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### The Spanish Mission Effort in Texas: 1519-1794

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The task undertaken in this research paper is the exploration of Spanish mission work conducted in the Texas area between the years 1519 and 1794. First, such a study is prompted in view of current Lutheran mission activity which appears to be pointing toward renewed or initial work in that portion of the country. Thus it is well that the efforts of the first Catholic missionaries undergo examination, realizing of course the key difference, that the Franciscans of Spain in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were seeking to convert indigenous Indian people, whereas current work is directed toward the "Mexican," a product of the mixture of Spanish and Indian blood. Nevertheless, both then and now, men of the church are seeking to engender the faith of the Christian church in the hearts of people who live in the same area, often under the same oppressive economic conditions with many of the same problems attendant to the struggle for existence. Secondly, as motivation for this study, the author spent his entire childhood and early adult life in the Texas area and has always been fascinated by the old missions as structures; add to that the sharing of the common task with men of the past who sought to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and understandably, given the typical provincial Texas pride, one can comprehend why the topic has been chosen for research.

This examination of the Spanish mission activity will first deal with mission attempts made by individual padres attending Spanish military or exploratory expeditions. Secondly, corporate mission attempts made by the church in conjunction with the Spanish state and her authorities in New Spain will be investigated. Thirdly, a brief presentation concerning the pattern of living in and around the mission facility will appear. Finally, an evaluation will be ventured regarding the effect as to its success politically, ecclesiastically and socially.

As major sources for academic investigation of Texas missions, the following works among many have proven to be absolutely essential. Firstly, a most comprehensive study is offered in seven volumes by Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas. This work remains, since its publication in 1936 for the commemoration of the centennial of Texas' independence from Mexico, as the most definitive study of the Texas mission period. Secondly, the labors of Herbert Bolton in several works of translation of primary source material, namely, Spanish Exploration in the Southwest and Spanish Explorers in the Southwest, afford a veritable mine of information. Thirdly and fourthly as informative works stand Spanish Missions in Texas by George McCaleb and Missions of Old Texas by James Burke. Finally, as primary source material is Fray Morfi's (d. 1783) contemporary study, History of Texas 1673-1779. The method of investigation followed was basically secondary-type research although some primary source material was employed.

## CHAPTER II

In the year 1519, one Alvarez de Pineda sailed from Cuba to find the illusive straits through the newly found North American continent which could lead Spanish vessels to the rich trade market of India. He sailed also determined to claim new lands for the supporter of his sailing enterprise, Francisco Garay, lands which lay between the known points of Pensacola and Vera Cruz. On that voyage he was destined to sail along the coast of present-day Texas; during his return trip to Cuba the Spanish explorer stopped and traded with the then friendly Indians on the Rio Grande River. In effect Texas had been discovered. This portion of the North American continent would stand under Spanish domination for almost three centuries to come. Spanish explorers, soldiers, colonists, and missionaries would traverse its lands, some for gold, some for fame, some for land, and some for the religious welfare of the indigenous people of the area. The last group, that of the missionaries and their work, is the object of this study.

Contact with the Indian was a few years away from the time when Pineda first spotted the coast of Texas. Camargo sailed in 1521 to verify the land claim for Garay who was attempting to rival Cortes' hold on Mexico. Garay reported to the King of Spain that he fully intended to follow his majesty's will, establish the holy Catholic faith, and convert the Indians to Catholicism by mild and fair means, at least according to Spanish standards. Optimistically, the Indians were reported to be inclined toward

Christian conversion.<sup>1</sup> In 1526 Narvaez was ordered to sail and establish two Spanish settlements between the mouth of the Rio Grande and Florida. Father Juan Suarez, who was appointed bishop-elect of the area north of the Rio Grande, went with Narvaez accompanied by four Franciscans. The clergy's purpose was none other than conversions of the native population. However, their purpose went unfulfilled; the ill-fated Narvaez expedition was wrecked on the shores of Texas. Bishop-elect Suarez probably died near Matagorda Bay with the rest of the clergy, while survivors, including Cabeza de Vaca, trekked across Texas from the Galveston area ultimately to the Pacific coast, suffering extreme deprivation, starvation, and mistreatment by some Indians. There would be no propagation of the faith by Franciscans on this expedition.

The first mission work of an individual Franciscan among the Texas Indians would come as a result of Coronado's expedition in 1539, when he went in search of the mythical seven cities of gold reported to be in the far northern reaches of present day New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma. Coronado set out with a huge brigade of men and 1,000 horses. They arrived at Cibola in New Mexico and found, not a golden city, but a poor Indian village, or pueblo. Nevertheless, Coronado, being unwilling to give up the search, decided to travel east hoping to find yet another reportedly rich Indian city in an area called by some Quivira. One Father Juan Padilla wished to accompany him on this extended leg of the heretofore unsuccessful expedition. Coronado and Padilla walked across the high plains of Texas. They found no Quivira of gold, just Indian villages which held little promise of wealth. Coronado decided to



return to Mexico but Father Padilla wished to stay in the Indian villages of Quivira which were probably located in the Canadian River area or near the present-day panhandle of Oklahoma and Texas. He labored among the Indians there for nearly two years evidently with some success; the fact that he stayed and lived for that period is the basis for such positive judgment. In November of 1544 he decided to move on to another village of Guay Indians to the south of Quivira. The Quiviran Indians warned against his intentions as they noted the hostility of the tribe he wished to visit. Nevertheless, he set out with two other clergy and one soldier; on the way they were confronted by Indians at war. Father Padilla urged his companions to flee as he waited to try to make peace with the attackers. No peace was to be made by the Spanish padre. The Indians charged him as he stood to greet them, killing him almost instantly with numerous arrow shots. Having acted as a decoy the missionary lost his life, allowing the others to make their escape. Over two years of his life had been spent in actual mission work with the Indians; dying as the proto-martyr of Texas in November 1544, he was but the first indication of the intense work to be carried out in future years by the Catholic missionaries from Spain.]

At about the same time Coronado set out on his expedition in 1539, Hernando De Soto, by order of the Spanish king, was instructed to conquer the Rio Grande-to-Florida portion of the continent. Missionaries had to be taken along on the expedition. In May 1539 De Soto, with a dozen padres (eight seculars, four religious), set out from Cuba for Florida. Vestments, chalices,

patens, wheat, and wine, everything for the saying of mass, were included in the expedition's religious supplies. Ultimately, the expedition would wander west across the present-day southern United States into northern and eastern Texas. After De Soto died, Moscoso took over command. As he set out to cross Texas, hoping to reach Mexico, it is reported that five of the original 12 missionaries accompanied him. One by one they became ill and died. What kind or how much missionary work went on during the trip is debatable. Undoubtedly, the padres served as ministers to the Spaniards and Christian Indians who went along with them (some Indians had been converted in the Mississippi-Louisiana area). Wherever they had opportunity they baptized indigenous peoples into the Christian faith. But like the efforts of Father Padilla who had died a few hundred miles to the west, the work of these five men met with little real success.

In 1553, Dominican padres, five in number, attended an unexpected expedition along the shores of Texas. Unlike Father Padilla with Coronado or the five fathers with Moscoso, these Dominicans had no initial intention of working among Texas Indian tribes. For they were with a rich group of Spaniards who set sail from Vera Cruz bound for Spain. However, their destination was never reached as a hurricane caught them in the Gulf of Mexico and wrecked their ship on the shores of Texas near present-day Corpus Christi. There the Texas Indian <sup>a</sup>costal tribes harrassed them almost daily, killing many of the ship's survivors as both padres and people tried to struggle back to civilization in Mexico. Having trekked from the site of the shipwreck, the five fathers with a small band

of survivors finally reached the Rio Grande. There they were attacked by Indians and Father Diego de la Cruz and Father Hernando Mendez were seriously wounded. While the padres were left for dead, the attacking Indians continued to pursue the Spaniards who had escaped the battle. Fathers Diego and Hernando, having waited quietly with the dead, decided to attempt to go inland to find a settled non-hostile tribe where they might recover from their wounds as well as possibly convert some of the native population.<sup>2</sup> However, Father Diego died as their search for a village continued. His companion Father Hernando would soon perish also. Their desire to Christianize went unfulfilled. The other padres who were in the shipwreck, Father Ferrer and Father Juan, also perished during an Indian attack. Only Father Marcus de Mena, who was seriously wounded, would live to return to Mexico and tell the gruesome tale. The remarkable thing about this "mission venture" is that at least two of the clergymen, although being wounded, were willing to take the chance of further maltreatment, for the sake of propagating the Catholic faith. Indeed, their commitment to their task as proclaimers of the Gospel is something to be noted.

In November 1580, Father Augustin Rodriguez determined to go to the Rio Grande area of Texas with the express purpose of preaching the Christian Gospel to Indians along the river. He had heard of those Indians from the reports of Cabeza de Vaca who had wandered across the country some four decades earlier. Father Rodriguez received permission from the Spanish government to set out with three friars and nine soldiers along with 90 horses and a supply

of goods for barter. The party met various groups of Indians who lived near the juncture of the Conchos and Rio Grande rivers near present-day Presidio. There they traded with Indians and planted crosses in the name of the Spanish church and state. Father Rodriguez traveled up the Rio Grande north into New Mexico taking careful notes along the way of the Indians themselves, how they lived, their character, and disposition toward the Spaniards. Nearly 300 Indians traveled at various times with the expedition as they passed from Indian pueblo to pueblo. The Christian Gospel was no doubt proclaimed but evidently none of the missionaries chose to remain permanently in these Rio Grande River pueblos. They did plan to return.

Thus, between the discovery of Texas in 1519 by Pineda and the Rodriguez expedition of 1580-81, numerous individual attempts had been made to Christianize some of the scattered indigenous population. Some efforts were planned quite deliberately, as in the case of Padilla and Rodriguez; some efforts occurred quite unexpectedly, as with the shipwrecked Dominican padres.

With these initial approaches, various details about the Indians began to filter in. The coast tribes were barbaric, nomadic, and very much war-minded. Intruders were unwelcome. Along the Rio Grande, the people were more agriculturally-minded and reflected, at least upon first contact, an open friendliness toward Spanish visitors.

The purpose of the padres in coming had been explicitly religious, i.e., the preaching of the faith and conversion of the

native peoples. However, for their desire to be fulfilled, they would have to mix their thoughts and outlooks thoroughly with the Spanish state which sought to gain land in the New World, conquer its people, and garner its wealth in gold, silver, or anything of value. The Spanish church and its workers fell easily into such a milieu of thought as they accompanied expeditions of exploration. The inseparable mixture of Spanish church and state would continue operative in Texas for over two more centuries. ]

FOOTNOTES

1. Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1936), I, 15f.
2. Ibid., I, p. 147.

### CHAPTER III

As the second quarter of the seventeenth century opened, individual attempts at missionizing were destined to give way to a more corporate style of approach. Strong Indian missions in Mexico would begin to serve as bases from which fathers operated in their attempts to contact and convert non-Christian tribes in Texas. Before the century would draw to a close, the state and the church would be working hand in hand to establish missions on the frontier, although with different functional purposes in mind. The work began in El Paso in West Texas.

The El Paso area on the upper reaches of the Rio Grande is one of the oldest mission areas in Texas. The pass through the mountains which gives the town its name was discovered by a Spanish explorer, Onate, in 1598, as he departed off the main road leading from Mexico to New Mexico in order to avoid certain Indians on the warpath. In 1630 Father Alonso de Benavides made the first attempt to preach to the Indians and conduct other missionary work in the El Paso region. He requested his religious order to establish a permanent mission, complete with a garrison of soldiers, to serve the Mansos Indians. In that year Father Antonio Ortega joined Father Benavides in his work with the Mansos. Father Ortega seems to have left shortly and no mission with permanency was forthcoming at this time. Almost 30 years later in 1656 Fathers Garcia, Cabal and Perez returned to try to fulfill Father Benavides' desire for a mission. However, after the arrival of the three new men, the Mansos Indians

became restless and the padres were forced to leave under the protection of military guards. In 1659 Father Garcia went back for a third try with the Mansos and Zuma Indians, who had penitentially requested his return. At this time Father Garcia and Father Juan de Salazar, along with ten Indian families, went to establish the permanent mission, Nuestra Senora de la Guadalupe de el Paso. The date was December 8, 1659. Governor Mendizabal of New Mexico had authorized the project. The clergymen congregated the Indians, built a chapel of scrubwood, planted a cross, and claimed the area for the King of Spain and the Catholic Church. A more permanent church was erected between 1662 and 1668 as the Indian population grew to over 2,000. This mission was established on the south bank of the river, which places it in present-day Mexico; nevertheless, due to its proximity to El Paso, it is usually associated with the Texas effort.

In 1680 the well-known Pueblo Revolt occurred in the Indian villages of New Mexico causing many Spaniards and loyal Indians to flee the area. They headed in the direction of El Paso; such an influx of people helped to further establish and increase Spanish influence in the area. For a short time the refugees and Indians remained on the south side of the Rio Grande. However in October 1680, under the order of Governor Otermin of New Mexico, a large number of people were moved across the Rio Grande. It had been decided that it was best to settle there rather than to make an attempt to return to the New Mexico pueblos for a reconquest. About 1900 people forded the river. Father Ayeta, the religious



leader of the area, ordered the refugees supplied with corn and cattle from surplus mission supplies. Governor Otermin requested New Spain officials to establish a presidio, or military fort, in the area complete with 50 soldiers and 200 new settlers. The purpose for its establishment would be protection of mission efforts below El Paso. The Spaniards were afraid the successful Indian uprising in New Mexico could spread southward. Indeed there would be missions to protect. The King of Spain gave his approval to Otermin's request in 1682. In that same year Father Ayeta established San Antonio de Senecu about four miles southeast of El Paso. This mission prospered as its Indian population increased to nearly 500. Good crops were raised around the mission; what the garden did not provide the hunt and chase did. Several tribes lived peaceably there together. Also in 1682, Nuestra Senora de Socorro was founded eight miles southeast of El Paso for the Pero, Jamez, and other Indian tribes. This mission existed for over 50 years but little is known about it. It underwent several name changes. In 1744 there were several Spanish families living in the area along with 60 Indians. In 1756 the mission was secularized, and its property given to the settlers and Indians. Thirdly, in the 1680 period the mission Corpus Christi de la Ysleta was established. This mission was built for<sup>u</sup> miles to the south of El Paso; it too was founded by Father Ayeta. In its history it served as a way-station and as a refugee camp for those Indians of New Mexico who fled from the attacking Apaches. The mission with its church was strongly and elaborately built. The large church was 145 feet long;

the bell tower had three stages. The mission produced good crops due to irrigation projects and possessed a fruitful vineyard. Today the restored church stands in suburban El Paso.

In 1683 work began also in the present day Presidio area or in the region commonly known as Big Bend Country. There two main rivers of the north Mexican frontier merge their often meager amounts of water. At the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Rio Conchos mission work was carried out for the Julime (Jumanos) tribe of Indians. These Indians, especially one leader, Juan Babeata, a Mexican-converted Indian, had heard of the work done to the north of them and sent envoys to Father Lopez requesting missionaries for their tribes.<sup>1</sup> To test the sincerity of their request, Father Lopez asked that they build some sort of make-do churches so that missionaries would have a place to hold services when they arrived. The Indians agreed and later Fathers Lopez, Zavaleta, and Avecedo set out to go among the unconverted Jumanos Indians. They found them very friendly and willing to be taught the faith. Indeed these Indians had had positive associations with Spaniards to the south of the Rio Grande for whom they had worked. Mission La Navidad de las Cruces was established for them near present-day Shafter, Texas, on Cibolo Creek in December 1683. Little is known about its ultimate fate or history other than that it was founded. In 1684, Father Lopez set out to find and meet more tribes to the east of the new mission of La Navidad. Within four miles he founded a second mission Apostel Santiago. He had been escorted by a Spanish military man, Mendoza, who proceeded to have the seven tribes in

this new area swear allegiance to the Spanish king while at the same time taking formal possession of the land. Indians built a church of timber and promised to construct one of rock. They also requested four more missions in the area. The request was accepted by Father Lopez. However, the revolt of the Indians in New Mexico shortly spread down the river and the missions Apostel Santiago and La Navidad fell and were abandoned. Fathers Aveoedo and Zavaleta escaped, with some loyalist Indians who helped them carry the service vestments and communion ware to safety in Parral, Mexico.

But before the revolt, in this same period of development between 1680 and 1684, several other missions were founded in the Presidio area. In 1684 Father Nicolas Lopez also established San Francisco de los Julimes about three miles northwest of Presidio for the Julime and Concho Indians. Babeata had a church built within 20 days after Father Lopez requested one. Approximately 108 Indians were gathered there in 1685. After that, with the spread of revolt, there are no records. Also the mission El Senor San Jose was established five miles north of Presidio on Perdue and Alamito Creeks. It too fell in the revolt or before marauding Apaches. Mission San Pedro Alcantara was established in 1684 by Father Lopez for the Apaches. Quite possibly the small timber church was destroyed by them as the missionary fled for his life. The same fate befell Mission Antonio de las Puliques founded nearby. It too would disappear, leaving little known history. It is known that it lasted at least until 1747, for a Spanish military officer, Odayaga,

mentions that 36 families still lived around the old mission at that time. He tried to persuade the Indians to abandon the area but to no avail. Today there is not a trace left. Probably it fell also before Apache attack. Mission Santa Maria la Redando was also founded near present-day San Esteban Lake north of Presidio for the Natages and Pulique tribes; a church was built but it and all traces of the mission have disappeared. Mission de la Cibolos was founded near Shafter on Cibolo Creek. Like many others established by Father Lopez it was really little more than a name; Father Gregino was placed initially in charge. In 1747 Odayaga and his soldiers visited the place and found that it had been razed by Apaches. Finally Mission San Clemente was established a few hundred miles to the east of Presidio near present-day Ballinger at the juncture of the Colorado and Concho (Texas) rivers. Mendoza and Father Lopez had marched that far to meet other Texas tribes who might be persuaded to have missionaries come to their pueblos. They camped at the place they called San Clemente and sent messengers to the various tribes to have their chiefs come to meet them. From March to May 1684 they waited and met some Indian leaders. Mass was said in a hastily built two-story chapel. A few Indians were baptized. The party went back to the Rio Grande promising to return to San Clemente to establish a permanent mission. There is no record that they ever did.

Thus in a few short years Father Lopez with the help of Mendoza and a few compadres established at least nine mission stations, some less permanent than others, in the Presidio area, with San Clemente being far to the east. Indian revolt and attack ended most of their

short existences. Although the missions were to last but a short while, the Franciscans were gradually opening the door to large scale permanent mission work in the vast expanse of Texas. Only the threat of foreign intervention on the east side of Texas by the French was needed to urge the Spanish state and church into the region.

The mission effort in the East Texas forest country began as a result of such a French incursion. It was no international secret in 1682 that the King of France had his eye of expansion focused on Texas. Diego Dionisio, an exiled Spaniard, had made overtures to him indicating his willingness to help bring the area under the Fleur-de-lis. Penalosa also offered to take the city of Panuco, Mexico, subject it to the French flag, and from there the conquest of northern New Spain could begin. The Ralston peace pact made by Spain and France in 1684 put an end to such a strategy of conquest against Mexico proper but Spain was still suspicious of French designs in Texas, especially in view of the fact that Robert La Salle had laid French claim to all areas drained by the Mississippi in 1682. That sweeping claim included a goodly portion of Texas. Where the imaginary boundary lines were nobody quite knew. In 1684 La Salle sailed to the mouth of the Texas Colorado River and established a colony of 400 people including seven clergymen. The colony at Matagorda Bay was ill-fated from its inception. Possibly La Salle had set out to establish the colony on the mouth of the Mississippi and simply missed his sailing mark. On the other hand he may have intended to sail onto the Texas

gulf coast to establish the settlement. Regardless, the colony met face to face with hostile Indians, deprivation, and starvation as it struggled for existence for four years. La Salle made three overland trips to the east in order to find the Mississippi and secure help in Canada. He never succeeded and was finally killed by some of his own men in an intracommunal squabble. The small band of Frenchmen eked out an existence. Finally in 1689 Indians craftily attacked Fort Saint Louis, ransacking and pillaging while massacring the doomed settlers. A few escaped death.

Fort Saint Louis had perished but the Spanish did not know that. All they knew from a captured French pirate was that it had been established. No less than five sailing and four overland expeditions would be authorized to locate, confront, remove, or destroy the French sign of intrusion. Alonso de Leon made his fourth attempt to locate the colony in the summer of 1689. In his expedition of 115 men went two padres, one being a most important clergyman, Father Damian Massanet. This man would become instrumental in the establishment of East Texas missions. The other was Father Garcia de Sierra. They found the sacked French fort August 22, 1689. It was completely vacant with the decaying bodies of the Frenchmen lying about. From Indians in the area they had learned that there were two Frenchmen living with tribes to the east. De Leon proceeded to search for them and found the two, named Jean Le Archeveque and Jacques Grollet. They were colonists who had fled from the fort when it was attacked and found solace with the friendly Tejas Indians. The chief of the tribe asked

Father Massanet to return with missionaries. The Franciscan promised to do so. Spanish authorities realized now the very limited incursion of the French had failed; but to prevent a more successful second try, the state, in conjunction with the willing church, decided to establish missions in East Texas. The Tejas chief really did not have to ask for Franciscan missions. Father Massanet indicated to the authorities his willingness to return to the area and on July 5, 1689, he was authorized by the Mexican viceroy to establish missions at the expense of the king under the direction of the Franciscan church officials. Father Massanet wished to go with as few soldiers as absolutely necessary while De Leon, his military escort, wished to make a show of force with many soldiers to prevent Indian revolt and guard against French invasion. Father Massanet and De Leon disagreed violently on the issue. With tension between the ecclesiastics and the military, Father Massanet and De Leon arrived in deep East Texas in May 1689 with over 100 men. Fathers Fontcubierta, Borday, and Casanas went along. On May 25 a solemn mass was said and the land was taken into official possession by the Spaniards as the Indians swore allegiance to the Spanish King. Mission San Francisco de los Tejas was established. A wooden church was built with the help of the Indians by June 1 near present day Weches, Texas. Father Massanet and De Leon started back to Mexico leaving Fathers Fontcubierta, Borday, Casanas, and three soldiers in charge.

In his report to the viceroy Massanet recommended the

establishment of seven missions in East Texas, four for the Cadodachos, two for the Tejas Indians, one of which was already established, and one mission on the Guadalupe River in Central Texas. Furthermore, he suggested that 27 clergymen would be needed to do the job effectively. He proceeded to make plans to insure good relations with the Indians. He indicated the bulk of the soldiers should stay on the Guadalupe to watch over French incursions. De Leon, on the other hand, who was obviously more military-minded, recommended four presidios to be strung across Texas. Father Massanet's recommendations were accepted over De Leon's in November 1690. Teran replaced De Leon as Father Massanet and Teran, appointed first governor of the Texas region in particular, prepared to return to East Texas to resupply Mission San Francisco as well as to establish the proposed new missions. Father Massanet was actually in charge of the expedition, Teran exercising authority only over the soldiers, which turned out to be a sore point with the new governor. Nevertheless in May 1691, 50 soldiers and 13 clergy set out for East Texas. As they approached Mission San Francisco they met an Indian scout who informed them that an epidemic had plagued the Indian villages and mission, along with floods resulting not only in the death of many Indians but also Father Fontcubierta. Two padres were left. In order to avoid the spreading epidemic one of them had established another mission, Santismo Nombre de Maria, moving the healthy inhabitants there. But the epidemic, plus flood waters, had spread, causing the Indians to grow restless as they blamed the



missionaries for the coming of the sickness. Stealing and pilfering of the mission supplies became more frequent.

The situation had become desperate. Although some 76 Indians had been converted at Mission Santismo, including Chief Xinesi of the Tejas, the epidemic claimed 300 Indians in that mission's area. Over 3,000 had died over the entire year. Upon Father Massanet's arrival and his viewing of the dismal future, no mission was founded at this time. The two already established were to try to hold on as they waited for regular relief expeditions from Coahuila in Mexico upon which they were dependent for supplies. Such expeditions reached them in June 1692 and May 1693. Both found the missions deteriorating rapidly. The padres' lives were in danger due to the threats of the Indians; sickness, floods, famine, lack of further Spanish gifts precipitated the hostility. Reportedly, Father Massanet asked for the right to abandon the area in 1693. But before the viceroy could answer he was forced to flee in October of that year. Father Massanet, having to swallow his pride, assented to De Leon's earlier suggestion that a show of force with soldiers in presidios would have to be made in order to Christianize and congregate East Texas Indians into pueblos. The missionary had met failure face to face. Twenty years later he would try again.

In 1716, French trading activity and settlement in East Texas again caused Spain to return to the area with its mission-presidio method of holding the frontier. One St. Denis, a Frenchman, was the occasion for the Spanish stir. In 1713 Cadillac, the French

Governor of Louisiana, sent St. Denis to trade with the East Texas Indians and to try to win their allegiance to France. St. Denis was captured by Spaniards but in a complex bit of international intrigue he worked himself into the good graces of the Spanish officials, mostly by marrying the daughter of one Ramon (a Mexican governor). As a result, the Spanish enlisted the Frenchman, St. Denis, to be their guide as they returned to re-establish the East Texas missions in 1716. The purpose was to stop French trading, hold the frontier, and convert the native population. The Ramon expedition set out in 1716 with 13 clergymen, 25 soldiers in a company of 80 to 90 people. They traded with the Indians along the way and found them quite friendly. When they arrived in the old East Texas mission field they were again warmly received; services were held; a peace-pipe ceremony was conducted on June 26, 1716, indicating the renewed positive relations between the Spanish and the Indian. Shortly thereafter Mission San Francisco de los Tejas was re-established by Father Espinosa who promptly left the mission in charge of Father Hidalgo. The expedition moved on about 20 miles northeast and founded Mission La Purisma Concepcion de Acuna. Father Vergara was the resident missionary. A third mission was established. This one was begun for the Nagodoches tribe, part of the Tejas confederacy, about 25 miles east of La Purisma and was named Mission Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe. A fourth mission was founded about 16 miles south east of La Purisma and left under the fatherly hand of Padre Sanchez. An elaborate ceremony was held at each founding of a mission as a mass was said, gun salutes

given, and the mission turned over by the state to the church in view of the fact that the Spanish state had already taken possession of the land. Log churches were usually built along with padres' quarters. Indians elected their own mission rulers in Spanish style.

At best, however, the situation would have to be described as perilous for the padres and the few soldiers. They were surrounded by four or five thousand Indians and it was nearly 800 miles to the nearest large Spanish outpost in Coahuila, which lay on the south side of the Rio Grande. There the soldiers and supplies were of little help in case of an emergency in East Texas. Nevertheless, Ramon continued to establish missions in the area as San Jose de los Nazonis and Neustra Senora de los Dolores de los Ais were planted in present-day Texas while San Miguel de Linares de los Aadaes was placed in present-day western Louisiana, just 20 miles or so from the French outpost at Natchitoches, Louisiana. The mission work itself went very slowly as the Indians refused to congregate about the missions. They said they would as soon as the next harvest of crops, scattered throughout the woods, came in. Furthermore the padres reported that they persisted in their idol worship. Sickness again became a problem as some soldiers and Indians died. The formal teaching of doctrine had not been started as late as October 1716. The clergy and the military soon realized they could not hold on without a resupply of the necessities of life which included a never-ending supply of gifts for the Indians. They began to see that a half-way station between

the Rio Grande and East Texas was absolutely essential as a supply base, if the Indians were really to be controlled and converted and French intrusion stopped.

Father Olivares was sent back from East Texas to persuade the Mexican viceroy to establish such a way station with a presidio-mission at San Pedro Springs, or at what is today San Antonio. With that action the long history of San Antonio and its missions begins.

In 1716 Olivares gave a most glowing report of the San Antonio area describing at length its flora and fauna, the possibility of mineral deposits and the presence of water for irrigation. The viceroy agreed with the proposal for a mission-presidio at the location and an expedition was prepared to leave Solano in Coahuila. Jarame Indians who had been Christianized in Mexico were to be taken along as examples and trainers for the expected (exaggerated) number of four to five thousand Indians Father Olivares hoped to congregate. The expedition arrived in May 1718 and established Mission San Antonio de Valero. The soldiers who came along were supposed to be married in order to prevent abuses of Indian women which had been a problem in other presidio-mission attempts. They were to be of good stock, not mulattos or halfbreeds. Fifty soldiers were sent but not all matched the desired descriptions. However, good animal stock for the proposed mission was provided as well as carpenters, blacksmiths, and masons. The Spanish were intent on this mission being permanent. Alarcon was the military officer in charge of the expedition; having established San Antonio

he was to move on to East Texas to relieve the missions there. Not only were a mission and presidio placed at San Antonio, but also the civil settlement, Villa de Bejar, was founded. Slowly Indians gathered about the mission. Spanish settlers came; stock and crops were raised effectively, a fantastic irrigation system constructed. San Antonio would have a long history. A stone church was built, the forerunner of the Alamo, as well as a large mission compound within heavy walls complete with padres' quarters, Indian quarters, granary, and workshops. As mentioned, stock and crops were raised outside the mission walls. There would never be more than 300 Indians at the mission at one time but between the year 1718 and 1761, 1,072 persons were baptized and 454 married according to mission records. By 1778 it would stand almost deserted and be secularized in 1792. The property was then distributed to the last mission Indians as the buildings were turned into an Indian pueblo.

When Alarcon went on to East Texas in 1718 he found six struggling missions. Disease, crop failure, and the low level of supplies made the 100 baptisms performed at the death of Indians seem like little success. He made a close investigation of the dismal scene and consulted with the padres on how to hold onto and firm up the situation. The fathers reacted against Alarcon himself, saying that little could be done seeing that he had brought no families, no fresh soldiery, nor substantial inducement to get the Indians to congregate. They also indicated the French smugglers were very persuasive with the Indians. The ecclesiastics complained

not only to Alarcon but also to the viceroy who appears to have lost trust in him. Shortly thereafter Alarcon resigned his position as governor of the area. Both the Ramon expedition of 1716 and the Alarcon expedition accomplished very little and Spanish control was not actually strengthened; few Indians were converted and the French still ran their trade operations. In 1719 the ill-supplied destitute missions whose soldiers were out of mounts and arms fell before the attacking French force of seven men led by Blondell. The missions of East Texas were abandoned for a second time with hardly a shot fired. Three years of work and expenditures of money was gone. The refugees retreated to San Antonio and waited for yet a third try at establishing the East Texas missions.

When the friars arrived in the San Antonio area in 1720 they established Mission San Jose y Miguel de Aquayo, named partially for the new governor of the area, Jose de Aquayo. Father Margil was placed in charge as probably the greatest and most successful mission in all of Texas effort was founded. The mission was located about five miles southeast of San Antonio de Valero. The mission walls around a large 600 foot square plaza were soon constructed and a church large enough for 2,000 people was completed in 1730. Indians were congregated from the Pampopa, Suliajames and Pastra tribes. A granary, Indian quarters, housing for the clergy, workshops and an irrigation ditch were all constructed. The 1730 church was destroyed in 1768 by a storm but was rebuilt and still stands as a beautiful witness to the padres' ability and ingenuity in construction as well as an example of the blend of Moorish and

Spanish architecture. The fields about the mission proved to be productive and the pastureland served to fatten a large herd of domestic stock. The mission reached its peak population in 1758 with 358 Indians. Over its entire history of nearly 100 years close to 2,000 baptisms were performed.<sup>2</sup>

After Aguayo saw to the founding of San Jose in 1720 he moved on to East Texas to remove the French intruders and establish for yet a third time the Piney Wood missions. He accomplished his mission ostensibly by August 1721 as missionaries were returned, a presidio re-fortified in far East Texas near the French border of Louisiana, French commerce stopped, and 28 families settled. But these missions were destined to last at best another 10 years. In 1727 it was reported that San Miguel had no resident Indians, Nuestra Senora de los Dolores had only a small party of converted Indians and some unconverted, while Nuestra Senora de la Guadalupe had a goodly number of natives but they too were unconverted. Missions La Purisma, San Jose, and San Francisco had no Indians at all.

Aguayo returned from East Texas and established mission San Xavier de Naxera in 1722 near San Antonio. The mission was established for the Sana tribe which numbered about 600. An Indian named Rodriguez was elected as the Indian civil leader and Father Gonzalez was put in charge. The mission never really developed as the Indians lost patience with such a sedentary enterprise; San Xavier was joined with its few loyal Indians to San Antonio de Valero in 1725.

Aguayo had also succeeded in establishing Mission Espiritu

Santo de Zuniga in 1722 on the old site of La Salle's fort at Matagorda Bay. Indians of the Caro and Cuyanne tribes gathered under the charge of Father Patron. A crop failure caused the mission to move inland as it attempted to minister to the Haranames Indians in 1726. Overt failure resulted there too.

Behind San Antonio de Valero and San Jose de Aguayo, two of the most important missions in the San Antonio area, three other major missions were planted in 1730-1731. Actually the three were East Texas missions moved to San Antonio in that period. The former San Jose de los Nazonis became mission San Juan Capistrano; the former San Francisco de los Tejas became San Francisco de la Espada; the former Neustra Senora de la Purisma Concepcion was moved and retained its name.

This last one, Mission Concepcion as it came to be known, was established about two miles south of San Antonio de Valero. The usual granary, workshops, and mission walls were erected but years passed before the church portion of the mission was finished. All of the movable supplies were brought 350 miles from East Texas including cattle, horses, mules, church furnishings, and personal supplies. Indians of the Coahiltican tribes were gathered, numbering about 300. In 1739 a hard epidemic reduced the population to 120 but the padres held on. By 1745, 393 Indians had been baptized. In 1762 the records show 58 Indian families were living there, the total being about 207 persons. The fields often produced beautiful crops and in 1762 the mission maintained over 3,000 head of various domestic stock. In 1794 the population declined to 38 and the mission was shortly secularized as the duties of the



church were turned over to parish clergy and the land distributed among the Indians.

San Francisco de la Espada was founded in 1731 in San Antonio, having been moved there from East Texas. Some furnishings and supplies were brought from the old mission but many new ones had to be supplied. Stock was procured from missions below the Rio Grande and new Indians were recruited to congregate and live about the mission. The mission, being the furthest out from San Antonio de Valero, was most exposed to Apaches who struck with frequency in the 1730's, stealing cattle and goods. What Indians were gathered (about 230 by 1737) abandoned the mission due to a disagreement over punishment of one of their brothers administered by a padre. Later they were persuaded to return. In 1739 a devastating plague hit the community and the Indian count was reduced to 50. The father in charge, Ysasmedgi, perished in the epidemic also. By 1740 the mission had grown again to 120 as fields were planted and a church was under construction in 1745; a strong two story building served as housing and offices for the padres; a stone granary stood ready to hold harvested crops which had been grown with the help of an irrigation ditch and aqueduct. By 1756 the small church was completed, being about 39 feet long and 15 feet wide. Close to 200 persons lived at the mission then and maintained over 2,500 head of domestic cattle. A total of 640 baptisms had been performed since 1731. About 50 Indians still resided at the mission in 1789 and the establishment was secularized in 1794. The land, the tools, the supplies, the stock were

distributed among the Indians.

Finally in the San Antonio area Mission San Juan Capistrano was founded in 1731. It was named for Giovanni de Capistrano, a Franciscan hero of the crusades. This mission did not show immediate progress due in part, like Mission San Francisco, to its exposure to Apache attack. Nor was the land at first sufficient for the raising of crops and cattle. Temporary rude structures were erected in 1731 with the supplies being brought in from the abandoned mission of San Jose de Nazonis. Coahuiltecan Indians were congregated but, as mentioned, the mission was harassed by Apaches who stole horses and even killed two women in 1736. An ecclesiastic-military dispute caused the withdrawal of two of the three soldiers protecting the compound. The Indians became restless and tended to show less respect toward the padres without the presence of soldiers. In June 1737 more than 200 Indians deserted the mission leaving about 20 Indians there. By February 1738 many did voluntarily return but the epidemic of 1739 cut the number back to 66. A more settled existence was found in 1740-45 as crops were successfully grown and generous allowances of food and clothes supplied the Indians who adapted fairly well to the routine. In the next years a church 80 feet long by 19 feet wide stood on the site along with an enlarged convent for the padres. By 1762 the mission stock had grown to over 5,000 head. Since 1731, 847 baptisms had been performed. In 1789 the mission claimed only 58 residents. In 1794 it, like the other missions of San Antonio, was secularized and the land and goods distributed to the Indians.

The five missions of San Antonio were the most permanent of all Texas missions as they served and lasted for 70 to 80 years. The perennial problem was the fact of Indian runaways; still, from the records it can be seen that enough stayed for rich crops to be raised, ranches maintained, and churches and other buildings erected. Furthermore, the frontier of Texas was held firmly in Spanish hands from 1721 on, after Aguayo helped to plant the missions at San Antonio. French trade spread no further than East Texas and the sincere desire of the priests to convert the indigenous people was attempted with great perserverance.

By 1749 Spanish forces were prepared to attempt to extend the frontier north from San Antonio about 100 miles into Central Texas. San Antonio, with its missions founded in 1720-1731, was firmly established. Thus missions were to be tried near present-day Rockdale, 75 miles northeast of Austin.

In 1747 the Viceroy ordered three missions and a presidio founded there. The first one which came into existence was San Francisco Xavier de Horcasitas. Father Marrano Francisco selected the site and congregated 200 Indians from the Vidais, Cocos, Saropseles and Anchosos tribes. There followed much friction between the soldiery and the clergy, primarily over the soldiers' sexual abuse of the Indian women. With such offense the gathered Indians often retreated to the woods, much to the frustration of the padres. Trouble would continue. San Idelfonso was founded early in 1749 for the Cocos, Mayeye, and Orcoquiza Indians, suffering in the same way as San Francisco Xavier. Epidemics and drought

only worsened the situation. But still a third mission was founded in April 1749 in the same area and named Nuestra Senora de la Candaleria under Father Francisco.

The downfall of all three missions came as one Father Ganzabal and a civilian named Ceballos were murdered by an Indian, possibly at the instigation of the Spanish officer Teran, who lived at the presidio which had been established near the mission. It seems that the soldiers' conduct had become so bad that the padres excommunicated many of them, enraging Teran. When Ceballos, an old personal enemy of Teran, took refuge in the area, it appears Teran hired an Indian to kill him and Father Ganzabal. While the two enemies of Teran sat at a meal one evening in 1752 a shot rang out, killing Ceballos. When Father Ganzabal jumped up from the table he was shot by an arrow. This incident caused many of the mission Indians to flee lest they be blamed for the killings. The missions struggled on but the death blow had been struck. They all were removed by 1755.

In 1757 the Spanish church and state decided to make a mission effort into Apache country. It was slowly becoming clear that the Apache raids on the San Antonio missions and even those missions below the Rio Grande could only be stopped when the Apaches were either pacified or allied. Hope for either was false. T.E. Fehrenbach writes, "The dominant tribes in Texas were the Apaches and Comanches. The Spaniards were never able to conquer the first and the second gave them the greatest defeat they ever suffered at the hands of natives in the New World."<sup>3</sup> But Spanish pride

bent very slowly and so they attempted the impossible, a mission in the Apachería, Apache country.

To the north of the Apaches were their worst enemies, the Comanches, who were gradually pushing them south into the country of their second most hated enemy, the Spanish. So in a clever move, demonstrating innate Apache intelligence, a few men of the tribe rode boldly into San Antonio and asked that a mission be established for them far to the northwest on the San Saba River near present-day Menard. The missionary priests could not believe their ears but they readily acceded to the request. In April 1757 Colonel Parilla, soldiers, and five priests headed for the San Saba. There a mission was erected and a presidio built not too far distant. Mission San Saba was founded. The purpose thereof was threefold: convert the Apaches, reduce their threat to settlements, and extend the Spanish frontier. None of the objects would be met. Rather, the Apaches' purpose would be more clearly fulfilled. By luring the Spaniards out they had set up the possibility of war between their two worse enemies. San Saba was almost, if not actually, in Comanche country. The Apaches wanted to see what they would do about it. The mission program went well at first under the leadership of Fathers Terreros, Santiesteban, and Molina as they gathered over 200 Indians. In March 1758 they heard of a possible Comanche attack. Colonel Parilla increased the alert at the mission with 17 soldiers. Quite predictably on March 16, 1758, as Padre Terreros said mass a booming Indian war cry was heard outside the walls. When Terreros reached the top

of the mission wall he gazed out on a full 2,000 Comanches in warpaint! The soldiers mounted the wall but did not fire. One of the Comanches boldly opened the gate feigning friendliness; the Indians poured in. The padres tried to offer gifts of tobacco and other supplies but the Indians needed no offers; they simply ransacked the place taking what they wanted. Earlier a number of Indians had shot and killed a few soldiers some distance away who had been dispatched to the mission. When those Indians arrived at the mission compound the killing began. Father Terreros was shot and killed, Father Santiesteban decapitated. Father Molina managed somehow to miraculously escape. Later he told the story of the massacre. The mission was then abandoned. A highly unsuccessful counter attack was launched against the attackers. After that "never again was a serious campaign mounted against the Comanches."<sup>4</sup> Spanish military had to fold before the native.

But the padres did not quit easily. In 1762 Fathers Teran and Jiminez gathered a few Apaches but the mission, named San Lorenzo de la Cruz, served little purpose. No trace is left of it today where it once stood in present-day Uvalde County. Also in 1762 the same fathers founded Mission Nuestra Senora de la Candaleria del Canon near present-day Montell in Uvalde County. For four yers they struggled with a few Apaches. The Indians came and went, coming when there was food, leaving when there was no more. In 1766 they left for the last time. The mission was abandoned in 1767, indicative of the fact that the Spanish experiment in Central and West Texas was both a disaster and a failure.

Previous to the San Saba attempt in 1757 the Spanish church and state had sought to found missions to the south of San Antonio, near present-day Goliad. There in 1754 Nuestra Senora del Rosario was planted. At first the site lay on the San Antonio River but was shortly moved into the Guadalupe - San Antonio Valley. By 1768, 200 Indians had been baptized but the perennial problem for the padres was that of the runaway Indian. However, the mission grew slowly; stock-wise it did quite well, having some 5,000 head in 1768. A mission compound was erected about 300 feet square along with a stone church. The fields and orchards grew well but only with rain. Irrigation was impossible. The type of Indian found there by a visiting official, Father Salas, was described as crude, dirty and cannibalistic. They reportedly ate one soldier sent after runaways.<sup>5</sup> In 1780 the Indians totally abandoned Rosario and the padres did likewise between 1783 and 1790. In 1790 it was revived by Father Reyes who himself soon left the mission taking about 20 Indian converts with him to missions south of the Rio Grande. Evidently he thought separation from their environment would help to permanentize them as Christians and civilized people.

The last attempt by the Catholic church to missionize the native population by building a mission was made in 1792 when Nuestra Senora del Refugio was founded near present-day Refugio. There worked Father Jose Garza protected by 10 soldiers. In the summer of 1792 other padres went among the Indians in the wild and invited them to come to the church which would be completed by 1793. An expensive church was erected and the mission was

well supplied by some of the more prosperous but now fading San Antonio missions. Still the effort was feeble as the Karankawa Indians of the mission, probably the least civilized of the Texas Indians, refused to stay in the compound. Gatschet, in an interview in the 1880's with a woman who had lived among the Karankawas in the early 1800's, reported them as an exceedingly primitive tribe; they wore no clothes, were very unclean and used shark's oil to rub over their bodies to protect them from mosquitoes. The result of this last practice made them exceedingly foul smelling. To finish the description Gatschet reports the Indians were very insensitive emotionally speaking, for instance in regard to marriage or death.<sup>6</sup> With that type of Indian even Spanish ecclesiastical perseverance could not long hold out.

By 1795 the Indians were becoming restless and demanded help in the form of food. Governor Munoz supplied them with beef. In 1798 the mission underwent harassment by hostile tribes who stole horses and cattle. Friction developed between the soldiers present and the padres over housing. It seemed the soldiers were displacing Indians from their quarters. Catechism was taught weekly instead of daily. In an up-and-down 25-year history only 150 converts would accept the Christian faith, or, as one padre put it, they could at least make the sign of the cross. By 1830 this last mission had undergone secularization and the land and goods distributed to the Indians. The mission era had drawn to a close there on the South Texas plain.

Most of the mission activity in the total Texas area has been



touched upon with the exception of some efforts made along the Rio Grande both north and south of the river. Otherwise the important missions which reflect the development and decline of smaller ones have been mentioned.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1936), I, 269.
2. Marion A. Habig, The Alamo Chain of Missions (Chicago, Illinois: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968), p. 94.
3. T. R. Fehrenbach, Lone Star (Toronto, Ontario: The Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 58.
4. Ibid., p. 61.
5. James W. Burke, Missions of Old Texas (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1971), p. 31.
6. A. S. Gatschet, "The Karankawa Indians," Archaeological and Ethnological Papers of the Peabody Museum (1888), I, 1, passim.

## CHAPTER IV

It would seem appropriate in a paper of this nature to describe the pattern of living in and around the mission compound beginning with initial establishment practices and building procedures.

Usually an official of the church or a traveling padre would recommend to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities that a mission be established in this or that place. The ecclesiastical purpose would be to convert and civilize the Indians; the state-military would have various reasons for the establishment: Indian control, holding of foreign aggression, limiting of foreign trade, or simply the expansion of the Spanish frontier. For example, Father Massanet in 1689 requested that missions be established in East Texas. He had acceded to a request made by the chief of the Tejas. In a letter to the civil authorities Massanet wrote, "I said to the governor (Indian chief) that his people should become Christians and bring into their lands priests who should baptize them, since otherwise they could not save their souls, adding that if he wished, I would go to his lands."<sup>1</sup> Father Massanet later spoke with his religious superior about the possibility of missionizing the Tejas. He directed him to a higher civil official. Father Massanet writes, "I had an interview with His excellency (the viceroy), and spoke at great length . . . of the Tejas, and immediately he replied that he would foster the cause with might and main."<sup>2</sup> Father Massanet's sole purpose was to bring Indians into the faith. The state purpose in this case was that of stopping

foreign aggression and prohibiting the possibility of French trade. It was well known by 1690 that Robert La Salle had tried to establish the French on the Texas coast. That was aggression; it had to be stopped. Furthermore, East Texas offered a chance for the expansion of French trade dealing in furs and hides which often reaped the benefit of Indian alliance. Besides, the Spanish saw in East Texas a chance for frontier expansion. "A large and fertile country already menaced by the French did indeed call for missions."<sup>3</sup>

Following the consent of both church and state, an expedition was usually readied with all things necessary to plant a feudal style community in the wilderness. The state often bore the burden of the cost. The patronato real allowed the Spanish state to present people to ecclesiastical office and to collect church monies which they were to use to spread the faith. Such crown rights had come about due to papal decrees. On November 16, 1501 the pope (Alexander VI) "granted to the crown the right to collect tithes in the American colonies with the condition that the Crown should provide revenues for the establishment of churches and missions. On July 28, 1508, Pope Julius conceded to the crown universal patronage over the church in the Indies."<sup>4</sup> Thus when the state outfitted an expedition to establish a mission they were exercising their right and fulfilling their duty to the Catholic Church as a whole. Obviously, they also were expanding the power of the king. Funds also came from some of the Franciscan colleges and their treasuries. Primarily three Franciscan colleges in Mexico supplied the funds and missionaries for the Texas Indians. One was the

Zacatecan College at Zacatecas; another was the Queretaran College at Queretaro; the last one, San Fernando College in Mexico City.<sup>5</sup>

With the money supplied from various sources the necessary goods were bought. For instance, when De Leon set out north with Father Massanet to establish the East Texas missions he took 150 burdens of meal, 200 beeves, 400 horses, 200 pounds of powder, 20 mule loads of wine, wax (for candles), clothing, gifts, tobacco and, understandably, building tools.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths were taken along. The long trek was then made overland to the site of the new missions. The Indians were usually attracted by the giving away of gifts, tobacco, cloth, etc. Having won (or bought) their friendship by gift and trade, the padres proceeded by interpreter to explain their purpose in coming, namely the saving of the Indian soul. Usually the Indian was willing to have his soul saved if his stomach was kept filled. Ofttimes the Indians concluded the meeting by requesting that the padres settle down in thier area and establish a mission. The military officer would ceremoniously declare the Indians the subject of the far-away Spanish king and their land his, a dedicatory mass would usually be said, and a cross planted; in short, a mission had its start. Building could then begin. A makeshift chapel would be erected while the more permanent structures for Indian quarters, padres' quarters, a granary, and workshops would be constructed. The mission church usually came last. The Indians were urged to congregate at the mission and take up residence there. Over the years it was the practice of the more developed missions to make

permanent buildings of adobe or rock where possible. Adobe and rock were plentiful everywhere in Texas except in East Texas. There the buildings were of timber. Most of the time a presidio for the soldiers was established a few miles away from a mission or series of missions.

It should be noted that because initial contact between Spain and the Texas Indian was made by padres instead of conquistadores, as in Mexico or Peru, the encomienda system was not therefore operative in Texas. "The encomienda was a system of virtual slavery, whereby the Indians of a conquered area were distributed among the land holding conquistadores, or encomenderos in perpetuity."<sup>7</sup> Father Bartolome de las Casas railed against this practice in the Indies in the 1540's.<sup>8</sup> While it was not ultimately abolished in New Spain it did not take root in Texas, probably due to the lack of ready wealth in Texas (no gold or silver to be mined in quantity, therefore no need for slaves) and probably due to the nonsedentary nature of the Texas Indian; it was a lot easier to "entrust" to conquistadores settled Indians who lived in pueblos in Mexico than Apaches or Comanches who roamed the plains. They were to be entrusted to no one!

What was the daily routine of the padres and the Indians in the mission like? The answer could be, "Rigorous." The mission bell would ring early in the morning near dawn as the Indians would be gathered in or near the chapel for the saying of the appropriate office. Thereafter would follow, every day, 30 to 60 minutes of doctrina or catechetical teaching of the Christian faith. The padres

sometimes taught through interpreters although all missionaries were to learn the native tongue. Sometimes lessons were given in Spanish if the mission were old enough for the Indians to have acquired the auxiliary language. The teaching methodology was, perforce, simplistic. In typical Roman Catholic style statuary, pictures, and drama were employed to portray the teaching. Breakfast followed that session and then it was off to a day's work. The men went to the fields to tend the crops or to the ranch lands, which nearly all missions possessed, for the care of livestock. The women would go to the workshops in the mission compound working at looms, or producing the stereotype Indian basket, or preparing meals for the men when they came in from the field. The children went to school under the padres who sought to educate them in a 17th or 18th century curriculum. In the afternoon the work continued. Toward evening the bells would ring again and the residents would gather for Vespers, another hour of instruction, along with the saying of the Rosary. The Indian authorities, who elected their own mayor, council and sheriff, would check to make sure all were present. Punishment was doled out to those who were inexcusably absent. The evening remained free. Some of the Indians would stand guard throughout the night watching for possible hostile Indian activity from the outside.

The routine described above was practiced day after day in more or less the same style. Castaneda writes, "In each mission therefore, the missionary imported religious instruction and industrial training by the simple process of following a definite

routine. Let it not be thought, however, that this was done in a haphazard or desultory fashion. Much judgment and discretion was exercised by the unselfish and zealous missionaries in accomplishing their task.<sup>9</sup>

Such was the daily procedure. The mission was designed to be completely self-supporting, like the old feudal manor. A few missions like San Jose de Miguel y Aguayo accomplished this feat in the Texas wild country; many remained dependent to a greater degree on outside supply. A mission was given usually ten years to establish itself and then the missionizing padres were to turn the compound over to secular parish priests and move on to new mission fields. In Texas the time for establishment was always longer than ten years.<sup>10</sup> In 1794 most missions were secularized not because they were successfully ready for release from mission status but because the Indians were so few in number that the mission was not worth continuance by the padres. If the mission ~~were~~ near a civil settlement as those were in San Antonio, then a secular priest would see to the spiritual needs of the few Christian Indians remaining in the area.



## FOOTNOTES

1. Herbert E. Bolton, Spanish Exploration of the Southwest (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1908), pp. 363f.
2. Ibid., p. 366.
3. Herbert E. Bolton, The Spanish Borderlands in The Chronicles of America Series, edited by Allen Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), XXIII, 216.
4. Frances V. Scholes, Church and State in New Mexico 1610-1650 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1937), pp. 13ff.
5. Burke, op. cit., p. 46.
6. Walter F. McCaleb, Spanish Missions of Texas (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1954), p. 31.
7. Robert M. Randoy, "The Spanish Mission of Florida, New Mexico, and California: 1559-1784." (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1960), p. 14.
8. Lewis Hanke, Bartolome de las Casas (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1951), p. 31.
9. Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1936), III, 28.
10. Ibid., p. 30.

## CHAPTER V

Finally, it is left to venture an evaluation of the Spanish mission effort in Texas politically, ecclesiastically, and socially.

Politically, did the effort successfully colonize the area for Spain? The answer is, "Not really." Spain had hoped that she could send out the missionaries with presidio protection, tame the frontier by gathering, controlling, and civilizing the Indians. Then Spanish settlers were to follow and civil settlements were to spring up around missions and presidios. By 1792, there were only five such civil settlements in Texas of substance. The only one of substantial size was Villa de Bejar which lay in the same area as the San Antonio missions. It stood as the forerunner of modern San Antonio, having been settled by soldiers' families and a few colonists from the Canary Islands. A small civil settlement lay near the East Texas mission field and came to be known as Nacogdoches, the name which the modern city bears. Also a few settlers and colonists had gathered near Refugio and Goliad near the missions there. Finally a colony of Spaniards stood at El Paso in far West Texas. But all five settlements together numbered only in the hundreds of Spaniards. San Antonio had 780 Spaniards in 1790.<sup>1</sup> The Indian was still too wild and no immediate means of attaining quick wealth in gold or silver mining was visible. Texas just was not that attractive to the Spanish settler.

Politically speaking, did the effort hold the Texas area for Spanish control? The answer is a qualified "yes." With the successful establishment of a presidio in East Texas in 1721,

and the founding of the presidio at San Antonio, a line could be drawn from east Texas through San Antonio and on to Eagle Pass and then up to El Paso. If such would be designated the frontier, yes, the Spanish held the frontier until it became the Mexican frontier in 1822 as Mexico revolted successfully. But Central and North Texas, north of San Antonio, were Spanish in name only. The Apaches and Comanches held that land as their own. On the east at the Sabine River the French were held off. But by European war and cession they gradually took present-day Louisiana and much of the Deep South from Spanish paper control until it was ceded back to Spain in 1762. Their traders still smuggled goods in and out of Texas, especially trading with north Texas tribes. Still Texas was more Spanish than French, where it was not Indian. Much of the Spanish activity was defensive. Bolton writes to the effect that the missions in Texas were more defensive than offensive, i.e., they were attempts to hold the frontier, not expand it.<sup>2</sup> The church served the state as the Spanish state accomplished its task of defense of borders. The ostensible purpose of converting the native took second place to defending against encroachment upon or attempted control of Spanish territory.<sup>3</sup>

Ecclesiastically, did the effort Christianize the indigenous peoples? McCaleb estimates that during the entire mission period about 10,000 Indians were baptized while about 2,000 became neophytes, i.e., Christians who barely grasped and comprehended the faith. Millions of pesos had been spent to convert the native

population. Some population estimates are given that when the Spanish discovered Texas in 1519 only 100,000 Indians lived in the province of Texas.<sup>4</sup> Given any growth rate at all in the following 400 years, 10,000 Indians is a paltry number of baptisms. Of course, from a devout Christian padre's point of view, if one soul was saved the effort was worth it all. Yet when one takes into account that the 2,000 neophytes did not form a nucleus from which Catholicism spread among other native peoples, the mission success looks bleak indeed. Given the fact that the Indian passed significantly in numbers from the American scene for various reasons, still today, "Roman Catholic Christianity is of little importance among the remaining Indian population of the United States."<sup>5</sup>

Ecclesiastically, what type of Indian-Spanish relation did the mission effort foster? "Benevolent paternalism" would be the kindest phrase for the description of the relationship of the Spanish padre to the Indian. The devotion of the fathers to their "charges" cannot be doubted as one views their willingness to suffer drastic privations of body and soul just to get a few Indians through the water of Baptism. Franciscan fathers, according to Gibson, were motivated by Erasmian humanism. They felt it was their God-given task to pacify, reform, civilize, teach, humanize, purify, and most of all convert the Indian.<sup>6</sup> America offered that opportunity. Priests went barefoot, unarmed, with only their clothes on their backs and their few religious books for personal possessions, to bring the Indian into the

Christian household of faith. Paternalism was the only type of relationship for the Spanish padre. It was assumed the Spaniard was superior in all ways to the Indian, in culture, civilization and lifeblood. Landowners in other parts of the Indies could practice virtual slavery with the Indian, but the padres could only operate with benevolent paternalism. "Because the Spanish faith was real, and America had two continents filled with heathen, . . . the Spaniard arrived with a ready and unshakable rationale for conquest. . . . A superior culture -- superior in the realities of organization and power -- always has attempted, and always will attempt, domination of other cultures upon which it impinges. The means (slavery or paternalism?) could be questioned; the practice never."<sup>7</sup>

Most of the fathers preferred that the conquest be carried out in gentler, more loving ways. Thus the relationship of Spaniard to Indian, was as superior to inferior, civilized to uncivilized, etc. Little wonder that the Indian ran away from missions, attacked them, or often completely abandoned them.

As a result of the Spanish mission effort many Spanish-based social characteristics were transferred to present-day Texas culture. Priestly writes, "The Spanish influence pervades Texas. . . the flavor of Spain (is found) in numerous objects of apparel and domestic use. The city (of San Antonio) is almost Latin in architecture. Similar mementos of the past . . . are found in El Paso and other Texas towns."<sup>8</sup> One need only stroll for instance through the University of Texas campus at Austin and note will surely

be made of the influence of Spanish architecture brought and fostered by padres -- open court yards, patios, clay shingles, open archways, flat roofs -- all point out the dominance of Spain in times past. The language of the area also has been increased by Spanish vocabulary. Spanish is the second language. Not far below San Antonio the roadmarkers become bilingual. Law in the area of water rights, property rights, mineral rights, even rights of women, are distinctly Spanish. As a result of the first mission surge into Texas a style of life in America was created. The blend of Anglo-Spanish culture is peculiarly southwestern and adds much to the mystique of "The Texan." His folklore with Coronado and other Spanish heroes, his food, his lodging, his Mexican neighbors, are often distinctly marked by Spanish influence. His much discussed agricultural and ranching methods have their roots in Spain. Most importantly though for a Christian minister, there are the people, who hold Spain or Mexico as their primary seat of heritage, the Mexican-American who speaks primarily Spanish and operates in a Mexican thought-world. They are the legacy of the Spanish influx brought by the mission effort. In them still lies the opportunity to spread the Christian faith, maybe otherwise than by benevolent paternalism, but nevertheless an opportunity to witness the faith that is held by those of Christ's Church.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Marion A. Habig, The Alamo Chain of Missions (Chicago, Illinois: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968), p. 262.
2. Herbert E. Bolton, Wider Horizons of American History (New York: D. Appleton Century Company., 1939), pp. 70f.
3. Bolton, loc. cit.
4. James W. Burke, Missions of Old Texas (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1971), p. 28.
5. Robert M. Randoy, "The Spanish Mission of Florida, New Mexico, and California 1559-1784." (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1960), p. 171.
6. Charles Gibson, Spain in America (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), passim.
7. T. R. Fehrenbach, Lone Star (Toronto, Ontario: The Macmillan Co., 1968), p. 21.
8. Herbert I. Priestley, The Coming of the White Man in A History of American Life, edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon R. Fox (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), p. 352.

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