 Apr. 1703 (Archives nationales, Paris, O/1 363 f. 101), hereafter (ANP, O/1 363 f. 101).

⁸ See fig 1, p. iv.

⁹ Éamon Ó Ciosáin, 'A hundred years of Irish migration to France, 1590- 1688' in Thomas O'Connor, (ed.), *The Irish in Europe, 1580-1815* (Dublin, 2001), p. 98.

Domestic constraints and foreign opportunities

As was the case with most European centralising states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England and Ireland were confessional states, and as a consequence adherence to the state Church or Anglican Church was a prerequisite for participation in political life. Irish Catholics wishing to become men of the cloth or advance their education were therefore severely limited in opportunity due to the restrictions on education and lack of seminaries in Ireland. The prohibition on Catholics teaching in or running schools meant there was regular traffic in teachers and students between Irish Catholics and their European co-religionists. The Education Act of 1695, or an Act to restrain foreign education, which was passed after Gould left for France was a reiteration of the Irish established church's monopoly over education.¹⁰ The only option for Catholics seeking an advanced level of education was to travel abroad. The large numbers of Irish opting for migration led, as mentioned above, to the establishment of a number of Irish colleges across the continent, one of the first being set up in Paris in 1578. The inception of these seminaries arose not out of Roman initiatives but from restrictions in place at home and opportunistic fundraising abroad.¹¹ Evidence does exist, however, of prior travel to European universities by Irish students as they appear on university registers as early as the 1540s.¹² France then, the primary geographic centre of this project, was host to a number of Irish colleges such as Douai (after its conquest by Louis XIV), Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes, Poitiers and the Collège des Lombards in Paris, which was handed over to the Irish in 1677.¹³ Thus by the time Gould arrived in France in 1678 many Irish colleges in France had already been established or were in the process of being set up. Those Catholic migrants from the south of Ireland tended to use old trade routes by sea, leaving Ireland's western coast to arrive at the Breton port towns or the port cities in the south such as Bordeaux. Those from eastern provinces in Ireland tended to travel across the Irish Sea over England entering France from its Northern ports such as Calais. These factors help explain the reason why Gould left Ireland, the proximity to France and its religious make-

¹⁰ S.J., Connolly, *Religion, law and power; the making of Protestant Ireland 1600-1760* (Oxford, 1992), p. 268.

¹¹ Patrick Ferté, 'The Counter-Reformation and Franco-Irish solidarity: Irish clerical refugees at the universities of Toulouse and Cahors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' in Thomas O'Connor and Mary Ann Lyons (eds), *Irish Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Dublin, 2006), p. 32.

¹² Thomas O'Connor, (ed.), *The Irish in Europe, 1580-1815* (Dublin, 2001), p. 14.

¹³ See fig 2, p. v.

up answers our questions as to why he opted for that country. However, it does not necessarily answer why he choose Poitou, which, as will become clear, was a somewhat unusual, although not uncommon destination, for someone travelling from the west or south of Ireland. A statistical study of Irish clerical attendance at French universities in the early modern period conducted by Brockliss and Ferté reveals a high percentage of students originating from the southern parts of Ireland, notably Cork, Kerry and Waterford.¹⁴ The study shows students from the ecclesiastical province of Cashel make up of 42.2% of all Irish students who attended the University of Paris between 1590 and 1789. For the period 1640-89, during which Gould travelled to France, the percentage was 54%. A similar trend is evident when one considers the Universities of the Midi-Pyrenees region such as Toulouse and Cahors. From 1590 to 1789 over 90% of the Irish contingent in these universities had come from the ecclesiastical province of Cashel. In the period 1640-89 when Gould comes in to the fold, the percentage of Munster students was 96.8%.¹⁵ These figures are not surprising given the migrant trends from Ireland to the Breton and southern ports such as Bordeaux. What does inspire interest is Gould's lack of conformity with this. Originating in Munster Gould eschewed the University of Paris and those of southern France. Instead he travelled to Poitiers in France's mid-west. Of course, if Gould did arrive in France through the Breton ports then geographically he was closer to Poitiers than Bordeaux and Toulouse. Yet his decision to travel to Poitiers was probably not made solely for reasons of geographical convenience. The existence of a small Irish community associated with Irish Jesuit college in Poitiers may have influenced his choice.

In Dreux –Duradier's *Histoire Littéraire du Poitou* the author states that Gould arrived in France around 1678 and, ' Il s'arrêta à Poitiers et y fit sa théologie.', and that 'Après avoir reçu les saints ordres, il[Gould] fut envoyé par l'évêque de Poitiers (Hardouin Fortin de la Hoguette) en 1681 ou 1682, à Thouars..'.¹⁶ This account is mirrored in Hayes' *Biographical Dictionary of Irishmen*

¹⁴ L.W.B. Brockliss and Patrick Ferté, *Irish clerics in France*.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 560.

¹⁶ Dreux-Duradier, Jean François, *Histoire Littéraire du Poitou, précède d'une introduction et continue jusqu'en 1849 par une société d'hommes de lettres*. (Genève, 1969) réimpression de l'édition de Niort, 1842-1849. p. 71.

in France.¹⁷ According to both authors Gould travelled to Poitiers in 1678, although it is Hayes who states that Gould attended the Irish Jesuit College. Duradier simply states that he arrived in Poitiers where he studied theology and afterwards was ordained. Both attest it was in Poitiers where he received his holy orders. These descriptions run into complications when one considers the make-up of the Irish Jesuit College at Poitiers. Poitiers was one of the largest towns in the province of Poitou-Charente located in France's mid-west. The Irish College was established by an Irish Jesuit, Ignatius Browne (1630-79). A native of Waterford, Browne was educated in Spain where he entered the Society of Jesus in Compostella. By 1673 Browne had already made his way to Paris. The contacts he established here, with the Jesuit Père Ferrier, personal confessor to Louis XIV, may have assisted him in gaining letters patent to establish a college at Poitiers in 1674, of which he, Browne, became first rector.¹⁸ The Irish college was attached to the already-existing Jesuit College in Poitiers established under Henri IV in 1605. The Jesuits had been given the Collège de Sainte Marthe, one of the colleges associated with the University of Poitiers, established in the fifteenth century and quickly became one of the most influential orders in the area. It was the Jesuits who conducted the first large scale missions to Poitou as well as other areas with large Protestant populations. At Poitiers they occupied a significant position, by 1650s this position was affirmed by Royal patronage,

Sa Majesté 'voulait et entendait que le collège des Jésuites de Poitiers fût perpétuellement et à toujours censé et réputé de *fondation royale*, et qu'il jouît des mêmes honneurs et privilèges, franchises et exemptions dont jouissent les maisons fondées par les rois ses prédécesseurs' le prenait sous sa protection et sauvegarde spéciale et le gratifiait d'une subvention annuelle de 3.000 livres, 'pour en jouir à perpétuité, par chacun an à prendre sur la recette générale de Poitiers, au chapitre des fiefs et aumônes'.¹⁹

To this establishment was attached the Irish College in Poitiers, which was variously called the Collège Irlandais, Pères Jesuites d'Hibernie or Petits-Jesuites. This new collegiate was situated in an annex of the Collège of Sainte Marthe, on the extremity of the Rue de la Prévoté, a crossroads that

¹⁷ Richard Hayes, *Biographical Dictionary of Irishmen in France* (Dublin, 1949), p. 108, and Jean François Dreux-Duradier, *Histoire Littéraire du Poitou, précède d'une introduction et continue jusqu'en 1849 par une société d'hommes de lettres*. (Genève, 1969) réimpression de l'édition de Niort, 1842-1849, p. 71.

¹⁸ Richard Hayes, *Biographical Dictionary of Irishmen in France* (Dublin, 1949), pp 15-16.

¹⁹ Joseph Delfour, *Les Jésuites a Poitiers, 1604-1762* (Paris, 1901), pp 103-104

earned the name Plan des Petits-Jesuites.²⁰ Francis Finnegan however, has pointed out that from the beginning the Irish college of Poitiers ‘was a school for the education of young laymen and not a seminary.’²¹ Therefore Gould could not have received his holy orders at this college. Despite not being able to study there, Gould may well have stayed at Irish College at Poitiers, making use of its other function as a house of refuge. Finnegan also points out that ‘In eighteenth-century correspondence the term seminarium is used fairly frequently to describe the establishment but . . . , the school maintained its lay character from its foundation until its extinction.’²² This may explain the suggestion that Gould attended the Irish college as a candidate for the priesthood. It also raises the possibility that Gould may have been a priest before he arrived in Poitiers. His arrival coincides with the Popish plot of 1678, when many Irish priests were forced to leave the country. Another avenue of speculation is that Gould did not attend the Irish college but the Université de Poitiers. Duradier simply states that he travelled to Poitiers where he studied theology. In *Histoire de l’Université de Poitiers : Passé et présent* (Poitiers, 1932), Gould is listed under ‘Théologiens de la Faculté de Poitiers au XVIIe siècle’,²³ where he is said to have ‘fait sa théologie’. Four years later, Gould was appointed ‘aumônier des Ursulines de Thouars (1682)’²⁴. If he did attend the University then four years seems like a suitable time frame for him to complete his studies and receive holy orders. The lack of hard evidence allows one only to speculate on his early activities and credentials upon arrival. Again, one can only speculate as to why Gould chose Poitiers. Given the Irish College’s recent establishment it is unlikely that Gould may have had any family members attending the college, but Gould may have had contacts in the area. Although there was no substantial Irish community in Poitiers around the time of Gould’s arrival other than the Irish College, there were some people who were of Irish extraction. A George Deyos (1659-1726), a native of Waterford, had settled in Poitiers after his marriage to a bourgeoisie of the town, a member of the Beauchet-Filleau family in the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 107.

²¹ Francis Finnegan ‘The Irish College of Poitiers, 1647-1762’ in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, vol. civ (Jul.-Dec. 1965), pg. 20

²² Ibid.

²³ M. Boissannade, *Histoire de l’Université de Poitiers: Passé et présent (1432-1932)*, (Poitiers, 1932), pp. 126-128

²⁴ Ibid., pg. 128

1670s.²⁵ Before this date however there were people of Irish descent recorded in the area. In the parish of Nouaillé in Poitou in the marriage registry for January 1655, the local curé presided over the marriage of two pairs of ‘hibernois’, Richard Valische and Magdeleine Cremin, and Thadée Karolle with Mathurine Guenin.²⁶ The sources highlight that much later after 1700 there was a considerable presence of Irish in the region. The *Union Chrétienne* at Poitiers, which housed those singled out for conversion and instruction notably young Protestant women, records in its accounts the presence of a young girl named Marie Gould aged between eight or nine, who was in receipt of a government pension. It is possible that Marie Gould was a Protestant, the extract details she was taken into the care of this establishment in order to remove her from being ‘exposee pour la religion’. The account records her as having been abandoned ‘estant sortie d’irlande depuis plusieurs annes sans bien ayant laisse celuy qui luy appartenait dans le pais sa pension est paie au tresor royal elle est [dont] depuis le premier de Janvier 1701’.²⁷ Marie Gould was not the only young Irish girl to be spirited away to a convent for protection. In 1717 the Bishop of Poitiers recorded that a Mademoiselle de Molloy a ‘fille de qualité Irlandoise’, had been institutionalised due to her distinguished beauty and fear that she might be solicited by undesirable persons of Poitiers, ‘qui voyoient la pauvrete de son pere et de la mere’. The decision was taken to place her in the Christian Union in Poitiers to be out of danger. The *intendant* suggested that she be placed on the ‘rolle des gratifications qu’on prend sur le bien des fugitifs, pour cent cinquante livres par an’.²⁸ By the first decades of the eighteenth century the area was obviously popular enough to attract more people of Irish extraction. One of the pull factors may have been the presence of the Irish College in the city as a base from which other Irish expatriates could embark on their new lives on the continent.

Research conducted on the curriculum in colleges and universities in France during this period allows one to draw some general conclusions about Gould’s education in Poitiers, if one is to assume he did in fact study at the university. Colleges and academic institutions in France were not simply social entities but legal bodies due to their charters of incorporation. These charters allowed

²⁵ Sébastien Jahan, ‘An Irish Family between assimilation and revolution: The Keatings of Poitiers, 1777-95’ in Thomas O’Connor and Mary Ann Lyons (eds.), *Irish migrants in Europe after Kinsale, 1602-1820* (Dublin, 2003), p. 152.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁷ Extrait des noms de Nouveaux Convertis, Jan. 1701 (ADV, Poitiers, C54, f.19).

²⁸ Mémoire de Monsieur l’Évêque de Poitiers sur les pensions et gratifications accordées sur les biens des fugitifs, May 1717 (ADV, Poitiers, C57).

them a number of rights and privileges such as exemption from royal and municipal taxation. *Les droit des gradués* gave university graduates the right of first refusal on all freely vacated benefices, except for bishoprics and cathedral prebends.²⁹ Therefore the process of organising themselves into academic communities in France gave Irishmen like Gould a number of rights and privileges denied to them at home. Moreover, these legal institutions provided stepping stones for those who wished to further their careers in France. Students entering the academic professions of theology, medicine or law initially had to gain a firm grounding in Latin, entailing a six-year course. After completing this course the student was then required to enrol in a two year ‘cursus’ in philosophy. At the end of this the student would then go to the university and take his MA or degree in philosophy. The MA was normally required only for graduates of theology or medicine; it was not required for those of law. For ordinary parochial clergy no professional qualification was needed other than ordination to enter church ministry, as Brockliss and Ferté point out. An MA would usually be pursued by the more ambitious and socially prominent who aimed to secure a bishopric or a canonry.³⁰ Krumenacker indicates that after his time spent in Poitiers Gould travelled to Thouars around 1681 or 1682.³¹ This suggests Gould spent no more than four years in Poitiers. If he did pursue further education at the university he most probably did not take a degree or MA, but he may have received his holy orders there.

The Irish colleges in France became the most important element in the education of the Irish diocesan clergy. The presence of a number of colleges in France assured the Catholic Church in Ireland a ready supply of well-educated clergy and so was crucially important to the survival of the Catholic Church in the early modern period.³² This proved a vital lifeline to the Church as the Catholic hierarchy had been severely disrupted during the Cromwellian period, which saw the majority of Irish bishops leaving Ireland.³³ Between the 1650s and 1680s the Irish colleges developed considerably under the centralising and absolutist policies of Louis XIV. Colleges at Bordeaux and

²⁹ L.W.B. Brockliss, *French higher education in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Oxford, 1987), pp 52-3.

³⁰ L.W.B. Brockliss and Patrick Ferté, *Irish clerics in France*, pp 532-33.

³¹ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou au XVIIIe Siècle 1681-1789* (Paris, 1998), p. 198.

³² L.W.B. Brockliss and Patrick Ferté, *Irish clerics in France*, p. 529.

³³ Éamon Ó Ciosáin, ‘The Irish in France, 1660-90: point of no return’ in Thomas O’Connor and Mary Ann Lyons (eds.), *Irish Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Dublin, 2006), p. 97.

Toulouse received funding under royal charters in 1653 and 1659 respectively.³⁴ The consequence of such developments for the Irish mission was that the number of Irish clerics receiving training in France increased considerably in the space of a few short years.³⁵ Those who were sent to France at a young age had been sent deliberately, with the intention of entering the church, that is to say the church in Ireland or France.³⁶ There were religious and pragmatic advantages. A member of the Catholic elite who opted to send a son abroad paid a service to the church by giving up a son, but also simplified the problem of inheritance.³⁷ It is true that many Irish clerics preferred to make a career in France rather than returning to join a weakened structure back home. Of those who did stay some managed to rise to prominence amongst the higher echelons of *ancien régime* France. Two well-connected expatriates, Malachy Kelly and Patrick Maginn, gained control of the Collège de Lombards, later the Irish college at Paris. The bishop of Killaloe John O'Molony born in Clare in 1617 became a doctor at the University of Paris and was a chief figure from 1662-66 in securing Irish church interests in France. Established contacts such as his friendship with the French first minister Jean Baptiste Colbert made him the perfect representative for the Irish bishops in France.³⁸ O'Molony is a prime example of what an Irishman with the right intellectual attainments and necessary contacts could achieve. Other ecclesiastics with the right family connections hoped to secure themselves positions as spiritual advisors to members of the French nobility and to enjoy a better life than that possible in Ireland. Thomas Gould is another notable example of an ecclesiastic who achieved a certain amount of distinction. In 1724 the advertisement of a work written by a Huguenot minister criticising Gould's theology, described him as the 'most famous missionary in France'.³⁹ This work, printed in London, indicates how Gould had acquired influence not just in Poitou but across the channel. Similar descriptions of his work come from his patrons as well as his superiors. This success owes much to

³⁴ Ibid., p. 96.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 100.

³⁶ L.W.B. Brockliss and Patrick Ferté, *Irish clerics in France*, p. 551.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 551.

³⁸ Richard Hayes, *Biographical dictionary of Irishmen in France* (Dublin, 1949), pp 245-46.

³⁹ Pierre Rival, *The Irish Missionary unmasked; or the abbot Goulde, an irish Priest, (a Frenchman by Naturalization) Treasurer and head of the Church and Chapter of our Lady of Thouars, (in France) and Missionary (in Poitou,) convicted of Four Falsehoods, and of a great Oversight, if not a Fifth Fraud, in one single Article concerning the Church of England, upon the invocation of Saints; all contain'd in one Page in 120 of his Letter to a Gentleman of Low-Poitou; which he has been pleas'd to entitle, The True Belief of the Catholick Church, against the Tenets falsly ascrib'd to her, in the Writings of the (Protestant) Ministers.* (London, 1724).

Gould's choice of Poitiers as a final destination, and therefore the reasons as to why he travelled there are of particular interest.

Higher education at a seminary or college abroad was an expensive investment; even the charitable provisions were too insubstantial for the maintenance of a student who lacked private means. Furthermore the well-endowed scholarships tended to be monopolised by the wealthy.⁴⁰ In the case of Irish students at the University of Paris, Brockliss and Ferté state that, 'The majority, in contrast, must have been the sons of successful tenant-farmers or the *nouveaux riches* of the towns ... If any students were still sons of landowners, then their fathers were probably Protestants hedging their religious bets by bringing up younger sons in the old religion.'⁴¹ It is unlikely that Gould fell into the latter category, given the energy with which he carried out his priestly functions and the strong attachment he had to his Catholic faith. One can assume he came from a strong Catholic background, not least of all from the evidence of his involvement in a program sponsoring the conversion of Protestants. Or perhaps he had himself the zeal of the convert, which would go towards explaining the more peaceful and persuasive method of his evangelical technique in a climate characterised by oftentimes violent persecution. Another factor worthy of consideration, is that, upon arriving in Poitiers, Gould was described as 'entièrement dénué des biens de la fortune' and was obliged to subsist upon the charity of those who were moved by his indigence,⁴² indicating that he was not wealthy coming from Ireland. Some of those who were moved by his situation may have been associated with the Irish Jesuit College.

It was to a convent of Ursuline nuns that Gould was appointed chaplain around 1681-82 by the local bishop Hardouin de la Hoguette (1643-1715), bishop of Poitiers from 1680 to 1685. The *Compagnie de Sainte Ursule* at Thouars was a community like other Ursulines in France, which was specifically charged with providing free instruction and education to young girls. By 1700 there were between ten and twelve thousand Ursulines in congregations across France.⁴³ Originally the *congrégées* lived in communities and considered themselves to be religious, but strictly speaking they

⁴⁰ L.W.B. Brockliss and Patrick Ferté, *Irish clerics in France*, pp 542-3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 544. One such cleric Luke Joseph Hooke (1716-1796) educated at the Parisian seminary of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet, was the grandson of a Protestant sergeant at law, and had a brother who was an Anglican minister.

⁴² Jean Francois Dreux-Duradier, *Histoire Littéraire du Poitou, precede d'une introduction et continue jusqu'en 1849 par une société d'hommes de lettres* (Genève, 1969), p. 71.

⁴³ Elisabeth Raply, *Dévotés - The Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Québec, 1993), p. 48.

were not religious orders in the sense that they were not bound by solemn vows or obligation to clausura. This was to change however in 1566 when a Papal constitution obliged them to take solemn vows and submit to enclosure.⁴⁴ It was in his work at Thouars with the Ursulines where Gould most likely developed a penchant for the conversion of Huguenots, which earned him the title of ‘*Missionnaire pour le Poitou pour la conversion des prétendus réformés de cette province*’.⁴⁵ In 1699 *L’intendant de Poitou* Gilles Maupeou wrote in a report that only in Thouars were the newly converted Protestants most docile and punctual in their attendance at mass. This as *l’intendant* points out was ‘*grâce à Gould*’.⁴⁶ Another intriguing aspect to Gould’s early activities is the date of his arrival. If indeed Gould was an opportunist hoping to make his way in France he certainly timed his arrival well. His native Cork was home to a small congregation of Huguenots, Cork city was home to a community that only ever numbered a few hundred.⁴⁷ There can be no doubt, however, that Gould was not aware of the hardship and persecution that they had endured in their native country. His chaplaincy at Thouars began during a period in which the role of the ecclesiastic would be an essential element within the crown’s policy regarding the local Huguenots. It also helps one answer the questions surrounding Gould’s choice of the Irish College at Poitiers. By 1680 Louis XIV had finally resolved to solve the problem of France’s Protestant population once and for all. Gould soon found himself in a pivotal position, resident in Poitou which was home to one of the largest Protestant communities in France and thus one of the prime targets in the crown’s policy of confessionalisation. The crown policy employed in Poitou during the 1670-90s to treat the Protestant ‘problem’ was a mixture of coercion, acts of persuasion and inducement. One aspect of this policy which used both coercion and persuasive methods involved the internment of Protestants who refused to abjure. Institutions such as *Les Maisons de filles Nouvelles Converties*, *La Maison de propagation de la Foi*, *Les Unions Chrétiennes* of Fontenay, Luçon, Poitiers, Loudon, Parthenay and more significantly the Ursulines of Thouars were all solicited to serve this function.⁴⁸ Predominantly this form of internment was almost exclusively reserved for women. Men were usually sent to prisons and seminaries.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴⁵ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou au XVIIIe Siècle 1681-1789* (Paris, 1998), p. 198.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 203.

⁴⁷ Alicia St. Leger, *Silver Sails and Silk, Huguenots in Cork 1685-1850*, (Cork, 1991).

⁴⁸ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou*, p. 155.

Institutions at Niort and Puygarreau in Poitiers were utilised for these purposes. The period of internment varied from a few months to sometimes years. This form of coercive conversion targeted mostly upper class Protestants, specifically the more recalcitrant or trouble-making Protestants who obstructed others from converting. For the most part these institutions housed Protestants who refused to convert and the newly converted who lapsed in their Catholic instruction.⁴⁹ Gould's work with the Ursulines at Thouars brought him into contact with these Protestants. His early proselytising work had him in contact with upper class Protestant women who had refused initial attempts at instruction. Gould's association with these institutions that interned Protestants, a method that can be described as coercive, suggests that despite favouring a pacific approach Gould may well have condoned more forceful ones.

As mentioned earlier, the province of Poitou in the mid west of France was home to a large population of Huguenots. By the mid-seventeenth century their numbers were still quite substantial, around 90,000 with some 15,000 living in urban areas.⁵⁰ The area was considered such a hotbed of Huguenot activity that the seventeenth-century Benedictine historian Dom Liabeuf regarded the region as 'one of the provinces most infested with heresy in all of France'.⁵¹ This may have its origins in the fact that it was one of the first places visited by Calvinist missionaries in the sixteenth century. The first missionary to leave Geneva Jacques L'Anglois, was sent to Poitiers in 1555 to instruct the faithful there in the 'administering of God's word'.⁵²

From war and toleration to forced conversion; the Huguenots and the French Crown

The history of the Huguenots and their relationship with the crown and Church in France is unfortunately a violent and volatile one. France is somewhat unique in Reformation Europe in that it was one of the first states to grant religious toleration with the Edict of Saint Germain in 1562, yet it

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp 156-57.

⁵⁰ Philip Benedict, 'The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685: The Demographic Fate and Customs of a Religious Minority' in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, Vol. 81, No. 5 (1991), pp 1- 164, at p. 8.

⁵¹ Keith P. Luria, *Sacred boundaries: religious coexistence and conflict in early modern France* (Washington, 2005), p. 12.

⁵² Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the coming of the Wars of Religion in France 1555-1563* (Geneva, 2007), p. 32.

was also home to one of the most violent inter-confessional disputes in Europe. This is hardly surprising, however, when one examines the circumstances which helped form the Catholic identity of France, often referred to as the eldest daughter of the Catholic Church. In France the coronation of the king was called the *Sacre du Roi* an overtly religious ceremony in which the king was consecrated by a bishop and where he promised to fulfil the role of defender of the faith and to strive to rid the realm of heresy. The relationship between religion and politics, state and church was so inextricably linked during the early modern period that to reject one was to reject both. The French Protestants traditionally belonging to the Calvinist branch of Reformed worship could be said to have constituted, with its potentially critical attitude towards the secular power, the first real threat to this French Catholic identity.

Their origins in France go back to the 1530s where groups of reform-minded religious activists, by failing to conform to the state religion, were deemed *de facto* heretics, as it was in most other European Catholic states where the rejection of the majority religion was deemed to be an attack on the established order of society. It was during the reign of Francis I (1515 -47) that Protestantism in the form of Lutheranism first arrived in France.⁵³ Francis I's failure to deal with the problem of heresy in the realm permitted Protestantism to take root. There were other reforming tendencies too, some of which later provided a home for Geneva-trained Calvinist missionaries. The event that rendered the proto-Calvinists groups seditious in the state's eyes was the 1534 *L’Affaire des Placards*. On the night of 18 October a number of Protestant billboards or placards attacking the Catholic mass were publicly displayed in a number of towns and even, it was said, on the door of the regent's bedchamber at Amboise. The result was a more hard-line government approach against religious dissidents, including proto-Calvinists. A wave of repression followed, with legislation approved by the parlement which turned the French Protestants into an officially subversive group. The content of the placards which was of most significance and caused most offence, was a vitriolic attack on the Catholic sacrament of the Eucharist, or more specifically on the Catholic belief in Christ's physical presence in the bread and wine, traditionally understood in terms of transubstantiation, an extremely

⁵³ R.J Knecht, *The French wars of religion 1559-1598* (New York, 1996), p. 2.

sensitive issue that formed the marrow and substance of much of the debate between the two religious communities.⁵⁴

The *Affaire des placards* had shown how French Protestantism was beginning to adopt a more Sacramentarian doctrine, one that completely rejected not only the Catholic Eucharistic theology of transubstantiation but also the Lutheran Sacramental union (expressed theologically by the theological term 'consubstantiation'). The Sacramentarians were more associated with reformers such as the Swiss Ulrich Zwingli and later Jean Calvin. Repression against French Protestants began in earnest under Francis I's successor Henry II (1547-59). In the early years of his reign more than 500 heretics were sentenced by a special court set up within the *parlement* of Paris called *Chambre Ardente*. In 1547 judges lost the right to vary punishments in heresy cases and henceforth death was to be the only penalty.⁵⁵ This did not contain the spread of the new faith. By the 1550s fully-fledged Calvinist churches had begun to appear in France, the first of which was established in Paris in 1555 by Sieur La Ferrière, a nobleman from Maine. Calvin was by this time in Geneva directing the organisation of the Calvinist churches in France. Between 1555 and 1562 over eighty- eight missionaries were sent into France from Geneva to help organise the new church.⁵⁶

The most significant development regarding the violence which followed was the advance of Calvinism into the ranks of the French nobility. Initially thought to have made its impact upon the lesser orders, Calvinism managed to attract large numbers of the French noble elite. Henry II learned with dismay in 1558 of the aristocratic family of Châtillon abjuring their faith for what was considered by many at the time a peasant's religion.⁵⁷ However when large numbers of the nobility began to turn to Protestantism in the 1550s and 1560s it was no longer seen in this light. The large numbers of nobility amongst the Calvinists tended to politicise and militarise the confessional group. The appeal of Calvinist ideas to the nobility of France in the sixteenth century may have been due to the number of high-born men in the pastorate. Robert Kingdon highlights how during the first war of religion perhaps as many as half the nobility of France were sympathetic to the Huguenot and

⁵⁴ See chapter 4.

⁵⁵ R.J Knecht, *The French wars of religion 1559-1598* (New York, 1996), p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

generally Protestant side. It was also the relatively large number of middle-class pastors who gave the Huguenot community some of its social distinctiveness. From its inception, as Kingdon points out, ‘the middle class were the backbone of Calvinism’.⁵⁸ Thus one can understand a crown policy over a century later that solicited the skills of men such as Gould, who targeted the middle and upper classes of the community. The reasoning behind such a policy was that the conversion of a noble would automatically be followed by the abjurations of their servants, retainers and dependants. The ensuing religious wars in France from 1562 to 1629 were a conflict fought over religion, wherein groups sought to defend their sacred notion of community which they defined in terms of religious beliefs and practices.⁵⁹ Fundamentally, it was a conflict that was dominated by a group’s inability to reconcile their religious beliefs with the political structures of the French monarchical system. The fact that Henry of Navarre, sometime Huguenot leader and future king of France had to abjure his Protestant beliefs as monarch, demonstrates how irreconcilable the two were. The conflict would be characterised by internecine warfare that would know periods of brief respite but also times of most abhorrent violence, such as the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in Paris 1572 which saw the slaughter of a number of Huguenots notables. The second half of the sixteenth century in France would be characterised and shaped by this conflict.

‘Ce siècle n’est rien qu’une histoire tragique’⁶⁰ is how Agrippa D’Aubigné, polemical writer and member of Henry of Navarre’s Huguenot party, succinctly described the century in his didactic poem *Les Tragiques* (1616). The work details a cosmological struggle between good and evil, in which God and his chosen people, the Protestants, oppose Satan and the fallen angels, the Roman Catholics. This fine piece of baroque poetry is an emotive and accurate insight into the sentiments held by those who had witnessed the wars at first hand, the so-called *temoins oculaires*. What D’Aubigné describes is how the Huguenots viewed the situation, *le monde à l’envers*. The work which was written sixteen years after the tolerationist Edict of Nantes 1598, demonstrates how even after the most violent of conflicts and the inauguration of a more tolerant legalistic climate, the Huguenots still viewed their situation with despair. The Edict of Nantes 1598 under Henry IV

⁵⁸ Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the coming of the Wars of Religion in France 1555-1563* (Geneva, 2007), p. 6.

⁵⁹ Mack P. Holt, *The French wars of religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 190.

⁶⁰ Agrippa D’Aubigné, *Les Tragiques* (1616) II, V. 206.

afforded the Huguenots a limited form of toleration. It was considered a temporary solution, certainly in the minds of the more zealous amongst the Catholic hierarchy. It was not intended as a permanent arrangement, as is evident in its wording, 'God had not seen fit that the King's subjects should as yet worship him under one form of religion'.⁶¹ Both sides recognised that the forty years of civil war had not rid the state of its religious problems, the Catholics had not rid the realm of heresy and the Huguenots had only received a limited version of the privileges they felt they should be accorded. The religious problem would, however, persist as long as the crown and Catholic Church maintained a close relationship. Both sides viewed the edict as a necessary evil, a stalemate to a conflict that was essentially one which centred on the religious identity of France. When Gould arrived in France in 1678, the crown was in the process of finally dismantling the last vestiges of this limited toleration that had been accorded the Huguenots in the edict of Nantes.

The last phase of the religious conflict terminated with the fall of the Huguenot stronghold at La Rochelle in 1628 and the submission of the duke of Rohan to the king in 1629. The subsequent Peace of Alais in June 1629 ended a ten-year effort by Louis XIII to bring the recalcitrant Huguenots under royal authority; the peace treaty resembled that of the Edict of Nantes although it eroded the political and military independence of the Huguenot party so they could no longer pose a threat to the crown. By removing their corporate status, the crown yet again effectively rendered the Huguenots a heretical group, which could not be tolerated.⁶² The militant dynamic of the Huguenots which dominated the sixteenth century gave way to a concentration on self preservation in the seventeenth;⁶³ Protestantism in France began to be defined more in terms of a community of believers rather than a set of religious beliefs, with political aspirations limited to alleviating their persecuted condition. Parallel to this final state heave against Huguenot military and political power were the missionary activities of the Catholic Church. One of the first large scale missionary programmes was initiated by the Capuchin Père Joseph in Poitou in 1617. There were many aspects to the missionary's strategy. They dealt with Huguenots in places where they co-existed with Catholics, reminding Catholics of the heretical nature of the Huguenot beliefs and exacerbating the sometimes latent hostilities between the

⁶¹ R.J. Knecht, *The French wars of religion 1559-1598* (New York, 1996), p. 97.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

two groups on a more grassroots level.⁶⁴ Overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, missions to Protestant areas in this period tended to avoid direct engagement with the Protestants themselves, the early missions focused instead upon fortifying the local Catholic populations.⁶⁵ This reluctance to meet with the Huguenot pastors head on can be understood in the light of the previous decades of religious strife, which few had the stomach to revisit. During 1620s Capuchin Père Joseph wrote of how one should approach the policy of converting the Huguenots of the Poitou region,

it would be easier to tear [them] out by peaceful and gentle means and not with arms in hand seeing that peace weakens their zeal and their courage while war only reignites and reheats both one and the other.⁶⁶

The Capuchins realised that true converts were not obtained through force or violence but through acts of persuasion. Although this irenic approach was preferred, more forceful means were acceptable if the former did not win converts. This conversion policy ‘by peaceful and gentle means’ was one adopted over a hundred years later by Thomas Gould in the same region of Poitou, yet by the 1680s the French Church and the state was confident enough to take on the Huguenots with a policy that actively confronted Protestant communities with the intention of converting them by persuasion, and failing this, by force. The province of Poitou, according to the Edict of Nantes, officially contained thirty-nine Huguenot churches and another fifty-three ‘places of worship’. The nucleus of the Huguenot population was situated in the main towns of Poitiers, Châtellerauld, Civray, Parthenay and Thouars. Divided into three ‘colloques’, Haut Poitou in the east had by 1660 twelve churches, Moyen Poitou had ten churches and Bas Poitou in the west had seventeen churches and another twenty-six places of worship.⁶⁷ Given these figures it is understandable why some Catholics would consider the place to be infested with heresy, and furthermore why it was the theatre for the first Catholic missions after Henri IV’s Edict of Nantes. Huguenot heartlands such as Poitou, Languedoc and Dauphiné would soon see the tide turning against them in a more legalistic sense during the second part of the seventeenth century. Under the personal rule of Louis XIV and the absolutist policies of the crown a

⁶⁴ Elisabeth Labrousse, *La Révocation de l’Edit de Nantes : une foi, une loi, un roi ? Essai sur la révocation de l’Edit de Nantes* (Genève, 1985), p. 50.

⁶⁵ Joseph Bergin, *Church, society and religious change in France 1580-1730* (London, 2009), p. 289.

⁶⁶ Keith P. Luria, *Sacred boundaries: religious coexistence and conflict in early modern France* (Washington, 2005), p. 60.

⁶⁷ Philip Benedict, *The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685*, pp 13 -14.

non-conforming group would have to be dealt with. By the 1660s a number of measures were taken against the Huguenots in order to restrict their social and political intercourse in the state. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was to be the final turn of the screw on the privileges accorded the Huguenots. Prior to 1685 a multitude of *arrets*, declarations and edicts were passed which severely restricted the social, political and religious mobility of the Huguenots. In 1663 sixteen ordinances were passed, fifteen in 1664-65, six in 1677, one in 1678, eight in 1680 and twenty in 1681.⁶⁸ This legal apparatus was aimed at curbing and repressing the growth of Protestantism by removing them from civic and social aspects of everyday life. Professions of notary, doctor, judicial clerks and school masters were soon closed to those belonging to the Huguenot community. Many of these measures had similarities with those that had been passed in Ireland during the Cromwellian period and later after the Williamite wars. Other legal frameworks attacked their religious practices. For instance, nobles who claimed to have the right to allow preaching of sermons in their homes and on their estates were obliged to provide titles of their lineage by 1681.⁶⁹ When Gould arrived in 1678 the climate was ripe for a much larger set of legal injustices to become routinely accepted. Despite the many legal restrictions it was not until the arrival of the dragonnades that a dramatic drop in the Huguenot numbers became apparent. The use of soldiers to force abjurations was first employed in Poitou under the *intendant* René de Marillac in 1681, and coincided with Gould's appointment by the bishop of Poitiers de la Hoguette, as canon of the Sainte chapelle to the Ursulines at Thouars around 1681-82.⁷⁰

Yet this was not the first use of soldiers as a means of conversion. This brutal method had first seen light in Béarn under the intendency of Foucault. The result of quartering of troops on Huguenots who refused to abjure their faith was a dramatic increase in the number of conversions to Catholicism. In total 27,700 Huguenots abjured their faith due to the *dragonnades*. Most of these conversions were, however, obtained through the use of coercion and violence and as such were unlikely to be sincere converts, reverting back to their original beliefs as soon as the military departed.

⁶⁸ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou au XVIIIe Siècle 1681-1789* (Paris, 1998), p. 53.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁷⁰ Jean Francois Dreux-Duradier, *Histoire Littéraire du Poitou, precede d'une introduction et continue jusqu'en 1849 par une société d'hommes de lettres*. (Genève, 1969), p. 71.

Overall the first *dragonnade* of 1681-82 in the Poitou region was a success in numerical terms. These strong arm tactics were tacitly accepted by the government, but Marillac was soon recalled due to the excessive violence of his soldiers who intimidated the Huguenot community with ‘l’épée nue et le pistolet à la main’.⁷¹ This indicates that although force was approved of by the government it was not the preferred strategy for obtaining conversions. Recent work on the role of the *intendants* has demonstrated that the pre-revocation *dragonnades* were not a deliberate, royally driven strategy but the outcome of attempts made by the provincial agents to enhance and protect their careers.⁷² Both *intendants* Marillac and later Foucault were reprimanded due to their excessive use of troops, in Foucault’s case it has been shown that he acted in defiance of crown directives when he employed the *dragonnades*.⁷³ There were limits, it seems, to how much violence the crown was willing to allow in order to bring about conversion.

Under the intendency of Nicholas Foucault the *grandes dragonnades* proved even more aggressive. Using similar methods Foucault had managed to convert the majority of the Huguenot population during his intendency in Béarn.⁷⁴ The first *dragonnade* in Poitou in 1681 had seen the billeting of soldiers operating in towns such as Chizé, Rouillé, Niort, Melle and Chatellerault.⁷⁵ One can probably assume that Gould was aware of the methods and results of such activities. Uncertainty arises, however, when one considers the exact effect the quartering of soldiers to force conversions may have had upon Gould’s work. The lack of source material relating to Gould during his early career renders it difficult to give an accurate account. Perhaps his experiences of religious restrictions back home and the excesses of troop quartering led him to question the more violent and coercive means of conversion, yet, as will be shown later, he was certainly not adverse to such measures on occasion. The quartering of soldiers on Huguenots had devastating demographic consequences, resulting in large numbers of conversions and emigration, whereby Huguenots sought refuge in neighbouring Protestant states such as England, Holland and Ireland. Protestant centres such as Niort

⁷¹ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou au XVIIIe Siècle 1681-1789* (Paris, 1998), p. 72.

⁷² Jacqueline Gratton, ‘The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the role of the *Intendants* in the *Dragonnades*’, in *French History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2011), pp 164-187.

⁷³ L. L. Bernard, ‘Foucault, Louvois, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes’, in *the American Society of Church History*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Mar., 1956), pp 27-40.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷⁵ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou*, p. 67.

and Fontenay suffered substantial losses in their reformed populations, of 90% and 98% respectively. Protestantism had practically disappeared in certain places such as Haut Poitou. It was the urban centres that housed the better off Huguenots. Given their title and wealth it was the nobility that proved to be easiest to monitor and convert, largely because they risked losing the most by refusing to abjure or by fleeing the realm. Intellectual Catholic arguments easily convinced many of the urban Huguenots who had a wider interest and exposure to theological discussions.⁷⁶ It was in the more rural areas that Protestantism survived best. The remnants of the Protestant population following the Revocation was forced underground, worshipping in secret, organising clandestine meetings in isolated houses, forests and caves. These clandestine meetings or ‘Churches of the Desert’ occurred in the wake of the persecution. The first wave of these *Églises du Désert* culminated in 1688, and saw the establishing of a network of contacts and worship that allowed Protestants to practice their beliefs in times of further repression. Thus, despite efforts by the crown and church, Huguenot worship persisted. As mentioned, the validity of abjurations obtained through the use of fear and violence was always suspect, and, as will be demonstrated later, many of those that did convert displayed varying levels of sincerity in the embrace of their new religion. Thus, even in the case of converts there was still plenty of work to occupy the *missionnaire*. During this extremely violent period it seems that Gould’s irenic and persuasive methods resonated with new converts and achieved results. In Thouars, Gould came to the attention of the duke de la Trémouille, Charles Belgique Hollande de La Trémouille (1655 –1709). This noble family had been quite prominent in Poitou since the fifteenth century.⁷⁷ The family’s participation in royal armies and as royal provincial governors resulted in the promotion of their viscounty of Thouars to duchy status in 1563.⁷⁸ Charles Belgique, 4th duc de Thouars came from a family into which Calvinist beliefs had encroached. The second duke of Thouars Henri de la Trémouille (1598-1674), was an ardent Calvinist and only converted to Catholicism in 1670.⁷⁹ Gould would find patronage under Henri’s grandson, who, given the Calvinist traditions in his family, was perhaps attracted to Gould’s more peaceful methods of persuasion in a climate of forced conversion.

⁷⁶ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou*, pp 223-22.

⁷⁷ William A. Weary, ‘The House of La Trémouille, Fifteenth through Eighteenth Centuries: Change and Adaptation in a French Noble Family’ in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Mar., 1977), p. 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Through Trémoille Gould would be brought to the attention of the provincial crown administrators in the regions, who, impressed with his work, passed news of his success further up the political ladder of influence that led to Paris. Gould's apparent ability in conversion was rewarded by the granting of two pensions from the king in recognition of his work, and also in 1714, the granting of the abbacy of Saint Laon, an Augustinian house. It was this period of early patronage from La Trémoille in which Gould earned his unique title, *Missionnaire du roi pour le Poitou*.

Conclusion

The primary impetus for leaving his native Ireland was no doubt the religious proscriptions that were in place in the form of the Penal Laws. The Catholic jurisdiction of France sheltered many Irish Catholics wishing to advance their education and spiritual careers, avenues that were closed to them back home. The existence of a large network of academic institutions across France that catered for the Irish Diaspora was a testament to this tradition. One can not concretely say whether Gould attended the University at Poitiers, although it is likely he made contact with the Irish College upon his arrival in Poitiers. Poitou proved to be attractive when understood in terms of the Counter-Reformation. His arrival in Poitou coincided with what was seen and hoped to be the solution to the religious question, the initiation of a policy to eradicate the Protestant community in France. Gould's involvement in this policy was the key to his success, and given the demographics of Poitou, opportunism and career advancement holds much currency when examining the reasons for his final destination.

During his early career Gould was still very much *un prêtre irlandais* yet within a short period he would be seen as a *missionnaire du roi*, an agent of the crown. At Poitiers Gould was quick to establish himself and gain favour with those of influence, impressing the Bishop de la Hoguette as well as La Trémoille, two very influential men in the region. Throughout his life, as will be shown, Gould would maintain productive relationships with his superiors, a factor that promised him a long and very successful career in the employ of the Crown. His experience at home most likely gave him an understanding of the mindset of those on the receiving end of religious persecution, which goes

toward explaining the particular approach he adopted when engaged in conversion and the success he met in this line of work. This success was characteristic in most aspects of his life and career as he succeeding chapters will demonstrate Gould went very quickly from being an Irishman abroad to a man of the French establishment. Not only was he intimately associated with those of Poitevin society, both Catholic and Protestant, but he was also actively involved in the French monarchy's policy of creating a religiously aligned state. We have looked at the reasons as to why Gould travelled to France and the initial reception of his arrival in terms of religious climate and ecclesiastical opportunities, let us now examine the specific aspects of his work that made him a success, the people that formed his entourage, and the exact nature of his function as a *missionnaire du roi* as well as his noteworthy published career. All accretions of those with the requisite ability to meet with success, but they were also characteristic of the work that occupied those in the service of the state, and what the state required from its agents of reform in the pursuit of religious unity.

Chapter 2

Huguenot nobles, parish priests and *Secrétaires d'État*;

The network of the *Missionnaire du Roi*.

In France, as a missionary, Gould did not work alone; he was part of a complex network of clergy, government officials and local Catholic laity. The 1705 edition of Gould's work *Lettre d'un missionnaire à un gentilhomme du Bas Poitou*¹ contains no fewer than eight recommendations or *approbations* from various distinguished individuals. The bishop of Poitiers, Jean Claude de Poype de Vertrieu (1655-1731) wrote that 'nous avons jugé cet ouvrage digne d'être mis au jour comme très utile par détromper nos chers frères'. The vicar general of Poitiers Monsieur de Villeroi expressed a similarly sentiment, 'cet escrit est très utile et très nécessaire'. The remaining attestations, in a similar flattering vein, come from a doctor of theology in Paris Monsieur Corneau, a Monsieur François-Aimé Pouget (1681-1702) the abbé of Chambon and a doctor of theology of the Sorbonne, and the abbé Jean-Marie de La Marque de Tilladet. What is, perhaps, most notable here is not just the accolades Gould received for his polemical works, but the distinguished position of those whom the *missionnaire* could boast of as supporters of his work. This suggests something of the extent of the ecclesiastical network in which Gould moved during the first decade of the eighteenth century. It extended beyond the Catholic clergy, and came to include provincial administrators; local government officials and those further afield in Paris, including the *secrétaires d'état*, the king's inner circle of administrators who directed much of the work that occupied Gould throughout his career. There is one more cadre of people that was an integral element in Gould's entourage, namely the Huguenot communities of Poitou, those who eventually formed the very reason for his work and the target of his activity.

In this chapter we will examine the nature of the relationship between these different groups and the *missionnaire*, located in the middle and intimately involved with their activities. Gould enjoyed a very long career in Poitou, engaged in missionary work to the Huguenot communities for

¹ Thomas Gould, *Lettre d'un missionnaire à un gentilhomme du bas Poitou, touchant la véritable croyance de l'Eglise catholique. Contre les dogmes qui lui sont faussement imputez dans les écrits des l'instruction des nouveaux convertis* (Paris, 1705).

over forty years, a considerable period of time and one that allowed him to establish links with an impressive network of people from both sides of the religious divide. An examination of this complex of networks will allow us to refine our picture of Gould's life in Poitou but, more importantly, assist us in appreciating the significance of these relationships against the background of religious reform, which was one of the catalysts in Gould establishing this network and a policy that guided how he interacted with the different groups within this network.

Early Networks of opportunity

Thomas Gould's first associations in France were those with whom he shared his studies and lodgings, around the Jesuit College on Rue de la Prévoté in Poitiers, fellow students, other migrant Irishmen and, of course, clergy. Unfortunately very little survives in terms of sources for the attendees of the Irish college in Poitiers, let alone the college's first students. If we are to assume that he arrived in France bereft of any financial assistance then he had need of a benefactor. The first of these came from the ranks of the Church in Poitiers. Impressing the right people and ecclesiastics proved to be the key to Gould's early success. When he arrived in Poitiers to take up his studies the bishop was Gilbert de Clérambault, (d. 1680); on his death he was succeeded by Hardouin Fortin de la Hoguette (1643-1715), former bishop of Saint Brieuç, who took up the bishopric at Poitiers in 1680 which he held until 1685 when he was moved to Sens.² It was under Hoguette that Gould most likely received his holy orders, and he was also sufficiently impressed by the young priest to appoint him as chaplain to the Ursulines Thouars, circa 1682. Gould's conduct during his studies and early pastoral duties may have marked him out in the bishop's opinion as a person suited to work with this cloistered religious congregation of women, or perhaps he had earned sufficient access to the bishop to request such an appointment. His position at Thouars proved to be a formative influence in his career. During his time there he acquired not just a penchant, but a certain success in the field of conversion work and importantly gained access to higher echelons of the *ancien régime*.

² Jean Francois Dreux-Duradier, *Histoire Littéraire du Poitou*, p. 31.

The Ursulines or the *Compagnie de Sainte- Ursule* at Thouars, was the feminine teaching congregation par excellence of seventeenth-century France.³ By 1700 there were over ten thousand Ursulines in over three hundred communities in the country including Thouars. These communities were charged specifically with providing free instruction and education of young girls. The Ursulines originated in Italy in the mid-sixteenth century. Beginning as a secular order, their origins were far removed from those which characterised them in seventeenth Poitiers. The first Ursulines concerned themselves with charitable works, taking no vows and caring for the sick. Of the multiple works of charity that the foundress Angela Merici and her followers had performed only one remained: the instruction of girls. With their transformation into cloistered nuns the Ursulines left their other callings aside and became specialists in child education.⁴ The early Ursuline French *congrégées* were, above all, catechizers. They threw themselves into the war that was being waged against the reformed religion and many members of their order were highly regarded as zealous missionaries and able converters. Their principal work, however, was the instruction of girls; it was the demand for this that drew them so quickly into the other cities of southern France. One of the society's early supporters were the Jesuits, they viewed the congregation's role in the education of young girls as a complement to theirs in the field of male education.⁵ This fondness and respect for their work as well as Gould's links with the Jesuits in Poitiers may well have influenced his appointment as chaplain in Thouars. Unlike some of their male counterparts the Ursulines were not permitted to beg and therefore had to survive on the charity of patrons and boarders, and generous funding from court and the nobility which rarely exceeded what was required to keep them from poverty. Increasing numbers of houses were persuaded to accept boarders, children of the wealthier classes, who were lodged within the convents and instructed separately from the day students. From the 1620s the Ursulines began to adopt the *clausura*, which resulted in aristocratization of the order. An enclosed monastery was expensive to build, and was usually financed from donations and from the dowries and pensions of the

³ Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Québec, 1993), p. 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 48-49.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

nuns. The wealth of one's family soon became a determining factor in the admission of not only aspirants to the order but also boarders.⁶

The Ursulines at Thouars engaged in the religious instruction of Huguenot girls, particularly those of the wealthier sections of Protestant communities.⁷ Involved in the conversion of young Protestant girls, they soon saw the benefit of targeting those of wealthier families, yet it was also their cloistered life that helped them recruit members from well-placed families. The strict control of women's movements proved attractive to those who instinctively preferred the prospect of a firmly controlled community with safeguards against the outside world. Many of their members were from the families of office holders, lawyers, merchants, those who provided the financial underpinning of the communities themselves.⁸ Throughout the seventeenth century nearly 320 Ursuline houses opened, located in the provinces of Brittany and Poitou as well as the Seine and Garonne valleys. This was evidence of the congregation's popularity,⁹ but also of the nuns' growing involvement in the thrust against the reformed religion that would characterise much of the state's policy regarding religion in the second half of the seventeenth century. Through his contact with this congregation at Thouars Gould received his first taste of what would come to define his career in Poitou, namely the conversion of Huguenot noble women. The sources detail very little about this period in Gould's career, but as a chaplain to the Ursulines he no doubt gained an intimate knowledge of and probably participated in much of the work that occupied this congregation. He was above all chaplain to the Ursulines, providing a priestly ministry to the nuns as well as the boarders including the Huguenots. His role would have consisted in instructing and catechising the young prospective converts, receiving their abjurations and guiding them into the Catholic faith. As well as acting as chaplain to the Ursulines, Gould was also appointed treasurer at the chapter of Notre Dame du Château du Thouars also known as the Château des ducs de La Trémoille.

⁶ Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes*, pp 59-60.

⁷ Maurepas to Le Nain, 19 Jun. 1732 (ANP, O/1 379, ff. 113-113), 6 Mar. 1733 (ANP, O/1 380, f. 49).

⁸ Joseph Bergin, *Church, Society and Religious change in France, 1580-1730* (London, 2009), pp 136-139.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 136-139.

From Thouars to Paris

Situated over 70 kilometres north-west of Poitiers, Thouars was architecturally defined by its large Château, the ducal seat of les Trémoille, dukes of Thouars. Located on the steep cliffs that rise dramatically from the north bank of the Thouet River, the Chateau made for an impressive sight. After the Protestant Henri III de la Trémoille (1598-1674) married Marie de La Tour d'Auvergne (1601-1665) in 1619, she razed the old gothic château-fort and began the work on what is now the present château built in the Louis Treize style. As the structure of the Château changed so too did the religion of its owners. Henri de la Trémoille converted to Catholicism in 1628, abjuring his faith in the presence of Louis XIII, Richelieu and the royal army during the siege of La Rochelle. For the crown La Trémoille proved a profitable convert, as he was one of the most powerful nobles in Poitou and guardian of the Reformed Church. Contemporary chroniclers extolled the duke's moderate character in descriptions of his conversion, a man who did not exhibit the pride and insolence common amongst those of his creed. His choice to bend the knee was born no doubt of political rationale rather than religious conscience. In return Louis XIII honoured the duke by making him 'mestre de camp' of the light cavalry.¹⁰ The duke's conversion was soon followed by his son's Henri Charles de La Trémoille, Prince de Tarente, (1620-1672) in 1628, a decision that did not find favour with his mother Marie de la Tour d'Auvergne, an ardent Calvinist, who spirited him off to Holland, where, under the tutelage of his uncle the Protestant prince of Orange, he returned to Calvinism in 1640.¹¹ Henri Charles became involved in the *Fronde* but unfortunately not on the winning side. By 1671 he made the same choice as his father and returned yet again to Catholicism, which would be his last religious transition, dying before his father in 1672. It was his son, Charles Belgique Hollande de La Trémoille, (1655-1709) who would succeed his grandfather as the 4th duke of Thouars. He was subject to the same religious vacillations as his father before him, although when Charles converted in 1671 he remained in the faith until his death in 1709. The elasticity with which the Trémoilles treated their faith was a distinguishing mark amongst many of these great nobles who adopted Calvinism during the French

¹⁰ Keith. P. Luria, 'The Politics of Protestant Conversion to Catholicism' in Peter van der Veer, (ed.), *Conversion to modernities: the globalisation of Christianity* (New York, 1996), pp 35-36.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

reformation, unable to display political allegiance without relinquishing their religious faith, perhaps using religion in their ongoing struggle for power and influence in the face of an expanding, centralising monarchy. The ultimate decision made by Henri III and his son to bend to royal will in many ways demonstrated the futility in resisting the religion of the king. This would endure with Trémoille's legacy in Charles Belgique, grounded in the history of his family's relations with the crown, and a consciousness that this relationship needed to be serviced through religious loyalty. Charles, himself a convert to Catholicism, fulfilled his part of the relationship through his patronage of those who were involved in evangelical work in his duchy. It was Charles, an individual with a chequered religious heritage that would become one of Gould's earliest supporters in Thouars and one of the most influential.

The duke's zeal for his religion was evidenced by Gould in his first work, *Lettre d'un missionnaire à un gentilhomme du bas Poitou* published in 1705. The *missionnaire* described the duke as 'un Prince, qui en toute occasion tesmoigne tant de zele, pour la propagation de la Foy Catholique, & pour la Saintete de sa doctrine.'¹² Gould was aware that his work, concerned with the instruction of a Huguenot *gentilhomme*, would resonate with a converted nobleman such as Trémoille. Gould dedicated the piece to the duke, marking it to be 'une juste reconnaissance de toutes les faveurs particulieres dont Vostre Altesse m'honore.'¹³ In the person of the duke Gould found an individual aligned with the establishment who valued the work of those involved in the policy of conversion. He was also a man of distinction and rank, linked with the powerful ministerial families of the political establishment. In 1697 Jérôme Phélypeaux (1674-1747), married Éléonore Christine de La Rochefoucauld-Roye, (1681-1708) linking the immensely powerful ministerial clan of the Pontchartrains with one of the most ancient and well respected in France. Through his wife Éléonore Pontchartrain became closely allied with many powerful ducal houses.¹⁴ Her parents were first cousins with the influential La Tour d'Auvergne de Bouillon family and significantly for Gould, La Trémoille of Thouars. It was through Trémoille that Gould came to the attention of Jérôme

¹² Thomas Goulde, *Lettre d'un missionnaire a un gentilhomme du bas Poitou, touchant la veritable croyance de l'Eglise catholique. Contre les dogmes qui lui sont faussement imputez dans les ecrits de l'instruction des nouveaux convertis.* chez Jean-Baptiste Coignard fils, (Paris, 1705).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Sara Chapman, *Private Ambition and Political Alliances, The Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain Family and Louis XIV's Government, 1650-1715* (Rochester, 2004), p. 27.

Phélypeaux comte de Pontchartrain and *Secrétaire d'État à la maison du roi* between 1699-1714. The 'faveurs particulieres' mentioned in the *Lettre d'un Missionnaire* was a reference to Trémoille's promotion of Gould amongst people like Pontchartrain in Versailles. In April of 1703 the *secrétaire* wrote to Gould, in which he indicated la Trémoille had forwarded good news regarding his work; 'J'ay veu par une lettre que vous avez escrit a M le Duc de la Tremoille la bonne disposition dans laquelle sont les nouveaux catholiques de touars,'¹⁵ It is likely that the *secrétaire* was aware of the Gould's work before this date, but one can concretely say that from 1703 reports of his success were being communicated to the directors of policy in Paris, the *secretaries d'états*, in particular the *secrétaire d'État à la Maison du Roi*. Gould had come a long way from the Rue de la Prévoté in Poitiers.

During Gould's career the office of *secrétaire d'État à la Maison du Roi* was dominated by the powerful noble family Phélypéaux de Pontchartrain. The Phélypéaux family provided secretaries of state from Henri IV up to Louis XVI and were commonly known by their seigniorial or lower noble titles, such as Pontchartrain, La Vrillière, Chateauneuf, Saint Florentin and Maurepas.¹⁶ It was the office of *secrétaire d'État à la Maison du Roi* and *La Marine* amongst others that were dominated by this family between 1690 and 1775. Louis Phélypeaux comte de Pontchartrain, (1643-1727) was acting Controller general of finances from 1689 to 1699 and chancellor until 1714, he supervised one of the most extensive administrative departments in the royal government. He assumed the reins of royal finances in a tumultuous time marked by the incessant warring of Louis XIV and the Revocation of Nantes.¹⁷ He was succeeded in the office of *secrétaire d'État à la Maison du Roi* by his son Jérôme Phélypéaux comte de Pontchartrain (1647-1747) in 1699 who held it until 1715, after which his cousin took over the post. This was Louis Phélypeaux marquis de la Vrillière (1672–1725) and *Secrétaire d'État de la Religion Prétendue Réformée*. Vrillière kept the post until 1718 when Jérôme's son Jean Frédéric Phélypeaux marquis de Maurepas (1701-1781) reached his majority, after which he held the office until 1749. The *secrétaire* was formally head of the *Maison du Roi*, and responsible for the appointment to offices in the king's household. The secretary's main power was in the

¹⁵ Ponchartrain to Gould, 25 Apr. 1703, (ANP, O /1 364, f. 101).

¹⁶ Roger Mettam, *Power and faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford, 1988), p. 96.

¹⁷ Sara Chapman, *Private Ambition*, p. 61.

administration of Paris and the provinces; he was also concerned with the conduct of the clergy and episcopal elections, and regulated their relationship with the government. It was these established and prominent members at the apex of French political society to whom Gould communicated his activities and from whom he received his directives. The sources detailing Gould's career as the *missionnaire* are dominated by two *secrétaires* in particular, Jérôme comte de Pontchartrain and his son Jean Frédéric marquis de Maurepas. In April of 1703 Pontchartrain wrote to the *intendant* of Poitou on the subject of Gould's successful conversion of the Huguenots and in which light he saw such work, he explained that 'il seroit bien a desirer que les autres [Huguenots] profitent de ce bon exemple, et ne peut trop leur mettre dans devant leurs yeux'.¹⁸ This 'bon exemple' was a reference of course to Gould's ability to bring about successful conversions by means of a pacific but astute method that involved persuasion parallel to the use of inducements and veiled coercion. When dealing with an extremely obdurate noble woman a year later Ponchartrain gave a clearer indication of how he would like the *intendant* and those involved, including Gould and the bishop of Poitiers, to approach her conversion; 'je crois', Ponchartrain wrote to Pinon, 'qu'il convient que vous taschiez de luy persuader d'y venir de son chef.'¹⁹ Unsurprisingly those who approached conversion willingly cost the administration considerably less in terms of time and resources. Moreover, it was understood that sincere converts were more easily obtained through such means. One of the ways in which the administration rendered a person more amenable to conversion was through peaceful instruction, and this is where Gould fits in to the picture of how Pontchartrain saw the crown's religious policy in Poitou should be implemented. Three years after Maurepas took up the post he explained to Gould the nature of their relationship: 'Vous me ferez plaisir Monsieur de m'informer comme vous faisiez mon pere de ce qui meritera attention dans l'exercice du ministere dont vous este charge..'.²⁰ The remark indicates Maurepas's need to remind the *missionnaire* of his obligations to the *secrétaire* and that Gould was required to provide Maurepas with the same service he had provided his predecessors.

The letter can also be regarded as an attempt by the young *secrétaire* to establish his influence in the role. Maurepas took up the position at the young age of seventeen. Before this his uncle Louis

¹⁸ Pontchartrain to Pinon, 25 Apr. 1703 (ANP, O/1 365, ff 100-101).

¹⁹ Pontchartrain to Pinon, 18 Oct. 1704 (ANP, O/1 365, f. 245).

²⁰ Maurepas to Gould, 30 Mar. 1721 (ANP, O/1 369, ff. 39-40).

Phélypéaux marquis de le Vrillière held the position, and also that of *Secrétaire d'État de la Religion Prétendue Réformée* between 1700 and 1725. This office oversaw the activities of the Protestants in the realm. After the Revocation this office entailed communicating with the clergy on aspects of Protestant activity and their adherence to the edict of 1685. There was much overlap between the two *secrétaires* regarding the religious policy. The sources detail that Gould received his directives from both offices, yet the sources are considerably richer in those coming from the *Maison du Roi*. In the same letter Maurepas gave information of 'la lettre que vous avez pris la peine de m'escire..et celle que vous avez escrite a M. de la Vrilliere..' ²¹ Gould's activities were of concern to both Vrillière and Maurepas, demonstrating not just the broad remit of his charge but the overlap of jurisdiction when it came to the implementation of the Edict of Fontainebleau. The young Maurepas was obviously keen to emulate his father's successful ministering of the position and more importantly establish his own authority in the role. The tone of Maurepas's letter to Gould suggests he was reminding the *missionnaire* to whom he should answer, obviously well aware of the relationship between Gould and his uncle; the letter can be viewed as Maurepas's effort to outline his authority over Gould. Maurepas's wish to emulate his father can be seen in his handling of the Huguenots, he outlined the specifics of this to Gould in September of 1722 advising Gould of his desire to bring those born in error back into the fold through peaceful and persuasive means. ²² This was again reiterated by Maurepas to the *missionnaire* in June of 1725, 'si je conviens avec vous qu'il est tres desirable que la religion s'enseigne et s'inspire avec douceur'. ²³ The sources demonstrate how this was a technique that characterised Gould's career and function as a *missionnaire du roi*. ²⁴ The reason for Maurepas's reiteration was due to the more coercive means that were being employed in other areas of the crown's policy regarding the Huguenots. Gould was expected to fulfil a specific role in this policy. The fashion in which Gould carried out this requirement was one on which both *secrétaires* advised. Between 1705 to 1725 the method had not changed, both Pontchartrain and his son Maurepas utilised the same resources and means in their handling of the issue, there was probably no need to change a

²¹ Ibid.

²² Maurepas to Gould, 23 Sep. 1722 (ANP, O/1 370, f. 108).

²³ Maurepas to Gould, 12 Jun. 1725 (ANP, O/1 372 ff 66-67).

²⁴ See chapter 3.

winning formula, one that was helping Gould achieve results and no doubt gave the *secrétaire* the quotas required of him by the regent to demonstrate he was getting the job done. There was certainly no doubt as to Gould's zeal for his religion in the minds of both Pontchartrain and Maurepas. The latter wrote to the *missionnaire* in October 1733 'on ne peut trop louer votre zele pour la Religion,'²⁵. The letter gives no indication as to Gould's zeal for his relationship with his *secrétaire*, but Maurepas certainly took advantage of Gould's religious *zele* at least and also his position, situated as he was at the confluence of so many information sources regarding the *Religion Prétendue Réformée in Poitou*.

During the intendency of de la Tour, the provincial crown agent in Poitou from 1718 to 1727, one can see from Maurepas's letters that information coming from Gould was generally passed on to the *intendant* as well as the secretary. Gould's reports on his activities during this period demonstrate this. However, with the intendency of de Beaussan this was not always the case. In August of 1729 the secretary passed on information to the *intendant* concerning the Protestant Jeanne de Bissy and the necessary orders for her internment. Maurepas pointed out in his letter to the *intendant* that details relating to this *religionnaire* had been made available to him from Gould through one of his contacts, the curate of Moncoutant.²⁶ In October of the same year Maurepas detailed how the *missionnaire* informed him of a number of religious assemblies, characteristic of Huguenot clandestine worship, taking place on the outskirts of Saint Maixant and Lusignan, again communicated to Gould from one of his contacts in the area.²⁷ On some occasions Maurepas's correspondence highlights that Gould was providing information to both himself and the *intendant*, but in others the secretary was privy to information that was not communicated to the *intendant* by Gould. Indeed the secretary provided the *intendant* with information regarding his own generality; the curate of Villefagnan complained to Maurepas in January 1730 of the frequency of assemblies and general attitude of disobedience amongst the *religionnaires*, (a word used in the sources that is synonymous with Protestant) particularly their failure to send their children to instruction.²⁸ The secretary then passed this on to de Beaussan. There are similar examples of information communicated to Maurepas who then sent it on

²⁵ Maurepas to Gould, 1 Oct. 1733 (ANP, O/1 380, f. 261).

²⁶ Maurepas to Gould, 30 Aug. 1729 (ANP, O/1 376, ff 290-291).

²⁷ Maurepas to Gould, 14 Oct. 1729 (ANP, O/1 376, ff 358-359), et Maurepas to Beaussan, 14 Oct. 1729 (ANP, O/1 376, f. 359).

²⁸ Maurepas to Beaussan, 11 Jan. 1730 (ANP, O/1 377, f. 11).

to the *intendant*, during the intendency of Le Nain. Indeed, it appears that the secretary, by drawing attention to the fact that information had been passed to him from other people in the area, was implicitly pointing out that it was not from the *intendant* that such information had come to the *Maison du Roi*. The correspondence between Gould and Maurepas indicates the lack of a concrete hierarchy of communication, and undefined spheres of jurisdiction regarding the Huguenots. One historian has given examples of a surprisingly limited role played by some clerics in the oversight and rehabilitation of the Huguenots. In Languedoc in the 1690s the roles of investigating suspected Protestants, imposing compliance with the stipulations of the edict, and surveillance of new converts to ensure they were adhering to Catholicism was largely left to the *intendant* Basville not the clergy, who often willingly relinquished these responsibilities to the *intendant*, despite the fact they clearly fell within the provincial clergy's jurisdiction.²⁹ In many cases, however, the clergy had no real means of imposing such adherence to royal writ. As we shall see in the next chapter many of these roles in Poitou were largely left to and carried out by Gould and the local clergy. Pontchartrain and Maurepas's successful implementation of royal policy was reliant upon the strength of their relationships with the local elites, provincial clergy and administrators, those who constituted their client network in the region. In Poitou, Gould formed part of this network. One aspect of the secretary's job that would ensure his ability to maintain such a network was his appointment of the provincial *intendants*. Chancellor Louis Phélypeaux did have extensive influence over the appointment or at least recommendation of new *intendants*, some of these appointments coincided with Gould's early work in Poitou.³⁰

The Intendants

From Gould's arrival in Poitou till his death, he carried out his work under eleven *intendants*. Unfortunately the sources only provide an understanding of the relationship between Gould and a few of these government officials; therefore it is difficult to assess the influence these individuals had in relation to how Gould carried out his work. One constant throughout Gould's career was the presence

²⁹ Sara Chapman, *Private Ambition*, p. 103.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

of a large Huguenot population in the region and, as such, a need to reintegrate this community back into the Catholic faith. This need fell under the remit of each *intendant* appointed to Poitou. The permanency of religious policy contrasted with the frequency with which the change of *intendant* occurred in the province. From 1682 to 1732 there were twelve *intendants*; this was not exceptional, however. In Limoges there were thirteen *intendants* from 1681 to 1735. At Rouen there were twenty-one *intendants* from 1664 to 1716, not one of whom held the office for more than seven years.³¹ On the other hand La Rochelle had considerably fewer with just six between 1682 and 1737 but La Rochelle had been an exceptionally important Huguenot town and may have been considered deserving of more consistent oversight. The variability of tenure according to each province was reflective of the needs of each intendency. This was also true in terms of the function of these crown administrators.

The *intendant's* role was to represent the king in matters of justice, police and finance in the provinces. Officially the commissions of the *intendants* included broad powers of justice and policing in their respective provinces. In Lyon, an important centre of trade with routes that passed through Dauphine and crossed those with Savoy and the river Rhone, the *intendants* were concerned with commerce, tolls, maintenance of roads and rivers and smuggling.³² The *intendant's* position at La Rochelle on the coast of France had much to do with trade and naval administration. In areas with large populations of Protestants the remit of the *intendant* was adapted to deal with issues of religious conformity, prevention of assemblies and the successful reintegration of this community into the Catholic faith. The specialisation of areas dictated from whom the *intendants* took their directives. In areas plagued by war they came from the *Secrétaire d'État de la Guerre* at La Rochelle it was the *Secrétaire d'État de la Marine* and in Poitou it was the *Secrétaire d'État de la Maison du roi*. After 1690 the Phélypeaux held both the *Secrétaire d'État de la Marine* and *de la Maison du roi*.³³ The office of the *intendant* was outside the venal tradition of hereditary bureaucracy and was dependent upon royal will in regard to both appointment and tenure of office. It seems to have been common

³¹ Allen Johnson, *The Intendant as a Political Agent under Louis XIV* (New York, 1899), p. 13.

³² Roger Mettam, *Power and faction in Louis XIV's France*, (Oxford, 1988), pp 212-213

³³ Sara Chapman, *Private Ambition*, pp 71-72.

practice to choose *intendants* from the ranks of the *maîtres des requêtes*, who were usually representatives of the petty nobility.³⁴ They were essentially crown agents drawn from beyond the provincial borders with few attachments or vested interests; and thus largely external to the local rivalries of the area, and therefore seen as the most suitable to implement crown policy in the region. Oftentimes, however, their perceived ‘foreign’ nature tended to render them royal spies in the eyes of the locals.³⁵ This characteristic did constitute the principal weakness of the even the most effective *intendants*, who were accused of often lacking sympathy for the local interests of the province.³⁶ Traditional historiography presents the *intendants* as powerful agents of state centralization who did much to undermine the authority of provincial and local elites and replace it with royal power. In reality the *intendant* was required to work in concert with local provincial networks in order to effectively administer the province.³⁷ It was often a physical impossibility for an *intendant* properly to inform himself of the state of the different parishes of his generality, and as it has been shown, in some cases the *intendant* received information regarding in his generality from the *secrétaires* in Paris. Oftentimes it became difficult to implement crown policy that compromised the position of the local governors. This problem is evident in Gould’s reports and one that affected clergy as well as crown agents. The distance from Paris and his superiors allowed room for at least the possibility of ‘disloyalty’ amongst these men. They were used by the crown as instruments for the supervision of the administration of the venal offices in the provinces but there were no royal agents to ensure they themselves were carrying out their supervisory duties.³⁸ This point is interesting when examining not just Gould’s interaction and correspondence with the *intendants* but also with those from whom the *intendants* received their orders, in this case the secretaries Ponchartrain and Maurepas.

Throughout Gould’s tenure there were a number of different *intendants* of Poitou, as mentioned earlier. Nicolas Foucault took up the position in 1685 at the height of the religious persecution against the Huguenots. In his previous posting Foucault had overseen the dragonnades in

³⁴ Allen Johnson, *The Intendant as a Political Agent under Louis XIV* (New York, 1899), p. 12.

³⁵ Roger Mettam, *Power and faction in Louis XIV’s France* (Oxford, 1988), p. 129.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

³⁷ Sara Chapman, *Private Ambition*, p. 70.

³⁸ Roger Mettam, *Power and faction in Louis XIV’s France* (Oxford, 1988), p. 23.

Béarn and had employed the same method in Poitiers. However, the increasing number of complaints made by Poitou nobles concerning Foucault's over-zealous use of troops to achieve the religious end, resulted in many reprimands from his superiors.³⁹ There were limits to the persecution that was to be inflicted upon the Huguenots it seems. Foucault's successor Antoine Ribeyre died just one year into office and little is known of his intendency. He was replaced by his son in law La Bourdonnaye, *intendant* from 1690 until 1695. His tenure was characterised by a moderate approach to the question of the Huguenots compared to that of Foucault. La Bourdonnaye's father had been *intendant* of Brittany due to his connections with Louis de Phélypeaux. After his post at Poitiers La Bourdonnaye went on to serve in Rouen, Bordeaux and Orléans.⁴⁰ His replacement was Gilles de Maupeou in 1695, and like his predecessor Maupeou had strong links with the Phélypeaux. He was cousin to Louis de Pontchartrain's wife, Marie de Maupeou.⁴¹ A characteristic element during his intendency was the employment of spies, he also charged the local curates with roles of surveillance regarding issues pertaining to the Reformed communities.⁴² Much of Gould's work, especially the content of his reports, are essentially descriptions of the surveillance that he carried out during his missions in the areas of Lower Poitou. It was during this early period that Gould came to the attention of Phélypeaux and another one of Phélypeaux's clients, Gilles de Maupeou. The *missionnaire* may well have acquired his more investigative technique that is present in much of his later reports, during his early years under Maupeou. This unfortunately is merely conjecture as the sources available do not cover Maupeou's time in the area. Anne de Pinon Vicomte de Quincy from the Parisian nobility was a successful *intendant* at Pau, Alençon, Poitiers and Dijon. He took up the post after Maupeou in 1703 until 1705 and had no discernable links either through family or patronage with the Phélypeaux. Coming from the generality of Alençon one can say he was unaware of the work carried out by Gould upon taking up his position as *intendant* of Poitiers. In a letter of April 1703, the secretary wrote to Pinon;

³⁹ L. L. Bernard, 'Foucault, Louvois, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes', in *the American Society of Church History*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Mar., 1956), pp 27-40, p. 37.

⁴⁰ Sara Chapman, *Private Ambition*, pp 84-85.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁴² Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou*, p. 169.

J'ay veu par une lettre de M. Gould prestre Irlandois estably a Touars qui a jusques a present parfaitement reussy a l'instruction des nouveaux catholiques que tous ceux de ce canton la ont fait leur devoir a Pasques que bien loin d'y avoir du relachement parmy eux leur zele augmente.⁴³

It is evident here Pontchartrain was introducing Gould as a man of ability to the new *intendant*, and also marking Gould out to be one of his men in the area, carrying out a role that had been attributed to him under the secretary's patronage. The sources are unfortunately quite deficient regarding the intendancies of Jean Charles Doujat, *intendant* from 1705 to 1708, replaced by Nicolas Roujat in 1708 to 1713 and Seigneur de Richebourg (1713 to 1716). They do give an indication as to the work carried out by Richebourg regarding some Huguenots. The *intendant* presided over interrogations of those who having left the realm were apprehended upon re-entering. One interrogation that of Marie Thoreau, provides an excellent example of this lady's life and also what exactly the administration hoped to extract from these interrogations. Marie Thoreau was asked what religion she professed, how long she has been a member of this faith and details referring to the religion of her children. Interestingly she is questioned quite relentlessly regarding 'la preche', where she worshipped, the location, how many assemblies she had attended and who presided over them.⁴⁴ The interrogations demonstrate that at the very least Richebourg took his role regarding the Huguenots seriously. Richebourg was replaced by Jean Baptiste de Gallois, Seigneur de la Tour who held the office for the longest period during Gould's career, from 1716 to 1728, yet he was reproached on a number of occasions for his lack of efficiency.⁴⁵ After de la Tour Francois de Beaussan took up the post in 1728. In 1732 he was succeeded by Jean Le Nain who took a firm line on religious policy in the province.⁴⁶ Of these last three Gould seems to have had a closer relationship with de la Tour regarding his missionary work. The relationship between Gould and de la Tour can be understood in the many reports the *missionnaire* sent to the *intendant*. It seems they had a good working relationship. In May of 1725 Gould wrote to de la Tour to express his:

⁴³ Ponchartrain to Pinon, 25 Apr. 1703 (ANP, O/1 364, ff 100-101).

⁴⁴ Interrogatoire de Marie Thoreau, Apr. 1715 (ADV, Poitiers, C57).

⁴⁵ Yves Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou*, p. 170.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

tres profonde reconnaissance de la continuation de vos bontés affections pour moy, dont vous me donnez, en toutes les occasions, des marques si eclatantes, je suis persuadé, monsieur, que vostre puissante recommandation{sic} et protection aupres des puissances en ma faveur, aura, enfin l'effet que vous esperez, quoy qu'il en soit.⁴⁷

The letter points to a relationship that had a more profound basis than one that was defined by work. De la Tour, as the letter suggests, promoted and protected the *missionnaire's* interests. The sources detailing de la Tour's intendency are quite rich in their descriptions of Gould's activities and the *intendant's* role in the direction of these activities. De la Tour, as will be shown, had an interest in not so much how Gould approached his work, but was concerned with the more practical issues as to where Gould should carry out missions. The *intendant* as well as the *secrétaire* also solicited Gould's skills when up against the more obdurate Huguenots. Under the succeeding intendencies of de Beaussan and Le Nain there is less activity and communication between the *intendants* and Gould. There are a number of possible reasons for this. Gould was active during the intendency of De La Tour and carried out numerous missions, especially between 1719 and 1725. The lack of reports from Gould to de Beaussan and Le Nain does not necessarily point to a lack of communication between these men, but rather a lack of activity on Gould's behalf. In his report of April 1725 Gould makes reference to his ill health, the result of which had forced him to employ the hand of an assistant to write a report to De la Tour.⁴⁸ This is just one of several instances where Gould mentions his poor health. In 1725 Gould was 68 and, as he got older, it may have been that despite possessing spiritual and mental vitality, his physical age may have hindered his activities, resulting in him being less active than he was under De la Tour's intendency. Much of the correspondence from Gould during the later years involved those Huguenots who were in his locality, and there is no indication from Maureapas's letters that Gould was carrying out tours of inspection on the same scale as he was during the intendency of de la Tour. The information gained from Gould during the period 1728 to 1733 had come to him through various individuals throughout Poitou, the network of local contacts he had established during his many missions to these areas.

⁴⁷ Gould to de la Tour, 8 May 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁴⁸ Gould to de la Tour, 13 Aprl. 1725, (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

Reporting to the *intendant* in mid-1719 Gould elaborated on the character of those with whom he had consulted during his tours, ‘apres avoir visite Mr, les cures dans les paroisses desquelles il y a nombre de religionnaires j’ay aussi visite les principaux gentils hommes’.⁴⁹ Gould does not specify whether these ‘gentil hommes’ were indeed Protestants but the demographics of the area suggest that many were of the reformed faith or at least new converts. The Huguenots were at the core of Gould’s network; they provided him with his principle clients and formed the basis for his success as a missionary. The *principaux gentils hommes* that Gould referred to were not just the main characters of Gould’s missions and published works, but the principle characters in the state’s pursuit of religious unity.

The Huguenots in Gould’s network

As the legal framework of protection expressed through the Edict of Nantes began to deteriorate during the latter part of the seventeenth century it would be the Huguenot nobility that would see a dramatic demographic decline. Arguably one of the reasons as to why the French Wars of religion were such a protracted catastrophe was due to the reformed faith making inroads into the ranks of the nobility. When the Princes of the blood began to display commitments to this faith the consequences proved disastrous for the Valois. Problems abounded when the religious convictions of these nobles such as Henri de Bourbon, later Henri IV grandfather to Louis XIV, came into conflict with the traditional rights and privileges that were accorded the aristocracy of the *ancien régime*. The political ramifications essentially resulted in a ‘heretic’ ascending the throne of France, although Henri did eventually convert; the very idea of this was unacceptable to the more ultra Catholic parties in the dispute, who proved intractable when it came to the religious compromise of the throne. Furthermore it was traditionally the members of the nobility that funded and pursued the military campaign against the crown and the Catholic League forces during the wars. Linking in with these social elites during missionary activities allowed Gould to assess the situation of the region, this of course depending on the noble’s willingness to help agents of the crown.

⁴⁹ Gould to de la Tour, []1719, (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

Writing to the bishop of Poitiers in March 1705 Gould reported his findings on a recent convert to Catholicism a ‘gentilhomme nommé Mr Genouille’.⁵⁰ Genouille was a new convert in the parish of d’Availles Saint Hilaire, twenty kilometres south of Thouars. According to Gould, Genouille did not appear to be sincere in his new faith, Gould informed the prelate how he ‘qui ne paroît pas estre [bien] catholique’. In contrast to this, his wife appeared ‘bien convertie’⁵¹ and wished their daughter to be instructed in the Catholic faith yet was obstructed by her husband. Gould suggested that Genouille’s daughter be removed to a convent, away from the influence of her father where she could be properly instructed. Unfortunately for Madame de Genouille who ‘selon toutes les apparences, soit bien convertie’ and who was not ‘absolument la maitresse dans la maison’,⁵² she had no say in her daughter’s religious upbringing not just in relation to the state but in relation to her husband, therefore it was necessary for the administration to intervene. Les Genouilles were just one example of a noble family divided by faith. It became increasingly difficult for Gould to enforce religious conformity on families who displayed varying attachments to their religious beliefs; such variations came to represent the vast bulk of those that populate the source material. In the same letter Gould also refers to an ‘...autre gentilhomme de ce canton qui negligé beaucoup l’instruire bien de ses enfants dans la religion catholique.’⁵³ Under the stipulations of the Édît de Fontainebleau Huguenot parents were obliged to bring their children up in the Catholic faith. Gould does not provide this *gentilhomme*’s name, but this *gentilhomme*’s actions, or lack thereof, indicate that at least some Huguenots were not fulfilling their religious obligations to their children as outlined by the state. Much later, in 1723, Gould was congratulated by Maurepas on the recent conversion of a lady, Beauvais de Loudun. Maurepas’s letter underlined the need and importance that was attached to conversions of such high ranking people. He wrote to Gould, ‘j’espere comme vous que cet exemple fera un bon effet dans sa famille et dans le pais...’.⁵⁴ It was hoped this example would act as a further stimulus amongst the other members of Lady Beauvais’ family, suggesting that, like the Genouilles, she came from a family with members who preserved their Calvinist beliefs. The conversion of these

⁵⁰ Gould to Bishop of Poitiers, 3 Mar. 1705 (ADV, Poitiers, C56).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Maurepas to Gould, 19 Jul. 1723 (ANP, O/1 379, f. 159).

social elites not only diminished the power of the Huguenot populations in the area but also afforded the crown a great advantage in terms of the influence that these nobles wielded when it came to gaining further converts within their own kin or amongst their retainers. This was certainly the view that was taken with 'un gentilhomme' named Monsieur de St. Roman, a 'capitaine des chasses de sa majesté'⁵⁵ in Mouchamps. St. Roman attracted the *missionnaire*'s attention as he failed to fulfil his religious duties, indicating he was a new convert, but it was his influence in the area that made him a concern for the administration and Gould who described him as 'le conseil de tout le pays en matiere de religion'.⁵⁶

Although Gould did deal predominantly with the Huguenot nobility, his remit was by no means reserved to this cadre of Protestant society. Much of the Huguenots who were brought to the attention of the authorities by Gould were those who were seen to vitiate crown policy in the area. Essentially they were people with influence either through their status, wealth or kinship ties in the area. In Bouperre there was a Madame de la Boulle whom Gould described as 'riche',⁵⁷ a label that is understood when Gould explained how she married her only daughter to the youngest son of the seneschal de la Doipe of Mouchamps. Her wealth allowed her to provide an attractive dowry for her daughter, both families were converts who had since relapsed in their faith, and far from making any attempts to restore themselves to the Catholic faith they were strengthening their ties to Calvinism through marriage.

Another category of the Protestant community that required the authority's special attention were the lay itinerant preachers called *prédicants*, who in the absence of trained Huguenot ministers organised the *prêche* in their localities. The edict of 1685 forbade the activities of ministers under the pain of death; given such punishment many fled the realm. The danger that many of these ministers risked is evident in the lengths some of them were willing to go to avoid detection. One brave enough to remain and preach was an individual referred to as Girard a 'véritable ministre'. De la Tour asked Gould to investigate the presence of Girard, but was reminded of the difficulty in doing so as Girard

⁵⁵ Gould to de la Tour, 8 May 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

‘change de figure et de demeure Presque tous les jours.’⁵⁸ The vacuum left by those not courageous enough to stay around was filled by the *prédicants*. These lay preachers presided over the assemblies, a constant scourge to an administration trying to stamp out outwards displays of religious heterodoxy. The assemblies were illegal gatherings that provided one of the only means of public worship for large numbers of Huguenots, in a climate wherein any public display of religious belief other than that of the Catholic faith was forbidden. The gatherings conducted clandestinely could accommodate from as few as 100 worshippers to well over a thousand and saw their inauguration at the time of the Revocation up until the more favourable religious climate of the late eighteenth century. Naturally, following the Christian liturgical calendar, the majority of these assemblies occurred during the religious seasons of Christmas, Lent and Easter. Interestingly, these coincided with Gould’s missions to the region. In March of 1719 Gould informed de la Tour that in certain areas these assemblies ‘se multiplient tous les jours’.⁵⁹ The movement of clandestine worship is commonly referred to as *l’église du Desert*, the allusion being to the physical reality of the Huguenot worship, many of them took place in secluded areas such as forests, grottos and caves, but also to the biblical persecutions of the Hebrews in the Old Testament and their flight into the desert.⁶⁰ In parishes with large Huguenot populations both the *prédicant* and the assembly were constant annoyances to the administration. Through the first half 1719 there was a growing concern in Gould’s reports regarding the subject of *prédicants*.⁶¹

Consulting with the curé of Rochetrejeux in the diocese of Luçon, Gould was made aware of an individual named Paquereau in the village of Pelletrie. A weaver by trade, the principle charges made against Paquereau was one of being the ‘predicant dans tous les cantons la’ and also corrupting the faith of at least two girls in the village, one ‘une ancienne catholique et l’autre nouvelle convertie’.⁶² As well as organising assemblies for the edification of the Huguenot congregations, the *prédicants* targeted those who relinquished their Calvinist beliefs for Catholicism. Gould, involved in

⁵⁸ De la Tour to Gould, 27 May 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁵⁹ Gould to de la Tour, 14 Mar. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁶⁰ Georgia Cosmos, *Huguenot prophecy and clandestine worship in the eighteenth century; the sacred theatre of the Cévennes* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 42.

⁶¹ Gould to de la Tour, 21 Mar. 1719, 10 Apr. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58). De la Tour to Gould, 27 May 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁶² Gould to de la Tour, 7 Mar. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

conversion work, fought a constant battle with *prédicants* to keep new converts firmly in the bosom of the established church. Gould's career and indeed the crown's policy in the area resembled an endless tug of war to keep the religious irresolute on their side of the religious divide. When apprehended these *prédicants* faced two choices: lengthy incarceration, which meant a prison cell or a worse fate in the galleys, or conversion, which in some cases was the result. In September of 1722 the *secrétaire* wrote to Gould on the subject of 'l'acte d'abjuration de Predican...' ⁶³ he had acquired. The outcome of the issue concerning the other *prédicant* Paquereau was detailed by the *secrétaire* in correspondence to the *intendant* four years later, indicating Paquereau had been arrested and eventually converted by the *missionnaire* who believed the conversion to be 'sincère'. ⁶⁴ With the right amount of pressure and religious exhortation, aided by the walls of a prison cell, *prédicants* could prove just as tractable to conversion as other Huguenots. Yet as we shall see later in our discussion, there was a considerable distance that needed to be traversed between conversion and acceptance into what the state deemed Catholic conformity. The conversions of these individuals would always be suspect giving the risk many of them ran by propagating an illegal belief system. As expected, not all *prédicants* were easy to apprehend let alone convert, and as such many slipped through the crown's net, and indeed Gould's.

In March 1719 Gould detailed the activities of a *prédicant* named Dauband, an individual specifically singled out by the *intendant* who charged Gould with investigating his activities. Jacques Dauband was the subject of a number of communiqués between Gould and the *intendant*. In 1715 Dauband had sought refuge in England, upon returning around 1719 he was identified and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Travelling quite frequently it seems between England and Poitou, six months previously he had left France along with 'un jeune garçon'. ⁶⁵ De la Tour provided Gould with reports of Dauband in Mouchamps, Fontenay and Pousange, where he was reported to have preached. ⁶⁶ Gould expressed to the *intendant* how he was unable to uncover this *prédicant* but before his coming

⁶³ Maurepas to Gould, 23 Sep. 1722 (ANP, O/1 370, f. 108 r).

⁶⁴ Maurepas to de la Tour, 9 Dec. 1726 (ANP, O/1 373, f. 606).

⁶⁵ De la Tour to Gould, 27 Mar. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

tour of lower Poitou, he promised that he would ‘redoublerai’ his efforts to locate the individual.⁶⁷

The provincial administrator, seneschal Corneuve of Moncoutant informed Gould that Dauband had been spotted in the area during the same month. Gould wrote to the *intendant* asking him to furnish the seneschal with the necessary orders that would allow Monsieur de la Corneuve to arrest this individual.⁶⁸ A month later in April Gould wrote to de la Tour that Monsieur Corneuve had yet to send any information regarding Dauband, Gould was required to make use of his other contacts;

Je n’ay pas encore receu{sic} de nouvelles de M. de la Cournueve{sic} au sujet du nomme dauband, je prends la liberte de vous envoyer l’extrait dune{sic} lettre que j’ay receüe d une autre personne que j’avois employé pour la decouverte de ce predicant.⁶⁹

The sources do not provide any further indication as to what became of Dauband and of the administration’s pursuit of him. It proved to be extremely difficult to apprehend these individuals who were constantly on the move in efforts to avoid state detection. The crown’s success in capturing individuals could be only as strong as the network of contacts they had in place, the local apparatus of clergymen and informants who provided the state with the information required that led to the *prédicants’* arrest.

The common thread that wove all of these Huguenots together was the influence they were suspected of having over new converts, those who were in need of a greater oversight by the administration to keep them in their new faith. Gould outlined this concern in a letter to the Bishop of Poitiers, ‘je continue toujours a [report] sur la conduite de nouveaux convertis de ces cantons, particulièrement de ceux dont la Catholicité [est] suspecte’.⁷⁰ In July of 1727 Gould informed the *intendant* of the ‘tres bonnes dispositions’⁷¹ of an individual named Renault. He requested that Renault be removed from the prison at Niort to Thouars where the *missionnaire* could have easier access to him and bring about a conversion.⁷² Renault appears again in the sources in 1729, and from Maurepas’s letter it becomes clear that Gould was successful in persuading him to convert. Maurepas

⁶⁷ Gould to de la Tour, 21 Mar. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁶⁸ Gould to de la Tour, 24 Mar. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁶⁹ Gould to de la Tour, 10 Apr. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁷⁰ Gould to Bishop of Poitiers, 3 Mar. 1705 (ADV Poitiers, C56).

⁷¹ Gould to Le procureur general, 13 Apr. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁷² Gould to De la Tour, []Jul. 1727 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

wrote to Gould detailing how Renault desired to ‘..aller passer quelque temps a la Rochelle pour disposer sa pretendue[sic] femme a embrasser la Religion catholique afin de l’epouser ensuite en face d’Eglise..’.⁷³ Given his previous incarceration, a result no doubt of his initial reluctance to convert, the administration had reason to assume that his *Catholicité etait suspecte*. The *secrétaire* urged Gould to inform the *intendant* and the grand vicar of la Rochelle of Renault’s intended visit to the area to ensure that this ‘particulier ne fasse a la Rochelle un mariage clandestin’.⁷⁴ Under the edict of 1685 the only sanctioned marriages were those made before the Catholic Church, a legal mechanism that effectively prevented Huguenots from strengthening their communities and safeguarding their estates through marriage. Two years later in 1731 Renault was yet again the subject of correspondence between Gould and the *secrétaire*, this time he was further north of La Rochelle in Rouen. From Maurepas’s reply to Gould one can extract the subject of Gould’s original letter; the *missionnaire* had importuned the secretary to mediate on Renault’s behalf and procure a small pension for him from the bishop of Rouen, indicating Renault did indeed travel to La Rochelle to urge his wife to embrace the Catholic religion and not, as was suspected, to engage in an illegal Protestant union.⁷⁵

We began our discussion by giving an indication of the extent of the ecclesiastical network in which Gould found himself by 1705. This however is only representative of those who were familiar with his published works rather than the pastoral and missionary work, which in essence formed the basis for his published career. The success of his missionary work, and obligations regarding the more problematic Huguenots such as the *prédicants* was reliant to a large extent upon the strength of Gould’s relationships with the clergy on the ground, the parish priests and local bishops, those who provided the *missionnaire* with much of the information he passed on to those in Poitiers and Paris. It seems it was common practice for Gould to establish himself with the parish priest in areas heavily populated with Huguenots. He told de la Tour in 1719 how he had visited with ‘les curés dans les paroisses des quels il y a nombre de Religionnaires’.⁷⁶ It was these local ecclesiastics that provided Gould with essential information regarding Huguenot activities, such as the *curé* of Rochetrejeaux in

⁷³ Maurepas to Gould, 14 Oct, 1729 (ANP, O/1 376, ff 358-359).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Maurepas to Gould, 22 Apr. 1731 (ANP, O/1 378, f.110).

⁷⁶ Gould to de la Tour, [] 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

the diocese of Luçon who put Gould on the trail of the *prédicant* Paquereau.⁷⁷ When Gould informed de la Tour of the rate at which the assemblies were multiplying in March of 1719, he was reporting on the basis of information that had been furnished by the bishop of La Rochelle, who had sent Gould a letter detailing Huguenot activities in the region. The information provided by the clergy in the parishes proved invaluable to the administration. Travelling through Pousange in April 1725, Gould wrote to the procureur general of a description provided by the parish priest regarding ‘un nommé Broüart dont le fils etoit predicant et qui est passé dans les pays etrangers...’. Furthermore Gould pointed out that the *curé* had assured him that Broüart’s father was also suspected of being ‘un predicant caché’.⁷⁸

Such information would be impossible for Gould to acquire without sources in the area. The work of a travelling missionary did not allow him to remain in any given parish for more than a number of days, just long enough for him to consult with those with the right information. Through his missions, or *tournées* as he terms them in his reports, Gould gathered information from local priests and established a portrait of Huguenot activities in the region, this was then passed on to his superiors. The *curés* had an intimate knowledge and understanding of the Huguenot communities in their locales, in some parishes their own Catholic congregations lived side by side with the Huguenots. Their role in sketching an accurate picture of Protestant populations, was of course one that was expected of them, the state’s ability to keep such men content was reflected in the clarity of the picture they passed on to crown agents. There was also the question of the *curé*’s authority, which at times was seen to be suspended during missionary activity in their parish.⁷⁹ In order to furnish accurate assessments to his superiors Gould was required to endear himself to these local priests. A good investigator is only as good as his informants and despite being a clergyman he was also a government agent, acting on the mandate of the crown. One way to cement the relationship was to communicate the parish priest’s good work to his superiors, passing through Pousange le bourg in

⁷⁷ Gould to de la Tour, 7 Mar. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁷⁸ Gould to Le procureur general, 13 Apr. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁷⁹ John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France; Volume 2: The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion* (Oxford, 1999), p. 92.

April 1725 Gould described the parish priest there as ‘un excellent curé’⁸⁰ in his report to the procureur general and the *intendant*.

Conclusion

The successful performance of crown policy regarding the Huguenots was heavily reliant upon the informal networks that were in place, and the interaction between those who made up these networks. These networks were in turn regulated by the royal hierarchy. At the summit was the king who demanded service and in return could change an individual’s place in this structure.⁸¹ Mobility could also be influenced through an individual’s ability to please certain people with the right connections to Versailles. For Gould it was a combination of both. His position with the Ursulines was where he acquired and honed his skills in conversion, through La Trémoille he gained access to the Phélypeaux and by 1704 the king was specifically requesting Gould’s instruction regarding certain Huguenots.⁸² The networks Gould established as a result of his instruction and missionary work allowed him to service the relationship with his royal superiors by providing them with access to a large pool of information regarding the Huguenots in the parishes.

The Huguenots were, of course, the subjects of this policy, most of those who entered into contact with Gould and his superiors were those of quality and influence, the nobility and *gens riches* such as merchants. Not all of those mentioned came from higher social echelons, but were nonetheless people who were deemed important to the crown, such as Pageaureau, who despite being a weaver by trade also acted as a *prédicant*. Examining Gould’s episcopal and crown networks in the context of religious reform reveals a number of problems that served to compromise the success of the policy. All information of pertinence regarding the Huguenots travelled to the top, yet there seemed to be a lack of any direct route of communication. Ideally the route was supposed to start with the parish priest on the ground, then to the bishop, the *intendant*, and the *secrétaire* who acted upon the information or passed it to the regent. Gould’s correspondence with his network demonstrates that his

⁸⁰ Gould to Le procureur general, 13 Apr. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁸¹ Sharon Kettering, ‘Brokerage at the Court of Louis XIV’, in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (March, 1993), pp. 69-87 at p. 69.

⁸² Maurepas to Madame de Vêrac, 19 Sept. 1704 (ANP, O/1 365 f, 210 r.v), Maurepas to de la Tour, Dec. 1726 (ANP, O/1 373 ff. 622-623).

was not the case. Much information came to the *secrétaires* or *intendants* attention via more indirect routes, in some cases Gould provides information to the *secrétaire* from the bishops, which is then passed back down to the *intendant* in Poitiers. The lack of concrete routes of communication could mean the difference in apprehending a suspected *prédicant* or preventing religious assemblies. The weight behind the crown's policy came from these networks that were in place in regions like Poitou, heavily reliant upon the relationships that held these networks in place, and obligations to one another of those that populated them, in many cases these obligations had to be rendered to a local provincial administrator or clergyman who was not necessarily in complete concord with the policy that was being employed by the crown in the region. It could be extremely difficult to impose a uniform system upon such networks, the movement of information between Gould and those around him demonstrates this.

From the sources one can see how the clergy, certainly the network of local parish priests, provided Gould with much of his information and formed the basis of his contacts when carrying out his tours of the region. It was essential that Gould maintained a positive interaction with these individuals. Unfortunately it is harder to discern the nature of his relationship with higher ranking clergy, especially the local bishops, but they too provided Gould with much information. Placing Gould amongst the clergy and the crown administrators it becomes apparent that he acted as a link between the network of ecclesiastics on the ground and the directors of policy in Poitiers and Paris. There is no doubt that he enjoyed a good relationship with the bishops of Poitiers. It was Hardouin Fortin de la Hoguette who had originally noticed Gould's enthusiasm for conversion work, and the many endorsements of his published material work from the successive bishops of Poitiers suggest that he had their support. This assessment can be extended to Gould's relationship with the *intendant* and more specifically the *secretaries*, the latter in particular based on a considerable amount of respect and positive appraisal of Gould's work. They essentially viewed Gould as a means of providing the establishment with an abundant knowledge regarding the activities of the *Religion prétendue réformée*. Gould was not parachuted into Poitou by the administration. Instead he was selected from the area to carry out a specific task of the religious policy, strategically placed at the centre where the Huguenots, Catholic clergy and crown converged. This position rendered Gould one

of the most suitable candidates for this particular role in the state's policy. He was also most fortunate that throughout his career there was a voluminous flow of work for someone involved in evangelical activities. The religious obstinacy of the Huguenot population in Poitou and the enduring desire by the state to have them reintegrated into the Catholic religion created a readymade career for this talented and ambitious ecclesiastic. The influential people who constituted these networks and private ambition must not be overlooked in Gould's rise, it is clear they were a requisite element to his success. Of equal importance to his success was Gould's ability and the accuracy of his persuasive technique when it came to conversion. What endeared him to La Trémoille, the Phélypeaux, the clergy and all those involved in the reintegration of the Protestants into the Catholic fold, was an exceptional talent for converting Huguenots. Simply put, Gould was good at his job. The key to this ability lay in the particular technique he applied to his evangelical work which, in a climate of forced conversion, found encouragement from his superiors in Versailles. This particular technique was characterised by persuasion and the strategic use of inducements to entice the Huguenots to abjure their heterodox beliefs, a method that was essential to Gould and the state when they approached the conversion of the Huguenots, the subject to which we turn in chapter three.

Chapter 3:

The *Missionnaire du Roi* - Apostle of Christ or Agent of the Crown?

In any study of *ancien régime* France, the researcher will encounter ecclesiastics like Gould who were deeply implicated in the machinery of state as well as serving the Church. As is well known, relations between the Catholic Church and the Bourbon Monarchy were complex and comprehensive and based on the premise that all authority, ecclesiastical and temporal had a single divine source. Indeed the very centrality of religion and the Catholic Church to the workings of early modern France meant that there was always an important role for ecclesiastics when it came to the running of the state, especially in its complex interface with religious belief and practice. This was true not only for French ecclesiastics but also, as Gould's career highlights, for those of foreign extraction. It was the centrality of religion to the state and also the issue of conflicted religious identity in France from the time of the Reformation that created opportunities for talented clerics like Gould. For Gould this opportunity was expressed in his earning the title of *missionnaire du roi*. But what exactly did this title connote? And, more importantly, to what extent, if any, did it distinguish Gould from all those other clerics involved in the same missionary work?

Certainly the title itself seems to have been unique, judging from the historiography concerning missionaries in France. Hence one must ask whether it was a purely honorific title, bestowed on Gould for his considerable work in the field of evangelisation or perhaps it was a specific office created with a particular function and a special type of person in mind? These are the fundamental concerns that will guide this discussion as we examine the exact nature of Gould's missionary work, and how his role and activities can be studied to understand a specific aspect of the French Counter-Reformation: how the state and its ecclesiastical allies went about converting their minority Protestant community, the Huguenots.

When using the title of *missionnaire du roi* to describe Gould one must be mindful of not only its application and usage in the sources, but also of the uncertainty as to when exactly he received this title. In the sources, Gould is referred to as *l'Abbé Gould* or simply *Monsieur Gould*, titles that he himself as well as crown administrators used in their correspondence. It is in his published works that

one encounters the title of *missionnaire du roi*. In Duradier's *Histoire Littéraire* one learns that Gould received the title of *missionnaire pour le Poitou, pour la conversion des prétendus-réformés de cette province* by royal brevet¹ some time before he received the abbacy of Saint Laon in 1714. When exactly the author does not elaborate. In the early correspondence before 1714 Gould is referred to simply as 'Monsieur Gould', after which he is addressed as *Abbé Gould*. In his first published work *Lettre d'un missionnaire*,² he is referred to simply as Monsieur Gould a *missionnaire*, but not of the king. It is only in his later published works that one comes across explicit references to this title. The *avertissement* to his 1724 edition of the *Traité du saint sacrifice de la messe* details how, 'Depuis trente six ans qu'il travaille en qualité de Missionnaire de sa Majesté en Poitou,' and importantly, 'sous les Ordres de Messieurs les Eveques de Luçon et de Poitiers'.³ The preface to his 1727 *Entretiens* offers a similar description of Gould, working 'depuis quarante années en qualité de Missionnaire du Roy'.⁴ The available sources that detail his early career do not allow one to pinpoint the exact date when Gould was given this title, or, indeed, the specifics of its wording. What is certain is that he was given a royal commission along the lines of missionary for the province of Poitou, sometime during his early career, and certainly before he received the abbacy of Saint Laon. So what exactly did this role entail? At first sight, one can see that it had two functions, a religious one and a royal one. Let us start with the first.

From the *Entretiens* an understanding can be derived of how Gould himself viewed the role of the missionary. The *Entretiens* was a manual that was used for the instruction of new converts and functions as a 'frequently asked questions' tool on the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Through this the proselytiser answers questions and defends the teachings of the Church in response to the inquiries of a prospective convert. Gould's book is significant here in that in it he outlines his views on what exactly is understood as the 'Mission'. According to Gould there are two types of mission: the

¹ Jean Francois Dreux-Duradier, *Histoire Littéraire du Poitou, précède d'une introduction et continue jusqu'en 1849 par une société d'hommes de lettres*. (Genève, 1969, réimpression de l'édition de Niort, 1842-1849), p. 72.

² Thomas Gould, *Lettre d'un missionnaire*, (Paris, 1705).

³ Thomas Gould, *Traité du saint sacrifice de la messe, avec l'explication des cérémonies qui s'y observent et la manière d'y assister dévotement, selon l'esprit de la primitive Eglise. Adressé à une dame de qualité nouvellement convertie* [par l'abbé Th. Gould], (Paris, 1724), *avertissement*.

⁴ Thomas Gould, *Entretiens ou l'on explique la doctrine de l'église catholique par la sainte écriture, et où on fait un juste discernement de sa croyance d'avec celle des Protestants. Imprimés par ordre du Roy, Pour servir à l'instruction des nouveaux convertis*, (Paris, 1727).

'*mission extraordinaire*' and the '*mission ordinaire*'.⁵ The former is undertaken when one is '*envoyé de la part de Dieu*'⁶ to preach the word of God. It is this type of mission that characterises many of the stories of the scriptures such as Moses, Eli and Jesus Christ. The '*mission ordinaire*' is described as the spreading of the Gospel but one that has been ordered at the behest of men, endowed with divine authority to instruct, evangelise and administer the sacraments. It is these missions that occupied clergymen of Gould's period. Gould, well versed and erudite in his understanding of the scriptures, was fully aware of John 1: 1, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God'. Beginning with the word that characterised Gould's role can illuminate our understanding of his work. *Missionnaire* has its origins in the Latin *mitto*, meaning 'to send', and its Greek equivalent in *apostello* from which are derived the words 'apostle' and 'apostolic'. These words characterised the discourse of Catholic renewal during the late sixteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries in France. Jesus being the first teacher was therefore the first missionary of the New Testament, and indeed in the well known verse in the Gospel of St John he is described as the only begotten son of God sent so that the world could be saved from sin.⁷ The scriptures abound with missionary references. It can be argued that the New Testament is primarily a missionary book,⁸ therefore one can suggest that ultimately a man like Gould received his missionary mandate of 'Go.. Teach... Baptise'⁹ from the scriptures.

The missionary function of men like Gould was therefore ordained in the scripture, a function that was concerned with the management of the spiritual affairs of the faithful, (and in some cases to the betterment of the ecclesiastics' temporal affairs, as Gould's career demonstrates). The minister of religion not only received a spiritual authority from the scriptures but also the spiritual charge of carrying out missionary work entailing the preaching of God's word to all those who live in ignorance of his message, as Matthew outlines in his Gospel. This simple role does not describe accurately the role of the *missionnaire du roi*, only how clerics such as Gould may have viewed it themselves on a spiritual basis and in a sense of applied theology, communicating an understanding of the Gospels to the congregations through practical religious works of charity, catechising and evangelisation. This

⁵ Thomas Gould, *Entretiens*, p. 242.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁷ John 3:16-17.

⁸ Robert Hall Glover, *The Bible basis of missions* (Chicago, 1946).

⁹ Matthew 28: 19-20.

role of the active, pastoral priest was one that occupied many ecclesiastics of the period. It has its immediate origins in the late sixteenth century and maintained acute political importance in the mid-seventeenth when the scriptural prompting of St. Matthew's 'Go... teach... baptise'¹⁰ merged, in state and church discourse alike, with Louis XIV's *une foi, une loi et un roi*.

The spiritual renewal of the French Church

The Edict of Nantes (1598) brought the French Wars of Religion to a close, at least in terms of open hostilities. The respite in violence allowed the Roman Catholic Church in France to shift its focus inwards and set about reconstructing its shattered remains. Developing against the backdrop of religious wars the French reform adopted styles of reorganisation along the lines of those set out by the Council of Trent. Reforming individuals began to pay particularly attention to issues of spirituality and clerical reform, perceiving them as key elements in the re-conquest of territory lost during the sixteenth. The Tridentine programme of reform placed an emphasis on the role of bishops. A large responsibility lay with bishops as leaders both in the spiritual and temporal spheres of their diocese. Simony, absenteeism and pluralism plagued dioceses not only in France but throughout Europe. Therefore residency of the prelate was now deemed to be essential to the role now accorded to bishops and they were to ensure order and discipline among the lower clergy and, through them, among the laity.¹¹ Alongside this changing attitude to the role of the episcopacy came a change in the character and the standard of the diocesan bishop. There was a general improvement in the education level of the bishop. Between 1589 and 1660s around 84% of bishops held degrees of some description.¹² Since no professional qualification was needed to enter the Church other than ordination, degrees and MAs were usually taken only by the ambitious and socially prominent. This standard was

¹⁰ Matthew 28: 19-20, 'go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the father the son and the Holy Ghost'.

¹¹ Alison Forrestal, *Fathers, pastors and kings; Visions of episcopacy in seventeenth-century France* (Manchester, 2004), pp 22-23.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

now seen as a prerequisite for all those who aimed at obtaining higher office in the church. The role of the bishop demanded such qualifications.¹³

Higher standards of education allowed for a much greater pool of ideas to develop when it came to discussing and developing the new shape of church structures and ecclesiastical discipline as well as the content and transmission of church teaching and spirituality.¹⁴ Within this new context of Church renewal emerged certain personalities whose reforming ideas and innovations would provide guidelines as to how the French Church would develop throughout the early and mid-seventeenth century. Men such as François de Sales (1567-1622) and François de La Rochefoucauld (1558-1645) were ecclesiastics who adopted Tridentine styles of administration of their dioceses. They further provided a conduit for the broader dissemination of new practices throughout the Catholic episcopate. These early reformers sought to achieve reform through a more active religious life, preaching, instructing and performing visitations.¹⁵ Writers such as Augustino Valier (1531-1606) the Italian cardinal and bishop of Verona advanced ideas on the divine and spiritual importance of the episcopal and administrative roles. Bishops would cease to be solely administrators like secular officials, instead they would be viewed and view themselves as representatives of Christ and his apostles, actively engaged in the work of salvation.

The changing character of the Tridentine cleric was not confined, of course, to the bishop but extended to the lower clergy especially to the parish clergy. Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629) was the founder of the Society of the Oratory of Jesus in Paris in 1611 or the *Société de l'Oratoire de Jésus et de Marie Immaculée*. It had a profound influence on the development of the French school of spirituality and he was one of the most important mystics of the period. Bérulle placed an emphasis on the sacerdotal nature of the priesthood, which stressed the priest's importance as mediator between the congregation and Jesus Christ. The sacrament of ordination consecrated the priest to a life of imitation of Christ. This Bérullian view of the episcopacy and clerical life in general heavily influenced further reformers, in particular two of his disciples, Jean Jacques Olier (1608-1670) founder of the Society of St Sulpice in 1642 and also Jean Eudes (1601-1680) the French missionary and founder of the

¹³ L. W. B. Brockliss and Patrick Ferté, *Irish clerics in France*, pp 527-572.

¹⁴ Forrestal, *Fathers, pastors and kings*, p. 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 38-40.

Congregation of Jesus and Mary, commonly referred to as the Eudists. This French school of spirituality, which at the turn of the century had many exemplars, sought to achieve and in many respects did accomplish a bridging of the gap that had existed between the episcopate and their flock, both lower clergy and laity. It also merged both the administrative and spiritual roles of the prelate in his management of religious needs of the laity. Such an overhaul of one of the most structured institutions in France resulted in a more devoted and spiritually focused clergy and laity. A new spiritual ideal developed, one that centred on the pursuit of closeness to Christ. This intimacy could only be achieved through active works of devotion, charitable acts, and conversion, the work that had characterised the ministry of Jesus in the scriptures.

The religious and political upheavals of the sixteenth century and a series of plagues and bad harvests that occurred during the first decades of the seventeenth fell heavily upon the poor, large numbers of whom, unable to subsist in agrarian areas, gravitated towards the towns. In a society that was heavily regimented the increase in poverty amongst the lower classes soon became a scourge to those of higher rank and greater wealth. The care of these impecunious multitudes was left increasingly to the pious and charitable of society, and predominantly religious institutions. Usually established at the behest of a pious individual, these institutions were, by and large, voluntary organisations that aimed to provide care and in some cases free education for the poor and sickly of society. These societies and congregations were run by those *dévotés* who, deeply religious in conviction, were dedicated to the reform and running of society along spiritual lines.¹⁶ These groups had also one more particular characteristic; they were predominantly feminine in their make-up.¹⁷ During the period 1620 -1650, large numbers of women were admitted to the ranks of active religious life and many of these were of noble extraction. Given these circumstances, and given that many of these institutions were voluntary and privately funded, it was increasingly difficult for the Church hierarchy to control them. The Ursulines of Thouars, with whom Gould spent a formative period of his life, were typical of this phenomenon. Other religious institutions like *La compagnie de la Propagation de la Foi* or the *Exaltation de la Croix*, established in Paris in 1632, and the congregation

¹⁶ Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal, 1990), p. 80.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

of the mission popularly known as the Vincentians or Lazarists, an order of Priests founded by Vincent de Paul in the early decades of the seventeenth century, were involved in such charitable works. These charitable acts were also part of the much larger goal, the pursuit of religious unity.¹⁸

The care of the destitute and the pursuit of a Christo-centric life were not the sole remit of these religious groupings. For many the reclamation of souls lost either through poverty or the ignorance of heresy was understood as one of most effective means of living the apostolic life. One of the chief movers in this phenomenon was Saint Vincent De Paul (1581-1660). In 1616 he organised a mission to Folleville to exhort the inhabitants to confess. The response was so overwhelming that he had to enlist the help of nearby Jesuits in Amiens to assist in handling confessions. The response from the laity to De Paul missions led him to establish a company of priests with the sole purpose of converting and catechising the countryside. Their method was the mission or, as Rapley explains, an organised descent by a group of preachers upon a community, characterised by a period of intensive exhortation and instruction which ended only when everybody had received the sacrament of penance.¹⁹ Areas targeted for missionary work saw an increase in levels of activity of religious institutions and congregations. Regions home to large communities of Huguenots, such as Poitou, saw a permanent presence of these religious institutions which was deemed necessary in order fully to evangelise the area. Also involved in this early internal missionary work were the Jesuits and the Capuchins. Such missionary activity was part of a much larger global initiative undertaken by the church in general, to further expand the Roman Catholic faith.

The early global mission during the age of exploration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had been monopolised by the Spaniards and Portuguese and served as the religious arm of the secular colonial endeavour. Much of this missionary work in the new world was carried out by the Dominicans, Franciscans and later the Jesuits, who first landed in Mexico in 1572.²⁰ The early missions particularly in Mexico adopted the ‘clean sweep’ method wherein the missionaries did not try to discover whether the religion of the indigenous contained any truth, but sought completely to

¹⁸ Catherine Martin, *Les compagnies de la propagation de la foi (1632-1685) : Paris, Grenoble, Aix, Lyon, Montpellier* (Geneva, 2000), p. 353.

¹⁹ Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 80.

²⁰ Bernard de Vaux, *History of the missions: from the beginning to Benedict XV* (London, 1961), p. 67.

extricate the local indigenous from their inherited pagan beliefs. This was mainly due to a European abhorrence of the rite of human sacrifice practised in these new lands, which was more than enough to convince the colonisers that the indigenous should relinquish all attachments to pagan beliefs.²¹ Over the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the Iberian hold over the global mission relaxed to allow other European nations to send forth their missionaries. The acquisition of new territories not only provided the opportunity for colonial aggrandisement but also created new arenas wherein religious crusaders filled with spiritual zeal and religious obligation could convert the indigenes in the name of Christ, the 'new world opened up an apostolic emigration'.²² The decline of the Iberian colonial powers also affected a shift in the spirit and direction of the missions. The creation of the congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622 by Gregory XV gave Rome a bigger hand in the direction of the global Catholic mission. In its instructions to its vicars apostolic in 1659 the congregation for the Propagation of the Faith advised

do not regard it as your task... to change their manners, customs and uses unless they are evidently contrary to religion and sound morals. What could be more absurd than to transport France, Spain, Italy or some other European country to China? Do not introduce all that to them, but only the faith which does not despise or destroy the manners and customs of any people.²³

This change was evidently intended more to assist Catholic spiritual aggrandisement than simple colonial ambition. However, during the early stages of the age of discovery Europe had not yet been as religiously fragmented as it would become during the early seventeenth century. The religious demographics of Europe changed radically over the course of the sixteenth century. Although the Roman Catholic global missions did not see any competition until the rise of the English and Dutch Protestant empires, the presence of heterodox established religions did urge the Roman Church to take firmer control over how their global missions were undertaken. Of most pertinence to the Catholic Church and those states involved in their own missionary programs were the internal, domestic missions. In many Catholic states such as France, Protestant enclaves had developed making it

²¹ Ibid., p. 67.

²² Ibid., p. 89.

²³ Stephen Neil, *A History of the Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, 1964), p. 179.

difficult for these states to pursue policies of religious unity. The missionaries in New France, China and the Americas dealt with exclusively pagan indigenous peoples, societies that were linguistically, culturally and geographically distinct from those in Europe. These barriers oftentimes required the missionary fully to immerse themselves into the culture of the indigenes adopting their customs and traditions and most importantly their language. Members of the Society of Jesus in the Chinese mission, such as Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) the sixteenth century Jesuit missionary, would sport long beards to proclaim their status as scholars alongside the Mandarin elite. The Italian Jesuit Roberto De Noailles (1577-1656) was active for over fifty years in India, during this period he learned the native languages of Tamil and Sanskrit, as well as abandoning everything that could be deemed offensive to the local power magnates, such as the wearing of leather.²⁴ The missionary endeavours of De Noailles highlight the cultural ravines that needed to be traversed for the diffusion of God's message.

In France the mission did not encounter such cultural barriers. Indeed the very fact that the main targets of the Catholic missions were French would prove to be one of the most complicating elements in the French reform and Counter-Reformation. It was the reformed communities' pursuit of the privileges and political rights accorded to the Catholics that would bring them into conflict with the monarchy and with their Catholic neighbours. The difficulty for the Catholic Church in France was that they were not trying to evangelise pagan 'barbarians', but other Christians, who spoke their language, shared their countryside and were in many cases related to them. The people with whom the early missionaries in France and later Thomas Gould would deal had two very important characteristics. First, they were part of a religious tradition that had lived long enough under the Catholic Church to become disaffected with its doctrines. Second, their dissatisfaction with the established Church encouraged them to develop their own set of opposing beliefs. Add to this the development of a didactic polemic designed not only to defend these new beliefs but also to attack those of the Catholic Church and one can begin to appreciate the difficulty for those engaged in apostolic missions to the Huguenot 'heretics'. In this regard the internal missions met with as much success and failure as those of a more global nature. Fundamentally the Huguenots were French but not in full communion, so to speak. In this regard, the French Catholic Church had one major

²⁴ Ibid., p. 184.

advantage: it was the established state church, and *la véritable Église*, to which the majority of French men and women belonged. To use the adjective *véritable* to describe one's belief entails the conviction that all others are heterodox. The Protestant faith in France was pejoratively termed *la Religion Prétendue Réformée* or the 'RPR'. Those 'unfortunate' enough to be born into it were referred to as those born in *erreur*. It was a lexicon that was used to demonstrate the gap that existed between the two communities, but a gap that could be bridged by conversion. Despite their contrary religious beliefs, the Huguenots were still seen as members of the *corps du Christ*, the *brebis égarées*, who with the right amount of pressure and evangelical exhortation, could be successfully reintegrated into the arms of the one true church.

The shape of the internal missions developed along the lines of the global missionary programmes and would come to characterise much of the work undertaken by Gould. In the early decades of the seventeenth century the missions were predominantly led by the Jesuits and the Capuchins.²⁵ The essential aim of the missions was the instruction of the people which included both Catholics and Protestants. Instruction was deemed key to evangelisation of those who through ignorance or '*erreur*', understood to be one of the principal causes of heresy,²⁶ had broken away from the true church. Early reformers such as François de Sales afforded great attention to catechising during their missions, teaching the mysteries of the faith and prayers. Missionaries adapted catechism to focus on the essential teachings of worship and preparation of the sacraments.²⁷ The pursuit of *la vie apostolique* or the apostolic life was a fundamental aspect of the missionaries' work. The Capuchins and Jesuits both firmly believed that their missionary vocation was '*à la suite de Jésus et l'imitation du Christ*'.²⁸

The internal missions consisted of two types. Missions of a shorter duration or temporary missions, as we have outlined above, were generally aimed at the Catholic communities, and were seen to be part of the prelate's pastoral duty. These were characterised by short catechism sessions followed by confession and concluding with reception of communion at Mass. The permanent or

²⁵ Yves Krumenacker, *L'école française de spiritualité; des mystiques, des fondateurs, des courants et leurs interprètes* (Paris, 1998), p. 313.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

longer-term missions were carried out with the same idea that inspired the foreign missions. They were conceived as the conquest of territory in spiritual terms. Or, in the case of France, the reconquest of territory hostile to Catholicism, regions such as Cevennes, le Midi, Mountauban, and Poitou and Dauphiné. The sources indicate that it is this type of mission that occupied the *missionnaire du roi*.²⁹ His aim was the ultimate conversion of the Huguenots. However, in regions where there existed both Catholics and Huguenots the missions also had the purpose of admonishing the Catholics regarding the dangers of heresy and arousing latent hostilities amongst the two communities. They also, naturally, applied pressure to the Huguenot consistories.³⁰ A further aspect of these missions was their focus on Huguenot social elites by singling them out for special attention and a particular effort at conversion.

The early internal missions were conducted against a slightly different political backdrop to that of Gould in the early eighteenth century. In the earlier period, despite having the full support of the crown, the missions were essentially fighting against a religious community that had been granted toleration, albeit limited, under the Edict of Nantes 1598. In the second half of the seventeenth century the tide began to turn against the Huguenots who saw many of their privileges washed away during the personal rule of Louis XIV, a period where the crown began to duplicate in the legal sphere what the Catholic Church was already doing in the spiritual one. The dismantling of the edict of Nantes is demonstrative of the first visible signs of political will to eradicate religious heterodoxy in the realm.

The renewal and reform that began at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries meant that when Louis XIV approached the question of religious unanimity he could draw upon the work and an already extant religious infrastructure geared towards the eradication of religious heterodoxy. After the 1660s the Catholic Church was not just actively involved in helping the king fulfil his coronation oath of eradicating heresy from the realm, they were also implementing the express desire of Louis XIV. This would see the war against heresy waged by

²⁹ Gould to de la Tour, 8 May 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59), to le Procureur général, 13 April. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59), to de la Tour, 22 May 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

³⁰ Elisabeth Labrousse, *La Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes : une foi, une loi, un roi ? Essai sur la révocation de l'Edit de Nantes* (Genève, 1985), pp 49-50.

royal *arrêt* as well as the sword.³¹ As such the missions conducted by Gould took on a political as well as a religious character. Many of Gould's visits to areas formed part of the crown surveillance in the area. Travelling with at least one 'compagnon' on his journeys, an individual called Missé, the *missionnaire*'s tours were carried out over durations of between three weeks to a month. In some tours Gould visited up to seven different parishes in Low Poitou. His geographical remit also extended beyond these boundaries to cover most of the province, further west, to areas such as Luçon. There linking in with already established contacts Gould would either revisit those new converts already known to him through previous instruction or become acquainted, through the local clergy, with newer ones, who provided Gould with much of his information regarding specific parishes. The *missionnaire du roi* performed a religious function but the creation of the office itself, or rather that office and title when it was given to Gould, resonated with and was part of the crown's objective of religious unity. Gould was carrying out a function that was essentially religious in nature but, as the sources suggest, one that was politically sensitive. Gould and the other missionaries may well have received their authority to carry out the missions from the scriptures but it was the crown that would foot the bill, and as the focus now shifts to the activities of the *missionnaire du roi* it will be demonstrated how Gould was equally if not more an agent of Louis XIV as an apostle of Christ.

The conversion of the Huguenots

Entering a climate of state-sponsored religious persecution or as it was understood in the view of the establishment, the pursuit of religious unity, the role of the ecclesiastic in missionary territory became more complex. This is true particularly in Gould's case. The new phase in the state's relations with the Huguenot minority opened up new career opportunities for talented clerics like Gould, but Gould, unlike other ecclesiastics, held a unique title, the *missionnaire du roi*. The sources detail quite extensively the range of Gould's activities in this regard. As the title of this chapter suggests there were two aspects to his function both of which can be said to be two sides of the same coin. However,

³¹ Roy L. McCullough, *Coercion, Conversion and Counterinsurgency in Louis XIV's France* (Leiden and Boston, 2007), p. 125.

let us concern ourselves initially with the *missionnaire*'s role in religious conversion. What exactly occurred during the religious instruction of a Huguenot by Gould? Much of Gould's work in this regard operated on the basis of individual consultation with the intended convert. The candidates were usually lapsed Catholics, Huguenots who had previously converted but had reverted back to their old faith, or continuously practicing Huguenots who had thus far avoided the crown's attention. Crown and church suspicion was aroused, usually through behaviour such as attendance at assemblies, Reformed preaching, but increasingly through the absence of a particular certain type of behaviour, i.e. Catholic conformity. In many cases Gould encountered a particular individual during his *tournées* or missions in the area. In other cases it was on the express orders of the crown that he instructed a Huguenot. The noble woman Madame de Vêrac was one such Huguenot. In September 1704 the *secrétaire* Ponchartrain wrote to Gould informing him that

Le Roy est informé que m[adame] la Marquise de Verac persiste toujours dans les erreurs du Calvinisme et comme Sa Majesté veut faire une dernière tentative pour sa conversion, elle a jugé que personne n'est plus capable d'y réussir que vous ainsy elle m'a ordonné de vous escrire que vous luy ferez plaisir d'aller voir cette dame, pour conferer avec elle sur les points de la Religion.³²

The noble family de Vêrac had a long tradition of opposition to the crown due to its attachment to the Huguenot faith particularly during the wars of religion. This religious heterodoxy survived up until the early eighteenth century through Madame de Vêrac, the wife of the Lieutenant general of Poitou, a government military commander of the region. Life began to deteriorate for this lady in 1685, due to the actions of her husband. Placing more importance on the relationship with his monarch than that of his religion and indeed perhaps his wife, the marquis de Vêrac abjured his Calvinist faith and embraced Roman Catholicism, thus greatly compromising his wife's position and removing a strong support from her and her practice of her Huguenot faith. Unfortunately for the crown Madame de Vêrac was not a woman who would be governed by the actions of her husband and she refused to follow his example. Nineteen years later and just after the death of her husband in 1704, Pontchartrain informed Madame de Vêrac that

³² Pontchartrain to Thomas Gould, 19 Sept. 1704 (ANP, O/1 365 f. 209v).

Vous scavez la considération particulière que le Roy a toujours eue pour le Marquis de Verac, il vient de vous en donner tout récemment une marque très sensible en accordant a M. vostre fils a son age la charge de lieutenant général au gouvernement de Poictou, mais si quelque chose est capable de vous convaincre davantage de l'estime que sa majesté avait pour luy c'est la complaisance qu'elle a eu pendant son vivant de ne pas vous inquiéter sur le fait de la Religion, espérant toujours que ses bons exemples et ses con[eils] vous détermineraient en fin a suivre le bon party a embrasser sincèrement la Religion catholique.³³

The Marquis de Vêrac's decision to toe the religious line was enough, it seemed, for the administration to overlook the position of his wife. But with the death of her husband and the decision to allow her son to inherit his father's office, crown patience with Madame de Vêrac's religious stance was wearing thin. The results of Gould's visit materialised when the *secrétaire* of state wrote to the bishop of Poitiers a month later to effect a resolution. By this stage Madame de Vêrac had been placed under house arrest until the return of her son who, the administration had hoped, would persuade her to fulfil her religious obligations to the crown. The bishop of Poitiers was called in, meeting with the same results as Gould, which was a failure to extract an abjuration from Madame de Vêrac. Bishop de Vertrieu advised that she be removed to the convent of the Visitation de Poitiers. Yet, despite the implementation of more coercive means this noble lady held fast to her beliefs, much to the exasperation and anger of the administration. By March of the following year the attitude of the crown was made clear when the *intendant* wrote to Madame de Vêrac's son, the Marquis de Vêrac and lieutenant general of Poitou, 'Le Roy a este bien fasche d'apprendre que M. vostre mere persiste dans son opiniatreté, sa Majesté veut bien luy accorder la permission de se retirer en Angleterre avec une fille...'.³⁴

It simply proved too embarrassing for the crown to continue in their fight against Madame de Vêrac. She had won it seemed, but her victory came at a considerable price. She was exiled to England. This solution seemed considerably less costly to the administration when measured against the amount they had already paid in terms of time and manpower to secure her conversion. The implication in the letter is that the king had allowed her to travel to England rather than force her to do

³³ Pontchartrain to Madame de Vêrac, 19 Sept. 1704 (ANP, O/1 365, f. 210 rv).

³⁴ Pontchartrain to Marquis de Vêrac, 11 Mar. 1705 (ANP, O/1 366, f. 62 rv).

so, but it is doubtful she had any choice outside conversion. Pontchartrain informed Pinon that she would be granted a travelling companion who would serve as her maid. This was because, despite her religion, she was still a member of the nobility, and the crown would not be accused of denying her the level of domestic service that befitted her rank. But fearing the effect that her intransigent constitution would have on a Catholic maid, the qualities of a suitable servant to accompany her, were made very clear to the *intendant*

luy donner une ancienne catholique et encore moins une nouveau qu'elle pervertirait sans doute, il faudrait voir s'il y aurait quelque fille opiniâtre qui n'est point encore fait abjuration et a laquelle il n'y eut point d'espérances a fin de s'en débarrasser est la luy donnant ³⁵

The need to find someone who was just as religiously obstinate as Madame de Véric to act as her servant was an effort to salvage some benefit from this extremely protracted ordeal and thus rid the realm of two recalcitrant women, (and perhaps to make life a little more difficult for Madame de Véric by closeting her with a servant who, like herself, had problems with authority). Madame de Véric's ultimate exile demonstrated that the administration would not tolerate extreme forms of religious obduracy regardless of status, but also that there existed those who would certainly not yield to the crown's attempts at forced conversion. If there was any victory for the crown it was a pyrrhic one. The most visible aspect of this case study is that the crown was ultimately impotent when faced with extreme forms of religious stoicism, especially by nobility, whether male or female. It also reveals much as to the exact nature of the process itself, and the part played by the *missionnaire*. Gould was brought in, it seems, to affect the more peaceful approach, through one-to-one instruction. Failing this other tools and methods were employed, demonstrating the almost improvisatory nature of the whole program. The intensity of the administration's actions depended, of course, on the reactions of the convert. Overall the above case demonstrates with tedious accuracy how difficult and lengthy the process could be.

The same holds true much later in Gould's career during the conversion of another Huguenot, named Julliot. Although resulting in more success than de Véric, in terms of resources and time

³⁵ Pontchartrain to Pinon, 11 Mar. 1705 (ANP, 0/1 366, f. 62 rv).

expended it proved to be equally protracted and costly. In May of 1732 Gould wrote to Maurepas requesting that Julliot, a merchant, spend a number of weeks at his home, in order that Gould could work on his conversion. Maurepas charged the *intendant* with the task of making Julliot attend Gould at his home, adding that if he resisted, ‘on pourrait employer l’ autorité du Roy pour l’y obliger’.³⁶ By June Julliot had failed to comply with a request to travel to Gould’s home and the *intendant* was forced to employ the rigours of the law. The order for his arrest and transfer to the prison at Thouars was sent to Le Nain. Maurepas wrote to the *intendant* to make the necessary arrangements so that Gould would be permitted to visit Julliot in prison, and anyone else who was in need of the *missionnaire*’s instruction.³⁷ By June this conversion was not forthcoming, an inconvenience that obliged Maurepas to send an arrest warrant to the *intendant* to put Julliot, ‘dans la prison de Thouars ou m. L’abbé Gould pourra l’instruire’.³⁸ During this period of incarceration, in which Gould tried to acquire an abjuration from Julliot, the *missionnaire* wrote to the *secrétaire* urging him to send the two sisters of Julliot to the Ursulines at Thouars to receive instruction.³⁹ After the internment of both Julliot’s sisters and the decline in his business due to his lengthy imprisonment, the *secrétaire* sent the necessary release orders to the *intendant* to be enforced only when Julliot had ‘donné sa soumission de se rendre chez m. L’abbé Gould.’⁴⁰ Eventually in October of 1733 Julliot gave his ‘soumission’ to abbé Gould, who presented the authorities with Julliot’s act of abjuration. Maurepas wrote to Gould, ‘sur ce que vous me marquez monsieur que le nomme Julliot a fait abjuration, j’envoye a M. L’*intendant* de Poitiers les ordres pour remettre a ce particulier de retourner a son commerce.’⁴¹ The interesting choice of the word ‘soumission’ in the correspondence reveals the character of the crown agenda to bend the Huguenots to the will of the king. Conversion was no easy task, it was necessary to instruct the individual as effectively as possible so that they would remain in their new faith, a process that could generally be deemed successful only if the new convert remained faithful over a prolonged period of time. Only seventeen months after this ‘negociant’ was brought to the attention of

³⁶ Maurepas to Le Nain, 10 May 1732 (ANP, O/1 379, f. 85).

³⁷ Maurepas to Le Nain, 19 Jun. 1732 (ANP, O/1 379, ff 113-114).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Maurepas to Le Nain, 25 Jun. 1732 (ANP, O/1 379, f. 116).

⁴⁰ Maurepas to Le Nain, 6 Aug. 1732 (ANP, O/1 379, f. 138).

⁴¹ Maurepas to Gould, 1 Oct. 1733 (ANP, O/1 380, f. 262).

the *secrétaire*, could Maurepas congratulate Gould on his successful conversion of Julliot, although the same could not be said of Julliot's sisters.⁴²

The two examples above allow one an understanding as to how Gould and the crown approached the conversion of some obstinate Huguenots, and both are revealing on a number of levels. The most striking aspect of these cases is that, despite a distance of thirty years, the crown was using a similar approach in 1732 as it was back in 1704, namely an approach that was, by and large, improvised and one that met with a varying level of success. But this is reflective of the complex nature of those whom the state was trying to convert. Both cases together allow a comprehension of how the crown attempted a conversion, and the particular methods that characterised Gould's work. The religious instruction would initially begin with a one-on-one consultation between Gould and the person marked for conversion on points of faith, this consultation also doubled as a means of gauging the individual's willingness to approach conversion.

Failing to reach the required result, a more rigorous or coercive position was taken, internment in a prison or convent, followed by continued religious instruction. If the individual persisted other forms of pressure might be applied, depending on how much leverage the administration could get from the individual's circumstances. The improvised nature of this method appears too when one compares the complexity of the above cases, especially from the point of view of social status. Crown responses to these individuals' religious stance would be tempered by their rank, which could either restrain the crown from behaving too harshly or give them a free hand to apply as much pressure as needed. One indicator of this is the fact that Gould was sent to Madame de Véric's home to conduct her religious instruction, whereas Julliot, a mere 'négociant', and of a less elevated extraction than de Véric, was required to attend Gould at his home. In both cases their family members were used as leverage to effect a conclusion.

The *secrétaire* made clear both the advantages and disadvantages of rank when it concerned a person such as de Véric.⁴³ Too harsh a treatment of Madame de Véric would contrast with the crown's

⁴² Maurepas to Gould, 1 Oct. 1733 (ANP, O/1 380, f. 261).

⁴³ Pontchartrain to Madame de Véric, 19 Sept. 1704 (ANP, O/1 365 f. 210rv).

consideration they had given to her son. Yet despite this they were still able to use this as a means of pressurising her into submission, gently admonishing her in what can be read as a veiled threat that there was a limit to the king's confidence and consideration regarding her family. Yet the tone and the wording of the letter are reflective of Madame de V rac's noble rank. There was no need for veiled threats when dealing with Julliot. In order to get the required result from Julliot both his sisters were interned, no doubt due to their religious allegiance but more likely due to the added pressure it would have upon Julliot. The same means were employed, but differed due to their status. For Julliot, his refusal to convert would have had greater personal and financial consequences, not to mention a lengthy prison sentence, or worse the galleys, rather than removal to England, but his refusal to convert would not bring the same embarrassment as Madame De V rac's did to the administration. Madame de V rac's religious intransigence was magnified by her noble status and the position of her late husband and son. Both cases demonstrate the vicissitudes of state conversion against the backdrop of a heavily regimented society. The position of de V rac allowed her to hold out against the crown, whereas Julliot was compromised by his, evincing conclusively that there would be no place in the kingdom for those who placed a profounder loyalty to their faith than to their king.

The convert's temperament as well as their position in society had a part to play in moderating the format of religious instruction imposed by the authorities. When writing to Madame de V rac on the subject of Gould's intended visit, Ponchartrain advised her that the king was persuaded she would listen 'avec docilit  et que vous vous defaires de tous vos faux prejuges qui seroient toujours un obstacle a vostre conversion'.⁴⁴ It was appreciated that her successful conversion was dependent on a certain amount of compliance on her behalf, an element that was necessary when approaching conversion through irenic and persuasive means, a characteristic of Gould's method. Writing to Gould at a much later stage the crown authorities detailed how they preferred Gould to carry out his work: 'rien n'est plus a desirer que de ramener par les voyes de douceur et de charit  ceux qui sont n s dans l'erreur'.⁴⁵ This was not a novel approach; earlier missionaries had sought to uproot Protestantism by similar means, such as P re Joseph during the first missions to Poitou, who

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Maurepas to Gould, 23 Sept. 1722 (ANP, O/1 370 f. 108r).

outlined the advantages of peaceful conversion. Although this irenic approach was preferred, more forceful means were acceptable if the former did not win converts. This view is repeated in the crown correspondence with Gould. But how exactly did one *ramener* those born in error through persuasion? And, in a period of religious persecution, what exactly did methods of *douceur et charité* entail? In Gould's reports to the *intendant* of Poitou and the *procureur général* one begins to appreciate this stratagem of irenic conversion as employed by the *missionnaire du roi*.

Douceur et charité and the *missionnaire*'s irenic approach

From Gould's reports back to Paris from his tours or missions, one can form an impression of the substance of the policy of *douceur et charité*, one which was dependent on a number of factors but specifically on the social position of those singled out for conversion. Travelling through Bersuire (the oral form of the town called Bressuire) in April of 1725, for instance, Gould visited two girls whom he had converted some twelve years previously. Unfortunately these girls had since returned to a life of '*erreur*' but were found to be in a position nevertheless to '*faire leur devoirs*', return to religious conformity, and make yet another venture into the Catholic faith. Although coming from one of the '*meilleures familles*' of this parish Gould also found these girls in an impoverished state.⁴⁶ Gould had acquired a small pension of 150 livres for their father who died a '*bon catholique*', unfortunately the king, often times inconsiderate of the needs of his poorer subjects, died before the brevet was signed.⁴⁷ Gould requested whether another small pension could be obtained for these '*pauvres*' girls. Their poverty was regarded as a reason for their apostasy and the granting of a pension would not only ease their condition but facilitate their move back into the Catholic fold. Gould's advice regarding these two girls displays the administration's appreciation of the benefits that acts of charity and financial inducements could have upon those who had not yet fully relinquished all attachments to their Calvinist faith. Gould behaves in a similar fashion in the parish of Mouchamps where a judicial clerk named Herpin had been suspended from duties due to a relapse into heresy. However, unlike the

⁴⁶ Gould to Le procureur général, 13 April. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

previous case, the crown's agenda was closer to that of both Gould and the local administrators. Gould reported that both Herpin's parents had performed their religious duty. Unfortunately for the authorities Herpin, through the influence of his wife of eight years, had been '*perverti*'. His wife, described as a *religionnaire* in the reports, was in receipt of an inheritance of two thousand livres, despite the existence of legal prohibitions against Huguenots inheriting. Gould informed the *intendant* that after many meetings with this individual he seemed to be in a good position to '*faire ses devoirs*,' which involved sending his children to Catholic schools for instruction. Gould kept his superiors well informed of this individual's circumstances, Gould wrote to the *procureur général* of Poitou

pour reussir a la conversion de cet homme M. ne jugeroit pas apropos de m'ecrire une lettre ostensible par laquelle vous auriez la bonté de me marquer que vous êtes content des bonnes dispositions ou je vous ay marque que je l'ay laissé, avec un mot de menace que sil ne fait pas son devoir il perdra la succession dont il jouit par le decez du Sr. Barthé du Sablon oncle de sa femme...⁴⁸

Herpin needed to be reminded not only of the administration's appreciation that he was making efforts to conform, but also of the dangers of his refusal to do so. The implication in the letter is that the crown would overlook the compromising issue of his wife's inheritance, despite the legal stipulations against Huguenots inheriting, a legal detail that could be solved by conversion. There are two ways in which one can view Gould's actions with these Huguenots. The first, and one that the authorities hoped would be adopted by the Huguenots, was that Gould appeared to be mediating on the behalf of the individuals involved, rewarding them for their 'bonne disposition' regarding conversion. This can be taken as one understanding of the term *douceur et charité*, but if Gould and the authorities were acting virtuously it was, perhaps, for want of opportunity to act otherwise. On a more subterranean level this policy seems more than mere philanthropy. Gould, in co-operation with the local administrators, capitalised on the conditions, in some cases destitution, that the Huguenot's position presented. *Charité et douceur* was not so much about displaying acts of compassion towards the Huguenots in the hope that they would convert, but rather seizing upon the situation of the Huguenots that could be exploited and feigning leniency or mediation in their favour to render them more

⁴⁸ Gould to Le procureur général, 13 Aprl. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

amenable to peaceful conversions. It is a strategy that although irenic in theory, might be considered more Machiavellian in its application. The desired result would give the administration a shorter and less costly conversion, and present Gould as a sympathetic ecclesiastic who had the requisite influence to intercede on behalf of the Huguenots who faced the powers of the state, an early modern equivalent, perhaps, of the 'good cop bad cop' scenario. There is evidence that suggests Gould was viewed in this light by some Huguenots. In July of 1727 Gould indicated that he 'reçois une lettre du nomme Renault',⁴⁹ a prisoner at Niort. Gould requested that Renault be removed from Niort to Thouars or to Gould's home, a point of detail that the *missionnaire* explained was '...toujours pratiqué à l'égard des autres Religionnaires..'.⁵⁰ It is clear it was Renault who had contacted him, suggesting that Gould had earned a certain reputation within recalcitrant Huguenot circles, and that his technique struck a chord with some of its intended targets. As well as indicating the sort of reputation our *missionnaire* had earned amongst his intended converts, this letter provides an insight into the more personal aspect of Gould's missionary work and how he approached conversion. Gould requested that Renault be removed to his care at his home. It could be that this request had more to do with mere convenience, although it must be mentioned that by 1727 Gould was in his 69th year. It was a practice that Gould maintained for all of the other *religionnaires*. By instructing the Huguenot at his home Gould was placing the convert in a much more informal and personal setting, where the dominant relationships were characterised by God and his lost sheep, the priest and the convert, focusing on issues such as penance, salvation and closeness to Christ. This setting contrasted starkly with that of the prison, a symbol and means of crown punishment for its recalcitrant subjects, inhabited by gaolers and the incarcerated, where the emphasis was placed on questions of conformity and loyalty to the state. This detail is an indicator of Gould's religious sincerity and also his acute awareness of a distinction between the agendas of both crown and church and how they may have been perceived by the Huguenots.

The leitmotif of these examples is that all the Huguenots involved found themselves in compromised circumstances that allowed the method of *douceur et charité* to be fully realised, yet it

⁴⁹Gould to Le procureur général, 13 Apr. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁵⁰ Gould to De la Tour, 1 July 1727 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

could not be used on everyone. Madame de Vêrac gives one example of a Huguenot who, no doubt due to her rank, had the means to resist these methods. The above examples deepen our understanding of what occurred when Gould and the state broached the issue of conversion of individual Huguenots, the subtle art of the *missionnaire*'s technique allows us to apply additional colour to the canvas to give a clearer picture of how Gould approached his work. His work was part of a state sponsored policy of conversion and as such Gould had access to immediate royal assistance, in all its forms. But despite being the over arching policy of state and Gould's religious objective, conversion was not the sole remit of the *missionnaire du roi*. His reports to the *intendant* and the dispatches from Fontainebleau and Versailles detail a role that was much more complex and centrally directed than that of a simple ecclesiastic bringing the Word of God to those born in error.

La Mission as a means of crown surveillance

In a revealing letter already referenced Maurepas wrote to the *intendant* Le Nain specifying that the merchant Julliot would only be released when he gave his 'soumission' to abbé Gould.⁵¹ The term goes a long way to expand our understanding of what the crown was trying to achieve. Imposing the established state religion upon the Protestant communities was more than merely bringing a religious truth to those deemed to be born in error. That, after all, was a function reserved for the Church. At the core of crown policy of conversion was the issue of loyalty and *soumission* to the established workings of society, and ultimately the state, embodied in the person of the regent. It was under the canopy of this much larger agenda that Gould carried out his work. In Gould's reports which detail his missionary tours, this overarching crown agenda is very much to the fore, permeating much of the content of what he writes and indeed framing the structure in which he was required to carry out his missionary function. Carrying out his missions on the express orders of the *secrétaire* of state, the *intendant* and *procureur général* of Poitou, reveals the real state dimension to Gould's function as the *Missionnaire du roi*, explicitly seen in Gould's report of May 1719. He wrote, 'Jay donc l'honneur de vous dire monsieur que suivant vos ordres et ceux de M. le procureur général nous

⁵¹ Maurepas to Le Nain, 6 Aug. 1732 (ANP, O/1 379, f. 138).

avons fait nos visites a Niort, St. Maixant, Cherueux St Christophe, Echire et Pamperou..’.⁵² This practice seemed to be quite common for Gould during the 1720s.⁵³ In April 1726 Maurepas addressed the *missionnaire*, ‘Voicy Monsieur, le temps de vos missions je ne doute pas que vous les fassiez avec le zele que vous [soutenez] depuis si longtems, ...’⁵⁴ indicating that the *secrétaire* was perhaps choosing the times of these missions, or at least giving the *missionnaire* the green light for a tour during Lent, that had been suggested by Gould. There is no doubt that the crown had a direct hand in how Gould carried out his function. Even in his reports Gould rarely uses the word ‘mission’, the word used to describe his visits is much more official, he refers to them as ‘*tournées*’, ‘tours of inspection’, with rather a more military tone, one senses.⁵⁵ Gould stated quite explicitly the principle function of his tours in one of his reports in March 1719, ‘A mon arrivée icy de ma dernière tournée en bas Poitou ma première attention a esté de vous rendre compte de tout ce qui s’est passé dans ces cantons la au sujet de mon voyage.’⁵⁶

A common thread woven throughout the fabric of these accounts was the assembly, the clandestine gathering of a large number of Huguenots for the purpose of communal worship. Descriptions of this illegal activity form much of the substance of the source material relating to Gould from the *maison du roi* and indeed to other ecclesiastics too such as the bishops of Luçon and Poitiers. As we saw earlier, the assembly provided one of the few means of worship for large numbers of Huguenots and thus provided a conduit for the propagation of their faith. Assessing the situation on the ground Gould reported that there was quite a disturbance regarding assemblies around Niort, Saint Maixant and Lusignan, and indicated that, ‘S.A.R [Son altesse Royale] a donné des ordres de faire marcher des troupes de ce costé la sil en est besoin, ainsi il faut esperer par vos soins, et par vos justes precautions que cela va finir incessamment,...’.⁵⁷ The assemblies were a great concern for the authorities, being flagrant displays of illegality and a means of allowing worship of an outlawed religion, thus strengthening and edifying the Protestant communities.

⁵² Gould to de la Tour, 10 Apr. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁵³ Gould to de la Tour, 8 May 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁵⁴ Maurepas to Gould, 2 Apr. 1727 (ANP, O/1 373 f167).

⁵⁵ Gould to de la Tour et Le procureur général, 2 May 1719, 21 Mar. 1719, 24 Mar. 1719, 22 May 1719 (ADV Poitiers, C58) 13 Aprl 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁵⁶ Gould to De la Tour, 7 Mar. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

The importance attributed to quelling such disorder meant that it would be incumbent upon all clergy in the region to notify the authorities of such activity in their regions. When one looks deeper at the content of his reports and letters one can discern an even greater crown pressure in the *missionnaire*'s work. One gets a taste of this in July of 1721. The arrival of a group of *religionnaires* from England in the parish of Moncoutant caused some disturbance and was reported by Gould to the authorities. Replying to this report ten days later on 28 July the *secrétaire* directed the *missionnaire* to report on all aspects of this party's make-up, names, profession, numbers and their activities since arrival.⁵⁸ As a missionary of the king, Gould was concerned with matters other than those relating to conversion and religious instruction. He was also expected to perform the function of a royal investigator and provide the administration with information on all issues relating to the legal framework around the religious question. In some cases Gould was asked to confirm information that was provided to the authorities by other means. In 1722 the *secrétaire* informed Gould of his suspicions of assemblies on the outskirts of Pousanges but as the *secrétaire* pointed out, 'les faits n'en sont pas encore assez circonstanciels pour y reporter les remebers convenables vous me ferez plaisir de vous en informer de votre coste afin de joindre ce que vous en apprendrez aux exclaircissemens que j'en auray d'ailleurs'.⁵⁹ Whether it was following up on a lead that had been given to the *secrétaire* or conducting surveillance on Huguenot activities, the level of state direction in Gould's work is quite apparent. The *missionnaire*'s function was manifold, and so too was its benefit to the crown. Through Gould's activities and tours of Poitou the crown was provided with a report on the constitution of the Huguenot communities, the *missionnaire* acted as a symbol of ubiquitous crown presence in the region and the enduring demand of religious orthodoxy, and the distance of the Huguenot communities from state requirements of conformity.

Measuring Catholic conformity and Protestant dissent

⁵⁸ Maurepas to Gould, 28 Jul. 1721 (ANP, O/1 369, ff 95-95).

⁵⁹ Maurepas to Gould, 14 Mar. 1722 (ANP, O/1 370, f. 27r).

The content of Gould's reports allows an insight into the complexity of religious dissent as understood by the administration. Ostensibly it may appear that it was a question of either being a Catholic or Protestant, but Gould's reports offer a picture that has more local colour. Between these two there existed a grey area with varying shades of religious orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The individuals that populate the *missionnaire's* correspondence and their religious vacillations are indications of this complexity, and how Gould, and by extension the administration, approached this often times amorphous problem.

On the lower end of this spectrum were those who proved to be the least problematic for the administration, the Huguenots who had decided to relinquish their Calvinist beliefs and embrace the Catholic faith and state conformity. Such groups were generally termed *nouveaux convertis* or *nouveaux catholiques*. Travelling through lower Poitou in March of 1725 Gould detailed one such individual, a lady of 'distinguished quality' Madame de la Forest Monpensier, a member of the nobility from the parish of Bressuire, who along with the rest of her family had benefited from the evangelical work of the *missionnaire du roi* some ten years previously. Gould was quite content to confirm that this family continued to display obedience to the established religion.⁶⁰ This contrasts with the suspicion cast upon the seneschal de la Doipe in the parish of Mouchamp who was much closer to this grey area on the religious spectrum. The seneschals were the king's representatives in the local administrative districts known in the south as *sénéchaussée*. Despite presenting themselves as *bons catholiques* for a number of years doubt was cast upon their sincerity to the established faith. De la Doipe had been removed from his charge as he no longer attended mass or received the sacraments. Further concern was aroused at the arrival of his son, who no longer fulfilled his religious duties since returning from his studies in Poitiers.⁶¹ All indicated to Gould and the authorities that the de la Doipes were not as attached to their new faith as the state would have them. One reaction to this was to place the eldest daughter of de la Doipe in a convent. A month later, in May, Gould wrote to the intendant, 'ce que vous avez fait a legard{sic} de la fille cadette du s. de la doipe en la

⁶⁰ Gould to De la Tour, [] Jul. 1727 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁶¹ Ibid.

mettant a l'union chrestienne de fontenay ceci produire un tres bon effet.'⁶² Simply converting to the established religion was not sufficient to remove one from the scrutiny of the Church and crown. Loyalty to the state was measured through one's loyalty to the established religion, expressed through outward displays of Catholicism. This could be measured through one's attendance at mass and receipt of the sacraments, participation in which served to indicate the state of one's faith. The need to carry out surveillance on these people was justified by the behaviour of families such as de la Doipe, it explains the lingering suspicion of the authorities and their need to monitor those who had long since converted such as the Montpensiers in order to ensure they maintained their new beliefs.

Writing to the *secrétaire* a year previously Gould detailed another reason why the crown was required to supervise constantly the new converts. Gould mentioned a new convert named Perinne Talebot who had benefited from the *missionnaire's* instruction and deemed to be in 'peril par l'opiniatrete de sa mere',⁶³ that is, she risked being pulled back into the 'errors' of Calvinism by someone who had not given up their heretical beliefs as easily as she did, in this case her mother. Described as *opiniâtre* or obdurate, she represented those who were positioned at the extreme end of the spectrum, furthest from established notions of religious conformity. Like Madame de Vêrac they resisted all attempts at conversion and oftentimes, as was the case with Talebot, actively vitiated the pursuit of religious unity by convincing, or as the crown termed it, corrupting others, usually family members. In the discourse of the crown and established church such people were said to have *perverti* or corrupted the new converts, a word used to describe the actions of the Huguenot pastors and *prédicants* as well as the *opiniâtres*. Interestingly many of those accused of such obduracy were widows, immovable in their beliefs and, according to the crown sources, unwilling to allow their children to deviate from their reformed faith. One example of such behaviour was displayed by a widow Madame de la Mainsaye in the parish of Pousange. In May 1719, during a visit to the parish, Gould advised the *intendant* of the need for urgent attention to be given to this lady due to her religious intransigence.⁶⁴ At one stage she was interned by royal order in the convent at Saint Jean de Thouars and placed under Gould's instruction where 'elle me paroisoit dabord bien intentionnée

⁶² Gould to De la Tour, 8 May 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁶³ Maurepas to Gould, 28 Mar. 1724 (ANP, O/1 371 f 161).

⁶⁴ Gould to De la Tour, 22 May 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

pour sa conversion..’.⁶⁵ With death of Louis XIV she quit the convent, after which she continued to aggravate matters through her persistent *opiniâtreté*, and even more through her active ‘corruption’ of her daughter who as Gould pointed out, ‘avoit été pendant longtems bonne Catholique’.⁶⁶

Madame de Mainsaye was not the only troublesome individual in the parish of Pousange. It was home to a sizable population of *religionnaires* who refused to obey the crown declarations that obliged them to conform to Catholic practices and beliefs, attend mass and send their children to schools for religious instruction in the established faith.⁶⁷ Theoretically the king’s writ extended all over France, but given the bureaucratic system and the differing customs of the localities, royal writ oftentimes became less potent the further one travelled from Versailles. It could be further diluted if the behaviour of those charged with its implementation was at variance with the policy of the state, its successful application depending on the co-operation of the seneschals and particularly those charged with the management of the regions spiritual affairs, the local clergy. In the parish of Pousange such co-operation was not forthcoming. Indeed, the activities of the local priest named Marboeuf necessitated the sending of two officials by the Bishop de Vertrieu of Poitiers, to investigate claims that he was presiding over Huguenot funerals. In his report Gould was able to confirm that not only did Marboeuf drink with the Huguenots he also allowed one of the most obstinate of the community, Mr de la Mainsaye, late husband to that problematic Madame de Mainsaye, to be buried, it seems, in Catholic ground. His actions scandalised the local Catholics in his parish.⁶⁸ Marboeuf had committed both a religious as well as a secular offence, and his activities in Pousange were not an isolated case. Gould provided his superiors with information regarding other problematic clerics, including a ‘disgraceful friar’ in the area of Saint Fulgent.⁶⁹ This friar, a member of the Dominican order, had been blessing Huguenot marriages. Fortunately, for the authorities, he was no longer in the kingdom, but this individual was one amongst many who engaged in this activity. Huguenots wishing to marry went to La Rochelle to avail of ‘*malheureux prestres*’ who presided over these illegal unions for

⁶⁵ Gould to Le procureur général, 13 Apr. 1724 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., ‘nous avons séjournés a Pousanges ou les religionnaires sont en très grande nombre, aucun ne se soumet a la déclaration du roy’.

⁶⁸ Thomas Gould to Monsieur de la Tour, 8 May 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁶⁹ Gould to Le procureur général, 13 Apr. 1724 (ADV, Poitiers, C59), ‘cet indigne Jacobin n’est plus dans le pays dieu mercy.’

monetary gain, a practice that has parallels with the so-called 'couple' friars in Ireland, and one that most likely had more to do with their financial straits rather than their religious insincerity.

This service was also provide by notaries, but in the absence of both a notary and a needy clergy man, Gould detailed how the Huguenots in his region married by a process which they themselves termed '*adouage*', a process by which their union was made sacred and sanctioned by the presence of family members or friends.⁷⁰ In period when the only sanctioned marriage was that made before the Catholic Church, illegal unions could be problematic. Marrying by *adouage* not only brought the Huguenots into disrepute with the law but also with the moral teachings of the Catholic Church and thus the state as a whole. Illegally married couples were technically cohabitating, rendering them objects of scorn and earning them the opprobrium of the moral guardians of the state. Calvinists did not see marriage as a sacrament, but, nevertheless, they placed great importance on the proper establishment of and respect for the married state. The use of the notaries may suggest that they wished to have some semblance of legality before the state and their own conscience. *Adouage* was an effort to maintain some semblance of matrimonial decorum without either relinquishing their faith or attracting the state's attention.

The problems with such individuals and practices were clear: the conversion of the Huguenots and their successful reintegration into the Catholic state could not be achieved without the support and co-operation of all levels of the clergy, local worthies and administrators, and government officials. Achieving such a comprehensive and broad level of support was ambitious and, one could argue, quite impossible. This was due to a number of very practical reasons, notably the lack of sufficient human and material resources. On closer scrutiny the difficulties and problematic individuals that pepper Gould's reports and the state's inability to deal with them effectively did not solely rest upon a condition of finite resources. The problems were reflective of a certain amount of hubris and ambition on the part of the administration in what it hoped to achieve. The majority of the king's Catholic subjects, including the clergy, did display a certain abhorrence towards heresy and may have agreed with the policy behind the law, yet the local customs, demographic makeup of their localities and

⁷⁰ Ibid.

relationships within the local community sometimes made it impossible to implement them. There was also the larger problem, the lack of actual physical means of coercing the Huguenots when necessary to adhere to the law. The success of the policy owed much to the ability of the local curate or official (almost always drawn from the area) to reconcile the practical issues in his locality with the legal stipulations of the law. In the parish of Moncoutant, home to a large number of Huguenots who were in possession of firearms, and from where Gould reported that during his visit neither his nor the local parish priest's safety was assured,⁷¹ a successful implementation of royal writ regarding religious conformity was virtually impossible. The use of troops could have enforced obedience, but there is little sincerity in an action that has been forced especially through the use of violence.

The activities of those '*malheureux prestres*' or renegade priests, who offered their matrimonial services to Huguenots is in need of deeper scrutiny. As mentioned earlier, most of the lower clergy were drawn from the locality and came from less elevated backgrounds than their bishops, so social status cannot be overlooked when considering how Gould referred to such clergy and how they were treated by their own bishops. The state obviously tried to address these problems usually by removing the offending individual, but such cases point to another obstacle on the road to confessional unity, that of religious co-existence. The case of Marboeuf is an obvious example, where it was a question of presiding over religious ceremonies that were sacred for both religious communities. The legal frameworks that were in place forbade such co-existence by closing certain professions to the Huguenots, outlawing exogamy and forbidding communal burials. Catholics may not have agreed with how their co-religionists worshipped Jesus, but in many of these confessionally mixed communities religious differences were overlooked if both groups had to endure common hardships together, such as harsh winters and poor harvests. It was these facts that could forge bonds of communion stronger than those that tied them to Versailles. It was the crown's job to break such ties, but it was no easy task. This is evident when looking at those links that tied the Huguenots to each other.

⁷¹ Gould to Le procureur général, 13 Apr. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

The existence of large Huguenot communities in areas made it extremely difficult for the authorities to gain durable converts to Catholicism. Familial, conjugal and social bonds could be just as powerful and influential in preventing and recovering those who had or might wish to sever their religious ties to the community. Compare the two examples given earlier of both Madame de la Forest de Monpensier and the family of Mr de la Doipe. The Monpensiers of Bressuire had maintained their new faith for almost twelve years after Gould instructed them, whereas the son of the seneschal de la Doipe of Mouchamps relapsed once he returned home. The *missionnaire* also mentioned that ‘il n’y a plus, par la grâce de dieu aucun protestant dans Bressuire.’⁷² Contrasting this with Mouchamps, home to a number of Huguenots where the wishes of the king might not be so assiduously obeyed. Without bringing Gould’s conversion abilities into question, one must ask whether the conversion of Monpensier would have endured if there existed a larger Huguenot community in Bressuire. Consideration must be given to the influence other Huguenots had on those who had newly converted. It was certainly a matter of concern to the authorities, as the examples referenced highlight. Their struggle was not just against the Huguenot religion as such but rather the whole Huguenot community, one that, although rigidly defined by religion, placed importance on other marks of identity, such as class and family. This intricate web of problems and the many obstacles that frustrated the move towards religious unanimity are revealed when getting to the substance of the *missionnaire*’s task. Indeed this was only one aspect of *missionnaire*’s role, that of identifying such barriers and problems

Conclusion

Organising our examining of Gould’s activities around the nature and functions of his titles as royal missionary has allowed us to get to grips with his activities in Poitou. The Church missions differed somewhat from that of Gould’s, yet both had the same goal in mind, the re-conquest of souls lost to heresy and the edification of the Catholic congregations. In the *missionnaire*’s tours this aim was just one of many. Although religious in outlook Gould’s tours were used by the crown as a religious vehicle to investigate issues concerning loyalty to the state. By the 1730s the Church was

⁷² Gould to le procureur général, 13 Aprl. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

one arm of the body politic, but at the head were the king and his ministers. The Church remained an integral part in society; ecclesiastics were always in the employ of the crown.⁷³ In Poitou Gould was considered one of the most able in the work of conversion, an extremely wearisome process in many cases, as we have seen. He was also required to ensure that others were making efforts to meet their obligations to the state, in the form of Catholic conformity. Gould carried out surveillance on the Huguenot communities, gathered information and passed it on to his superiors. His activities allowed the crown to measure and attempt to bridge the gap that existed between conformity and those who stood outside the state's religious framework.

The versatility of his work set him apart from conventional ecclesiastics of the period. Carrying out these numerous functions Gould embodied not just the agendas of both the institutions of the state and Church, but the marrying of these agendas and the position of the ecclesiastic in relation to the king. Whether this is the view that was taken of his role earlier in his career is subject to debate. It seems that the title of *missionnaire du roi* was bestowed on him initially as an honorific title, due to his ability rather than any specific need to fill voids left empty by incompetent clergy. His published work outlines how he carried out his task on the orders of the bishops of Luçon, and Poitiers,⁷⁴ although the evidence highlights it was the crown who dictated policy when it came to his work.

Another string to this bow was the use of instruction manuals, religious texts that were used during conversion. In the latter part of his career Gould published numerous texts of this nature and disseminated them amongst those he converted. It is only in his published works that Gould is referred to under his unique title of *missionnaire du roi*, in works like his *Traité du saint Sacrifice de la messe*.⁷⁵ As we shall see, in the following chapter, his *Traité* as well as his *Entretiens* were texts that represented the culmination of Gould's work, expressed in published format. Perhaps that is why one only sees the title of *missionnaire du roi* used in these, his later published works. Its use in Gould's published works illustrates how Gould and his activity had come to be viewed at a later stage in his

⁷³ John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France. Volume 1: The Clerical Establishment and its Social Ramifications* (Oxford, 1999), p. 57.

⁷⁴ Thomas Gould, *Traité du saint sacrifice de la messe, avec l'explication des cérémonies qui s'y observent et la manière d'y assister dévotement, selon l'esprit de la primitive Eglise. Adressé à une dame de qualité nouvellement convertie* [par l'abbé Th. Goulde], (Paris, 1724).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, avertissement.

career. He may have been given the title much earlier in his career but it was only in the 1720s that he could truly be described as a king's missionary.

et certainement leur nombre seroit continuelle-
ment
plus grand sans les soins continuels que
vous nous donnez pour la faire croître
comme ie le mande en cour, ie ne perdroy
jamais la moindre occasion de vous faire
connoître, Monsieur mon très illustre
protecteur, que j'ay l'honneur d'être plus
qu'homme du monde avec la plus vive
reconnoissance, et avec le plus profond respect

Monsieur,

Vostre très humble & très
humble & très obéissant
serviteur
à honneur le 28 juillet
1724

Abbe Gould

Plate 1. Gould to de la Tour, 28 Jul. 1724 (ADV Poitiers, C59). Image of Gould's report to the *intendant* 28 July 1724 in which the *missionnaire* describes de la Tour as his 'illustre protecteur', Gould's signature is clearly visible at the end of the letter.

1775
13 April

Monsieur

Comme mon indisposition continue Il m'est
impossible d'avoir l'honneur de vous écrire de
ma propre main ainsi je suis obligé de me servir
de celle de mon Compagnon, pour vous marquer
Monsieur ma parfaite Joie de votre heureuse
arrivée de votre voyage, en parfaite Santé
personne au monde ne s'y intéresse plus que
moy. Je prens la liberté Monsieur de vous
envoyer Copie de la lettre que j'écris aujourdy
à M. Le procureur general elle vous mettra au
fait de ce que nous avons remarqué dans notre
tournee en Bas-poitou au sujet des Religi.
et nouveaux Convertis de ce pays la.

Plate 2. Gould to de la Tour, 13 Apr. 1725 (ADV Poitiers, C59). Image of a report dictated by Gould to the *intendant*. The frequency of Gould's missions seemed to have had a detrimental effect upon his constitution, resulting in him relying upon the hand of his assistant, an individual named Missé, to write his reports.

Chapter 4: The Missionnaire du Roi and the religious book

In the decades of self reassertion following the wars of religion, the Catholic Church in France underwent a considerable spiritual transformation, a subject that has been touched upon in the previous chapters. This renewed religiosity stimulated the appearance of a new spiritual and theological literature. Many of the early French reformers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were influenced by external developments especially in Spain and Italy, where the literary output of religious reformers, steeped in the spirit of Trent, functioned to communicate this new religiosity to those thirsty for spiritual renewal in France. According to the literature, this renewal developed along essentially emotional lines on the basis of 'hierarchically ordered didactic literature composed of 'saints' lives, catechisms, meditations, and spiritual exercises of all types.'¹ The book was a central element in this renewal, the result of a long established practice of maintaining and refuting various theologies through the media of the printed word, and one that emerged in the formative years of Europe's Reformation. There is little doubt that the printed word was one of the great forces for religious change in sixteenth-century Europe, and, as this chapter will demonstrate, it enjoyed a continued role as the central catalyst for religious change well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The explosive potential of this medium, matched with an agenda for religious and political change, not only contributed to the religious fracturing of Europe in the sixteenth century, but also to how theologians as well as religious commentators constructed their religious texts over a century and a half later. The schismatic Protestant religions became religions of the book, and this is not only true in the sense that adherents to the new faiths placed a profound emphasis upon the written word of the Gospel, but also because of the skilful manipulation of the printed word by the early founders of those new theologies, such as Luther and later Calvin. The great success and indeed genius of a man such as Luther was his recognition of the power of the printed word to carry his message *en masse* and

¹ Henri Jean Martin, *The French Book; Religion, Absolutism, and Readership, 1585-1715*. Trans, Paul Saenger and Nadine Saenger (London, 1996), p. 19.

articulate his interpretation of the Gospel.² The printed word was intrinsic to the spread of Protestantism, but it would also be essential to the agenda of the old Church in its fight against this new theology right up to the eighteenth century. Essentially what is of significance to this discussion is the effect that this polemical tool had in shaping and developing the guidelines governing how theologians, intellectuals and especially the ruling elites developed and communicated their religious policies and ideas. The religious texts of Gould, whose analysis form the basis of this chapter, were works written by the *Missionnaire du roi* in order to push a very specific religious and political agenda. As will be demonstrated, they were both polemical and instructive texts that defended the traditional dogma and practices of the Catholic Church and served as manuals that elaborated on Roman Catholic doctrine using a technique that targeted potential new converts among the Huguenot communities whose conversions was Gould's particular priority.

The religious conversion methods, which used the book as the fundamental medium, had been well developed by the time Gould put his thoughts to paper. From 1705 right up to 1734 the *missionnaire* saw continued publication of his works. The religiously apologetical dimension of the book had originated in the early sixteenth century when the printed word emerged as a weapon in the search for religious truth and the winning of converts. This led to the establishment of large printing and publishing centres throughout Europe. This was especially true in Germany. In the ten years following 1517, Wittenberg was transformed from a mere printing outpost in the publishing world to one of the pillars of the German print industry.³ The shift of focus in terms of audience, as the religious debate began to engage a largely non-clerical audience resulted in an increased demand for books and printed material. Other relatively insignificant centres underwent similar transformations due to such demand and also the desire to make a profit on what was a rapidly expanding market. By the conclusion of the sixteenth century there were twenty two significant printing centres in Germany, eight in Italy and five in France of which Paris and Lyon represented 75% of the published material.⁴ Unsurprisingly most of the content from these printing centres was theological and spiritual in nature.

² Andrew Pettegree and Matthew Hall, 'The reformation and the book; a reconsideration', in *The Historical Journal*, vol 47, No. 4 (Dec, 2004), pp 785-808 at p.785.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 788.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 794.

In France large printing centres such as Paris were unsurprisingly obedient to the wishes of the established Catholic Church. The initial campaign against Luther was championed by doctors of the Sorbonne, from which the Dominican and Doctor of Theology Pierre Doré emerged as one of the most popular religious writers in France. Doré enjoyed the support of many major publishing houses in Paris and can be placed ahead of Luther in the popularity of religious writers published in France during the period.⁵ There was a very good reason for publishing houses not to displease the Church. After all it was the established religious institution that provided not only the texts but the clientele to purchase them.⁶ The French authorities were quick to take control of the printing press during the early years of upheaval in central Europe. When Protestantism truly began to expand rapidly during the 1560s there already existed well developed and robust publishing centres in France that were tightly controlled and intrinsically Catholic intellectually. This was particularly true of Paris. The result of this was that the Reform movement would never have the same coherency in France in terms of publication as it did in Germany, the site of a truly unbridled production of polemical religious texts.

Only once in the sixteenth century, during the period 1560-1565 did French Protestants out publish their Catholic opponents,⁷ such was the tight grip the established institutions had on the printing centres in France. Much of the reformed movement's discourse came from centres such as Geneva and Lyon. Paris had always had a strong obedience to Catholicism regarding the work and texts that were published there. The theological base of the Sorbonne doctors, and also the effective use of its printing powerhouses by the Catholic League during the later wars of religion resulted in a city that would act as a publishing bulwark against religious heterodoxy. Thus Paris constituted a centre that would assure the position of the Catholic Church and maintain its intellectual superiority in the struggle against Protestantism. During the early years of the seventeenth century the book trade in France experienced a brilliant renewal, with numbers of books growing 'unrelentingly'.⁸ Two groups of writers emerged, the *respublica literaria* a group who congregated around the Place Royale in Paris

⁵ Ibid., p. 802.

⁶ Henri Jean Martin, *The French Book*, p. 19.

⁷ Andrew Petegree and Matthew Hall, *The reformation and the book*, p. 804.

⁸ Henri Jean Martin, *The French Book*, p. 56.

and kept their distance from politics, individuals who were highly respected but independent minded. And on the other hand and of importance here were the *Ecrivains*, writers who provided some of the chief panegyrists for the administration. The *Ecrivains* were made up of individuals who placed perfection of form above creativity, a style that was conducive to their positions in the service of important personages for whom they composed letters and political statements.⁹ The *Ecrivains* were essentially hired pens ready to take up the cause of the establishment, the pliancy of their literary style soon found favour with the administration who considered them to be more malleable than the traditional *hommes des lettres* and therefore most apt to perform the role of ‘unconditional panegyrist’.

¹⁰ In the 1630s Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) gathered some of these leading *Ecrivains*, carefully selected from the circles of the leading patrons into an ‘*Académie*’, which would soon develop into *l’Académie Française*, established in 1635.¹¹ The purpose of the *Académie* was to ‘to provide the Augustan age that France enjoyed thanks to the Cardinal with a language that had the universality and durability of Ciceronian Latin.’¹² The pursuit of the classical ideal formed part of that ideology retrospectively termed absolutism; institutions such as *L’Académie Française* helped promote this image as well as the book itself. In 1691 *Les Livres de Cicéron de la Vieillesse et de l’Amitié*, by the greatest orator of the classical world Marcus Tullius Cicero was published, three years later in 1694 the first edition of *Le Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* was published and dedicated to the greatness of the Sun King.¹³ Both works were published by Jean Baptiste Coignard, *imprimeur du roi* a title that was given to those who were rewarded with the very lucrative position of state publisher. Every French edition of Gould’s work between 1705 and 1745 was published under Coignard, for whom better to publish the work of the *Missionnaire du Roi* than the *Imprimeur du Roi*.

The Coignards were a Parisian family of librarians and printers who operated out of the rue Saint Jacques in Paris, the great commercial street that straddled the Sorbonne and around which many great printers, publishers and other tradesmen involved in the book industry gathered. Jean

⁹ Ibid., p. 44

¹⁰ Ibid., pp 44-45.

¹¹ Ibid., pp 44-45.

¹² Ibid., pp 44-45.

¹³ Marcus Tullius Cicero *Les Livres de Cicéron de la Vieillesse et de l’Amitié, avec les Paradoxes du même auteur*, traduits en français sur l’édition latine de Graevius, avec des notes... par l’auteur de la traduction des Offices (Philippe Goibaud-Dubois), (Paris, 1691). Chez J.-B. Coignard et J.-B. Coignard fils, et *Le dictionnaire de l’Académie française* (Paris, 1694).

Baptiste I (1637-1686) was appointed *imprimeur du Roi* in 1678 and *imprimeur de l'Académie Française* in 1678, two both very prestigious positions. Upon his death his son Elie Jean Baptiste II Coignard, (1667-1735) assumed the role as head of the publishing business, he would acquire the position of *imprimeur du Roi* held by his father in 1690 and 'tient un rang des plus honorables dans l'histoire de la librairie parisienne.'¹⁴ Works from the arts and sciences were not the only genres to come off the Coignard presses; they also published a considerable amount of historical, ancient and theological texts. Texts such as *Les Offices de Cicéron* by Cicero, *Le Livre de Saint Augustin de l'esprit et de la lettre*, by Augustine, and *L'imitation de Jesus Christ* by Macé were published by Coignard in the Rue de Saint Jacques. As well as publishing the first editions of the *Dictionnaire de L'académie*, they also produced *Histoire de L'Académie Française* by Paul Pellisson Fontanier, published in 1700. The bibliographical list of works published by Coignard provides one with an example of what exactly the administration wanted from its *Imprimeur du Roi*, especially in what it deemed to be appropriate contributions to the faculties of art, science, history and of course religion. What is of most significance here, but hardly surprising, is that the literary works of the *Missionnaire du Roi* would be published by the *Imprimeur du Roi*, as both publisher and published fulfilled a function that served the agenda of the state. Our *missionnaire* produced works that were used in the pursuit of religious uniformity and the *Imprimeur* acted as a conduit for its dissemination. The fact that all of Gould's works published between 1705 and 1740 were published under Coignard is indicative of the importance that was placed on them by the administration. It also reveals much about Gould before one even opens the cover, namely that Thomas Gould as *Missionnaire du Roi* was a man of the establishment.

Publication and distribution

The first of Gould's works to be published was his *Lettre d'un missionnaire à un gentilhomme du bas Poitou touchant la véritable croyance de l'Eglise Catholique contre les dogmes*

¹⁴ Paul Delalain, *Les libraires et imprimeurs de l'Académie française de 1634 à 1793 : notices biographiques* (Paris, 1907), p. 50.

qui luy sont faussement imputez dans les Escrits des Ministres, published chez Coignard in 1705. The work is essentially a polemical tract in which the author defends himself against charges of heresy and criticises the superstitious beliefs of certain Huguenot preachers. This work was revised and republished in 1709 and entitled *La Véritable Croyance de l'Eglise Catholique et les preuves de tous les points de sa doctrine, fondées sur l'écriture sainte*. *La Véritable Croyance* went into a third edition in 1717 and was reissued in 1720. To the 1720 edition was appended a new text entitled *Les Preuves de la Doctrine de l'Eglise, fondées sur l'Ecriture sainte. Pour servir de response à un libelle intitulé, Antidote, contre la lettre d'un missionnaire touchant la croyance de l'Eglise Romaine*. If one includes its appearance in *Lettre d'un missionnaire*, *La Véritable Croyance* went into seven editions, 1705, 1709, 1713, 1717, 1720, 1726 and the final posthumous edition in 1745.

Using online collective catalogue websites such as Worldcat and Gallica, *Catalogue Collectif de France* and The European Library, one can gain some sense of the distribution of his works in global repositories. One of the drawbacks to these resources is, of course, that not every digitised catalogue is linked to these sites. In fact there may well be a much greater number of Gould's works in smaller, parochial and provincial collections, particularly in France, collections that have yet to be digitised. Another limitation of these resources is that not all of them list every available copy of a particular work or edition from digitised repositories linked to their websites, WorldCat being a case in point. Despite being linked to the digitised repository for the Russell Library Maynooth, WorldCat fails to give results for the 1720 edition of *La Véritable Croyance*, which is indeed contained in the Russell library and listed in their online catalogue, which is accessible through their website.¹⁵ Similar limitations attend use of the most complete bibliographical list of Gould's work, found at *Catalogue Collectif de France/CCFr*.¹⁶ This bibliographic research tool combines the three main digitised catalogue collections in France: the Catalogue of Digitized Municipal Library Collections (*Catalogue des Fonds des Bibliothèques Municipales Rétroconvertis/BMR*); BnF catalogue général and the University Documentation Catalogue (*Catalogue du Système Universitaire de*

¹⁵ The catalogued records for this edition available in the Russell Library Maynooth can be accessed at: http://lb-srv-2qj.nuim.ie/F/3CB8G2DSQS2NLNCUGYHLDGH1NYRS7F1UU7N66NLOQG153PL73E-21476?func=full-set-set&set_number=004959&set_entry=000001&format=999

¹⁶ <http://ccfr.bnf.fr/portailccfr/servlet/LoginServlet>

Documentation/Sudoc). The results from the CCdEF provide only a partial representation of the distribution of Gould's works available in repositories throughout France, and it is not without its faults. The CCdEF provides just one result for Gould's 1735 edition of *Recueils des objections*, that being the copy contained in the Bibliotheque Abbé Grégoire at Blois, yet there is also a copy of the same edition in the Bibliotheque Municipale de Poitiers, a catalogue that is included in the CCdEF from which one gets results for many other works by Gould. Despite these drawbacks the CCdEF provides the most extensive list of works and their availability in libraries in France. The results from this list are presented in Table one. Taken from the catalogues of 21 repositories throughout France the results indicate 25 available copies of *La Véritable Croyance*. Listed are five copies of the original edition *Lettre d'un Missionnaire*, four of the last edition of 1745, the best represented in the libraries catalogued is the 1726 edition of the work. From the other online collective catalogues such as WorldCat and the European Library one can get a sense of the international penetration of his works. In the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Germany one finds the 1713 publication of this work. As mentioned the 1720 edition is available at the Russell library in Maynooth, this edition is also found in the Biblioteca Nacional Madrid in Spain. The 1726 edition of the work which is the best represented in France can be found in the libraries at King's College, Halifax in Canada and in the Université de Montréal, Canada, as well as the Woodstock Theological Center in Washington DC. In Europe, apart from France, the Bibliothèque Cantonale et Universitaire, Lausanne Switzerland holds a copy of this edition. Gould also survives in translation in editions published between 1725 and 1733. *Der wahrhafte Glaube der Catholischen Kirche, und die Beweisthümer ihrer Lehre, wider die Lehre, welche ihr in den Schrifthen ihrer Gegner zugemissen wird,*¹⁷ translated by Francisco Nonhardt and published in Prague in 1725 by Wolfgang Wickart, is a German translation of *La Véritable Croyance*. This title is available at Universitat Tübingen Germany, and also in the Danish National

¹⁷ There are two copies of this or at least two different ones cited *Probier-Stein, In welchem Die alte wahre Christlich-Catholische Kirche/ mit denen neuen Reformirten aufgeleget : Und Die Wahrheit von dem Anstrich der Falschheit unterschieden wird* Von P. FRANCISCO NONHARDT, der societät. Jesu Priestern, published in Prague in 1725, which gives Nonhardt as the author, it also indicates that he was a member of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit link being of most significance. The other title that is found in Czech library catalogues gives Gould as the author, *Probier-Stein, In welchem Die alte wahre Christlich-Katholische Kirche mit denen neuen Reformirten aufgeleget, Und Die Wahrheit von dem Anstrich der falschheit unterschieden wird. Erstens: Von dem Hochwürdisen Herren Gould, Abben, Schatz-Meistern, und Regenten des Capitels Unser Lieben frauen von Thoüars, in frantzösischer Sprache verfasst. Nun aber... in das Teutsche übersetzt und mit mehrerem erklärt.* also published in Prague 1725 by Wickart

Library in Copenhagen. It appears that Francisco Nonhardt also translated another work bearing Gould's name, the work entitled *Probier-Stein, in welchem die alte wahre christlich-catholische Kirche, mit denen neuen Reformirten aufgeleget und die Wahrheit von dem Anstrich der Falschheit unterschieden wird*. This also appeared in 1725 translated by Nonhardt and was published in Prague by Wolfgang Wickart (d.1726) the official printer for the archiepiscopal see in Prague active between 1700 and 1726.¹⁸ This title seems to be a translation of Gould *Lettre d'un Missionnaire à un Gentilhomme au bas Poitou*, published in 1705. The copy contained in the Royal library of Denmark in Copenhagen entitled *der Catholish Glaube* contains both *Der wahrhafte Glaube* and *Probier Stein*. *La Véritable Croyance* was also translated into Italian and published in Venice, in 1733, by Francesco Pitteri, also a prolific author, under the title, *La Dottrina de la chiesa Cattolica spiegata per via di Dialogo e Sostenuta coll' autorità della divina Scrittura contro la falsa Dottrina de' Protestanti. Opera del Signor abata Gould già Stampata in Parigi d'ordine del Re ad istruzione de' nuovi Convertiti, ed ora in Italiano tradotta*. A copy of this Italian translation can be found in the Scottish National Library, and also in the Research Library Olomouc in the Czech Republic. The latter library also houses copies of the two German works cited above.¹⁹ The reasons why this work went into so many editions and two translations may lie in the fact that it was extremely popular; another is that Gould did not publish a second work until 1724, nineteen years after *Lettre d'un Missionnaire* appeared.

The translations of *La Véritable Croyance* give unexpected geographical range to Gould's work throughout Europe, and one wonders why they crossed over into Italian and German. One explanation is the market forces of supply and demand. These works came into the hands of foreign readers who deemed them valuable tools for their domestic missionary activities and set about producing a translation. Perhaps this is to give Gould's work too high a significance within the context of the eighteenth-century international book market and wider European readership. An argument that holds more weight however is that it was most likely through Gould's established contacts in France that this work was disseminated further afield. We know that in June 1727 200 copies of Gould's *La Véritable Croyance* as well as his other works were ordered to be shipped to the

¹⁸ Madeliene Orioux, *Repertoire d'imprimeurs/Libraires XVIIe –XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1991), p. 233.

¹⁹ The digitised catalogue for the Research library at Olomouc can be accessed through their website: <http://www.vkol.cz/>

‘Jésuites de Canada’²⁰, and one can most assuredly say that it was the recent edition of this work, the 1726 edition that was shipped off to the colonies. And indeed it is this edition that appears in King’s College Halifax and the Université de Montréal, Canada. The link between the Jesuits in Canada and the *Missionnaire* was perhaps not fortuitous; it was a one that may have been nurtured through Gould’s sojourn in the Irish Jesuit College in Poitiers. Another reason for this contact may well have been through Gould’s relationship with Maurepas the *Secrétaire du Maison du Roi* who was also the *Secrétaire d’État à la Marine* which oversaw the running of the French Colonies, such as Canada. The Jesuit link is more credible and further reinforced when one considers that the German translator of Gould’s works, Franciscus Nonhardt was himself a Jesuit and also an author widely published in German, Czech and Latin.²¹ The place of publication is also of significance. The area around Prague experienced a shift from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism during the seventeenth century, which may explain the translation of Gould’s work into German. There are other possible links, from the early seventeenth century there existed an Irish community in Prague. In 1629 the Irish Franciscans established a college dedicated to the Immaculate Conception at Saint Ambrose in Prague’s New Town.²² Yet as the city was being re-Catholicised in the mid-seventeenth century, there existed divisions as to how it should be accomplished. The Franciscans tended to side with the archbishop of Prague, Arnost Cardinal Harrach (1598-1667) who was anxious to enforce his episcopal authority in the newly re-conquered city. For some, particularly the Jesuits in Prague, the orders such as the Franciscans offered an institutionalised form of opposition to the Society of Jesus who were much more favourably disposed to the increased involvement of the Habsburg state in the process of re-Catholicisation.²³ The Franciscans were active in schools and threatened to dilute the Jesuit influence and hence the imperial influence in places such as universities. There was another factor as to why the Franciscans, particularly the Irish Franciscans were viewed with distrust. It was their perceived

²⁰ Maurepas to Coignard, 20 Jun. 1727 (A.N.P., O/1 375, f. 277).

²¹ *Consolatrix afflictorum refugium peccatorum, Die Trösterin der Betrübten u. Zuflucht der Sünder, Das ist: Die Mutter Maria ... verehret, als die Kathol. Gemeine auss Dressden das erstemal das Gnaden-Bild Maria zu Schweina in Böhmen besucht ... auch gehaltener Lobrede von Franciscus Nonhardt ihre Andacht angefangen hat*, (Prague, 1725).

Gespräch im Reich der Lebendigen, zwischen dem letztthin jämmerlich ermordeten evangelischen geistlichen M. Herm. Joachim Hahn und dem bekannten Jesuiten, Pater Nonhardt (Franckfurt, 1726).

²² Jan Parez ‘The Irish Franciscans in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Prague’, in Thomas O’Connor and Mary Ann Lyons (eds.), *Irish Migrants in Europe after Kinsale, 1602-1820* (Dublin, 2003), p. 104.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

potential of bringing in Jansenism, from places such as Louvain with which the Franciscans in Prague were associated.²⁴ Given Nonhardt's Jesuit background it appears likely that it was a Jesuit link rather than an Irish one that helped Gould's work cross over into German. The Italian edition is not as straightforward. Protestantism was never a great force in Italy, the heart of the Roman Inquisition and the Counter-Reformation. The exceptions were those Protestant communities that appeared in the north, in the Alpine valleys close to the border with Switzerland, communities that could be supplied with pastors and support from neighbouring Geneva. One reason as to why the Protestant reformation lacked the same coherency or strength in Italy as it did in Germany or even in France was due to a lack of vernacular Bibles.²⁵ One aim of the 1564 Tridentine Index of books was to keep vernacular Bibles away from the laity. Pope Paul V summed up the Church's opinion when he chastised a Venetian ambassador in 1606, 'Do you not know that so much reading of Scripture ruins the Catholic Religion?'.²⁶ The idea was that with no Bibles to sustain evangelical belief, heresy would soon decline. Indeed, partly thanks to strict censorship and the operations of the Italian Inquisition, by 1600 there were few Protestants in Italy. However in the independent city state of Venice there was a much stronger Protestant movement, due to Venetian pan-European commercial interests. Even after the council of Trent had moved to exclude heretics, the University of Padua continued to attract Protestants from as far away as England.²⁷ These conditions did not nurture a Protestant community but they helped create an atmosphere that was slightly less intolerant of religious difference than other parts of the Italian peninsula.

Gould followed up his *La Véritable Croyance* with the *Traité du Saint Sacrifice de la Messe, avec l'explication des Cérémonies qui s'y observent, et la manière d'y assister dévotement, selon l'esprit de la primitive Eglise. Adressé à une Dame de Qualité nouvellement convertie*. Published in 1724 with the help of a government subvention,²⁸ this work was a text concerned primarily with the Eucharist, and aimed, as the title suggests, at Protestant communities. The *Traité du Saint Sacrifice*

²⁴ Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia: Force and persuasion in the Catholic Reformation* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 99.

²⁵ Diarmad MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House divided 1490-1700* (London, 2003), p. 406.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 408-409.

²⁸ Thomas Gould, *Entretien ou l'on explique la doctrine de l'Eglise Catholique par la Sainte Ecriture, et où on fait juste discernement de sa croyance d'avec celle des Protestans. Imprimés par ordre du Roy. Pour servir à l'instruction des nouveaux convertis 1727*. (Paris, 1727), Avertissement.

did not, however, enjoy the same success as *La Véritable Croyance* in terms of re-publication, although it did run into several editions, the first in 1724, the second edition in 1729 and the final edition in 1740. Using the results from Table 1 it is possible to see that there are just eighteen copies of this work in libraries in France, with the second edition of 1729 being the most common, with eight copies preserved. The *Traité* can be found in repositories outside France. The New York Public Library and Theodore R. McKeldin Library Maryland, contain the first edition of this work and one can find the second edition in the British National Library. Along with *La Véritable Croyance* 200 copies of the first edition were dispatched to the Jesuits of Canada ‘..pour s’en servir a l’instruction des pauvres habitants de cette Colonie,..’.²⁹ Gould’s third work was entitled *Entretien ou l’on explique la doctrine de l’Eglise Catholique par la Sainte Ecriture, et où on fait juste discernement de sa croyance d’avec celle des Protestans. Imprimés par ordre du Roy. Pour servir à l’instruction des nouveaux convertis* 1727. In this work Gould based his argument upon his knowledge and experience of Anglican establishments in Ireland and England. The *Entretien* met with similar success, although went into just two editions, 1727 and 1745. The first of these seems to be the more widely available, with nine copies in France, one in the National Library of Denmark in Copenhagen as well copies in King’s College Halifax, Michigan State University Library and DePaul University Library, Chicago. There are just three copies of the last edition in libraries in France. However one can find the 1745 *Entretien* in the library of Maastricht University. To the three works outlined above Gould added *Recueil des diverses objections que font les protestans contre les catholiques sur quelques articles de foi controversés et les réponses des catholiques aux dites objections qui les réfutent avec évidence et sans réplique par la sainte écriture* published in 1733 and again in 1735. His last work was entitled *Abrégé des Psaumes de David, sur la conduite que chaque chrétien doit tenir dans tout le cours de sa vie, où il trouvera le remède à ses inquiétudes, le sujet de sa tranquillité et de sa paix avec Dieu, avec son prochain, et avec soi-même. Adressé à un gentilhomme nouveau converti.*³⁰ It was published in 1735. The *Recueil* seems to be the rarest of his works there are just two copies available in repositories, both of which are 1735 editions. The *Recueil* can also be found in repositories outside

²⁹ Maurepas to Coignard, 20 Jun. 1727 (ANP, O/1 374, f. 277).

³⁰ Both works unfortunately were not consulted at the time of research, and as a result will not be discussed here.

France, for instance in Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen in the Netherlands . The same paucity in terms of available copies applies to his *Abrégé des Psaumes de David*. The 1735 edition of this work is available at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Poitiers France.

Table One: Distribution of Gould's works in French libraries today.

Titles	La Véritable Croyance de l'Eglise	Traité Du Saint Sacrifice de la Messe	Entretien ou l'on explique la doctrine	Recueil des objections
Editions				
1705	5			
1709	2			
1713	3			
1717				
1720	4			
1724		5		
1726	7			
1727		3	8	
1729		8		
1733				
1735				1
1740		2		
1745	4		3	

Source : Catalogue Collectif de France, Bibliothèque nationale de France. <http://ccfr.bnf.fr/portailccfr/servlet/LoginServlet>

Table 1 was compiled from results taken from the *Catalogue collectif de France*, and details the number of editions of each of Gould's works from a total of twenty one repositories throughout France , including four in Paris and two in Poitiers. Gould's first work is the most widely available. *La Véritable Croyance* survives in twenty-five copies; the 1726 edition of this work seems to be the most common with seven copies in repositories in France. Interestingly this edition was widely

accessible in libraries across Europe and in repositories in the United States and Canada. *La Véritable Croyance* is followed in popularity by his second work *Traité du Saint Sacrifice*, with eighteen copies the most numerous of which is the 1729 edition with eight copies extant in French libraries. The numbers diminish for his third work *Entretiens*, with only eleven copies still available, eight of the 1729 edition. His final work *Recueil des objections*, which seems to be the rarest can be accessed at two libraries in France, both of which being the second edition of the work published in 1735.

The table provides only a very general idea of the distribution of Gould's works in numerical terms. However this data does display some interesting trends. Ten of the works contained in these repositories are from editions between 1705 and 1717. Thirty-five from 1720 to 1729 and eleven from 1733 to 1745. The later editions of both *La Véritable Croyance* and *Traité* are most numerous. It is also evident that the majority of books available are from editions published between 1720 and 1729, a period in which Gould was extremely active, as has been demonstrated in previous chapters. It would appear that his missionary activity on the ground was mirrored in his published output. During this period *La Véritable Croyance* went into a further two editions, and his *Traité* into three editions as well as the first publication of *Entretien* in 1727. This energetic literary activity was matched by a substantial demand for these works as will be demonstrated shortly. Another interesting trend to note is the availability of editions of his works that were published posthumously. In total there are eleven copies of his works contained in French repositories, published between 1735 and 1745. Nine of which were published between 1740 and 1745 which indicates that there was obviously a renewal of demand for Gould's works ten years after his death. All his posthumously published work came off the Coignard presses in Paris. The sudden republication of his work in 1740 was most likely due to demand. Krumenacker points out that in Poitou, 'les années 1740 connaissent indiscutablement un nombre importante de grandes assemblées.'³¹ An increase in the number of assemblies held pointed to the presence, perhaps, of a greater number of *prédicants*, which may have fed a need to provide local Catholic clergy with effective instruction manuals to help them keep their *nouveaux convertis* attentive to orthodox sermons. The production of new editions between 1720 and 1729 corresponds to a period of high demand for these works, especially during the period 1724 to 1730 and the sources

³¹ Krummenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou*, p. 311.

provide a flavour of the demand for this period. Between 1724 and 1735 there was quite a considerable market for all of his published material. One can roughly estimate that at least 1250 copies of *La Véritable Croyance* came off the presses, over 700 copies of his *Entretien* and over 1550 of *Traité du Saint Sacrifice*. In February of 1724 Coignard was ordered to supply Gould with 400 copies of his *La Véritable Croyance* and 800 of *Traité du saint sacrifice*.³² Another 150 of the *Traité du saint sacrifice* along with equal number of copies of *La Véritable croyance* were delivered in 1726 to be distributed amongst the *nouveaux convertis* and a further 200 copies of *La Véritable Croyance* were furnished for new converts in January 1727. In June Coignard was asked to send 200 copies of *La Véritable Croyance* and the *Traité* for shipment from La Rochelle to the Jesuits in Canada. The following year twelve copies of each of the above titles were sent to the village of Gex to be used by the local curate. Gex is situated in the eastern region of France, right on the border with Switzerland and close to Lake Léman. Today, on the other side of this lake stands the Bibliothèque Cantonale et Universitaire, Lausanne Switzerland, an institution that holds an edition of Gould's *La Véritable Croyance*.

Unsurprisingly the distribution of his works during the 1720s corresponds with their preservation in repositories today. In March 1727 200 copies of the *Entretien* were sent to the Bishop of La Rochelle. In October of 1728, 30 copies of both *La Véritable Croyance* and the *Traité* were sent to S.Mulot, and also to a Père [Saget] for use in his parish. The sources indicate that the works were aimed at Catholic parochial clergy just as much as Protestants. In 1729 four copies of all Gould's works were to be distributed to 'chacun des s. Cures de St. [Fujon] de Clermont en Saintonge, de St. Vincent de Breges, de St. Denis de la Chevalle et de la Meilleraye..', and 24 copies of *La Véritable Croyance* were to be sent to Gould himself. The following year the *intendant* of Poitiers received 125 copies of both again the popular *La Véritable Croyance* and also the *Traité*, in 1731 200 copies of each of his works were to be sent to Monsieur Bignon, the *intendant* of La Rochelle.³³ In 1733, 100 copies of each of his works were sent to Gould himself. Even after his death his works enjoyed a

³² Ibid., p. 203.

³³ Maurepas to Coignard, 3 Apr. 1726 (A.N.P, O/1 373, f.168). Idem., 12 Jan. 1727 (A.N.P, O/1 374, f. 6). Idem., 20 Jun. 1727 (A.N.P, O/1 374, f. 277). Idem., 18 Mar.1728 (A.N.P, O/1 375, f. 101). Idem., 25 Mar. 1728 (A.N.P, O/375, f. 111). Idem., 12 Sep. 1728 (A.N.P, O/1 375, f. 312). Idem., 7 Oct. 1728 (A.N.P, O/1 375, f. 356). Idem., 4 May 1729 (A.N.P, O/1 376, f.137). Idem., 25 Jul. 1730 (A.N.P, f.299). Idem., 22 Apr. 1731 (A.N.P, O.1 378). Idem., 19 Oct. 1733 (A.N.P, O/1 380, f. 276).

continued popularity and wide distribution, over a 1000 copies of his final work *Recueil des objections* going to his successor l'abbé Edmund Gould, vicaire general de Monseigneur l'Eveque de Poitiers, in 1735.³⁴

The availability of Gould's works today in repositories from Canada to Czech Republic and Denmark to Spain is indicative of how well they were received when they were first published and also perhaps indicate how useful they were judged to be at the time. This success was dependant on a number of factors. In the previous chapter it was demonstrated that the *missionnaire*'s rise to a position of standing had much to do with the networks he maintained and the contacts he nurtured. However, his success in establishing and maintaining networks of influence may well have facilitated the success of his published work. The Jesuit link is a good example. Gould also had the advantage of having the *imprimeur du Roi* as his publisher, which meant that his published works not only enjoyed the full support of the crown but was financed from royal coffers. Another determining element in his successful publishing career was, of course, the quality and aptness of the content of his works. His religious texts served a particular function that was at once religious and political. Gould's works were distributed amongst the Huguenot communities and also the Catholic parochial clergy. For new converts they acted as a guideline to maintain them in their new faith, and for the clergy they provided manuals to assist in the effective instruction of members of the reformed faith. The message that was communicated in Gould's works obviously resonated with the administration and members of the Reformed community, and it is to this message that one turns now. What exactly was the *missionnaire* trying to communicate through the medium of the printed word? And to what extent was this message echoed or duplicated in the active, pastoral life of the *missionnaire du roi*?

Religious controversy and the message in Gould's work

In his first work, *Lettre d'un Missionnaire*, republished as *La Véritable Croyance de L'Eglise Catholique et les Preuves de Tous les Points de sa Doctrine, fondées sur l'Escriture Sainte*, Gould defends the primacy of the Catholic Church as *la Véritable église*. He refutes charges made by

³⁴ Krumenacker, *Les Protestants du Poitou*, p. 203.

Protestant ministers against particular aspects of Catholic belief, essentially that the foundations upon which Gould and other Catholics claim that Catholic Church is indeed the true Church, are unsound. In doing so Gould introduces his target audience to the second part of the work, where he provides a clear and concise account of the precise teachings of the Catholic Church. These, he argues, are rooted in the Scriptures and beyond reproach. He contrasts them with the ‘fallacies’ upon which the Reformed Church bases its beliefs. Gould constructs his argument around a number of what he calls *falsifications et oppositions* against the particular aspects of Catholic doctrine.

Gould begins by outlining the fifteen charges that have been made against the Catholic Church by these Protestant ministers. He covers a number of issues such as the invocation of the saints. In particular he defends against the accusation that the Church ascribes the same importance to worship to the saints as it does to the worship due to Christ. The Catholic Church is also charged in Gould’s account with believing that they have recourse to others means of salvation and remission of sins other than that of the death and resurrection of Christ. The basic tenet of these charges rests on the premise that ‘dans l’Eglise Romaine on établit les fondements du salut sur les seules traditions humaines.’³⁵ In response to these charges Gould outlines four characteristics that render the Catholic Church the true faith, ‘la marque de l’Unité’, ‘la Sainteté’, ‘qui est d’être Catholique, c’est à dire universelle’, and ‘qui est d’être Apostolique’.³⁶ In defending the Church Gould is required to detail quite precisely the arguments of his opponents. Indeed the charges outlined above and refuted by Gould are old issues that traditionally arose in the doctrinal debates between the Catholic and the reformed faiths. These traditional concerns underpin his later works. Of greater importance, particularly in regard to Gould’s applied theology and religious instruction is the technique used in his argumentation. For an author like Gould, engaged in sensitive conversion work with an often well informed and committed audience, the medium was almost as important as the message. Gould outlines the principal charges made against the Church, deconstructs these charges by pointing out discrepancies in their authors’ argumentation and, by means of contrast, reveals the Catholic Church as the one true faith. Gould mimics his Reformed opponents by exclusively using the Scriptures as the

³⁵ Thomas Gould, *La Véritable Croyance de L’Eglise Catholique et les Preuves de Tous les Points de sa Doctrine, fondée sur l’Ecriture Sainte, Nouvelle édition, revue, corrigée et augmentée*, par l’abbé Gould (Paris, 1717), p. 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

only recourse to Catholic belief, a favourite method employed by the reformed Church critics. When deconstructing his opponents' arguments Gould draws on his erudition in Protestant theology, especially the Anglican Church. Thanks to his expertise in this field he is able to point out inconsistencies in the belief structure and scriptural rationale of the reformed faith.

The dialectic outlined above is most obvious when Gould discusses one of the essential points of controversy, the Eucharist, and investigates its scriptural underpinning, particularly the verses, 'Cecy est Mon Corps qui est donné pour vous',³⁷ commonly explained in Catholic tradition in the scholastic language of transubstantiation. The author defends against charges that in believing in the physical presence of Christ in the Eucharist and, further, speaking of consuming the flesh of Christ in the host, the Catholic Church had 'anéanti l'essence du Sacrement de l'Eucharistie'.³⁸ Gould directs the reader to John 6, in order to refute these claims, citing 'Si vous ne mangez la chair du fils de l'homme et si vous ne beuvez son sang, vous n'aurez pas la vie éternelle en vous'.³⁹ In Frank Lestringant's *Une Sainte Horreur*, the author argues how the Eucharist continued to be the marrow and substance of religious polemical interchange in religious controversy well into the eighteenth century.⁴⁰ Gould's reliance on the scriptural witness is not just a means of demonstrating how he can match Protestant polemical techniques. It also serves to highlight how the Catholic Church has always followed and taught what is written in the Scriptures. Gould maintains that the Catholic Church has been consistent and unified in its faith and in what it teaches, and furthermore has adhered to the Holy Scripture in its original written form. This is a classic topos of Catholic apologetic. Gould attempts to dismantle his opponents' arguments by making reference to inconsistencies in this matter between various non-Catholic theologians. Gould points out how those of the Reformed tradition have not been coherent with the scriptural passage and associated teachings they so vehemently profess. He skilfully uses non-Catholic theologians to bolster his arguments, pointing out, for instance, how Zwingli distorted the passage in John 6, by substituting 'cecy est mons corps', for the phrase 'cecy

³⁷ Thomas Gould, *La Véritable Croyance* (Paris, 1717), p. 83.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴⁰ Frank Lestringant, *Une Sainte Horreur Ou Le Voyage En Eucharistie XVIe - XVIIIe Siècle*, (Paris, 1996).

signifie mon corps'.⁴¹ For Gould these commonplaces of sixteenth-century religious polemic had lost none of their value. The same holds for other scriptural references. He refers to Genevan reformed translations of the bible and how they differ from each other, for instance how editions of 1590 differed from earlier versions produced in the 1530s and 1540s.⁴² For Gould this manipulation of the Holy Scripture is in effect an attempt to 'anéantir le Dogme de la présence réelle'.⁴³ Thus he adroitly turns an argument traditionally made against the Catholic Eucharistic tradition by reformers against the reformers themselves.

In *La Véritable Croyance* Gould concludes that the Reformed faiths lack the characteristic elements of the true church, notably *unité* and *universalité*.⁴⁴ Within the Reformed tradition there exists a confusion and diversity of sentiments. All of these Churches consist of people who believe, teach and preach doctrines very dissimilar from each other.⁴⁵ These essentially are the foundations of Gould's argument. By relying on scripture to drive his argument, and highlighting the Catholic Church's consistency and unity in its coherence to the scriptures Gould effectively undermines the argument of the Protestant polemicists. As a whole the argument and technique presented by Gould, and also the arguments which he refutes, provide a valuable insight into the polemical interchange surrounding the religious controversy in early eighteenth-century France. In a wider context the arguments in the work are indicative of how this controversy centred primarily on differing interpretations of the Holy Scripture. They also help historians gain a better understanding of how these interpretations affected social groups and how successfully social groups maintained and defended their respective interpretations of the Scripture. The merit of the work lies in its didactic presentation.

In his *La Véritable Croyance* Gould uses a homiletic style, eschewing more prolix and strictly theological language in an effort to present his message in an accessible format. What Gould hoped to achieve in *La Véritable Croyance* was to persuade a particular group of the veracity of the Catholic Church. So we see that the development and construction of his argument mirrors the process of

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 370.

⁴² Ibid., p. 383.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 384.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 360.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 400.

instruction and conversion of an individual in a catechetical situation. This involved identifying the main issues of controversy or difference between the faiths, deconstructing not only the arguments and misconceptions of the Catholic Church promulgated by Protestant ministers but also the pillars upon which the Reformed faith based their teaching. The process of conversion required the converter to bring about a realisation in those he instructed of the weakness of their original beliefs and in doing so extol the virtues and veracity of the Catholic Church. This involved focusing on the principal points of disagreement, but executed so as to assist potential converts to separate themselves from the ‘fallacies’ of reformed doctrine. One of these pivotal disagreements has already been mentioned, that concerning the differing interpretations of the Eucharist, a ubiquitous theme in all of Gould’s works, primarily because it constituted the fundamental point of rupture between Catholics and Calvinists in France. In *Le Traité du Sainte Sacrifice de la Messe, avec l’explication des Cérémonies qui s’y observent, et la manière d’y assister dévotement, selon l’esprit de la primitive Eglise. Adressé à une Dame de Qualité nouvellement convertie*, Gould elaborates on his treatment of this subject in *La Véritable Croyance*. The work is a text on the Eucharist and functions predominantly as an instruction manual, as the title suggests, to new converts to Catholicism, with the primary purpose of deepening their Eucharistic faith by explaining the belief, foundations and practice of the central sacrament of the Catholic Church. Indeed the significance of the Eucharist in these debates and the perceived importance in deepening new converts’ Eucharistic faith bear further explanation.

The problem rested upon what would become a particularly problematic passage in the scripture, Matthew 26:28. a passage frequently referenced in all of Gould’s books. According to Matthew, Jesus said at the Last Supper, ‘ceci est mon sang qui est répandu pour vous en remission de vos pechez’.⁴⁶ It was this passage, originally given as a bond of union and peace, which would become the most divisive element in the faith wars of the Reformation period and later. The Roman Catholic view revolved around the belief of the physical and spiritual presence of Jesus Christ during the Mass, the Lord’s presence in the bread and wine, frequently spoken about in terms of transubstantiation. To those diametrically opposed to all physical presence in the bread and wine, the Catholic belief was not

⁴⁶ Gould, *La Véritable Croyance* (Paris, 1717), p. 82.

only idolatrous but anthropophagic and even theophagic.⁴⁷ The Eucharistic doctrines of Calvin differed from those of the Catholic and Lutheran tradition. Calvin's opposition to the Catholic view stemmed from his aversion to idolatry, a sentiment strongly influencing the early iconoclasts during the first wars of Religion in France. Paying undue reverence to physical objects obscured the worship of God,⁴⁸ a charge levelled at Catholic understandings of the Eucharist. Calvin centred his Eucharistic view on a principle of distinction but not separation, *distinctio sed non separatio*,⁴⁹ which differentiated between reality and sign. For Calvin, then, the signs of 'the bread and wine became an instrument of God's grace in uniting the believer to Christ,' not as the Catholic viewed the literally physical presence of the Lord's flesh and blood. It was to this doctrine that those of the Reformed faith in France looked. During the Colloquy of Poissy in 1561 Theodore Beza summed up the Calvinist position of Christ's presence during the mass, 'we say that His body is as far removed from the bread and wine as is heaven from earth'.⁵⁰ For the Catholics, the notion of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic species was much stronger. In fact, their understanding of the process of transformation viewed the bread and wine as actual representations of the flesh and blood of Christ and consequently that Christ was physically present in the Eucharist. What the controversy entailed was a debate upon the significance of what was being signified or 'le mode de la présence de Dieu aux hommes et à son Église'.⁵¹ In *Une Sainte Horreur*, which deals with literary representations of this controversy, the author maintains that the schism was one that saw its origin in semantics,⁵² which, in essence is, at least on one level, what the dispute boiled down to. Yet it is important not to view this complex issue reductively or simplistically. The significance for religious communities of the early modern period of the Sunday celebration and what occurred there, be it real or symbolic or otherwise, was a grave matter and worthy of polemic and more. To the early modern mind the matter was not a question of simple grammar but also of visible signs, invisible realities, social behaviour, patterns of belonging and relating and understanding one's place in the world and the universe. The fact that Gould devoted a work to this controversy demonstrates how ideas concerning the Eucharist still pervaded the minds

⁴⁷ Frank Lestringant, *Une Sainte Horreur ou le voyage en Eucharistie XVIe – XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris 1996), pp 74-75.

⁴⁸ Gould, *La Véritable Croyance* (Paris, 1717), p. 248.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.250.

⁵⁰ Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers, The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford, 2009), p. 151.

⁵¹ Lestringant, *Une Sainte Horreur*, p. 15.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 243.

right up until the early eighteenth century. The Eucharist posed the single greatest doctrinal obstacle to converts from the Reformed faith reconciling with the Catholic Church.

The *Traité* is an attempt to reconcile those of the Reformed tradition to the Catholic belief regarding the Last Supper. Gould elaborates on all aspects of the Catholic Mass in order to facilitate an easier cross over by potential and new converts. The specific audience and purpose of this work is outlined in the *avertissement*

Il [Gould] ne l'avoit pas composé pour être donné au Public; mais uniquement pour instruire une Dame de qualité, que des Ministres seduisoient, par leurs prétenduës Lettres Pastorales. Il fut obligé ensuite de le communiquer à d'autres personnes qui étoient dans le même cas,⁵³

This work operates on the premise that its audience is ignorant or at least misguided when it comes to understanding the exact nature of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic theology and practice. Indeed, as the above quotation points, this ignorance is attributed to the Protestant ministers. The strongest impression one derives from this work is that it does not possess the same polemical urgency as *La Véritable Croyance*. The purpose of the *Traité* is to outline comprehensively every aspect of the Mass, with a focus on the ceremonial aspect of the Mass, and its scriptural justification. The piece is essentially a tool that was used to prevail upon new converts, regarding the continuity of the Catholic Eucharist with that of the primitive Church. A continuity, as the author never fails to point out, that is absent in the services of the Reformed Churches. Gould divides the work into four parts. He begins by setting down in very simple and clear language the actual belief of the Catholic Church regarding the oblation, during which he repeats much of what is discussed in his previous work regarding the Eucharist, the last supper and the sacrifice made on the Cross. Church Doctrine concerning these fundamental issues conforms and has always done so with that of the *Saint Pères de la Primitive Eglise*. This is the essential premise of the introductory piece, which is followed by 'Les Preuves', in the first of which, 'la vérité du Sacrifice de la Messe', Gould centres on the word 'Messe'. It is not used in Reformed services, the author acknowledges. He searches for its scriptural origins, and locates its etymological roots in the Hebrew *missahac*, a term that signifies an oblation, or a voluntary

⁵³ Thomas Gould, *Traité du saint sacrifice de la messe, avec l'explication des cérémonies qui s'y observent et la manière d'y assister dévotement, selon l'esprit de la primitive Eglise. Adressé à une dame de qualité nouvellement convertie*, (Paris, 1724), *avertissement*.

sacrifice. Gould gives the scriptural reference for this by direct quotation from Deuteronomy 16, and points out that ‘nous faisons les jours fetes, au Seigneur une oblation volontaire, que l’Ecriture nomme en Hebreu, Missahac, et les Grecs, Liturgie’.⁵⁴ The point of which is again to introduce to its intended reader that the Mass, not just the term but the overall ceremony has its origin in the scriptures and in the sacramental practice of the primitive church. The work inevitably moves on to treat the main issues of dispute, the holy sacrifice, which Gould explains according to the language of the Scriptures as ‘faire, signifie souvent sacrifier, ou offrir.’⁵⁵ Given the subject of the work it is inevitable that the author becomes somewhat pedantic in demonstrating his proofs of Catholic practice regarding the Eucharist. However he does refer to some earlier practices of oblation, drawing comparisons with the eating of the host. He remarks that in the ‘ l’ancienne Loi il fallut manger de la victime sacrifiée pour participer au fruit du sacrifice; ainsi pour être participant à l’oblation sanglante du Corps de Jésus-Christ sur la Croix, il faut absolument le manger’.⁵⁶

As noted above, the first part of the work aims to deconstruct erroneous doctrine the new converts may have carried over from their former faith regarding the Catholic Mass. It lays the foundations for the rest of the *Traité*, with the introduction outlining the central beliefs surrounding and functions affected by the mass, providing proofs for them and arguing their merit. The author follows this up with a detailed description of the *déroulement* of the Mass, from the initial sign of the cross made by the priest who marks the commencement of the service to the last or closing Gospel. The *Traité* as mentioned is an elaboration and indeed a repetition of many points that Gould had defended in his previous work. In the section of the *Traité* entitled *explication des cérémonies*, Gould once again discusses the invocation of the saints and maintains that petitioning Saints as well as the Sainte Vierge is done so in accordance with, ‘l’ancienne coutume de l’Eglise.’⁵⁷ The work is designed as a defence and glorification of the mass for new converts. As such it also needs to fulfil a real persuasive function. Despite not being an explicitly polemical work, this text does exhibit many of the dialectic techniques employed in *La Véritable Croyance*. The first of these is the preponderance of

⁵⁴ Gould, *Traité du saint sacrifice* (Paris, 1724), p. 21.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 40.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 60.

scripturally-based argument. Second there is the familiar recourse to non-Catholic theologians as well as comparisons, none of them flattering, with other Protestant Churches, especially the Anglican Church in Ireland and England. The section of the Mass in which the Credo is recited after the reading of the Gospel, is, according to Gould, similar to the service of the Anglican Church.⁵⁸ He again draws on Anglican liturgical practice when discussing the Consecration of the Host, in which the recital of the words ‘ceci est mon sang’ is used in both ceremonies, and of course taken from the Scriptures. In contrast to this he points out the differences during the Calvinist liturgy which does not conform to any practice in the Roman Church or the Scriptures, he argues. Instead the Reformed Church

met ces paroles dans la bouche de ses Ministres quand elle fait la Cene. Le pain est la communion au Corps de Christ, cette coupe est la communion au Sang de Christ. Cette maniere de consacrer, n’étant fondée ni sur le text sacré ni sur aucun exemple que l’Antiquité puisse rendre vénérable,⁵⁹

The purpose of this point is, of course, to stress how scripturally baseless the ceremonies of the Calvinist liturgy are. Moreover, the contrast with the Anglican liturgy is used to demonstrate the idiosyncrasy of the Calvinist treatment of the Eucharist, and to indicate the inconsistencies among Protestant denominations. The end of the *Traité* contains lists of prayers that are used during the Mass, set out in chronological order. Viewed as a whole the piece is fundamentally a *vade mecum* to the Catholic Mass.

Gould’s third work *Entretiens où l’on explique la Doctrine de l’Eglise Catholique par la Sainte Ecriture*, functions in the same fashion. The *Entretiens* is written with the express design of instruction and lacks the polemical sharpness of Gould’s *La Véritable Croyance*. The content of the work is presented in question and answer format, and addresses questions concerning matters of faith and doctrine of the Catholic Church and also how this doctrine, founded on the scriptures, differs from the beliefs of the Protestants. In the preface of the work Gould describes the method, taking its inspiration from II Timothy 3: 6, ‘All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.’⁶⁰ This is the tone in which the

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 100.

⁵⁹ Gould, *Traité du saint sacrifice* (Paris, 1724), pp 138-139.

⁶⁰ Holy Bible, King James Version, the Second epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy. Ch. 3, V. 16.

Entretiens is presented and the arguments are in the form of a dialogue between a missionary and a Protestant. The way in which his works are constructed is indicative of his overall missionary priorities and techniques. In other words, his works are literary representations of how he actually engaged those he was charged with converting. The *Entretiens* contain thirty-four particular doctrinal issues, many of which are repetitions of issues that are contained in his previous two works such as the characteristics of the true church, its universality, the primacy of the Pope, the sacraments and the invocation of the Saints. There is a much greater attention to the sacraments of the Catholic Church, with the author paying attention to the Eucharist.

In each *Entretien* the Protestant asks a number of questions regarding the particular issue under discussion. On the Eucharist the first question seems quite simple, ‘Que croyés-vous de l’Eucharistie?’⁶¹ This is then followed by a detailed description of what exactly the Catholic believes in this regard. In the responses the *missionnaire* carefully differentiates between the Catholic Church and those of the Reformed tradition. In the twentieth *Entretien* of the work, for instance, Gould outlines how the Protestant Church is not a Church of Jesus Christ, in response to the question if the Protestant Church can in any way be the true Church.⁶² Gould reiterates the basic points of *la Véritable Eglise*. When given these answers the Protestant inquires, ‘Faites-moi voir par une raison solide, fondée sur la Parole de Dieu, que cette Eglise [Protestant Church] n’est point Apostolique.’⁶³ This question allows the author to demonstrate how the Protestant Church indeed lacked any signs of the true church. The format of the *Entretiens* was not a novel one, indeed it mimics a work entitled *Le Traité des Péchés* (1708) written by the bishop of Poitiers De la Poype de Vertieu.⁶⁴ De Vertrieu’s work covers a number of analogous issues of faith and controversial points of scripture. It was the fruit of the bishop’s work with seminarians at the college in Poitiers. Gould’s *Entretiens* echoes de Vertieu’s style in content but more so in format. *Les Traités* follows a similar question and answer style, where the questions regarding particular issues of theology are elaborated on and answered according to the Scriptures and the tradition of the Catholic Church.

⁶¹ Thomas Gould, *Entretiens* (Paris, 1727), p. 284.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 215.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁶⁴ Jean Francois Dreux-Duradier, *Histoire Littéraire du Poitou, precede d’une introduction et continue jusqu’en 1849 par une société d’hommes de lettres* (Genève, 1969), p. 346.

The posing and answering of the questions gives an insight into how the actual instruction of a Huguenot individual most likely advanced. It indicates what questions they were asking. It is likely that the questions that make up the *Entretiens* were ones that were asked of Gould during his many consultations with those who formed the *noyau* of his clientele, Huguenot nobles for instance, whom he instructed on an individual basis. The central thesis of the *Entretiens* and indeed the previous works operates on the process of making the reader aware of the Catholic belief; spelling out quite clearly what exactly it is that the Catholics believe. By doing so the author leads to the second step in the instruction process which is an identification of the issues of disagreement. Here Gould contrasts the Catholic truths which take their root from the Gospel with the unfounded beliefs of its opponents. This process moves on to the third step of provision of understanding: why does the Catholic Church believe what it believes? Here Gould points out how all the Church teaches is based on Scriptures and the early Church Fathers.

This structure allows one to place Gould's work in the context of actual evangelisation, how it related to the more active process of conversion itself, as outlined above. Certainly the tone in which they are written fits in quite well with the whole purpose of the process which essentially aimed to persuade these individuals to relinquish one set of beliefs and accept another. Overall the pitch of these works is persuasive just as much as they are didactic. Unsurprisingly there is much repetition of the chief difference amongst them as the three works just treated focus upon the same points of doctrinal controversy, characteristic of the classic Reformation debates. However, *La Véritable Croyance, Traité* and the *Entretiens* are devoid of any vitriolic attacks upon heresy so abundant in much of the earlier religious tracts. In fact, there is only sparse use of terms such as *hérésie*. Instead Gould uses more euphemistic, almost affectionate phrases such as *nos frères séparés*, or *ceux qui ont le malheur d'en être séparés*,⁶⁵ a lexicon that permeates his correspondence with his superiors. A prerequisite of any work that was intended for use in religious instruction is that it should be persuasive in order to be effective. In the preface to his 1727 edition of *Entretiens* Gould presents the

⁶⁵ Gould, *Entretiens*, (Paris, 1727), preface.

work in ‘un esprit de paix, de douceur et de charité’.⁶⁶ As a method it achieved a certain limited success.

There can be no doubt that these works struck a chord with Huguenots and new converts, not to mention Catholic clergy. It has been demonstrated how they enjoyed a significant circulation in the 1720s. In 1725 Gould informed de la Tour of the popularity of his books amongst those he had instructed, the Monpensiers of Bressuire, ‘ont paru fort contents de mon livre de la messe’ and the Huguenot Herpin of Mouchamps assured the *Missionnaire*, that ‘il lirait avec attention les livres que je luy ay passé, particulièrement celuy du St sacrifice de la messe et des cérémonies.’⁶⁷ When viewed as a whole one can observe in the work a consistent and coherent process of doctrinal development. His first work focuses on the truths of the Church; his second gives a deeper explanation of the central issues of divergence between the faiths. The third packages the same information in a more accessible format, a question and answer structure which was the common method of catechetical communication. One moves from the first contact with the Huguenot, through the polemical phase and instruction to the deepening of the acquired faith in reflection and practice. In the preface of the *Entretiens* Gould explains how he has constructed his work in a ‘manière aisée et intelligible’,⁶⁸ a style that can be attributed to all of his works.

Gould’s work in the context of international polemics

Indeed the message contained within the pages of Gould’s written works would not be welcomed by everyone, least of all the Huguenot ministers and pastors. Gould’s printed message was geared towards diminishing much of the work these ministers were carrying out in France. In the preface to the *Entretiens* Gould wrote that

J’ai toujours remarqué que ce qui empêche les Protestans de revenir de leurs fausses idées contre l’Eglise, c’est qu’on leur a fait une peinture affreuse de sa doctrine, n’étant point, à ce que les Ministres leur faisoient croire,⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Gould to de la Tour, 13 Apr. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁶⁸ Gould, *Entretiens*, (Paris, 1727), preface.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

One such Huguenot who took issue with Gould's published work was an exiled Huguenot Pastor in London, Pierre Rival (b. 1662). Rival's disagreement with particular aspects of Gould's *Lettre d'un Missionnaire* resulted in the publication of his *The Irish Missionary unmask'd*, published in two parts in 1724.⁷⁰ The locus of Rival's argument converges on a specific part of the Anglican liturgy regarding the invocation of the saints, used in quotation by Gould in his *Lettre d'un Missionnaire*. For the purpose of demonstrating continuity in liturgical practice Gould pointed out how both the Collect of the Church of England and that used in the Church of Rome were similar regarding the invocation of the saints. Rival's interpretation of this particular remark in the *Lettre d'un Missionnaire* runs thus;

The Catholick Church, says he, [Gould] pays no other Honour to the glorified Saints in Heaven, by saying to them, Pray for us, than what is shewn them by the Church of England, in her Prayer or Collect on the 29th of September.⁷¹

To cement his argument Rival places both the quotation from the French translation of the Book of Common Prayer alongside the text quoted in Gould's work. Rival cites the passage that has caused so much upset, his use of the text in his pamphlet is identical to that of *Lettre d'un Missionnaire*,⁷²

fais par ta grace que ceux qui te servent continuellement dans le Ciel nous secourent par leurs Prieres, et nous défendent par ton ordonnance ici- bas sur terre par Jesus-Christ..⁷³

The source for this passage in Gould's *Lettre* is given as '*Liturgie Anglicaine*'⁷⁴ although the passage that Rival quotes from the French translation of the Anglican Liturgy differs somewhat from that quoted by Gould;

Fais[sic] par ta grace que comme les Saints Anges te servent continuélement[sic] dans le Ciel, ils nous secourent aussi et nous defendent[sic] par ton ordre ici bas sur la terre, par Jesus Christ,...⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Pierre Rival, *The Irish Missionary unmask'd; or the abbot Goulde, an Irish Priest, (a Frenchman by Naturalization) Treasurer and head of the Church and Chapter of our Lady of Thouars, (in France) and Missionary (in Poitou,) convicted of Four Falsehoods, and of a great Oversight, if not a Fifth Fraud, in one single Article concerning the Church of England, upon the invocation of Saints; all contain'd in one Page in 120 of his Letter to a Gentleman of Low-Poitou; which he has been pleas'd to entitle, The True Belief of the Catholick Church, against the Tenets falsly ascrib'd to her, in the Writings of the (Protestant) Ministers*. London 1724, trans. by D.G Gent. (Hereafter, *The Irish Missionary unmask'd*.)

⁷¹ Rival, *The Irish Missionary unmask'd*, p. 9.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷³ Thomas Gould, *Lettre d'un missionnaire* (Paris, 1705), pp 21-22.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Rival, *The Irish Missionary unmask'd*, p. 4.

The notable difference is, of course, the insertion of ‘par leurs Prieres’ in the passage quoted in *Lettre d’un Missionnaire*. It is this misquotation and manipulation of the Anglican liturgy with which Rival takes justifiable issue, and upon which he hangs his argument. He taxes Gould with charges of scriptural ignorance, poor scholarship not to mention explicit falsification regarding the use of Scriptural passages in his work. The thrust of Rival’s method revolves around that commonplace of polemical interchange, accusing Gould of what Gould accused men such as Rival of, corruption of religious texts and prevarication regarding the religious congregations. Focusing on the phrase ‘pray for us’ which in essence forms much of the basis of Rival’s argument, may seem trivial, yet to degrade his argument to simple semantics is to misunderstand the importance these polemical texts had on the faithful of the period. Rival’s work is as much an *ad hominem* attack on Gould as it is an attack on what his theology is trying to convey, he brands the *missionnaire*’s work as mere ‘craft and imposture’⁷⁶ the produce of an ‘irrational, fawning and lying Creature’.⁷⁷ When Gould used the quote to which Rival refers, the *missionnaire* was demonstrating the commonality in certain practices between the Roman and Anglican traditions during the Mass, and by extension as we have discussed, highlighted the disparity amongst the other reforming traditions notably between Anglicans and Calvinists. This not only had religious but political ramifications particularly for those Huguenots in the English refuge.

The appropriately named Rival was a minister at the French Chapel of Saint James’s Palace in London from 1710 until 1728. The French chapel was established in 1689 soon after the arrival of William III who granted the use of the friary to French Huguenots attached to the court, the ministers being appointed Royal Chaplains.⁷⁸ This congregation functioned along similar lines of the Protestant churches in France up until 1710 when the congregation conformed to the Anglican Church during the reign of Queen Anne, and as part of which made use of a French translation of the Anglican liturgy

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

⁷⁷ Ibid., preface.

⁷⁸ George B. Beeman, ‘Notes on the sites and history of the French Churches in London’, in *The Proceedings of the Huguenot society of London*, pp. 13-59. Vol. VIII, no.1, 1905-1908, p. 47.

during its services.⁷⁹ The Huguenot ministers at St. James's were considered to hold one of the best positions amongst the refuge clergy in London, for not only were they well paid but well placed allowing them considerable influence,⁸⁰ a result of the Chapel's royal association. It was from this base in London that Rival produced his *An Irish Missionary Unmasked*, a translation of the text originally written in French, and also another almost forgotten work entitled *Apologie de Pierre Rival, Ministre de la Chapelle Françoise au Palais de St. James*, (London, 1716). His *Apologie* was a pamphlet born of a very trivial event that had very serious consequences, namely the accusation that Rival held Jacobite sympathies. It details the minister's early life and journey from France to the London refuge during the wake of the Revocation.⁸¹ In his attempt to dispel any notion of Jacobite leanings, Rival provided proofs of an ardent longstanding devotion to the Protestant succession and a long tradition of Protestant faith present in his lineage.

Rival was born in Salies in Béarn in the South of France to a family with a strong attachment to the Huguenot faith. His father, Jean Rival, was a minister at Salies and afterwards at Pau. In his *Apologie* he alludes to the death of his father in 1674 when he was twelve, which places his birth at 1662. Just as the administration was tightening the noose around the reformed community in the 1680s Rival was secure in Geneva studying as a candidate for the ministry. In 1685 the news reached Rival that his mother had succumbed to royal pressure and converted, from which Rival formed a plan to return to France and persuade his mother to take flight with his younger siblings.⁸² This was of course an extremely dangerous endeavour given the legal implications existent under which Rival came, banishing all ministers on pain of death.⁸³ Despite the danger he set out for Salies in April 1686, but due to the suspicions of the Catholic bishop, who correctly suspected that he had returned, Rival left for England, travelling via Bordeaux. He arrived in London in September 1686, having left

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Robin Gwynn, 'The distribution of Huguenot Refugees in England, II; London and its environs', pp 509-563. in *Proceedings of the Huguenot society of London*, Vol. XXII, No. 6, 1976, p. 544.

⁸¹ The *Apologie* is discussed in detail in 'Winifred Turner, 'Pierre Rival: an Autobiography' in *Proceeding of the Huguenot Society of London*, vol 17, no. 1, (1942-1946), pp 37-52. Here Turner discusses the origins of these Jacobite charges. In 1716 a poem in praise of the King and the Protestant succession was circulated and recited which claimed that any member of the audience who did not acknowledge the merits of the composition, was thereby branded a Jacobite. Unimpressed with the literary style of the work describing it as prosaic, Rival's cool reception aroused suspicion from some of the more Williamite royalists present, by whom the rumour of Rival's Jacobite sympathies were spread.

⁸² Turner, 'Pierre Rival: an Autobiography', p. 43.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 43.

Geneva in April of the same year.⁸⁴ Rival did not linger in London, but travelled to Holland amidst the climate of political intrigue that presaged the downfall of James II. It was during this period through his uncle that Rival was introduced to Charles Mordaunt, the Earl of Peterborough, engaged in frequent trips to Holland in connection with the projected bringing of William III to England. It was Peterborough who facilitated Rival's ordination by the bishop of Ely in 1687. Through his association with Peterborough Rival became an emissary between the Protestant camp in Holland and Williamite supporters in England, a task that required him to make the potentially fatal journeys between England and Holland carrying sensitive documents relating to the coming Orange invasion,⁸⁵ after which Rival found himself in a very prominent position, chaplain to a regiment of soldiers raised by Peterborough and Minister to the French refugee community in London.

Rival was not entering a harmonious environment politically or religiously when settling in England. In fact, despite being granted shelter under the restoration and again under the protection of the Williamite succession there existed a considerable complexity and indeed a certain vehemence in the debate between dissenters, non-conformists and those of the established Anglican tradition. Pre-Revocation Huguenots settling in London were far from welcome, there is evidence that they were the subject of hostilities. The 'Pest house' used to contain outbreaks of plague, used as a temporary accommodation for the refugees, (adding another meaning to its title) was at one point the target of a group of Whig apprentices who labelling the Huguenot refugees as Papist spies, conspired to attack the building.⁸⁶ In the context of this behaviour the Huguenot consistories urged their congregations to behave in a fashion that would not draw undue attention. The aim of church discipline at the time went beyond the usual proscriptions upon questionable conduct, it had a more urgent and specific goal of minimising hostility from the local populace.⁸⁷ Many of the pre-revocation refugees found that they had little option but to conform to the Anglican tradition. This was due to Royal policy however, and

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp 51-52.

⁸⁶ Eileen Barret, 'Huguenot integration in late 17th- and 18th – century London; insights from records of the French Church and some relief agencies', pp 375-382, in Randolph Vigne and Charles Littleton, (eds.), *From Strangers to Citizens, the integration of the immigrant communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550-1750* (London, 2001), p. 376.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 376.

not to any urge or wish from the congregations themselves to toe the religious line.⁸⁸ Despite this the Huguenots were well treated overall by the English refuge, particularly after William's succession. It would take much harsher treatment to force them to believe they were less well off than they had been in France. In order to limit the suspicions of the local populace the Huguenot congregations often chose to conform to the Anglican Church. The government of Charles II would only licence new congregations if they adopted the Anglican liturgy translated into French. Under James II the attitude was more hostile. Both Stuart kings derived their policy from the English Civil War in which a large number of members of the French Churches in England had shown themselves firmly on the side not of the king but of parliament.⁸⁹ This policy was to change when royal pressure to conform was alleviated under James II as part of his Declaration of Indulgences in the spring of 1687.⁹⁰ After 1687 many congregations chose not to conform and by the early eighteenth century there were three times as many non-conformist as conformists amongst the Huguenot refuge. By the end of the seventeenth century some twenty eight non-conforming churches were extant in and around London. By 1730 there were still at least twenty and fifty years later still fifteen, it is not until 1800 that one can see a dramatic decline or rather an increase in French congregations conforming.⁹¹ The congregation at Saint James Palace adopted the French translation of the Anglican liturgy in 1710, coinciding with Rival's ministry there. It was Gould's alleged falsification of a particular aspect of this French translation of the common book of prayer that linked the *missionnaire* to Rival, who by 1724 was obviously well versed in its text.

Viewed in the context of religious polemic, Rival's work is emblematic of the theological parrying amongst ministers of the opposing faiths. When understood in the context of the Huguenot Refuge in London and Rival's activity during the Williamite succession, an *Irish Missionary Unmask'd* takes on a greater political sharpness. Rival's argument is essentially an attempt to refute Gould's charge of disunity amongst the Calvinists and Anglicans. The issue of dissimilarity amongst the congregations made by Gould could have very tangible consequences for those such as Rival

⁸⁸ Robin Gwynn, 'Conformity, Non-conformity and Huguenot Settlement in England in the Later Seventeenth Century', in Anne Dunan Page, (ed.), *The Religious Culture of the Huguenots, 1660-1750* (2006), p. 27.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁹¹ Eileen Barret, 'Huguenot integration in late 17th- and 18th century', p. 376.

trying to settle into a new life in London. Arriving from France they were granted shelter, yet by refusing to relinquish their Calvinist beliefs they were still distinct from the members of the Anglican Church. In such a context Huguenots were quick to push aside points of division between their beliefs and that of the Anglican Church, emphasising in its stead the commonalities that linked them together, opposition to the Catholic Bourbon monarchy and the papacy in Rome being points of confluence. In essence Rival's work is one such attempt, and it was Gould's *Lettre d'un missionnaire* that provided the occasion. The English translation no doubt had its relevance more so for Rival than it did the Huguenots in France. Of course it was above all a theological text, which attacked the policy of religious persecution, the work of the Catholic Church and the Bourbon state and those in their employ. Originally the French version of the work was aimed at Rival's co-religionists back home, an attempt to give courage and strength to the congregations under threat from missionaries like Gould and the crown policy of forced conversion. This was common practice amongst the ministers in exile and a great deal of importance was placed upon these texts and pastoral letters by those in receipt of them back in France. Evidence of this is provided by Gould's report in April 1725 on the constitution of the Huguenot communities in low Poitou who 'paroissent plus opiniatres qu'auparavant' after receiving 'lettres pretendues pastorelles des ministres refugies[sic] en angleterre et en hollande..'.⁹²

The tone of *An Irish Missionary Unmask'd*, its central issue of debate, and its context are all confirmations that Gould's work struck a personal, religious and political chord with Rival. For Gould the *Irish missionary unmask'd* demonstrates the range of his work. Rival in his second part of the work,⁹³ elaborates how he became acquainted with the *Missionnaire's* text through the *Journal des Scavans*, a scientific journal printed in Amsterdam between 1665 and 1759. The 1707 edition of this Journal detailed Gould's work *Lettre d'un Missionnaire*. Rival was so offended by this 'imposter' and 'array'd in Black, with Speech demurely soft'⁹⁴ (a quip no doubt designed to present the pacific tone of Gould's work in a more sinister fashion), that he set about producing a response. The pamphlet

⁹² Gould to Le procureur general, 13 Apr. 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

⁹³ Pierre Rival, *The Second Part of the Irish Missionary Unmask'd in which The Abbot Goulde, an Irish Priest, Treasurer and Head of the Church of our Lady of Thouars, and Missionary in Poitou, is anew convicted of several Falshoods and Impostures in general; but particularly in Points relating to the Church of England. Written in French by Mr. Rival, one of the Ministers of the French Chapel at St. James's. London; Printed for J. Roberts, near Oxford Arms in Warwick Lane* (London, 1724).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

allows one to add yet another colour to the canvas of Gould's published career, their range and influence extended beyond the prospective converts in Poitou and France, reaching those Huguenots who, fleeing France for a refusal to relinquish their beliefs, were still subject to political ambivalence in places like the London Refuge. Rival's response offers the reader an understanding as to how Gould was viewed not just as a writer, but as a missionary. The translator of Rival's work describes Gould as the 'most famous' as well as the 'Coryphaeus of missionaries in France'.⁹⁵ Care must be observed with this description, it may well be a deliberate one in order to reinforce the charges that are made against Gould, a setting where he is presented as an impostor of great magnitude. Yet the description is still an interesting one, it demonstrates the importance that was attributed to him, despite it being made in an unfavourable context. The salient point is that the message in Gould's work was deemed powerful enough to elicit a response from a Protestant critic and reinforces the overall impression of Gould's relative importance in this polemical field in France and wider Europe.

Conclusion

Gould was not simply a missionary but a missionary of the king, and with his express wishes and indeed financial support Gould launched his published career. His first work was published in 1705, twenty-seven years into his career, the second after almost forty-five years. His works were in essence as mentioned above, testimonies of his successful work in the field of conversion, detailed accounts of the issues and questions that he had encountered over his career and how he had effectively treated them in the process of instruction. They were the fruits of an experienced and successful pastoral life. The message, of course, had a part to play in their favourable reception, certainly in regard to what was communicated Gould was introducing nothing new, but the manner in which he presented this message or rather as he describes it the 'esprit' of his message, is significant. The books are intended to present an alternative and facilitate a move from one religious camp to another and as such the tone is quite persuasive and convivial.

⁹⁵ Rival, *The Irish Missionary unmask'd*, preface.

Viewed through the prism of persecution, they could present a welcome religious alternative to many who lived in an atmosphere where their traditional beliefs were attacked and their practice proscribed. This can be said to be one factor in the success of Gould's written works, in which one can view how central the book and the medium of the written word was in the fight to win new adherents to Catholic faith. Yet despite their influence books such as Gould's could never provide all the answers. Indeed the great worry for the early Catholic reformers was that texts such as the Bible itself could never truly provide everyone with religious truth. Gould's works and others like it were components, albeit integral ones, in the much larger mechanism of communicating the truth in an appropriate manner to the faithful. In the preface to his *Entretiens* Gould mentions that, 'J'ai toujours remarqué que ce qui empêche les Protestans de revenir de leurs fausses idées contre l'Eglise, c'est qu'on leur a fait une peinture affreuse de sa doctrine, n'étant point, à ce que les Ministres leur faisoient croire,...'.⁹⁶ This remark indicates two issues: first the confidence of Gould's faith in what he espoused and, second, an overview of the issue of Huguenot belief and attitudes towards the Catholic faith. It fails to appreciate the fact, however, that far from being ignorant of what the Catholic Church taught, some Huguenots simply did not want to relinquish their faith, not because of any notions of religious truth but because the religion that was being presented as an alternative had been part of a process that actively strove for the eradication of Reformed Protestantism in France. These attitudes adopted by Gould formed part of a number of inherent obstacles to which, with the luxury of hindsight, one can attribute the ultimate failure of the attempt to achieve religious unity in France.

⁹⁶ Gould, *Entretiens*, (Paris, 1727), preface.

Conclusion: Successes and failures

Our discussion thus far has brought us to the conclusion that Gould was undoubtedly successful as a missionary and as an agent of the crown throughout his time in Poitou. Nearing the end of this tenure in 1730 Maurepas commended Gould on his activities, ‘vous avez même souvent la consolation de ne pas voir vos travaux sans succès’,¹ the *secrétaire* continued to outline how the administration wished the curates of the province would follow such a fine example. The letter is an indication of the positive appraisals Gould received for his work. His accomplishments as an Irish man in France are impressive although they were not unique. Earning considerable distinction amongst his peers and cultivating a long career as a royally instructed *missionnaire du roi* to the Huguenots in Poitou, Maurepas words and the extent and reach of his published works are markers of such an achievement. This is how our perception is formed when one assesses it through the context of Gould’s personal career. When understood in the wider religious context of France we see that Gould’s success was reliant upon his involvement in a policy that ultimately failed.

The theocratic conceptions of the monarchy that drove the pursuit for religious unity emphasised that loyalty to the king presumed adoption of the religion of the king. The peace of Augsburg principle *Cujus regio, ejus religio*, when applied to France, rendered the Protestants disloyal to their monarch, whose duty it was to advance his subjects’ quest for salvation achieved through the promotion of good order in the Church and, the eradication of heresy. Such was the obligation of kings, who derived their political authority from God, at least that was what monarchy would have its subjects believe. Like the king, Gould’s priestly authority in his evangelical work to the Huguenots was also divinely commissioned. More specifically, this mandate came from the scriptures as we have discussed in chapters three and four. His reliance on scriptural references underpinned most of his conversion as well as polemic activities. As an erudite scriptural scholar, Gould was no doubt fully aware of chapter thirteen of Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, in which the apostle speaks of coercive government as a divinely appointed remedy to sin. This constituted a scriptural justification for the Church and state in their policy against the Huguenots; such notions of authority were widely accepted, but mostly amongst

¹ Maurepas to Gould, 24 Mar. 1730 (ANP, O/1 377, f. 104).

the drivers of the policy, the Church and the monarchy. Gould operated under these theological and political presuppositions. Dominating such notions and at the centre stood the king, the embodiment of the state. The royal person claimed a pervasive control over French constitution, laws, customs, parlements, estates, and officers, the nobility and importantly the Church and religion. Yet when we examine Gould's role in the implementation of this royal claim, particularly over church and religion, it becomes quite apparent that such omnipotent control was merely a claim and not a reality.

Gould's participation in this policy was one that was moderated by an attachment to irenic conversion. He arrived in France at the culmination of a number of small injustices that created a climate wherein much larger ones became routinely accepted.² The height of these injustices was characterised by the forced and violent conversions of the *dragonnades* in Poitou which presaged the Revocation in 1685. This was a result not of crown initiatives but, as indicated, of overzealous and ambitious *intendants* in the region. The actions of both Marillac and Foucault were deemed to be too violent and excessive. Foucault after succeeding Marillac as *intendants* of Poitou in 1683 was acting against the orders of the first minister and Louis XIV when he billeted troops to Huguenots to induce conversions. Both *intendants* were eventually remonstrated with and recalled.³ These were not local provincial administrators, but crown appointed agents. Thus the case is an indication of the problem of trying to apply crown authority over its agents in the peripheral provinces. In terms of conversion, what the state required was a softer approach, although strong armed tactics would be tacitly approved if the former did not win converts. In his instructions to the Dauphin Louis XIV outlined his opinions on this subject;

those who want to use extreme and violent remedies do not understand the nature of this evil [the reformed faith] caused in part by heated passion...it is necessary to let [them] run their course and die out rather than reignite them by some strong [measures].⁴

² John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France. Volume 2: The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion* (Oxford, 1999), p. 570

³ Jacqueline Gratton, 'The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the role of the *Intendants* in the *Dragonnades*', in *French History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2011), pp 164-187.

⁴ Roy L. McCullough, *Coercion, Conversion and Counterinsurgency in Louis XIV's France* (Leiden and Boston, 2007), p. 172.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the events that presaged it can hardly be said to be letting this 'evil' run its course. Yet this was the sentiment taken with regard to conversion, strong measures could prove counterproductive. The available sources do not allow one to assess accurately the influence of Gould's background in Ireland and the excesses of *Dragonnades* during his initial years in Poitou, on his approach to his work. Yet there are grounds for intelligent speculation to suggest that they may well have tempered his method, pushing him towards the more irenic route to conversion. The strongest evidence for his adoption of irenic techniques lies in the fact that it allowed him to achieve results. The documentary evidence does highlight that as well as being a man of the establishment he was a man of the church devoted to his interpretation of religious truth and sincere in its dissemination amongst the Huguenots. This is apparent in his reports and his published works. The vocabulary used by Gould to describe the varying levels of religious heterodoxy and Catholic conformity amongst the Huguenots of his network demonstrated that it was not simply a case of being Protestant or Catholic. Somehow there was space that existed between these two categories, situated in this middle ground. Here Gould worked to pull back those who had veered too far towards the heterodox end of the spectrum, and to maintain those who had crossed over, in their Catholic beliefs. His reports describe a people who were in a constant religious flux. Heresy was considered one of the worst stains on a person's character but it was not viewed as an indelible mark, it could be erased through the act of abjuration. The words such as *frères séparés* and *brebis égarées* are essentially divisive terms, but terms that demonstrate the potentiality of rejoining the flock, they are not descriptive of an idea that viewed them as completely divorced from society or from the Catholic Church.

Using a lexicon of word and phrases such as *pervertir* and *née dans l'erreur* situated many of these Huguenots in the role of victims, prey to circumstances beyond their control. The lexicon used by Gould is quite pacific, it lacks the virulent and acerbic tone that one assumes would be characteristic of a Church and state program to stamp out heresy. It represented Gould's temperate view of his work, but it is also reflective of Gould's and the state's failure to appreciate the Huguenot attachment to their beliefs, and more importantly Huguenot rejection of Bourbon Catholicism. It is interesting when Gould mentions the case of Madame de Mainsay, he presumes upon her relationship with her daughter, whom she 'corrupted'. It is very possible the Mainsay's daughter had willingly rejected her new faith, family

ties were more important than obligations to the crown, at least to some. It represents a failure or refusal to appreciate that many of these people did not want to convert. Those who were denied the practice of their old religion had very little respect for the new. The *intendant* of Agen wrote in 1700 that ‘you cannot say they are Huguenots’ ‘without any instruction in religion they know only that their fathers were and that they must not become Catholics.’⁵ The Protestants had already been given the choice to exist as separate religious communities within the French state, their demand for a distinction between religious choice and political subjecthood, an apparently modern demand, had been accepted by Henri IV in 1598 but rejected by his grandson Louis XIV in 1685. People do not give up such privileges easily, especially when these privileges related to their practice of religion.

Studies have been conducted which have tended to diminish the conventional picture of a divinely appointed king who resolved to rule alone, and whose bureaucracy was an emanation of royal authority.⁶ The power of the monarchy depended on the government’s ability to manipulate an array of vested interests. Absolutism, if indeed it can be applied to the workings of *Louisquartorzien* France, was contradicted by its dependence on a compromise with the families and groups who controlled the key institutions of central and provincial government. The real problem faced by the monarchy was coming to grips with the fact that its existence was rooted in the web of patrimonial alliances.⁷ The energies of the crown were more preoccupied with the distribution of wealth, power and status than with the implementation of absolutist policies such as religious unity.⁸ On a lower level the successful implementation of Gould’s remit in this overall policy in Poitou was heavily dependent on those alliances and relationships that made up his world. Examining Gould’s network reveals a number of problems that served to compromise the success of his conversion mission. This was particularly the case with regard to the nature of the relationship between the three groups of people that made up the *missionnaire*’s world: the clergy, government agents and, the Huguenots.

Much of Gould’s information regarding the Huguenots congregations was communicated to him from the local parish priests who formed the backbone of his contacts in Poitou. But in certain

⁵ John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France. Volume 2: The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion* (Oxford, 1999), p. 598.

⁶ David Parker, ‘Absolutism and the function of the law in Seventeenth-Century France’, in *The Past & Present Society*, No. 122 (February 1989), pp 36-74 at p. 38.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 69-70.

cases it was the local clergy charged with the spiritual affairs of the parish who facilitated Huguenot activity either by turning a blind eye or actively enabling illegal activities; this had been shown with the example of the *curé* of Pousange, Marboeuf.⁹ Such activity was not reserved to clergy members, but members of the laity such as notaries and clerks, who like their religious counterparts, conducted illegal Huguenot marriages for a fee.¹⁰ These are not merely single cases but indicators of a much larger problem, the lack of complete involvement from the grass roots to implement the crown's policy, and as Gould's reports demonstrate, with an acute presence amongst the Catholic clergy. The actions of Catholic clergy in these heavily populated Huguenot areas may well have been a response to the lack of available resources to physically force these communities to behave like Catholics.

Gould's involvement in the instruction process informs us on the number of people required to effect successful conversions, which proved extremely difficult to achieve when those people who were charged with the removal of Huguenots, ate, drank, and ploughed the same fields with those they had to convert. Agreements between the religious groups, an *amitié ancienne*, had been cultivated in the climate of the Nantes arrangement of 1598, and was expressed in activities such as joint cemetery use.¹¹ In some of these communities the Catholics had more in common with the Huguenots than they did with their king, who resided leagues away in Versailles. To many the monarch was merely an idea, the embodiment of the state, and importantly absent of all the personal attributes that may have endeared a Catholic to their Protestant neighbour or vice versa. Yet the crown policy and its success necessitated that one dismantle such relations. The barriers with which Gould came up against in his work are descriptions of these communal associations, networks from which the monarchy derived its power, and as the *missionnaire's* reports highlights, networks that oftentimes worked against and abrogated crown policy.

The limitations in the avenues of effective implementation of what was, in historical hindsight, an extremely ambitious plan, were compounded by the obduracy of the Huguenots themselves who as mentioned simply did not want to convert. The beliefs and identity of this community had been shaped

⁹ Thomas Gould to Monsieur de la Tour, 8 May 1725, (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

¹⁰ Gould to de la Tour, 22 May 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

¹¹ Keith P Luria has discussed this point at length in both his *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, 2005), and 'Separated by Death? Burials, cemeteries, and confessional boundaries in Sixteenth-Century France' in *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (spring 2001), pp 785-808.

and forged through opposition to the monarchy over two centuries; if a Huguenot lacked the intellectual ability to define what he was for doctrinally, the religious climate in which they grew up certainly gave them an understanding of what they were against, Bourbon Catholicism. The obduracy which Gould encountered during his work is evidence of this defiant religious tradition. Most of his meetings that are reported in the sources, display this varying level of resistance. An obvious drawback to conversion was the time and resources that were required to affect a degree of success. Time was one of the best ways of weeding out trivial and insincere conversions, which were carried out at a glacial pace over a number of weeks, sometimes months. The conversion of the weaver and *prédicant* named Paquereau is a good example. In December 1726 Maurepas received Paquereau's act of abjuration from Gould.¹² This was not the first time that Paquereau had come to the attention of the *missionnaire*. Gould reported his activities in 1719, but it had taken over seven years to finally bring about a resolution to this problem. The length of time needed to extract a conversion and the effort exerted in this process does not seem to have been worthwhile when one considers how easily these individuals reverted back to their former beliefs. What is impressive, however, is the continued effort exhibited by Gould, all too familiar as he was with the problems and setbacks concomitant to his work. His zeal and enthusiasm rarely diminishes in his reports and there is no evidence of any uncertainty of belief in the success of his instruction. The alacrity with which he carried out his function is very evident in the source material.¹³ It is this very energy and zest for his work that encouraged the administration to send numerous individuals to Gould for instruction especially those who were deemed to be problematic.

Even when the Huguenots did convert there was the growing suspicion and indeed in some cases an acceptance that they would abjure. The doubt of conversion's authenticity was a constant theme throughout modern Christianity and also for men like Gould. Motives for abjuring ones faith could be very compelling because religious affiliations criss-crossed other social groupings such as kinship ties, family alliances and communal institutions, patron –client networks and class. In Krumenacker's *Protestants du Poitou*, he demonstrates how the state policy of religious unity was one that was imposed from the top, although it did have many adherents and supporters on the ground. It

¹² Maurepas to de la Tour, 9 Dec. 1726 (ANP, O/1 373, f. 606).

¹³ Gould to de la Tour, 10 Apr. 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

was a top down approach and this is why it could never be successful. The interconnectedness at grassroots level was such that the success of the policy needed to come from those local networks themselves. It could be very hard for a government agent in heavily populated Protestant areas, where the local power networks and clientage links he relied upon to implement religious policy, were made up of Huguenots.

Such success as Gould enjoyed rested on the many abjurations he coaxed or wrenched from the Huguenots over his career. These conversions were the fruit of one to one instruction, and their success depended specifically in this technique. Yet even without questioning the effectiveness of the *Missionnaire's* technique, he could never really hope to diminish the Huguenot population in his area. The main obstacle lay in the mechanics of the state and the workings of society which functioned in a way that was incompatible with what it hoped to achieve in its religious agenda. The winds that had fanned the flames of religious turmoil in the sixteenth century kindled new fires of religious identity in later seventeenth. The new ways in which minorities viewed their relationship to their religion and their monarch, the thinking that developed in an early enlightenment period, both changed public opinion. The Huguenots' case was championed by thinkers such as Pierre Bayle, and much later Voltaire. Attempts to centralise the state religiously and its ideological underpinnings came into conflict with these new ideas of religious identity and freedom. Gould's work on the ground in Poitou allows one to view the tangible results of these changes, this was expressed in Huguenot religious obduracy and political aversion to the Bourbon state, which itself lacked the resources and in certain cases the will to neutralise these Protestant sentiments. All of which was reflective of a state's inability to convert its religious minorities and the limits of its absolutist claims.

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Abrégé des Pseaumes de David, sur la conduite que chaque chrétien doit tenir dans tout le cours de sa vie, où il trouvera le remède à ses inquiétudes, le sujet de sa tranquillité et de sa paix avec Dieu, avec son prochain, et avec soi-même. Adressé à un gentilhomme nouveau converti (Paris, 1735).

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Appendix I : a selection of items from Gould's correspondence 1705 - 1727

A note on the transcriptions

The transcription conventions of the text follow their original presentation in the manuscript sources. All text has been left in its original spelling, text contained within [] denote transcriber's expansion on abbreviations in the original, such as S.A.R [Son altesse Royale]. Where the text is left blank [----] is an indication of unknown text, either through illegible penmanship or damage to the manuscripts.

Copied from the Archives Départementales de la Vienne, Poitiers.

Gould to the Bishop of Poitiers, 3 March 1705 (ADV, Poitiers, C56)

Monsieur,

Suivant ces st[sainte] et pieuse intentions du Roy, je continue toujours a veiller sur la conduite de nouveaux convertis de ces cantons, particulièrement de ceux dont la catholicite [est] suspecte il y a dans la paroisse d'availles st hilaire un gentilhomme nommé mr de genouille nouveau convertis qui ne parois pas estre [bien] catholique, et quoique madame son epouse, selon toutes les apparences, soit bien convertie, cependant je ne trouve pas qu'elle ait assez d'attention [-----] madame sa fille dans les principes de notre religion, cette petite personne est agée de neuf ou dix ans, elle a beaucoup d'esprit pour une enfant de son age, et fort bien intentions pour la religion catholique et cela est si vray qu'elle se cache a ce qu'en m'a assure par des personnes dignes de luy, pour faire le signe de la croix et pour dire l'ave maria, comme la mere n'est point absolument la maitresse dans la maison, et comme elle crainds beaucoup son mary c'est ce qui est, sans doute la cause qu'elle n'a pas eleve cette enfant dans les principes [----] de la catholicité, c'est pourquoy j'ay cru, monseigneur, qu'il estoit [de mon{sic} droit vous en donner] advis{sic} puisque vous avez autant de zele pour la religion que vous [----] pour le service de nostre [-----]

--], je suis persuade que la mere seroit ravie de voir sa fille pour quelque temps dans l'abbaye de st Jean aupres de madame [l'abbesse] ou elle seroit tres bien [----] pour la religion et pour les manieres honnestes et polies du monde. Le pere est riche et bien en estat de payer la pension, si vous juges apropos monseigneur de donner un ordre pour faire mettre cette enfant dans un couvent.

On m'a avertis qu'il y a en cette ville depuis 1ere de mai un tapisier estranger de la religion protestante et dont il fait profession c'est un homme qui rode le pays je l'ay [---] icy il y a trois ans, mais il fut obliger de s'en retirer [----] ayant appris que monsieur[--- ---- ---] intendant d'icy, avait donné des ordres pour l'arrester, je suis tres persuade monseigneur que cet sejour de cet homme n'est point avantageux pour icy, c'est pourquoy je vous supplie tres humblement de donner vos ordres pour qu'il n'y demeure plus long temps, si vous jugez apropos, monseigneur de donner vos ordres a mr la prevost d'icy pour le [-----] de la ville et de tous ces cantons, je [---] d'iray l'endroit ou il pourrait le trouve. J'ay prié monsieur l'abbé de Villeroy de [vous dire] un mot de ce tapisier et de vous parler monseigneur, d'un gentil-homme de ce canton qui neglige beaucoup l'instruire bien de ses enfants dans la religion {sic} catholique. trop heureux, si je parois d'une cette œuvre de bien servir, en quelque manier, d'instrument a vostre [zèle], monseigneur, pour la reunion parfaite de ceux qui ne sont point entierement persuades de nos st [mysteres], au moins j'auray la consolation de vous assurer de ma parfaite soumission, et du profond respect avec lequel je suis,

Monseigneur

Vostre tres tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur

Goulde,

A Thouars le 3 Mar 1705.

Goulde to De La Tour, 14 March 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58)

Monsieur,

Il faut esperer, monsieur, que par vos soins toujours assaisonnés de vostre prudence ordinaire, on verra bientot finir les assemblées de Religionnaires qui se multiplient tous les jours a ce que monsieur l'eveque de la Rochelle me mande par sa derniere lettre, du costé de Benet et en plusieurs autres endroits tout autour. Je crois devoir vous informer, monsieur, qu'on soupçone {sic} avec quelque fondement quil{sic} y a des gens mal intentionnés qui se trouvent dans [les] assemblées habiliés{sic} en poisons pour mieux insinuer leurs mauvais desseins. J'auray l'honneur, monsieur, de vous donner avis de tout ce qui me reviendra sur cette affaire si importante pour la Religion et l'estat,

Je suis ravi qu'on vous ait envoyé l'arret d'attribution, c'est une justice que la cour rend a vostre [zele] et a vos attentions continuelles pour le bon ordre de cette province cela ne m'a pas surpris.

J'espere que le Prevost de la Rochesuryon executera bien vos ordres a l'occasion de l'avis que le curé de la Rochetrejon m'avait donné au sujet de son predicant. Je prie le seigneur de benir vos bonnes instructions, monsieur, je le souhaite avec autant de [----] que j'ay l'honneur d'estre avec un respect infini,

Monsieur,

Vostre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur
L'abbé Goulde,

a thouars le 14 mars 1719.

Gould to De la Tour, 10 April 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58)

10 avril 1719 Goulde to De la Tour,

Monsieur,

Une legere indisposition que ma laisse le mauvais tems aussi bien que la fatigue du voyage que nous venons de faire, m'oblige de me servir de la main de mon fidelle compaignon de Mission pour vous informer Monsieur de ce que nous avons vû et fait dans cette derniere tournée.

Jay donc l'honneur de vous dire Monsieur que suivant vos ordres et ceux de M. Le procureur general nous avons fait nos visites a niort, st. Maixant, cherueux st christophe, echiré, et pamperou, ou nous avons trouvé les anciens catholiques et les nouveaux bien convertis dans une grande consternation sur les bruits ridicules que des gens mal intentionnés pour la religion et pour le gouvernement present, ont fait courir d'une liberté de conscience, mais ils ont été bientost detrompés par les lettres que je leur ay fait voir de vous, Monsieur, de mon sr. le procureur general et de M. le prince de talmond qui assurent le contraire, la declaration du Roy qui a paru depuis a confirmé ce que j'avois eu soin de publier a ce sujet, il ne faut pas douter quelle ne fasse le mesme effet dans toute la province et quelle n'empêche les mouvemens sedicieux des Religionnaires auxquels il estoit tems de remedier ce qui se passa a morgan le dimanche des Rameaux lorsque nous etions encore a st. maixant doit faire beaucoup d'impression sur l'esprit de ces malheureux qui certainement sont poussés par des personnes qu'on pourra connoistre par vos soins et les justes mesures que vous prenez comme je lay mande en cour. Comme je suis persuadé, monsieur, que vous estes parfaitement informé de tout ce qui s'est passé dans la fameuse assemblée de morgan je ne vous en marque rien. En verité monsieur il faut estre sur les lieux pour connoistre la temerité de ces Religionnaires et la consternation des fidelles sujets anciens catholiques. Nous avons eu la consolation de voir que plusieurs nouveaux reunis persistent dans le devoir de bons catholiques quoy que le nombre en soit petit, Je n'ay pas encore receu de nouvelles de M. de la Cournueve{sic} au sujet du nomme [dauband], je prends la liberte de vous envoyer l'extrait d'une{sic} lettre que j'ay receüe d'une autre personne que j'avois employé pour la decouverte de ce predicant

qui cadre fort a ce que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de me mander a ce sujet, je continueray mes soins pour le decouvrir sil{sic} est possible et vous donneray toujours des marques du zele et du respect avec lequel jay l'honneur d'estre

Monsieur

Votre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur

L'abbé Goulde

a thoüars le 10 avril 1719

Gould to De La Tour, 22 May 1719 (ADV, Poitiers, C58).

J'arrivay icy samedy d'une tournée de 3 semaines apres avoir visité sous vos ordres, monsieur, et sous ceux de monsieur le procureur general, la plus part des paroisses des dioceses de la Rochelle, et de Luçon ou il y a nombre de nouveaux convertis. vos lettres, monsieur, et celles de cet illustre Magistrat ont fait une grande impression sur l'esprit des mal convertis, et cause une joye infinie aux anciens catholiques voyant quil{sic} y a plus anciennes esperances de liberté de conscience. vostre lettre circulaire a tous les curés pour aprendre d'eux les nombres des nouveaux reunis qui ne font pas leur devoir a produit un effet admirable, dieu mercy.

mon compagnon et moy avons commencé par la [forest ---- -----] ou presque tous les nouveaux convertis ne font plus aucun devoir de catholique, n'aprochant pas mesme de l'eglise, on pretend que c'est le nommé [Dudel] qui a tout perverti dans ce pais la, apres estre sorti des prisons de Saumur ou il a demeuré 25 ans, il n'est plus dans le pais, ce malheureux avant son depart a perverti le nommé Senechau agé de 23 ans qui est [---] des pere et mere catholiques, et [-----] esté toujours de la nous sommes allée a Moncoutant ou il y a un nombre considerable de Religionnaires ou nouveaux mal convertis dont pas un ne fait son devoir, a courlay ou il y en a aussi beaucoup, quelques uns vont a l'eglise.

a pousange ils sont tres opiniatres, nous avons rendu visite a madame de maintay, tres vieille qu'elle fasse une serieuse attention sur ce que nous luy avons dit pour son salut aussi bien qu'a tous ceux que nous avons visités dans leurs maisons.

ceux de la paroisse de Rochetrejon sont sur le mesme pied, ils nous ont cependant ecouté avec beaucoup de docilité, vostre lettre circulaire contribuera beaucoup a leur retour au moins paroisses et ils sont estonnés dans cette paroisse comme dans toutes les autres.

nous avons eu l'honneur de voir M : L'evêque de Luçon qui nous a receu tres gracieusement, et fort exhorté de bien proner vos lettres, et celles de monsieur le procureur general qui font voir qu'il n'y a aucune esperance de liberté de conscience. ce prelat m'a fort prié de voir le nommé Gilbert vostre prisonnier de Rochetrejon en passant au [Ruibelliard] et de tascher de mettre la paix entre luy et le curé et les autres habitants qui sont tous fort animés les uns contre les autres, quant a Gilbert il m'a promis de ne plus enseigner, et de bien vivre avec son curé comme vous le verrez, Monsieur, par sa promesse quil{sic} m'a donné par escrit, je vous envoie aussi une lettre que son curé m'a escrite. comme ce pauvre homme a femme et trois enfens{sic} qui sont a ce qui je vois, dans un estat a plaindre; je crois, Monsieur, sans vostre meilleur avis, qu'il seroit a propos et si vous avez pour agreable, de la faire sortir de prison voyant la disposition ou il est presentement.

nous avons visité la paroisse de st. [Philbert] ou tous les nouveaux convertis font leur devoir a l'exception de deux, le curé de chantonnais nous dit que la majeure partie de ses nouveaux convertis font assez bien, Mr de la [Neveanchere], a qui nous avons rendu visite, nous a assuré que tous les gentils hommes de son canton font parfaitement bien leur devoir surtout les demoiselles de [---] que nous avons vües, et qui sont tres bien converties. nous avons vü avec joye que les mariages abusifs ne sont plus en usage dans plusieurs paroises{sic} l'avis que vous m'aviez donné conformement a celui de Mr le comte de chamilly, et de Mr le procureur general, d'engager les notaires par voye de douceur et d'insinuation de ne plus faire ces sortes de contrats de mariages, a produit un admirable effet [----]quil{sic} ne s'en est pas fait dans les paroisses ou ils estoient les plus communs. cependant a St. Jouin de Milly il s'en est fait trois depuis le mois de janvier, et nous avons decouvert le notaire, il est de pousange, et nous y avons esté pour l'engager comme nous avons fait les autres

par la mesme voye, il a promis de ne plus retomber en pareille faute. Si ces notaires persistent dans cette disposition, ce sera une bonne affaire. J'aye fais tout mon possible pour tascher de decouvrir quelque predicant mais depuis la derniere declaration du Roy a l'occasion des assembleés, et voyant l'attention que vous avez, monsieur, de la faire executer, ces predicants ne paroissent plus, si on en trouve quelqu'un, vos ordres seront exactement executés pour le faire arreter et conduire dans les prisons les plus prochaines de bien ou on fera la capture. J'ay l'honneur de vous dire monsieur que S:A:R:[Son altesse Royale] a donné ordre au sr. coignard de faire une nouvelle edition de mon livre, [--] luy a ordonne de m'envoye les 200 cens{sic} exemplaires qui luy restent de la derniere edition aussitost que je les aurai receu{sic}, j'aurai l'honneur, monsieur de vous en donner avis, afin de recevoir vos ordres pour en faire la distribution. Je tascherai en toutes occasion de vous donner des marques de ma parfaite soumission, et du profond respect avec lequel j'ay l'honneur d'estre,

Monsieur,

vostre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur

L'abbé Goulde

A thouars le 22 maiy{sic}

1719.

Gould to De la Tour, 28 July 1724 (ADV, Poitiers, C59)

Monsieur,

Vous continuez a me donner des marques de l'honneur de votre bienveillance, et je continueray toute ma vie a vous en temoigner ma vive reconnaissance, et se tascheray de la meriter par mon attachement considerable et respectueuse pour vostre illustre personne, et par mon zele pour la Religion. [-----] entrent dans nos pieuses intentions a l'egard de la derniere declaration du Roy, je seray mieux en etat de

seconder vos bons sentiments pour la conversion des protestants de vostre province. Le principal point de tout en maniere de religion c'est, comme vous l'avez fort bien remarqué l'education des enfants, et les mariages abusifs. C'est a quoy il fait travailler avec precaution et menagement. J'y donneray mes soins [----], monsieur. C'est une chose etonnante, et le procedé le plus hardie dont on puisse estre capable de faire des assembleés et vendre se[s] meuble et autres effet pour passer en Angleterre et en hollande depuis la declaration du Roy. Cela nous fait connoistre l'esprit de l'heresie qui cause toujours les plus grandes troubles par tout ou cela est J'avais suspendu d'abord mon jugement sur ce qu'on m'avait mandé au sujet de l'assemblee des Religionnaires a mouchamps, mais je vois aujourd'hui que cette nouvelle est confirmée par la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur, monsieur, de m'crire. Jen ay fait part a mon illustre patron Mr le Procureur general.

On m'a donné avis depuis quelque jours que quelques Religionnaires malins et mal intentionné du costé du bas Poitou, publient entre eux que la derniere declaration du Roy qui les regarde n'est que pour leur faire peur et quelle n'aura pas de [suite] c'est a ceux que parlent les prédicants, ce sont ces malheureux qui mettent toujours le feu et la discorde dans nostre province et certainement leurs nombre seroit considérablement plus grand sans les soins continuels que vous nous donnez pour les faire arrester comme je le mande en cour, je ne prendray jamais la moindre occasion de vous faire connoistre, monsieur mon tres illustre protecteur, que j'ay l'honneur d'estre plus qu'homme du monde avec la plus vive reconnaissance et avec le plus profond respect.

Monsieur,

Vostre tres humble, et tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur.

L'abbé Goulde

A Thouars 28 juillet 1724.

Gould to Le procureur general, 13 April 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

Copie de la lettre de M. Labbé Goulde en datte du 13e avril 1725 a M. le procureur general.

M[monsieur]

Je commence par vous demander pardon si je nay pas l'honneur de vous ecrire aujourdhuy de ma propre main un segnement de nez m'oblige de me servir de celle de mon compagnon.

agreez donc sil vous plaist M. que j 'aye l'honneur de vous rendre compte de ce que nous avons fait dans notre tournée de trois semaines dans le Bas Poitou. nous avons eu la consolation d'apprendre qu'on ne parle plus d'aucune assembleé dans toutes les paroisses ou {sic} nous avons passé, vos excellentes lettres ostensible des annees precedentes on produits cet effet, nous avons aussi eu la joye de voir que les notaires qui faisoient des mariages abusifs ne sont plus dans cet usage depuis les menaces que nous leur avons fait de votre part, mais cela n'empeche pas que les Religionnaires ne se marient par adoüage, comme ils appellent, cest a dire qu'ils se donnent l'un a l'autre en presence de leurs parens et amis en suite de quoy ils habitent ensemble, les plus aysés et les plus scrupuleux vont aux environs de la Rochelle et de Rochefort ou ils trouvent de malheureux pretres qui se disent aumonier de [vesseau] qui les marient pour de l'argent. Ceux qui avoient ete maries l'un passe par un moine Jacobin dans une auberge de st. fulgant nont pas tenu la parole qu'ils m'avoient donnée de faire rehabiliter leurs mariages et de se faire bons catholiques. Ils vivent toujours dans le concubinage malgré les sages remontrances {sic} que Monseigneur l'Eveque de lucon leur fit le 15 septembre dernier en les exhortant de se soumettre aux declarations du Roy et a la sentence rendue contre eux en particulier au presidial de poitiers, cet indigne Jacobin nest plus dans le pays dieu Mercy et les soins de Monsr[ieur] de La tour notre zele intendant, on croit quil s'est retiré en angleterre et qu'il a apostosié {sic}

Ce qui nous desolle cest que la declaration du Roy n'a pas produit leffet qu'on devoit en attendre. Il est vray que tous les Religionnaires en furent dabord efrayer {sic} et qu'ils envoient leurs enfans aux instructions et aux ecolles catholiques, mais cela ne dura qu'un mois ayant receu des lettres pretendues pastorales des ministres refugiez

en angleterre et en hollande par lesquelles ils leur mande que cette declaration est un [---] rapport qui passe, dont il n'y a rien a craindre d'autant plus disent ils, quil y aura bientost une alliance{sic} entre la france et l'angleterre, enfin ils paroissent plus opiniatres quauparavant,{sic} Il faut pourtout esperer que les livres que le Roy a eu la bonté de leur envoyer pour leur instruction et dont plusieurs paroissent contens produiront un bon effet, Mrs[messieurs] les curés promettent d'en faire un bon usage pour le salut de ces brebis Egarées.

Monsieur de la tour toujours attentif au bien de la Religion a envoyé plusieurs exemplaires de ces livres dans le haut poitou, nous verrons en quel que tems dicy{sic} apres la tournée que nous allons faire a loudun quel effet la lecture de ces livres aura produit sur leurs esprits, en cas que ma santé qui est fort alterée puisse me le permettre. Mrs[messieurs] les curés ont été charmés de votre derniere lettre, Ils m'ont tous prie de leur en laisser des copies, et je puis vous assurer M[onsieur] quelle a fait impression sur ceux des Religionnaires a qui je lay faite voir

Nous avons commencé notre tournée par bersuire ou nous avons été bien ayse de voir que Madame de la forest Montpensier dame d'une qualité distinguee et de merite, a profité aussi bien que toute sa famille des instructions que je leur avois données autrefois, Ils ont paru fort contens de mon livre de la messe, Il y a dans cette ville la deux filles d'une des meilleures familles qui firent leur abjuration entre mes mains Il y a douze ans, qui se estoient{sic} relachées depuis quelque tems, mais elles sont presentement dans la disposition de faire leur devoirs, comme ces filles, quoy que de bonne famille, sont fort pauvres, si par votre moyen M, on pouvoit leur procurer une petite pension de contribuer ce seroit une grande charité, j'en avois obtenu une de 150[livres] pour leur pere qui est mort en bon catholique, mais le Roy mourut avant que le brevet fut signe, Il n'en jouit pas, Il n'y a plus, par la grace de dieu aucun protestant dans Bersuire.

de la nous alames a Courlay ou il y a nombre de Religionnaires sur lesquels la declaration du Roy n'a rien produit, Il semble qu'ils agissent partout d'intelligence, nous avons pourtant eu la joye d'y voir mourir une femme agée de 80 ans dans la Religion catholique, et recevoir les sacremens avec edification apres avoir été toute sa

vie une des plus opiniâtres; J'espère que cet exemple fera impression sur sa famille et sur les autres.

Nous avons passé quelques jours à Moncoutant où les Religionnaires sont en très grand nombre, Il faut espérer que les ordres que monsieur de la tour notre intendant a donné de faire mettre dans les prisons de Thouars le nommé Bernardin homme dangereux et qui a quatre de ses enfans en Angleterre, pourra les toucher. Il y a aussi le nommé des Berthières très riche marchand, encore plus dangereux que Bernardin son oncle, Il m'a dit sa sortie du Royaume à ce que M. le curé nous a assuré, et qu'il a envoyé deux de ses enfans âgés de dix à douze ans, en Angleterre Il en a chez lui une autre âgée de neuf ans qu'il serait très à propos de faire mettre *{sic}* dans un couvent. Le nommé Talbot homme riche, de la même paroisse est aussi très dangereux et parle mal de la Religion, Il m'avait *{sic}* promis devenir le faire instruire chez moi ou il aurait demeuré gratis il m'en avait même donné son billet, mais il n'en a rien fait.

Il est à remarquer que dans cette paroisse presque tous les Religionnaires ont des armes à feu et que notre vie n'y est pas en sûreté, non plus que celle du curé qu'ils ont souvent menacé, il serait bon de les faire désarmer.

Nous avons aussi séjourné à Pousanges où les Religionnaires sont en très grand nombre, aucun ne se soumet à la déclaration du Roy, ils étoient allés comme les autres à l'Eglise *{sic}* pendant un mois, mais depuis ils n'y mettent *{sic}* pas le pied, n'y envoient leurs enfans aux écoles, pendant le peu de temps qu'ils les y ont envoyés ils ont eu plusieurs fois la témérité de dire au Regent qui est gagé du Roy, que s'il menait les enfans à l'Eglise ou qu'il leur [fit] faire le signe de la croix. Ils n'y retourneront jamais, cependant votre lettre *{sic}* monseigneur, dont j'ay laissé copie à M. le curé n'a pas laissé de les étonner, à ce que j'ay appris depuis, ils croyoient qu'on ne pensoit plus en eux; ce qu'il y a de certain, *{sic}* c'est que si les juges des lieux tenoient la main à faire payer des amendes les pères qui renvoient pas leurs enfans aux écoles on verroit un grand changement. Il y a une chose à remarquer sur laquelle je vous prie M. de faire attention pour la gloire de Dieu et pour le bien de la Religion, c'est qu'il n'y aura jamais lieu de désespérer la conversion des R. r [religionnaires] de Pousanges la ville tant qu'on y laissera pour curé le M. de Marbeuf, vous connoissez son caractère aussi bien

que M. l'Evêque de Luçon, cet illustre et sage prelat travaille a luy faire faire {sic} son procès sur bien des chefs ayant envoye son official et son promoteur sur les lieux pour informer de ses vie et mours les R.rs[religionnaires] en sont consternés et craignent de le perdre.

Nous sommes allés en suite a pousanges le Bourg ou il y a un excellent curé. Il vous remontre M. quil y a dans sa paroisse bien des Religionnaires qui n'ont obei a la declaration du Roy que pendant un mois quil venoient en foule a l'Eglise mais ils en ont été detournés, il vous prie aussi defaire sortir de la maison des nommés fluseau et des barres calvinistes qui demeurent a la martiniere dans la dite paroisse une fille de douze a treize ans dont le pere et les ayeux sont morts bons catholique, elle s'appelle des Barres, pour la faire metre chez le nomme pierre des barres son tuteur ancien catholique on prevoit bien qu'on veut le lever dans la Religion protestante; Il y a dans ce lieu la un nommé Broüart dont le fils etoit predicant et qui est passé dans les pays etrangers sur les menaces que je luy avois fait de votre part. M. le curé nous a assure que le dit Broüart pere est soupçonné destre{sic} luy mesme un predicant caché, mais ce qui me paroist plus important, cest quil y a dans cette paroisse une veufue de qualité nommée Madame de la Maintaye qui a été mise, autre fois, par ordre du Roy dans le monastere de la st. Jean les{sic} thouars, pour y estre sous ma conduite, elle me paroissoit dabord bien intentionnée{sic} pour sa conversion, mais apres la mort du grand Roy elle sortit du couvent et a toujours percisté{sic} dans son opiniatreté, elle a mesme perverti sa fille qui avoit été pendant longtems bonne Catholique, jusque la quelle vouloit se faire Religieuse dont j'ay la preuve en main, elle la envoyée en presse ou elle a abjure la foy catholique, M le curé nous a dit que la declaration, en question, l'avoit fort intriguée mais que depuis un voyage quelle a fait a nantes elle paroissoit tranquille et a persuadé aux autres quil n'y a rien a craindre, cette dame jöiit de douze cent livres de rente, ses detes payées, en cas qu'on voulut la mettre dans une communauté il seroit apropos que ce fut loins d'icy, pour luy empecher tout commerce avec les Res[religionnaires] de pousange, on peut compter que cet exemple produiroit un bon effet.

Comme il y a beaucoup de travail a Mouchamp nous y avons passé les fetes de paque, la declaration du Roy y a produit la meme effet que dans les autres paroisses, il est vray cependant que quelques uns d'entre les Res[religionnaires] envoient leurs enfans

aux Ecolles catholiques, nous avons eu le plaisir de voir 22 garçons enfans de Religionnaires dans l'Ecolles du Regent et doix{sic} ou douze filles dans celle de la Regente les uns et les autres vont a la messe et aux instructions qui se font a l'Eglise, le Senechal de ce lieu nommé le Sr de la doipe qui est interdit depuis peu de sa charge, a la diligence de Mr de la tour intendant, va a la messe les dimanches et les festes mais il ne s'aproche plus des sacremens, quoy quil leut fait pendant dix huit ans, toute la famille qui avoit aussi été tres catholique, en aparence pendant le dit tems de dix huit année et sur le mesme pied a la reserve quil n'y a que luy qui entre dans l'Eglise ce est{sic} tres facheux, cest que son fils ayné avocat qui avoit toujours professé la Religion Catholique et qui s'aprochoit exactement des sacremens a poitiers ou il faisoit son droit, n'aproche pas de l'eglise depuis quil est de retour chez son pere.

dans cette mesme paroisse le nommé herpin de la jurisdiction aussi interdit de sa charge qui est nay{sic} catholique et de pere et de mere catholiques, dont il avoit toujours fait le devoir pendant quil demeuroit, en qualité de domestique chez [---] M. le comte de la massage, s'est perverti depuis huit ou dix ans quil est marie avec une Religionnaire qui luy donne un gros bien ayont mesme hérite depuis peu d'une succession de plus de dix mil ecus, contre les declarations du Roy, J'ay eu plusieurs conferences avec luy pendant mon sejour, il m'a paru assez disposé a faire son devoir, le tems nous le fera connoistre, il a commencé a envoyer ses enfans aux Ecolles. pour reussir a la conversion de cet homme M. ne jugeroit pas apropos de m'ecrire une lettre ostensible par laquelle vous auriez la bonté de me marquer que vous êtes content des bonnes dispositions ou je vous ay marque que je l'ay laissé, avec un mot de menace que sil ne fait pas son devoir il perdra la succession dont il jouit par le decez du Sr. Barthé du Sablon oncle de sa femme et quil ne suffit pas d'envoyer ses enfans aux Ecolles. Si je puis ramener a son devoir cet indigne catholique son exemple nous en donnera bien d'autres. Je tirer une bonne [augure] pour sa conversion de ce quil m'a assuré quil liroit avec attention les livres que je luy ay laissé, particulierement celuy du St sacrifice de la messe et des ceremonies

Le nommé alexis Blanchart de la mesme paroisse, paysant Re[ligionnaire] cause un grand scandale, mesme parmi les R.es[religionnaire] ayant eu l'audace de se conjoindre avec la cousine germaine de sa premiere femme, cest un inceste criant,

vous y ferez sil vous plait attention afin de faire cesser ce crime abominable. Comme le senechal et le greffier sont interdits le prieur curé ne scait a qui s'adresser pour faire payer lamande a ceux qui n'envoyent pas leurs enfans aux Ecolles aussi bien que pour les autres articles qui regardent la declaration du Roy.

Nous avons trouvé dans sa paroisse de Rochetrejon 400 Religionnaires dont les uns sont Riches et les autres aisés, M. le curé nous a assuré quils avoient paru disposés pendant six semaines a entrer dans lesprit de la declaration mais que depuis ils ne paroissent plus a l'Eglise n'y n'y{sic} envoient leurs enfans, il y en a plusieurs qui pouroient payer des pensions a l'union chretienne de Luçon entr'autre{sic} le nommé [Bliteau pousanne] Bliteau sa fille agée de 16 ans, et [René croisé pousanne] croisé la fille agée de 24 ans. a legard des Religionnaires de cette paroisse et de celle de mouchamp qui avoient été maries par un malheureux moine dans le cabaret de st. fulgent, ils n'ont pas tenez la parolle quils m'avoient donnée de faire rehabiliter leurs mariages. on nous a dit quil y a un gentil homme nomme M.de st Roman capitaine des chasses de sa majesté, demeurant a la maison de la Bonnelliere paroisse de St Michel de [montmaleus] qui ne fait aucun devoir de catholique non plus que toute sa famille, on dit quil est le conseil de tout le pays en matiere de Religion.

La derniere paroisse que nous avons vû c'est celle du Boupere, les Religionnaires y font comme tous ceux des autres paroisses. Les nommés les M. Brunet et Gandoüart sont gens Riches et en Etat de payer des pensions dans des communautés pour leurs filles le premier n'en a qu'une et l'autre quatre, il y a aussi la d.lle[demoiselle] de la boulle Riche de trois mil livres de rente qui ne fait aucun devoir de catho.[catholique]. Elle se moque de tout au grand scandale de tous les Catholiques et continue par son exemple les autres Religionnaires dans leurs erreurs, elle a marié depuis peu sa fille unique au sr. de la doipe fils cadet de Mr, de la Doipe senechal de mouchamp, ce jeune homme qui avoit toujours fait son devoir de catholique particulierement pendant ses etudes a poitiers ne le fait en aucune maniere n'allant pas mesme a l'Eglise n'y {sic}son epouse depuis leur mariage. Voila, M., en abregé ce que nous avons remarqué de plus essentiel dans les paroisses ou nous avons sejourne, je prie notre seigneur J.C quil inspire ce qui sera plus convenable pour la gloire et pour le bien de la Religion et de l'Etat, pour deraciner cette heresie si funeste, pour cet effet je redoubleray mes voeux et prieres au Ciel en continüant mes soins et mon aplication,

au peril de ma vie pour une si bonne oeuvre, vous assurant M. que je suis et que je seray toujours avec un devoiement respectueux,

Signé L'abbé Goulde

Gould to de la Tour, 8 May 1725 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

Monsieur,

en arrivant icy de Loudun on j'ay resté quelques jours par ordre de M: le Marquis de la vrillierre au sujet des religionnaires et nouveaux convertis. Monsieur de la Brassandiere vostre digne subdelegué m'a rendu les deux lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'escire. on ne peut rien ajouter monsieur, a ma tres profonde reconnaissance de la continuation de vos bontés affections pour moy, dont vous me donnez, en toutes les occasions, des marques si eclattentes, je suis persuadé, monsieur, que vostre puissante recommandation et protection aupres des puissances en ma faveur, aura, enfin l'effet que vous esperez, quoy qu'il en soit.

Je continueray toujours, un precieux souvenir de vos bonnes intentions a mon egard je vous en fais mes tres humbles remerciemens en priant le seigneur de vous [-----] ad multo annos en santé et en prosperité pour le bien de l'état et de la religion.

ce que vous avez fait a legard{sic} de la fille cadette du s. de la doipe en la mettant a l'union chrestienne de fontenay ceci produire {sic}un tres bon effet. Le sr des Berthieres dont vous me faites l'honneur de me parler n'a pas de fils en france, il en a envoyé deux en Angleterre, il n'a chez luy qu'une fille ageé de neuf ans, on dit, qu'il veut aussi l'y envoyer avec ses parents, elle seroit bonne a mettre aux filles de st. claire de cette ville, je la verrais quelque fois, a legard du pere, c'est un homme fort riche dont le bien est en argent et en titres Mr. le curé de moncoutant m'a assuré qu'il [-----] sa sortie du Royaume, c'est un des plus fermes Religionnaires que j'aye veu {sic}.

il y a le nommé talbot, dont je vous ay parlé qui n'est pas assez dangereux que l'autre, il demeure presentement, dans une ferme qui se nommé chateaneuf paroisse

de [largere] pres moncoutant, comme je voudrais bien le tirer de ses erreurs par les voyes de douceur, ne jugeriez vous pas apropos de luy donner ordre de venir icy aupres de moy pour se faire instruire, peut estre le gagnerayie{sic}, sil veut demeurer chez moy il y sera gratis et tous les autres qui pourront y venir de vostre part comme j'ay toujours fait en pareilles occasions. Je prends la liberte de vous envoyer, monsieur, cy joint la copie de la promesse que le dit talbot m'avait donnée de venir chez moy pour se faire instruire dans nostre ste[sainte] Religion mais il n'en a rien fait.

A legard du sr. de Marboeuf l'indigne curé de Pousange la ville, le memoire que Mrs de la Brassandier vous a envoyé a son sujet est tres exact, il faut compter, monsieur que pendant quil y sera les Religionnaires ne se convertirent jamais c'est un homme qui se donne ou vin et a bu quelques fois avec eux jusques a deux heures apres minuit, et a dit la messe en suite a huit heures, c'est un des chefs d'accusation mentionnés au memoire instructif que [---] M: levêque de luçon m'avoit prie denvoyer{sic} a M: le procureur general, il est signé de plusieurs habitans, il y a dans ce memoire bien des articles de consequence dont je ne me souviens pas, je mande a cet illustre magistrat que je vous ay informé que je luy ay envoyé ce memoire si on pouvoit le trouver, il vous mettrait au fait de tout. ce qu'il y a certain et assuré c'est que cet indigne curé a enterré un des plus opiniatres heretiques le sr [seigneur] de la Maintaye dont vous avez connu le mauvais caractere, dans son eglise au grande scandale de tous les catholiques nouveaux et anciens, pour recompense de son sacrilege contre les loyes Ecclesiastiques et seculiers, Madame de la Maintaye luy donna, a ce qu'on dit, cinquante livres, le curé de Pousange le bourg dans la paroisse duquel il il{sic} avait esté assigné ne voulait pas l'enterrer par ce quil le connaissait{sic} pour heretique et pour un risque que n'avait pas de Religion on assure aussi que le dit Sr de Marboeuf en a enterré beaucoup d'autres dans son eglise il est vrais que M. l'evêque de Luçon a donné ordre de faire des informations contre luy, et qui conteste [] faites juridiquement, mais je n'ay pas oui dire qu'il y eust aucune menable a cette occasion, mais je crains fort que ces informations n'ayent{sic} pas d'effet, parce que plusieurs personnes de qualité qui blamaient autrefois sa conduite irreguliere et scandaleuse, sinteresent{sic} en sa [faveur] aupres du prelat parce qu'il est gentil homme, particulièrement Madame de puignon et mde de la Flasseliere qui ont este plusieurs

fois chez M: de lucon a [----], luy mesme a eu l'imprudence de le publier et qu'il ne craignoit rien, si quelque autre chose de certain et assuré me revient sur son compte j'auray l'honneur, Monsieur de vous en donner avis.

Il m'est revenu qu'il y a des Religionnaires a Moncoutant qui gardent des armes chez eux, quand je seray plus exactement et mieux informé de ce fait je ne manqueray pas de vous le mander, car il ne faut rien avancer a nos superieurs que ne soit dans la derniere exactitude, en attendant j'ay l'honneur de vous assurer et de vous protester qu'il n y a homme au monde qui soit avec plus de respect et de reconnaissance

Monsieur,

Vostre tres humble, tres obeissant, et tres obligé serviteur,
L'abbé Goulde,

a thouars le 8 may 1725.

Gould to de la Tour, 1 July 1727 (ADV, Poitiers, C59).

Monsieur,

Comme je me trouve incommode et fatigué d'une tournée que je viens de faire par ordre de M. le duc d'antin je ne puis me donner l'honneur de vous écrire de ma propre main Je me sers de celle de M. de Missé mon compagnon pour vous dire monsieur que dans ce moment Je reçois une lettre du nomme Renault prisonnier a niort, que je prends la liberte de vous envoyer, comme ce pauvre homme me paroist dans de tres bonnes dispositions [-----], monsieur, esperer que vous voudrez bien faire quelque chose en sa faveur a mes tres humble supplication charitos christ urget me dans cette occasion, si vous jugez a propos de le faire transferer dans les prisons de thouïars ou mesme de le faire conduire chez moi, sans caussion{sic} ou il seroit gratis, comme j'ay toujours pratiqué a l'Egard des autres Religionnaires et particulierement des deux predicans que dieu a converti par mon ministere, ces voyes de douceur gagnent les

esprits les plus rebelles, en agissant de la sorte a l'Egard de cet homme je pouray en
gagner plusieurs autres

J'ay lhonneur d'estre avec mes sentimens ordinaires du plus profond respect et du
plus parfait attachement

Monsieur

Votre tres humble et tres
obeissant serviteur

L'abbé Goulde

A thouars le pr. juillet 1727.

LETTRE
D'UN
MISSIONNAIRE
A
UN GENTILHOMME
DU BAS POITOU,
TOUCHANT LA VÉRITABLE
croyance de l'Eglise Catholique.

CONTRE LES DOGMES QUI LUY SONT
faussement imputez dans les Escrits des Ministres.
par Thomas Gould.



A PARIS,
Chez JEAN BAPTISTE COIGNARD, Imprimeur
ordinaire du Roy, & de l'Académie Française,
rue saint Jacques, à la Bible d'or.

M D C C V.

Avec Approbation & Privilège de sa Majesté.

Lettre d'un missionnaire a un gentilhomme du bas Poitou, first published in 1705 and subsequently under the title *La Véritable Croyance d'Eglise Catholique* in 1713.

LA VÉRITABLE
CROYANCE
DE
L'ÉGLISE
CATHOLIQUE
ET
LES PREUVES
DE TOUS LES POINTS
DE SA DOCTRINE,
FONDÉES SUR L'ÉCRITURE SAINTE.
Nouvelle Edition, revue, corrigée & augmentée.

A.

Chez JEAN-BAPTISTE COIGNARD, Fils,
Imprimeur du Roi, au Livre d'Or.

M D C C X X V I.

AVEC APPROBATION ET PRIVILEGE DU ROI.

The 1726 frontispiece of Gould's second published work, *La Véritable Croyance d'Eglise Catholique et les Preuves de tous les points de sa doctrine*, first published in 1713.

TRAITÉ
DU SAINT SACRIFICÉ
DE LA MESSE;

Avec l'explication des Ceremonies qui
s'y observent, & la maniere d'y assister
dévotement, selon l'esprit de la pri-
mitive Eglise.

*Addressé à une Dame de Qualité nouvelle-
ment convertie.*

Imprimé par Ordre du Roy:

par l'abbé Gould



A PARIS,

Chez JEAN-BAPTISTE COIGNARD fils,
Imprimeur de sa Majesté.

M D C C X I V.

ENTRETIENS

OU L'ON EXPLIQUE

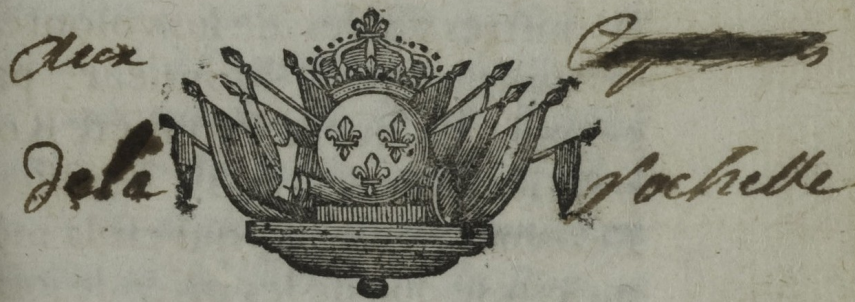
LA DOCTRINE
DE L'EGLISE CATHOLIQUE

PAR LA SAINTE ECRITURE,

Et où on fait un juste discernement de sa
Croyance d'avec celle des Protestans.

~~Imprimés par ordre du Roy,~~
Imprimés par ordre du Roy,

*Pour servir à l'Instruction des nouveaux
Convertis.*



A. PARIS,

Chez JEAN - BAPTISTE COIGNARD fils, Impri-
meur du Roy, rue S. Jacques, au Livre d'Or.

M D C C X V I I.

AVEC APPROBATION ET PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

BIBLIOTHEQUE
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DE
POitiers

The third work by Gould entitled *Entretiens ou l'on Explique la Doctrine de l'Eglise Catholique* published in 1727.

Der
Wahrhafte Glaube
Der
Catholischen Kirche /

und
Die Beweißthümer ihrer
Lehre /

Auff Göttliche Schrift gegründet /
Welche ihr in den Schriften ihrer Geg-
ner fälschlich zugemessen wird.

Von dem Hochwürdigen Herren
Gould, Abten / Schatz-Meistern / und Re-
genten der Kirche / und des Capitels Unser Lieben
Frauen von Thouars, in Französischer

Sprache verfasst.
Nun aber zu größerem Nutzen in das Deut-
sche übersetzt / erweitert / und in vielen Orten
mit mehrerem erkläret

Von
P. FRANCISCO NONHARDT,
der Societät Jesu Priester.

CUM LICENTIA SUPERIORUM.
Prag / gedruckt bey Wolffgang Widhart / Erb-Bis-
choffl. und Landschafft-Buchdrucker / 1725.

The German translation of Gould's *La Véritable Croyance* was published in Prague in 1725, under the title *Der wahrhafte Glaube der Catholischen Kirche*, and translated by Francisco Nonhardt.