

THE CHURCH IN THE SUBJUGATION OF MEXICO

by

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A THESIS

Approved:

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THE CHURCH IN THE SUBJUGATION OF MEXICO

A THESIS

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by

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Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to present an account of (1) the role the church played in the conquest of Mexico; (2) the church's missionary labors in Mexico; (3) the vast and powerful organization into which the church developed during the colonial period; and (4) the charitable, educational, and artistic accomplishments of the church in Mexico.

Methods

The method used to obtain data for this study was the examination of books, periodicals, and encyclopedias in the Sam Houston State College Library, Houston Public Library, and Rice University Library.

Findings

From the information examined the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. In Mexico as in Spain the church was closely affiliated with the state.

2. Catholicism blended easily with the pagan religion of Mexico because of their similarities.

3. Hernan Cortez and his expedition introduced Christianity to Mexico.

4. The majority of the clergy in Mexico did not want to abolish the encomienda system, but only improve the working and living condition of the Indians under the system.

5. The early friars and clergymen were outstanding missionaries, but later members were not so diligent.

6. The church was well organized in Mexico within a few decades after the conquest, and continued to grow in power and wealth throughout the colonial period.

7. In order to convert so many natives the missionaries used for methods, teaching, preaching, use of force and authority, and the suppression of idolatry.

8. The church had complete control of education in Mexico but did not encourage independent or creative thinking.

Approval:

Chairman

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A full understanding of Mexican colonial history is impossible without an insight into the position occupied and influence exerted by the Roman Catholic Church. In few other parts of the world has the church been so intimately a part of the social, economic, and political system as in the Latin American colonies.

The purpose of this study is to present a discussion of (1) the role the church played in the conquest of Mexico; (2) the church's missionary labors in Mexico; (3) the vast and powerful organization into which the church developed during the colonial period; and (4) the educational, charitable, and artistic accomplishments of the church in Mexico.

The history of the church during the early colonial period will be closely examined. In those early years the church blended its religion with that of the Indians and established its missionaries throughout Mexico, and the clergy began to acquire the power, wealth, and social rank which would later serve as its profile in the colonial period. The Roman Catholic Church as it existed in the

Mexican colony will be studied, rather than the church in Spain or Rome, although their relationship must occasionally enter this study.

The Aztec religion will be the only native religion considered. Most historians and writers make no attempt to distinguish between the religions of the many tribes in Mexico, but treat the country as one religious unit and the Aztec religion as that one religion. In order to justify this treatment, it should be remembered that while the similarities between the native religions were great, the differences were few.¹

The principal sources of information used were books, periodicals, and encyclopedias in the Sam Houston State College Library, Houston Public Library, and Rice University Library. Direct translations from Spanish into English were very helpful. The use of Spanish sources by most of the English authors and historians in this field granted access to the printed ideas and record of events in that language.

Religion by itself can be an emotional subject. Add to this a single powerful church affiliated with the state

¹Charles S. Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest of Mexico, 5.

in maintaining the economic, political, and social status quo, and an objective study of such an institution becomes much more difficult. Most of the early chroniclers, contemporaries of the events they recorded, were overly zealous, devout friars and missionaries who could only exaggerate the outstanding work and accomplishments of the church. Then after independence the native historians sought to crush the church and wrote only of its evil and corruption. In between these two viewpoints must lie the truth.

The background of the Mexican colonial church begins in the mother country, Spain. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the bloodline of the Spaniard was a mixture of Phoenician, Iberian, Celt, Greek, Carthaginian, Vandal, Visigoth, Roman, and Moslem.² While the Romans introduced Christianity to the peninsula, it was the Moorish occupation that left the greatest imprint on the religion of Spain and the character of the inhabitants who would bring the faith to the New World. The Moslems had invaded Spain in A. D. 711 and occupied the peninsula for eight centuries. Perhaps without the bitter struggle

²Joseph H. L. Schlarman, Mexico, A Land of Volcanoes, 14.

between the Spaniards and Moslems there would have been no exploration, conquistadores, or missionaries.³

When the Spanish conquered Granada, the last Moorish stronghold in Spain in March, 1492, they signed a treaty with the Moors promising that the Moslems in Granada and Castile would not be molested for their religious beliefs. While this treaty with the Moslems was honored by the Spanish for eight years, the Jews were immediately expelled, with much loss of life and property.⁴

Then in 1500 the Archbishop of Toledo, Ximenes de Cisneros, who was not pleased with the slow progress made in the peaceful conversion of the Moors to Christianity since the fall of Granada, began a program of harassment. He destroyed thousands of rare Moslem manuscripts, setting an example for the destruction of the pagan writings by the missionaries a few years later in New Spain. The royal court in Spain supported the eminent archbishop and his violent actions on the grounds that it was the Moslems who had first broken the treaty signed at Granada, thus forfeiting all their rights. When Moorish rebellion flared up, the Spanish troops were quick to put an end to it, and

³Francis Clement Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars, 21-27.

⁴Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 9-11.

in 1502 King Ferdinand issued an order requiring baptism or exile of all females over twelve years of age and males over fourteen.⁵

By the time Spanish unity was achieved the Spaniards bore the lasting imprint of their Moslem counterpart. They were less European than Asiatic, proud to the point of arrogance, and possessed by mysticism.⁶ Spanish Christians copied the easy morals of the Moslems and their concept of slavery.⁷ Greed as a motive for conquest was also acquired by the Spaniards from the Moors, as well as tolerance of extreme cruelty. If the inquisitors of the Holy Office knew how to get the truth from their victims by torture, it was the Moors who had refined and taught them the art.

The centuries of struggle against the Moslems only served to intensify Spain's religious devotion. The fanaticism and hatred of the unbeliever were symbolized by the religious heroism which swept over Spain. Warfare and

⁵Ibid., 12-13. Actually the monarch was being no more extreme in his actions than the clergy, for this same source on page 15, states that at the end of the sixteenth century, a Spanish bishop wrote that a child might slay his own parents without impunity, if they were heretics or idolators.

⁶J. Fred Rippey, Latin America, 39-40.

⁷Schlarman, Mexico, 7.

idealism were combined and taken forward in the conquests of the New World.⁸

Although Christopher Columbus made no mention of the faith in his written agreements with the crown, Hernan Cortez sailed with a banner bearing a red cross and inscription, "Let us follow this cross and under this sign if we have faith we shall conquer." Yet, like most adventurers, Columbus and Cortez were more interested in worldly riches than spiritual ones.⁹

While overflowing with fanaticism to crush or convert the unbelievers, the Spaniards of the sixteenth century believed that religious observance meant only a minimum amount of attendance at church ceremonies and the simple acceptance of all the doctrine the church taught. The church had little real influence on morality.¹⁰ Thus, this period of Spanish history produced a group of people full of contradictions, some of which are still evident in the Mexicans of today; the ability to celebrate in the very season of penance; to sin abundantly and yet hate sin; and to love

⁸Kelley, Altars, 28-31.

⁹Ernest Gruening, Mexico and Its Heritage, 171.

¹⁰Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 16.

the sacrament and yet hate the hand that offers it.¹¹ As a definite part of their character the Spaniards brought with them to Mexico the seeds of anticlericalism, as well as extreme devotion to the church.¹²

In addition to the absence of discipline and morality in the everyday lives of the Spaniards, there was also a lack of these same qualities in the monasteries and ranks of the secular clergy. Queen Isabel handed down reform orders, carried out by Archbishop Ximenes, which helped raise the general level of morality in the clergy, but abuses still continued. It is not surprising that these clergymen of undesirable character would eventually appear in the New World.¹³

The church was financially comfortable at the time of the conquest with seven archbishoprics and forty bishoprics receiving an annual income of \$7,000,000 and a secular clergy receiving about \$60,000,000 a year in rental income. The religious orders with about 9,000 monasteries in Spain were equally rich.¹⁴ Yet, when the silver and gold of the

¹¹Kelley, Altars, 32.

¹²Ibid., 55.

¹³Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 16.

¹⁴Rippy, Latin America, 41.

conquest came back to Spain, the clergy began to live even more luxuriously. Concubinage was the practice of most of the upper hierarchy of the clergy, and bishops openly left estates to their sons, despite protests from some clerics and laymen. More and more young men entered the religious orders for the exemptions from certain financial obligations and the privileges of the ecclesiastical courts. In 1787, one-fourth of all the Spanish males were either church and government employees, or soldiers.¹⁵

The ten Spanish monarchs who ruled from 1521 to 1821 were the incarnation of vice and weakness, with one exception, Charles III. Most of these men expended Spain's treasure and blood on wars in Europe in defense of Catholicism, and lavished fortunes upon a corrupt court nobility.¹⁶

The first five Spanish kings during the colonial period of Mexico were of the Hapsburg family, beginning with Charles I of Spain, 1516-1556, also known as Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. Most of the time Charles was more concerned with the German states than with his own inherited countries. Philip II, 1556-1598, made the Spanish Inquisition the terror of Spain and the Netherlands, and introduced it to

¹⁵Gruening, Mexico, 11.

¹⁶Rippy, Latin America, 43.

farmers and competition between middle-class industrialists, and reversed the traditional Hapsburg suspicion of foreigners. While the Hapsburg rulers considered the church a dominant arm of the government, the Bourbons distrusted the Spanish Church and were markedly anticlerical. Insisting on the supremacy of their bureaucracy over the church at all times, the Bourbon ruler, Charles III, ousted the Jesuit Order from Spain and Mexico when it began to appear as a threat to civil power, a state within the state.¹⁸

The crown in Spain enjoyed many privileges in its relationship with the church in Mexico. This close affiliation of the church and state was known as the real patronato de las Indias, or the royal patronage of the Indies.¹⁹

From early times the Christian Church had made concessions to the founders of religious institutions in order to express gratitude and to stimulate other followers to build churches. At first these privileges were honorary, non-transferable, and given only to ecclesiastics, but later they were granted to laymen, transferable to their

¹⁸Howard F. Cline, The United States and Mexico, 34-36.

¹⁹J. Lloyd Mecham, Church and State in Latin America, 1.

heirs, and included the right of presentation, which was the naming of candidates to fill clerical positions.²⁰

In Spain, Queen Isabel had received concessions from Pope Sixtus IV in order to fight the Moslems. These rights, first given to Isabel and Ferdinand, were later extended to include the selection of candidates for all clerical offices in Spain as a part of their program to unify Spain and strengthen the monarchy.²¹ Yet the rights of the crown in the regulation and control of the church in the colonies went further than those in Spain, and were all based on pontifical concession.

The first papal concession dealing with the Spanish colonies was issued by Pope Alexander VI, on May 4, 1493, giving the Spanish king domination of the Indies and the privilege of Christianizing the Indians. This decree was followed by the papal bull of November 16, 1501, issued by the same pope, granting tithes and first-fruits of all the churches in the Indies to the crown. These documents were reinforced by Pope Julius II's bull of July 28, 1508, granting the right of universal patronage over the church

²⁰Ibid., 8.

²¹Schlarman, Mexico, 92.

in the Indies to the king of Spain.²² The Spanish monarch virtually became the head of the church in the colonies.

The heart of royal patronage was the right of presentation. When a high church position--such as an archbishopric, bishopric, or canonicate--was vacant in the colonies, the king presented or chose the candidate, while the lower or parish clergy were nominated by the viceroy or governors in the colonies. The bishops would present a list of three candidates in the case of parish and cathedral clergy from which the viceroy or king would choose one.²³ Guide lines were established for the viceroy in his choice of presentation in order to favor the most worthy candidate.²⁴

In the matter of royal appointments the king often appointed the bishops of the church to civil positions, such as the office of governor or viceroy. It was quite natural that these clergymen should have been chosen, not only because of the close affiliation of church and state, but also because of their training and education. Laymen who could read and write well were few in number.²⁵

²²Mecham, Church and State, 12-13.

²³C. H. Haring, The Spanish Empire in America, 180.

²⁴Mecham, Church and State, 33.

²⁵Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, Church and State in Mexico, 1822-1857, 9.

According to the papal bull of 1501 all the revenue collected in the colonies by the church belonged to the Spanish king. This decree stated that in return for assuming the financial obligation of sending all the missionaries and priests to the New World, and assisting in the building of their churches, the king possessed the right to use the revenue as he chose. The devout Spanish monarchs preferred to donate the greatest part of this revenue to the clergy, bishops, hospitals, and other pious institutions.²⁶

As a privilege of royal patronage, the crown required a royal permit to build all churches, hospitals, and monasteries in the colonies. No clergyman could go to the New World without a royal license. The king had the right to establish and change the territorial limits of parishes and dioceses. No removal of an ecclesiastic could be made without royal permission. All communications from the pope could be enforced in America only after receiving the approval of the Council of the Indies.²⁷

²⁶Mecham, Church and State, 29.

²⁷Haring, The Spanish Empire, 181.

CHAPTER II

THE AZTEC RELIGION PRIOR TO THE CONQUEST AND ITS INTERACTION WITH CATHOLICISM

The sixteenth century conquest and conversion of the natives of Mexico by the Roman Catholic Church of Spain was one of the largest ever attempted. Never before had so large a group of people been persuaded to embrace a new religion in so short a time. Within a century the area south of the Rio Grande was nominally Catholic.¹ In order to understand how such a mass conquest and conversion could have been accomplished, the preconquest religion of Mexico must be considered, for the habit of being religious is a legacy that the Mexican received from his ancestors. Much to the surprise of the early Spanish conquerors and missionaries, there were many similar beliefs in the pagan and Christian religions which hastened the conversion process. Yet one culture never wholly replaces another, and some of the pagan practices are still evident in the Mexican religion.

¹Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 3.

The Aztec religion will be the only native faith observed in this study because that was the primary one that the Spanish encountered. The Aztecs do not deserve credit for the highly-complex religious system they were practicing at the time of the conquest. Comparative newcomers to the Anahuac Valley of Mexico, arriving in the twelfth or thirteenth century, the Aztecs borrowed their culture from the Toltecs, Mayas and others.² The synthesis of the faiths of preceding tribes with their own caused a striking incongruity to appear in the Aztec religious system. Two distinct and differing influences are evident, for some portions of their faith bear the mark of refinement, while other parts are brutal and severe. This diversity suggests that the Aztecs adopted segments of their predecessors' milder faith into their own harsher system, with the latter remaining more dominant.³

The early friars and missionaries were amazed at the similarities between the pagan and Christian faith and often noted in their writings that the strange mixture of truth

²J. Fred Rippy, Historical Evolution of Hispanic America, 24.

³William Hickling Prescott, A History of the Conquest of Mexico, 22.

and idolatry in the native religion could only have been the work of the devil. Nevertheless, the first priests and friars took every advantage of the analogies between the two religions to hasten the process of conversion.⁴

The Aztecs, like the Christians, believed in the idea of one Supreme Being. Although the natives had a plurality of deities, they recognized a superior Creator whom they addressed in their prayers with words bearing a remarkable resemblance to Biblical scripture. Not sophisticated enough to endow their Supreme Being with volition to carry out His purposes alone, they believed He was dependent on lesser deities. The natives made no attempt to represent him in a visual or objective manner as was the custom with all the other inferior gods and goddesses.⁵ The Aztecs called Him Teotl, a word which in pronunciation and spelling greatly resembles the Greek word for god, theos.⁶

Below the Supreme Being were more than two hundred lesser deities and thirteen major gods to preside over

⁴Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 75.

⁵Prescott, History of the Conquest, 22-23.

⁶Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 21.

earthly affairs, each with a special consecrated feast day.⁷ Friar Bernardino de Sahagun⁸ records the complete list of feast days the Indians celebrated during each of the eighteen months in the Aztec calendar. The countryside was covered with shrines and temples dedicated to these numerous deities.

The organized native priesthood had much influence on the Aztec religion. Combining astrology and superstition, the pagan clergy greatly impressed the masses with their awesome ceremonies.⁹ Various religious orders composed the hierarchy of the priesthood, and each order was devoted to the worship of one particular god. A high-priest governed at the top of this organization, followed in rank by bishops and ordinary priests. The office of priest was not permanent, although many gave their whole lives to it. Being chaste and honorable men, the pagan priesthood possessed dignity as well as the high esteem of their people.¹⁰ While allowed to marry, the native clergy lived in monastic quarters within the confines of their temples when performing their duties. Prayer three times

⁷Prescott, History of the Conquest, 22-23.

⁸See Appendix.

⁹Prescott, History of the Conquest, 25.

¹⁰Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 48-52.

daily and once at night, and the observation of fasts and harsh penances composed their strictly regulated lives within the temples.

The number of native priests was large, for at the Aztec capital five thousand men served in the principal temple alone. Within the hierarchy of this temple, as in all others, precise rank designated each priest's functions and duties. Some managed the choirs, others arranged feast days, and still others supervised the education of the children.¹¹

The Aztec priests, like their Catholic counterparts, administered the rites of confession and absolution. The pagan Indian also practiced oral confession without a priest. Friar Jeronimo de Mendieta¹² states that about twice a year the Indian traveled alone to a remote temple or shrine to make his oral confession.¹³ When confessing to a priest, the secrets of the confessional and penance imposed were protected as inviolable. Yet, because it was thought unpardonable to repeat an offence once absolution was granted, an

¹¹Prescott, History of the Conquest, 25-26.

¹²See Appendix.

¹³Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 69.

Indian usually made his one confession to a priest late in life. This absolution freed him from legal as well as spiritual punishment. Long after the conquest many Indians sought to escape arrest by a certificate of confession.¹⁴

Friar Juan de Torquemada¹⁵ estimates that approximately forty thousand temples dedicated to the worship of Indian deities existed in Mexico at the time of the conquest. The temples were called teocalli, and were built in a rectangular shape, except those honoring Quetzalcoatl. His temples were round since he was the god of wind and would meet less resistance passing through this shape of building. In addition to the temples, shrines adorned the roadsides and hills.¹⁶ The lands surrounding the temples were annexed, and the priests managed these properties and their tenants with a degree of generosity.¹⁷

At Cozumel, an island off the coast of Yucatan, the sight of a stone and lime cross amazed Hernan Cortez¹⁸ and

¹⁴Prescott, History of the Conquest, 26.

¹⁵See Appendix.

¹⁶Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 52-53.

¹⁷Prescott, History of the Conquest, 27-28.

¹⁸See Appendix.

his men. This cross was the symbol of the god of rain and the god of health throughout Mexico. Even the Spanish conquerors thought it very curious that the cross was venerated in the New World as well as the old.¹⁹ Found in many places in Mexico, the cross also appeared in native paintings and codices. The cross was not patterned after the Latin, for all arms were of equal length.²⁰

The Aztec treatment of the dead and belief in an after-world did not differ greatly from the Christian. After death the native practice was to dress the deceased's body in the vestments of his titular deity. After a ceremony to drive away evil spirits, the body was burned. The ashes of the deceased were kept in a vase in his family's home.

Three states of being composed the Aztec's afterworld existence. First, there was everlasting darkness for the wicked. Yet, contrary to Christian belief, there was an absence of physical torture in this destiny assigned to the wicked. The second group, those dying of certain diseases, would enjoy an afterlife of rather indolent contentment. Lastly, the heroes and warriors entered the heavens with a

¹⁹Prescott, History of the Conquest, 101.

²⁰Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 61-62.

dancing and singing procession, where their spirits were to dwell in the garden of paradise.²¹

Among other details of the native faith which closely resembles Catholicism is baptism. This native ceremony involved sprinkling water on the bosom and lips of a child for the purpose of removing the sins with which the infant had entered the world.²² Other similarities were monasteries training the young native men, and convents the women. Also the Aztecs used incense, holy water, sacred ointments, bells, charms, and ashes as a part of their religious ceremonies.²³

Another aspect of the Aztec religion, the legend of Quetzalcoatl, while not similar to Catholicism should not be overlooked. The legend of Quetzalcoatl played an influential role in the relationship of the Indians and Spaniards during the conquest for it helps to account for the acceptance of the Spaniards as gods by the Aztecs, thus making both the conquest and conversion swifter. The legend itself is a subject upon which many Mexican churchmen have enjoyed conjecturing theories. Quetzalcoatl was one of the

²¹Prescott, History of the Conquest, 24.

²²Ibid., 25.

²³Gruening, Mexico, 230-232.

three principal native gods who overshadowed all the other deities.²⁴ According to legend, Quetzalcoatl came as a stranger to live with the Mexicans, and after giving them instruction in art and agriculture, sailed off to sea. Before leaving he prophesied that some day he or some one like him, with white skin and beard, would come again and perfect their skills in the cultural arts.²⁵ Quetzalcoatl predicted that he would return in the year Ce Acatl. This was one of the fifty-two years which made up the cycle of divided time in the Aztec calendar. Strangely enough, while it was not known in which cycle it would occur, the year, 1519, was the year of Ce Acatl.²⁶

There has been much disagreement concerning the origin of the stories concerning Quetzalcoatl. Historians such as Jesuit Alfredo Chavero²⁷ believe that most of the Indian prophecies did not exist at all, but were fabrications of

²⁴Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 28-30.

²⁵Rippy, Hispanic America, 25.

²⁶Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 34-35.

²⁷See Appendix.

the missionaries and conquerors in order to hasten the conquest and conversion. Nevertheless, clear reference to this legend is found in the earliest writings concerning the conquest. Hernan Cortez in his own letters to Emperor Charles V gives a full account of the prophecy as told to him by Montezuma.²⁸ Friar Toribio de Motolinia²⁹ and Friar Bernardino de Sahagun both raise no doubt as to the existence of this prophecy. On no other basis does it seem possible to explain Montezuma's hesitancy in destroying Cortez and his forces long before they reached his capital.³⁰

Since the legend of Quetzalcoatl is not clear as to the physical origin of this deity, churchmen and scholars in Mexico have theorized several possibilities. Bartolome de Las Casas³¹ believed that he came to the Aztecs from the

²⁸Cortez wrote five long letters to the emperor shortly after the events of the conquest occurred. Supposedly these reports are an accurate account of what happened, but Cortez's enemies have charged that since his own fortunes were involved Cortez colored his narrative. The letters were written July 10, 1519; Oct. 30, 1520; May 15, 1522; Oct. 15, 1524; and Sept. 3, 1526. Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 317.

²⁹See Appendix.

³⁰Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 40-41.

³¹See Appendix.

East, probably from the Yucatan with followers. Friar Juan Torquemada and others agreed with Las Casas and his theory. Friar Jeronimo de Mendieta thought Quetzalcoatl came from the Yucatan area to the city of Cholula, because he was the most highly esteemed god in that city. Another early church writer, Mariano Veytia,³² from the various accounts that he had read concluded that Quetzalcoatl arrived from the North. Father Diego de Duran³³ and the brilliant scholar Siquenza y Gongora,³⁴ both writers of the colonial period, believed that one of the apostles, probably St. Thomas, preached in Mexico and was Quetzalcoatl. These speculations were supported by the similarities between the native practices and Christianity. Then there were those who felt that two Quetzalcoatl's existed, one of whom was a man, and the other, the god of wind.³⁵

The crusading faith brought by the conquistadores blended easily with the Indian paganism. Like their ancestors in northern Europe during the Middle Ages, the clergy smashed the false idols, but adopted the rituals and legends

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 32-36.

that could be reconciled with their faith.³⁶ By deliberately maintaining ties with the past and keeping some of the pagan traditions, a modified Mexican form of Catholicism was developed.

First, the church not only gave the Indian a chance to save his life, but left him his old faith in the Indian gods. The clergy superimposed its new faith on the older religious heritage left by the preconquest natives. When the friars destroyed temples of idols, they built their churches on the very sites where the old gods had been honored, using the old temple stones as their foundation materials. The priests and missionaries replaced the authority of the pagan priesthood, and the Indian permitted himself to be corrected and punished by this new spiritual power. The native built churches for the new clergy, just as he had previously built temples and pyramids for his preconquest religion. Even the setting aside of lands to be worked for the maintenance of the priests and missions had its origin in his earlier religion.³⁷

The church preserved the link between the past and present for the Indian, giving him a sense of continuance to his life. The mystical tie to the supernatural was

³⁶ Henry Bamford Parkes, A History of Mexico, 106.

³⁷ Frank Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution, 38-42.

never broken, regardless of how little the Indian really understood the church's doctrine.³⁸

The survival of ancient customs and rituals of the native religion is evident in the Mexican Catholic faith most conclusively in three areas. These are: (1) the retention of native feast days as Christian holidays; (2) the performance of native dances on religious occasions; and (3) the renaming of pagan deities and shrines with Christian names.³⁹

The religious holidays of the Mexican Church are still very much like the pagan feast days. The festival of All Saints and All Souls on the first and second days of November is a continuation of the preconquest worship of the goddess of death by the Indians. The Christian priests allowed these rites to be combined with those of the church, and thus the heathen custom has maintained itself to the present day.⁴⁰ Another church holiday, the Friday of Sorrows, which paradoxically is a riot of flowers and beverages, has replaced the Aztec spring festival.⁴¹

³⁸Frank Tannenbaum, Mexico, The Struggle for Peace and Bread, 124.

³⁹Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 280-281.

⁴⁰Ibid., 293.

⁴¹Gruening, Mexico, 240.

The adoption of native customs on religious holidays did not always meet the approval of the church. As early as 1539 the Junta of the church legislated against certain abuses which had developed, but neither they nor their predecessors had been able to banish them. The council decreed that the Indians should not be permitted to hold feasts in which there were costumes, eating, dancing, and wine, nor were there to be joint festivals with neighboring parishes. Yet the very customs and practices the church did not desire had to be tolerated or accepted because that was the only way the Indians would accept Christianity.⁴²

During the colonial period the Indians did not celebrate as many feast days as the Spaniards did. The church required the Indians to observe only twelve feast days beside Sunday, while the Spaniards were obligated to observe forty-two feast days. The reasons for this concession were the extreme poverty of the Indians, and the number of work days that would be lost by holding too many Indian festivals.⁴³

Native dancing as a part of the religious activities or ceremonies, while frowned upon by the officials of the

⁴²Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 174-175.

⁴³Ibid., 175.

church, has never been abandoned. The religious dance is not wholly of pagan origin, for in Spain people often danced and sang in their religious processions. However, not all the religious dances that survived in Mexico were imported; some were native dances which the priests permitted to be carried over into Catholicism. Usually such dances were performed outside the church and the costumes and music were also native.⁴⁴ Stuart Chase, twentieth century economist and historian, gives an interesting personal experience of seeing a pagan dance which has been incorporated into the Mexican religion as follows:

At Taxco . . . I saw the famous tiger dance. It was performed in the courtyard of a hillside chapel by a group of Indians arrayed in masks and special costumes, to the music of drum and pipe played simultaneously by a single musician. For hours the pipe wove its primitive tune, the drum thumped its stirring, monotonous rhythm, and the dancers, surrounded by a dense ring of enchanted Indians, stamped out the long and involved story of the tiger hunt. (By tiger Mexicans mean jaguars; there are of course no genuine wild tigers in the Western Hemisphere.) At its conclusion, dancers and spectators filed into the chapel and listened to the priest perform mass, while little boys in the towers turned the great bells over and over. The mass finished, everybody repaired to the courtyard again, ate and drank at little booths which had sprung up like mushrooms, discharged fireworks, listened

⁴⁴Ibid., 286-289.

to the village band, gambled with grains of corn on pictures, and watched itinerant acrobats perform on bars and wires strung to the church wall itself. I tried with no success to picture such a scene in front of any Catholic church I had ever seen. Aztec dance, Roman mass, itinerant circus, all enacted in the same holy precincts, and in a fairly sophisticated town as Mexican towns go.⁴⁵

The third way in which paganism influences the Mexican religion is the transference of ancient deities into Christian ones in the guise of Catholic saints. Shrines and sites sacred to the old gods were appropriated for similar forms of Christian worship.⁴⁶ The Spanish religion was virtually as polytheistic as the Indian's pagan faith with its particular devotion to the Virgin and Saint James of Compostella, adoration of countless saints, and belief that supernatural powers resided in the relics and bones of saints.⁴⁷ Thus, the friars brought the Indian new saints not unlike his old idols, and the Indian prayed to them in the same language and with the same prayers and songs he had used for centuries. Even today the favorite

⁴⁵Stuart Chase, Mexico, A Study of Two Americas, 99-100.

⁴⁶Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 296.

⁴⁷Parkes, A History of Mexico, 107.

saints and shrines in Mexico are those descended from pre-conquest days. Perhaps the best example of an exchange of a pagan shrine and deity for a Catholic figure is the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the very spot sacred to the goddess of the earth, who of all the native deities most resembled the Virgin.⁴⁸ Not only the Virgin and saints were Indianized, but many statues and figures of Christ were blackened and distorted to make them look more like idols of the past.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 302.

⁴⁹Gruening, Mexico, 237.

CHAPTER III

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CROSS AND SWORD

The church's work in the New World began in the West Indies shortly after Columbus' third voyage. The Franciscans arrived at Santo Domingo before 1500, and the Dominicans came in 1510.¹ From the Indies, ecclesiastics traveled with the conquistadores to the mainland where they played their part in the conquest. When news of Hernan Cortez's victories reached Spain, the first missionaries were sent to New Spain within a few years. Thus, the work of not only converting the Indians, but saving them from extinction had begun. During this early period the colonial church was forced to take a position on a difficult problem, the encomienda system. Because this economic system of land ownership and forced labor was both an evil and a necessity, some clergymen struggled to bring about reforms in the encomienda system, while others fought just as hard to protect the system from any change.

Much is known of Hernan Cortez,² the military conqueror, who with approximately seven hundred men completely

¹Haring, Spanish Empire, 185.

²See Appendix.

subjected the entire Aztec empire. Yet relatively little is known about Cortez, the apostle of Christianity. Friar Jeronimo de Mendieta as well as other clerics thought of Cortez as God's special instrument, for in his Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana he writes:

It ought to be well pondered how, without any doubt God chose the valiant Cortes as his instrument for opening the door and preparing the way for the preachers of the gospel in the new world, where the Catholic church might be restored and compensated by the conversion of many souls for the great loss and damages which the accursed Luther was to cause at the same time within the established Christianity. . . .³

From Cortez's correspondences throughout the conquest, it appears that he considered his campaign a holy crusade, with God's help and protection on his side.⁴ His attitude toward conversion of the Indians in Mexico was typical of the Spanish conquerors. Cortez sought a hasty conversion from pagan to Christian faith, and believed that the sword was as good an argument as the tongue. The history of Moslem occupation in Spain had shown the conquistadores how successful religion spread by the sword could be. Thus, if a bad cause could flourish by means of the sword,

³Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 76.

⁴Ibid., 77.

how much better a good cause would succeed. For Cortez every battle was a holy battle, and the conversion of one soul was worth the effort for it could wipe out many of his own personal sins.⁵

The first two missionaries to penetrate New Spain, Juan Diaz, a secular priest, and Bartolome de Olmedo, a Franciscan monk, traveled with Cortez and his forces.⁶ Olmedo had sailed with an earlier expedition under Juan de Grijalva⁷ to the coast of Yucatan, Mexico, and as far north as the modern day city of Veracruz in 1518. He is believed to have baptized one native on this former trip, but the honor of performing the first Christian mass in New Spain belongs to another priest, Alonso Gonzales, who sailed with Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba⁸ to the coast of Yucatan in 1517.⁹ Olmedo stayed with Cortez's expedition through the conquest, and died in Mexico City in 1524.¹⁰

⁵Prescott, History of the Conquest, 102.

⁶Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 87.

⁷See Appendix.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, 157-158.

¹⁰Schlarman, Mexico, 125.

Juan Diaz, confessor of Hernan Cortez, became the first parish priest in New Spain, and is credited, along with two helpers, with performing one million one hundred thousand baptisms in Mexico.¹¹ Diaz resigned his post in Mexico to accompany an expedition into Guatemala. Upon his return to New Spain in 1529, Diaz was killed in an Indian uprising at Quecholac.¹²

While Cortez consulted these two ecclesiastics on religious matters, it was not they who gave most of the religious instruction to the natives, but Cortez through an interpreter. The religious functions of the two men seem to have been the saying of mass, hearing the confession of soldiers, and performing other services reserved chiefly for the Spaniards.¹³

Even though Cortez had no express commission from the king of Spain for the conversion of Indians, as he sailed under the direction and orders of the governor of Cuba, he felt compelled to crusade for the Christian faith in all

¹¹Gruening, Mexico, 230.

¹²Bancroft, Mexico, II, 158.

¹³Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 87.

conquered native towns. Such efforts began on Cozumel Island off Yucatan, where he and his men saw their first pagan rites performed in February, 1519.¹⁴ Cozumel Island can be located on Map I.¹⁵ There, in order to convert the Indians more quickly, Cortez ordered the old idols rolled down the stairs of the temple, an altar built therein, and mass performed on the spot. If his interpreter did not succeed in convincing the natives why they should accept this new faith, they were certainly impressed by the boldness of the invaders.¹⁶

Shortly after leaving Cozumel in March of 1519, Cortez rescued a Spanish ecclesiastic, Jeronimo de Aguilar,¹⁷ from the Mayans. Aguilar proved to be quite useful to Cortez with his knowledge of the Mayan language. Aguilar's usefulness was further increased when Dona Marina,¹⁸ an Aztec

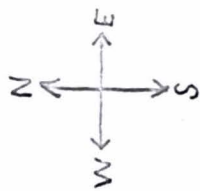
¹⁴
Ibid., 80-81.

¹⁵ Map I, "Route of Cortez from Cuba to Mexico City", Rippey, Hispanic America, 5; Schlarman, Mexico, inside pages; and Lopez de Gomara, Cortes, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson, inside cover.

¹⁶ Prescott, History of the Conquest, 103.

¹⁷ See Appendix.

¹⁸
Ibid.



MAP 1
ROUTE OF CORTEZ FROM
CUBA TO MEXICO CITY
IN 1519



woman enslaved by the Mayans, was presented to the Spaniards, for she spoke both the Aztec and Mayan tongues well. Thus, Cortez acquired two able interpreters.¹⁹

Following the coastline of Yucatan from Cozumel, the expedition landed at Tabasco on the Grijalva river. The Indians not being friendly, the Spaniards fought an hour long battle in which they took eight hundred Indian lives. After their victory, the Spaniards held a thanksgiving service in which they expressed their belief that the Holy Apostle James, patron of Spanish warriors, had ridden and fought with them that day. In Tabasco the first twenty Indians were baptized, all of them being the women given as mistresses to the Spanish officers. Dona Marina was among this group.²⁰ Later, the first native males would be baptized at Tlaxcala when five Indian chiefs received the sacrament from Father Juan Diaz.²¹

After landing at Veracruz in April, Cortez began the overland march to the Aztec capital. On this march he sought to spread Christianity wherever the expedition stopped. The group camped at Cholula in October, the most

¹⁹Priestley, Mexican Nation, 37.

²⁰Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 82-85.

²¹Ibid., 103.

important religious city in Mexico next to the Aztec capital. After admonishing the Cholulan chiefs several times for not destroying their idols, Cortez became very angry and impatient at their resistance. Father Olmedo cautioned him at this time as in many instances, not to force the faith on these people. To destroy their idols would mean little if they did not have a true understanding of the new religion. The argument that Cortez used at Cholula to convince the natives of the impotence of their gods was why had their powerful deities allowed them to be defeated by the Spaniards after promising them victory. Accordingly, their gods were false, and the natives themselves must destroy such deceitful gods.²²

After taking up residence in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan in November of 1519, Cortez began to persevere in his efforts to get Montezuma,²³ the Aztec chief, to give official recognition to the religion of the conquerors, if not accept it himself. One day while standing on top of the great temple pyramid, Cortez is recorded to have looked over the entire city from the high monument, and then remarked to Friar Olmedo that it was time to ask Montezuma for permission to build a Christian church there among the Aztec idols.

²²Ibid., 104.

²³See Appendix.

When Cortez made his request to place a cross and image of the Holy Virgin on the summit of the temple beside the gods, Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli, Montezuma was so indignant that he could not answer.²⁴ Later, Cortez had his way and a Christian altar was built in this most sacred of all places to the Aztecs, infuriating the Indians, and helping to precipitate the famous noche triste retreat of June 30, 1520 out of the city.²⁵

When Cortez and his forces again took possession of Tenochtitlan in August of 1521, five ecclesiastics accompanied the group. Two of the clerics, Bartolome de Olmedo and Juan Diaz, had sailed with Cortez from Cuba in 1519. Juan de Leon and Juan Diaz de Guevara had come as part of the unsuccessful expedition sent to subordinate Cortez by the governor of Cuba. Pedro Melgarejo de Urrea, a Franciscan monk, came to sell indulgences to the Spaniards for their crimes against the Indians. He was robbed on his return to Spain in 1522 by French pirates. To this group could be added Jeronimo de Aguilar, the ecclesiastic interpreter, who frequently assisted at mass.²⁶

²⁴Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 110. Tezcatlipoca corresponds to Jupiter in the Aztec pantheon. Huitzilopochtli was the god of war. See Braden, 28-30.

²⁵Ibid., 116-120.

²⁶Bancroft, Mexico, II, 157-159.

After the conquest, it was inevitable that the task of conversion should pass out of the hands of Cortez to the church. Cortez himself wrote Emperor Charles V urging that missionaries be sent from Spain to carry out the work that he had begun. In his letter Cortez asked that members of the religious orders be sent to New Spain instead of bishops or prelates, for high officials often indulged in riotous living. The natives, being accustomed to a priesthood that would not depart from the practices and teachings of their religion, would have little faith in the Catholic Church if they saw the priests practicing the vices and profanations common in Spain at that time. This suggestion was accepted and resulted in the sending in 1524 of twelve humble Franciscans.²⁷

Throughout his life Cortez continued to be a great benefactor of the colonial church in Mexico.²⁸ He was also the patron of the earliest hospital in New Spain.²⁹ Cortez supervised the building of the first church on the site of the great Aztec temple pyramid, using the broken statues of the native gods as foundation stones.³⁰ In an important

²⁷Prescott, History of the Conquest, 520.

²⁸Bancroft, Mexico, 388.

²⁹Haring, Spanish Empire, 193.

³⁰Prescott, History of the Conquest, 517.

letter of 1524, he sent orders to the people of New Spain regarding the proper religious treatment of the Indians.³¹ Never losing his flair for dramatics, Cortez upon hearing that the people of Texcoco³² were angered because their chief had been flogged for missing mass, deliberately missed mass himself. When he was sent for by the friars, he allowed them to strip and flog him before a large group of natives.³³

In his will Cortez provided for the founding of a monastery, hospital, and college of theology for the natives, as well as endowments for already existing religious institutions. He provided that masses be said for many years after his death not only for his soul, but for his men and Indian allies who had died during the conquest.³⁴

Even though Cortez had requested missionaries shortly after the conquest, there was a hesitancy on the part of both the church and laity to send missionaries to New Spain,

³¹Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 189.
This letter is discussed later in this chapter.

³²This town, located a short distance outside of Mexico City, has three spellings for its name, Texcoco, Texcuco, and Tetzco.

³³Bancroft, Mexico, II, 167.

³⁴Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 79.

because so little was known of the area, and there was still some slight doubt as to the validity of Spain's right to this new territory.³⁵ While papal bulls granting permission to the Spaniards to go to New Spain were issued at the time of the conquest, it was 1524 before the first group arrived from Spain.

On April 25, 1521, Pope Leo X had granted permission to preach to the Indians of New Spain to two Franciscans, Juan Clapion, a Flemish friar, and Friar Francisco de Angeles, a Spaniard. This was four months before the fall of Tenochtitlan. The Franciscan monks were to preach, confess, baptize, marry, absolve, administer the sacraments of the eucharist and extreme unction, consecrate churches, and ex-communicate, all without interference from lay or ecclesiastical authority. But before the plan could be carried out, Pope Leo X and Juan Clapion had died, and Francisco de Angeles had been elected general of the Franciscan Order in Spain, and was unable to go.

The new pope, Adrian VI, a Spaniard, granted even greater powers to the orders than his predecessor had done. On May 13, 1522 a new papal bull stated that all mendicant friars were free to undertake the conversion of the Indies

³⁵ Bancroft, Mexico, II, 157.

if suited by their knowledge and former life. They were to exercise all episcopal functions provided that no bishop was available, or in areas two days distance from the bishop's residence.³⁶

Because of the hesitation of the crown in sending missionaries to New Spain, the first three Franciscans to arrive were not Spanish, but Flemish.³⁷ Juan de Tecto, Juan de Aora, and Pedro de Gante³⁸ came without specific permission, but rather under the general authorization given to all Franciscans to engage in the conversion of the natives. Because this group did not speak Spanish, they settled at Texcoco rather than in the capital city, and began their work immediately. Little is known about their labors for the contemporary writers confined their attention to the later Spanish friars and missionaries.³⁹

The Franciscan lay brother, Pedro de Gante, or Peter of Ghent, was the outstanding member of the small group of Flemish missionaries. He is recognized as the father of education in Mexico. After establishing a school for native

³⁶Ibid., 160-161.

³⁷Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 132.

³⁸See Appendix.

³⁹Bancroft, Mexico, II, 161-162.

children at Texcoco and teaching there for three years, Pedro de Gante moved to Mexico City in 1527. There he resided at the San Francisco Church and directed the school for forty years, having as many as one thousand students at one time. He prepared the first class of fifty Indian boys specifically to enable them to enter Santa Cruz College, the first secondary school in America.⁴⁰ Pedro de Gante discovered that the best way to instruct these young natives was to place them in boarding schools away from all the pagan influences that they copied or learned at home from their parents.⁴¹ Later in his life he was offered many higher positions in the church including the archbishopric, but humbly declined them all.⁴²

The first official group of Spanish Franciscan friars arrived in New Spain in 1524. Friar Martin de Valencia,⁴³ in his fiftieth year led a group of twelve to the new continent. Provincial head of his order at San Gabriel, Spain, he acquired the title of custodio, and his orders were to establish the Custodia del Santo Evangelio in Mexico. On

⁴⁰Schlarman, Mexico, 131-133.

⁴¹Kelley, Altars, 90.

⁴²Bancroft, Mexico, II, 556.

⁴³See Appendix.

the island of Santo Domingo where the group spent six weeks, Valencia gained the additional title of inquisitor before proceeding to New Spain.⁴⁴

The friars did not ride on horses or in wagons, but walked barefooted on the journey from the coast to Mexico City. In every Indian village through which they passed crowds marvelled at their poor dress. One of the friars, Toribio de Benevente, inquired why the Indians used the word, motolinia, so frequently when looking at the religious brethren. When he found out the word meant "poor", he decided that would be his own name.⁴⁵ This is the same Friar Toribio Motolinia referred to earlier in this study.

When the twelve Franciscans reached Mexico City, the natives were amazed at the display of humility by Cortez and his men as they knelt in the dust and kissed the robes of the friars. The Spaniards had shown little respect to the sacred Montezuma, and after the conquest had treated most native chiefs in a condescending manner. Yet, this exhibition of humility by the conquerors had its political reasons too. The friars, being very influential at court, would be sending many reports back to Spain mentioning the

⁴⁴Bancroft, Mexico, II, 162-163.

⁴⁵Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 133-134.

condition of affairs under the conquerors. Also, the control of the Indians by the clergy would assure serf labor to work on the encomiendas for the conquistadores.⁴⁶

From the capital city, the Franciscan friars divided themselves into four districts and began their work of converting and teaching the Indians. Martin de Valencia, the leader of the group spent three and a half years in Tlaxcala, from 1527 to 1530, completing the construction of a monastery and teaching. In his attempts to eliminate idolatry Valencia executed four stubborn Tlaxcalan chiefs who had defied his orders.⁴⁷

While the clergy overlooked some of the abuses and cruelty toward the Indians by the conquerors, the benefits that the Indians received from the arrival of the early missionaries were substantial. The insistence by the church that an Indian was a human being, and could become a Christian, helped to prevent their extinction as a race. The church's sanction of marriage between Indian women and Spanish men improved the natives' position. By speaking in defense of the Indians, the church contributed to the development of laws and attitudes which bettered their life.

⁴⁶ Bancroft, Mexico, II, 166.

⁴⁷ Charles Gibson, Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century, 34.

Within its own organization the church passed special laws and exemptions in behalf of the natives. With the assistance of these missionaries, the government of Spain solved its Indian problems much more successfully than the United States had done.⁴⁸

In trying to protect and Christianize the colonial Indians, early members of the clergy struggled to bring about reforms in the labor system, the encomienda, under which the natives worked. The encomienda system had originally been used in Spain as a temporary grant of land and jurisdiction by the crown to the knights as a reward for victories gained in the wars against the Moors. The services of the people living on the land belonged to the man, the encomendero, possessing the grant of land.⁴⁹ The system had been introduced to the Indies by the governor of Hispaniola, Don Nicolas de Ovando, in 1502 as a cure for the confusion and rebellion on the island caused by the rule of the Columbus brothers. Because there were no missionaries on the island as yet, the encomenderos had to assume the obligation of the spiritual care of the Indians under their charge in exchange for the work the Indians did for them.

⁴⁸Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution, 36-37.

⁴⁹Haring, Spanish Empire, 44-46.

In many respects, this system was a contrivance to avoid the term, slavery. While the Indians could not be sold, they were overworked and not properly cared for physically or spiritually by the encomenderos.⁵⁰

When the missionaries arrived in the Indies and in New Spain, many clergymen spoke out against the cruelty and mistreatment of the Indians under the encomienda system. Both the church and crown wanted to protect the native by humanitarian laws, but at the same time were forced to recognize the necessity of such a system since the crown could not pay her conquerors in the New World. Thirty-two years after the first protests by missionaries in the Indies, a reform program to eliminate the wrongs of the encomienda system, the New Laws of 1542, was passed and then repealed. The encomienda and its offspring, the hacienda and repartimiento, were to remain unsettled problems for the clergy during the entire colonial period.

As early as 1503 the crown legalized forced labor as a part of the encomienda system, but at the same time tried to save the Indians from exploitation. While in theory the decree was carried out, the obligation of protecting the

⁵⁰
Simpson, Many Mexicos, 98.

natives became a mere gesture. Absenteeism of the encomenderos only made the system grow worse in the Indies.⁵¹

When the first Dominicans arrived in 1510, they began a campaign to suppress the system.⁵² One of the early defenders of the natives against the encomienda system was the Dominican friar, Antonio de Montesinos.⁵³ He regularly used the pulpit to denounce the Spanish landlords. Later when recalled to Spain, Montesinos addressed King Ferdinand on the subject.⁵⁴ Such complaints were partially responsible for the Laws of Burgos issued by King Ferdinand in 1512. These laws, while concerned with improving the working and living conditions of the Indians, brought them little relief. A third of the Indians still had to work in the mines, and all of them had to give nine months annual service to the Spaniards.⁵⁵

As it developed the Indians in the Antilles were past saving, having been practically annihilated by the encomienda system. When introduced by Cortez into New Spain, the

⁵¹Haring, Spanish Empire, 44-46.

⁵²Simpson, Many Mexicos, 99.

⁵³See Appendix.

⁵⁴Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America, 173-174.

⁵⁵Haring, Spanish Empire, 47-49.

system was much more successful, for these more hardy people had lived and labored under native overlords. Thus, they accepted their Spanish masters with indifference.⁵⁶

In 1523, the Emperor sent a letter of instruction to Cortez dealing with the conversion and treatment of the Indians. In these orders the king prohibited the granting of any new encomiendas, and revoked those already granted, stating that in view of previous experience in the Indies, the result of such a work system could only be the extinction of the natives through mistreatment and severe labor.⁵⁷ Cortez answered his Emperor that the enforcement of such a measure would dissolve the colony, for the Spaniards would have no source of cheap labor without the encomienda system. The Emperor yielded to this argument, and the order was laid aside.⁵⁸

The next year, 1524, Cortez sent his own instructions, many sections of which dealt with religious matters, to the encomenderos and people of New Spain regarding the treatment of the natives. These orders were important for they encouraged the conquerors to support the friars, and from

⁵⁶ Simpson, Many Mexicos, 101.

⁵⁷ Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 185-186.

⁵⁸ Haring, Spanish Empire, 51.

the viewpoint of the Indians gave the new religion the prestige of Cortez's personal backing.

In these instructions Cortez stated that the sons of Indian chiefs must be educated in monasteries or by the village priest. If no priest or friar were available in the village to serve as a teacher, a capable person had to be hired by the encomendero. Failure to comply could result in the loss of the encomienda grant. When two thousand or more Indians lived on one encomienda, it was the encomendero's duty to support a friar or priest in order to instruct and preach. Smaller villages must combine for purposes of instruction. While a few Spaniards did follow these instructions, they failed in their purpose because of the lack of priests, resistance of the encomenderos, and local officials who did not enforce them.⁵⁹

Through the urging of the missionaries in Mexico, Pope Paul III issued a bull on June 2, 1537 abolishing slavery in Catholic countries, and denying the sacraments to anyone disobeying this edict. When the Council of the Indies ordered that this bull be enforced, new strength was given to the anticlerical spirit in the Spanish colonies.⁶⁰ The

⁵⁹Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 189-192.

⁶⁰Kelley, Altars, 63-65.

papal decree embarrassed the Emperor of Spain, who believed its penalty for disobedience encroached on the crown's own right of patronage. The next year the pope lessened the penalty, although Friar Bartolome de las Casas and other reformers ignored the announcement of the change. Las Casas is credited with translating the original bull into Spanish and distributing it throughout the Indies.⁶¹

In 1539 Friar Las Casas appeared before the Council of the Indies and the Emperor to plead for measures of relief for the Indians. So impressive were his arguments that he was ordered to remain at court until new measures could be determined. That same year a royal council of jurists and ecclesiastics was established for the purpose of framing new ordinances for the government of the Indies. Las Casas spoke to the group advocating immediate liberation of all natives regardless of the cause of enslavement. The council developed a code of law which was given the Emperor's approval on November 20, 1542. After revisions of the code by the council, its publication and enforcement in Mexico were ordered on June 26, 1543.⁶²

The Laws of 1542-43 were intended to give the Indian an entirely new legal status. Formerly it had been legal

⁶¹Haring, Spanish Empire, 55.

⁶²Bancroft, Mexico, II, 518-519.

to enslave Indians caught in open rebellion against the Spanish. According to the New Laws all natives were to be set free, but with the provision that owners who already had such slaves might retain those for whom they could establish a legal title. No more additional natives were to be enslaved. More disastrous to the colonists, the inheritance of encomiendas was to be ended; no new encomiendas were to be granted, and royal officials and churchmen were to be deprived of their present encomiendas.

The king, realizing that this program would need delicate handling, appointed a member of the Council of the Indies, Francisco Tello de Sandoval, to assist the first Viceroy of Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza.⁶³ When the royal visitor landed at Veracruz in 1544, many of the encomenderos appeared in person to plead that the laws not be proclaimed. Nevertheless, on March 24, 1544 they were published.⁶⁴

Upon questioning members of the Franciscan, the Dominican, and other religious orders, Tello de Sandoval was indeed surprised to find that they agreed with the encomenderos on the importance of continuing the system of encomiendas. The friars argued that the encomenderos treated

⁶³Mendoza was appointed viceroy in 1529, and held office from Nov., 1535 to Oct., 1550. See Appendix.

⁶⁴Priestley, Mexican Nation, 62-63.

the Indians better than those living in the royal towns were treated, where civil authority was much harsher. Whether the clergy admitted it or not, they, too, were beneficiaries of the encomienda system. Most of the religious orders controlled their own encomiendas, and Bishop Juan de Zumarraga⁶⁵ owned a town and an encomienda by himself.⁶⁶

By royal decree on October 20, 1545 the contested provisions of the New Laws were revoked.⁶⁷ The wife or child of an encomendero could again inherit the encomienda by right of succession, and the government seized no additional encomiendas. Further enslavement of the Indians was forbidden, but civil authorities delayed action on the abolition of slavery. In 1551 the viceroy issued another order freeing all slaves even if it meant that the mines must close down.⁶⁸

Many groups including the members of the religious orders urged that the encomienda system be made perpetual

⁶⁵See Appendix.

⁶⁶Bancroft, Mexico, II, 523-524.

⁶⁷Ibid., 527.

⁶⁸Haring, Spanish Empire, 58; Kelley, Altars, 65.

as opposed to temporary, because those Spaniards who had no assurance of the duration of their grants were working the Indians to death. Even Bishop Zumarraga in 1529 requested perpetuity. While Charles V promised to make the encomiendas perpetual in 1528 and 1529, he secretly ordered the audiencia⁶⁹ in 1530 to gradually eradicate the institution. The king halted his secret resistance in 1535, for in only five years agriculture had shown a decline. New instructions issued to Viceroy Mendoza marked the return of the encomienda to royal favor.⁷⁰ Later possession of an encomienda was extended to the third, fourth, and fifth generation. When a defect in succession did occur the encomienda grant escheated back to the crown.⁷¹

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the crown taxed the encomenderos so heavily that it became less profitable to possess a grant. By 1720 the encomienda system was almost gone, being replaced by the hacienda and repartimiento. A hacienda was a large ranch where the workers lived in a group around the owner's house and worked for

⁶⁹Before the creation of a viceroy in 1535, the audiencia was the head of colonial government in New Spain. This small group of from five to seven members was appointed by the king or Council of the Indies. The audiencia became an advisory group for the viceroy in 1535.

⁷⁰Haring, Spanish Empire, 52-53.

⁷¹Ibid., 59.

low wages. A repartimiento was a contract for the use of a certain number of Indians for a particular length of time at low wages in agriculture, and mining.⁷²

Throughout the colonial period the church in Mexico was divided between its desire to protect the Indians from the evils of the encomienda system, and the realization that the system was an economic necessity of which the church itself was a beneficiary. Most clergymen preferred to work within the encomienda system for its improvement, rather than to support reformers who sought to completely abolish the whole work system. One such reformer, seeking to destroy the system, was Bartolome de las Casas, a Dominican friar previously mentioned in this study, and most articulate critic of the conquistadores.

Las Casas was born in 1474 in Seville, educated in law at the University of Salamanca, and came to the island of Hispaniola in the Indies in 1502. After making his fortune, he entered the priesthood in 1510 at the age of thirty-six. Las Casas accompanied the troops to Cuba and received an encomienda of Indians, as did all the other ecclesiastic and lay settlers. Suddenly at the age of forty in 1514, Las Casas awoke to the evils of the encomienda system and, after

⁷²Kelley, Altars, 70.

renouncing his own property and Indians, began a fifty-two year crusade against the system which had enslaved the Indians.⁷³

After two trips to Spain in 1516 and 1517, and audiences with King Ferdinand and King Charles I, Las Casas received permission to establish his own system of colonial farming in Venezuela which he believed would eliminate many of the evils of the encomienda system. According to his plan, Spanish farmers would be organized into villages of about forty families each with an allotment of Indians held in sacred trust by each village as opposed to individuals, and the land would be worked under cleric supervision. The experiment failed because of the laziness of the Spanish farmers who had not been carefully selected. Discouraged, Las Casas entered a Dominican convent in Santo Domingo in 1520, and wrote his Historia de las Indias.⁷⁴

After ten years of retirement Las Casas entered public life again, and continued his mission to save the Indians by beginning work with the fierce tribes of central America. After initial success in Guatemala, Las Casas was presented with the bishopric of a new see in southern Mexico, Chiapas.⁷⁵

⁷³Herring, Latin America, 174.

⁷⁴Ibid., 174-175.

⁷⁵Ibid., 175-176.

Las Casas' appearance at court in 1539, his arguments against enslavement, and his role in the passage of the New Laws of 1542 have already been mentioned. Before the royal visitor returned to New Spain after postponement of the encomienda sections of the New Laws, he called together the bishops of Mexico for the purpose of outlining ecclesiastic policy. Viceroy Mendoza purposely detained Las Casas from this meeting. When the royal visitor at the meeting introduced the subject of the relationship of the Indian and encomendero, Mendoza dismissed the matter as not being of an ecclesiastical nature, and none of the bishops present protested. Las Casas avenged himself for being detained from the meeting by excommunicating the viceroy and audiencia for an incident in Oaxaca. Later, Las Casas and several members of the lower clergy drew up a resolution declaring that the enslavement of Indians was unlawful. Although widely published, the edict had little effect.⁷⁶

In 1547 at the age of seventy-two, Las Casas retired to Spain and spent the last twenty years of his life writing in behalf of the Indians.⁷⁷ His book, Brevisimo relacion de la Destruycion de las Indias occidentales, published in 1552,

⁷⁶Priestly, Mexican Nation, 67-68.

⁷⁷Herring, Latin America, 176.

recounted the injustices and cruelties practiced upon the Indians by their conquerors. It made interesting reading as well as effective propaganda for the enemy-countries of Spain, being published in forty-two foreign editions in one hundred years.⁷⁸

Bartolome de las Casas was an epic figure among the early friars, and while given to exaggeration to prove a point, he must be admired for his spirit. His condemnation of slavery and the encomienda system forced him into open conflict with his own clergymen as well as the Spanish landholders of that time.

⁷⁸ Simpson, Many Mexicos, 122.

CHAPTER IV

FORMAL ORGANIZATION OF THE ORDERS IN NEW SPAIN

In the first fifty years after the conquest, the task of converting and educating the Indians fell almost entirely to the mendicant orders.¹ The members of the religious orders were then called the regular clergy because of their strictly regulated and cloistered lives, as opposed to the secular priesthood who had many more contacts with the laity and society.² Toward the end of the sixteenth century when the number of secular priests increased in New Spain, a bitter rivalry developed between the regular and secular clergy over privileges and the administration of parishes. After the semicivilized tribes in the core region were converted, the religious orders moved into the more remote regions with their frontier institution, the mission. Later the regular clergy clashed again with the hierarchy of the church over the secularization of the missions.

All of the major religious orders except the Jesuits were organized before the middle of the thirteenth century. Their

¹Schlarman, Mexico, 125.

²Rippy, Latin America, 46.

general purpose was to protest against the corruption of the times and teach a return to the simple life that they demonstrated in their manner of living. The Jesuits, organized in 1540 by a Spaniard, Ignatius Loyola,³ were the most militant in purpose for they sought to counteract the Reformation. The members of the orders came not only from Spain, but from all Christendom.⁴

The regular clergy was a powerful religious element in Spain at the time of the conquest. The orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic had held privileged positions since their thirteenth century origin. These semiautonomous groups enjoyed a freedom which made them a refuge for the finest intellects in the country. They made their own rules, and owed greater allegiance to Rome than to the crown of Spain. Queen Isabel appointed several regular clergymen to key positions; Franciscan Cardinal Ximenez de Cisneros served as Isabel's most trusted advisor, and Dominican Tomas de Torquemada established the Inquisition in Spain. The first two bishops sent to New Spain were also members of the orders, Dominican Julian Garces,⁵ Bishop of Tlaxcala, and Franciscan Juan de Zumarraga, Bishop of Mexico.⁶

³See Appendix.

⁴Rippy, Latin America, 46.

⁵See Appendix.

⁶Simpson, Many Mexicos, 66-67.

The dignitaries of the religious orders in New Spain above the position of friar were of four grades. The lowest of the positions was presidente; he was the chief of two or more friars at one place, usually a convent. The next grade was that of guardian, elected by a full convent of twelve friars who were his charges. Then came the custodio controlling a number of convents, followed by the provincial or chief of a province. A province was created from a custodia when population, resources, and number of convents warranted it. Above the provincials was the general of the order who resided in Spain with his officers including commissioners and visitadores.⁷

The members of the orders that were sent to New Spain were licensed by the Council of the Indies, and thus were indirectly supervised by the crown. The naming of a custodian in the colony was done by the provincial head of that order, who in turn had to gain the approval of the commissioner-general in Spain and the Council of the Indies. In order to found a new seminary or mission, the local province appointed a commission who had to receive the permission of the bishop,

⁷Bancroft, Mexico, II, 163, n. 23. The visitador was an ancient institution going back to the time of Charlemagne. By it the religious orders kept an eye on their servants. Of all the officers, the visitador was the most dreaded, for he was often vested with great authority.

audiencia, and viceroy before going to Spain to win the approval of the commissioner-general. Then all the documents were presented to the Council of the Indies where the power to issue a license resided.⁸

Although both mendicant orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic were permitted to send missionaries to New Spain simultaneously, the Franciscans arrived first. Perhaps the Franciscans were over zealous to prevail in this new area because the Dominicans had monopolized the missionary effort in the Antilles. The three Flemish Franciscans who arrived in 1522 to begin work near Texcoco, and the twelve humble Franciscans whom Cortez had requested were discussed in the preceding chapter.⁹ In addition to these fifteen Franciscans, Jeronimo de Mendieta records that two more friars were serving as chaplains with the soldiers.

On July 2, 1524 Father Martin de Valencia, custodian of the group, called together the seventeen Franciscan friars for the purpose of deciding what work they would undertake.¹⁰ The Franciscans were divided into smaller groups and sent into the capital, Texcoco, Tlaxcala, and Guaxacingo,¹¹ under a

⁸Mecham, Church and State, 38-40.

⁹Simpson, Many Mexicos, 68-69.

¹⁰Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 143-144.

¹¹Texcoco is located a few miles outside of Mexico City. Tlaxcala is about eighty-five miles to the east of the capital above Puebla. Guaxacingo, approximately sixty miles east of the capital, today is named Huezotzingo. See Map II at end of this chapter.

plan called the Custodia del Santo Evangelio. Convents, schools, and hospitals were built in each of these districts.¹² In 1525 the Franciscans constructed their great convent of St. Francis in Mexico City. The next year the order had spread into the Michoacan, Patzcuaro, and Lake Chapala area, several hundred miles to the west of the capital, as well as Jalapa and Veracruz to the east. By 1538 the Franciscans were as far northwest in their missionary activity as Sinaloa, near present day Durango.¹³ The number of Franciscan convents in Michoacan was sufficient in 1535 to found a custodia there, and the next year the custodia of Santo Evangelio was raised to a province. Friar Juan Torquemada describes the province of Santo Evangelio as later containing seventy convents and including the bishopric of Tlaxcala, and archbishopric of Mexico.¹⁴

In the seventeenth century two more Franciscan provinces were created. In 1604 the province of Zacatecas was founded in central Mexico, and the Santiago de Jalisco province in western Mexico including the city of Guadalajara was established in 1607. A college for the training of missionaries of the

¹² Priestley, Mexican Nation, 98.

¹³ Schlarman, Mexico, 127.

¹⁴ Bancroft, Mexico, II, 393.

Queretaro area was erected in 1683, and this institution sent its members into Oaxaca and Yucatan. The Franciscans were the only order to labor with the wild tribes in Yucatan. The Jesuits did attempt to found colleges on the peninsula, but they failed.

Later built Franciscan establishments included the San Fernando convent in Mexico City, the college of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe in Zacatecas, and the hospital of Nuestra Senora del Destierro in Puebla. In the north the Franciscans began missionary activity in the district of Rio Verde in 1612, and preached with some success in Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, and San Luis Potosi.¹⁵

In 1526 the first members of the Dominican order arrived in New Spain with their vicar-general, Tomas Ortiz.¹⁶ In 1528 several more Dominicans were sent from Spain, and these first twenty Dominicans labored harmoniously with the Franciscans for a few years. The Franciscans willingly turned over several of their districts to the Dominicans and together the two orders opposed the first audiencia's abuses. However, differences of policy and opinion developed between

¹⁵Bancroft, Mexico, II, 714-716.

¹⁶See Appendix.

the two orders, and they soon became bitter and unfriendly rivals.¹⁷

The Dominican and Franciscan orders were basically of different character. The Dominicans were the embodiment of legalism, and as a result sought humanitarian legislation.¹⁸ They voiced their political convictions in the pulpit, and made their appeals to the upper strata of colonial society. Through such men as Bartolome de las Casas, Antonio Montesino, and Pedro de Cordoba,¹⁹ the Dominicans spoke in behalf of legislation to alleviate the Indians' terrible working conditions.²⁰ Whereas, the Franciscans, being practical men, resorted to direct action, favoring mild rule combined with good will.²¹

The Dominicans divided their work between two groups. One group established its convent house in Mexico City and spread to the present state of Morelos, south of the capital. The other group began its activity in the state of Oaxaca which was much further south of the capital city.²²

¹⁷Priestley, Mexican Nation, 100.

¹⁸Simpson, Many Mexicos, 67.

¹⁹See Appendix.

²⁰Priestley, Mexican Nation, 101.

²¹Simpson, Many Mexicos, 68.

²²Schlarman, Mexico, 127-128.

The Dominicans built imposing convents throughout Mexico, the chief being Santo Domingo in Mexico City. Later at Puebla, Veracruz, Panuco, Oaxaca, Coatzacoalcos, and Guatemala they erected grand establishments.²³

For six years after their arrival, the Dominican order in New Spain had been under the jurisdiction of the Santa Cruz province in Spain. Then in 1532 the custodia of Santiago de Mexico was elevated to a province.²⁴ The next province to be created for the order was that of Oaxaca which operated under the name of San Hipolito. The Dominicans began to move northward with a convent at Zacatecas in 1604, and then westward with another convent at Guadalajara in 1610. Later they carried on mission work at Queretaro, and in 1686 commenced work with the northern Chichimec Indians.²⁵

The first seven Augustinians arrived in Mexico in 1535. They lodged at the Dominican convent of Santo Domingo until their application for a charter could be considered. Five of them went to work in outlying areas, Chilipan, Tlapan, and Santa Fe, a small town two leagues outside of the capital.

²³Priestley, Mexican Nation, 101.

²⁴Bancroft, Mexico, II, 395.

²⁵Ibid., III, 720. The Chichimecs included the northern food-gathering nomad Indians, and also farming Indians to the north. They were culturally simpler than the civilized tribes of central and southern Mexico. The Aztecs were among the Chichimecs before they entered the valley of Mexico.

The other two Augustinians remained in the city to gather alms and to form a system of government for their future province. They decided to remain under the province of Castile in 1536 rather than become an independent province. In 1541 they began to build their convent in Mexico City, and this building costing one hundred and sixty-two thousand pesos was entirely paid for by the king.²⁶ Their province of Michoacan was organized in 1543, and by 1596 they had established seventy-six monasteries.²⁷ In 1602 it became necessary to divide their province into two, one called San Nicolas Tolentino and the other, Santisimo Nombre de Jesus.²⁸

The missionary forces of New Spain were greatly strengthened in 1572 by the entrance of the Jesuits. The founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius Loyola, said concerning missionary activity in New Spain, "Send missionaries to Mexico if they ask for them, and even if they do not ask for them."²⁹ Indeed, they were asked six years prior to their arrival by a wealthy gentleman in Mexico, Alonso de Villaseca, who promised to bring the society to New Spain at his

²⁶Ibid., II, 397-402.

²⁷Priestley, Mexican Nation, 101-102.

²⁸Bancroft, Mexico, III, 717.

²⁹Schlarman, Mexico, 146.

own expense. The Bishop of Michoacan asked them to come in 1566-67. Viceroy Enrique of Mexico, a relative of the Jesuit general in Spain, believed the families of rank in Mexico would welcome this group as educators for their children.³⁰

When the first twelve Jesuits arrived in 1572 under the leadership of Dr. Pedro Sanchez, they directed their efforts only toward the education of Spanish youth rather than the Indians. Father Sanchez believed that colleges in the cities and towns teaching young Spaniards to avoid the vices of the adults would prove to be an indirect aid in the conversion of the Indian race. He felt that he could put more missionaries in the field in less time by educating the Spaniards to become missionaries themselves than by sending his own men out to work with the Indians.³¹ Because of this policy critics charged that the Jesuits neglected the Indians and their missionary duties.³²

The first Jesuit college in Mexico City was San Pedro y San Pablo. A casa profesa, or house for novices, was begun in the capital city, but had hardly been started when

³⁰Bancroft, Mexico, II, 700.

³¹Ibid., 703-704.

³²Schlarman, Mexico, 150.

the other three orders in the city opposed it on the grounds that it would interfere with their work in the city. After the audiencia suspended work on the Jesuit building, the Council of the Indies upheld the suspension order. The Jesuits then appealed the case to Rome, and in 1595, the right to build the casa profesa was decided in their favor.³³

Before the end of the sixteenth century the Jesuits had entered the mission field, Michoacan in 1573, Nueva Galicia in 1574, Oaxaca in 1575, Veracruz in 1578, and Puebla in 1580.³⁴ Their work continued into the seventeenth century with the conquest and conversion of the Mexican northwest and California from their locations at Durango, Sinaloa, and Sonora. At the same time they used every opportunity to establish convents and colleges in the other provinces. Jesuit colleges were founded at Zacatecas in 1616, Guadalajara in 1659, and San Luis Potosi in 1623. Others were built at Queretaro, Patzcuaro, Valladolid, and Puebla. In southern Mexico the Jesuit missions were less successful than those in the north. Their establishments at Oaxaca were in poor

³³Bancroft, Mexico, II, 703-704.

³⁴Priestley, Mexican Nation, 103.

de Monserrate, in the southern section of Mexico City.³⁸

The Mercedarians constructed their first convent in the same year as the Benedictines. Originally the Order of Mercy had entered Mexico in 1530 on a return trip of Hernan Cortez from Spain, but most of this first group went to Guatemala and did not return to New Spain until 1589.³⁹

Sisterhoods were developed slowly in Mexico. Between 1588 and 1750 the number of such female organizations increased from seven to twenty. Outside of Mexico City, the nunneries were located in Puebla, Queretaro, Guanajuato, Michoacan, and Jalisco. These religious communities were not the tranquil quarters usually associated with convents and monasteries. Quite often the contentious sisters struggled against interference by the secular clergy and payment of the tithe.⁴⁰

During the sixteenth century the religious orders enjoyed many privileges because there was so much missionary work to be done in the Spanish colonies and relatively so few to do it. In addition to teaching the Indians, the friars were allowed by the crown and pope to administer all the

³⁸Bancroft, Mexico, II, 711-712. Friar Luis de Boil, who brought the Benedictines to Mexico, is said to have destroyed one hundred and sixty thousand idols, making him one of the world's greatest iconoclasts.

³⁹Priestley, Mexican Nation, 101.

⁴⁰Bancroft, Mexico, III, 709-710.

sacraments of the church, ordinarily beyond their jurisdiction and reserved only for the secular priesthood.⁴¹ Such concessions led to the rapid growth of the orders. By 1559, just twenty-five years after the first twelve Spanish Franciscans entered Mexico City, there were 380 Franciscans occupying eighty monasteries, 210 Dominicans in forty monasteries, and 212 Augustinians in forty establishments.⁴²

At the end of the sixteenth century, after seventy-five years of work, there were four hundred convents in New Spain.⁴³ The Franciscans at that time worked in three provinces, Mexico, Michoacan, and Yucatan. The Spaniards and natives gave them land, alms, and labor to such a generous extent that for their first forty years they had no royal allowance, managing on pious gifts alone. After they left the areas of white population to work on the frontier they began to receive a regular royal subsidy. The Dominicans by the end of the sixteenth century had developed two provinces, Santiago de Mexico and San Hipolito de Oaxaca with a total of sixty-nine convents.⁴⁴ At the same time the Augustinians

⁴¹Ibid., III, 702.

⁴²Schlarman, Mexico, 127.

⁴³Gruening, Mexico, 174.

⁴⁴Priestley, Mexican Nation, 103-104.

occupied seventy-six monasteries in New Spain.⁴⁵ The Jesuits having arrived later than the other orders numbered only about three hundred and forty-five members in 1603.⁴⁶

Two centuries later, in 1803, the entire organization of the religious orders in New Spain, including lay brothers, and servants as well as friars totaled seven to eight thousand persons. Twenty-three convents with approximately 1200 members operated in Mexico City alone.⁴⁷

The construction of buildings was a symbol of power and strength during the colonial period, and the friars replaced every Indian observatory and temple with a church or monastery. If the Franciscans built a large convent, the Augustinians began to draw up plans to erect an even larger and more elaborate one near by. While the Franciscans and Augustinians built in the valleys, the Dominicans occupied the towns, and the Jesuits established their schools and hospitals in the cities.⁴⁸ The Dominicans charged that the Franciscans had far too many monasteries and prevented the Indians from working for them, while the Franciscans counter-charged the

⁴⁵Bancroft, Mexico, II, 737.

⁴⁶Schlarman, Mexico, 149.

⁴⁷Bancroft, Mexico, III, 709.

⁴⁸Anita Brenner, Idols Behind Altars, 81.

Dominicans of being motivated by envy. All the orders complained that the Jesuits had the best haciendas.⁴⁹ Even the smaller orders erected churches and convents far beyond their needs. As early as 1531, the queen herself had to reprimand the Dominicans for the sumptuousness of their convent under construction in Mexico City.⁵⁰

In 1593 a royal decree stated that licenses for convents could only be granted with the crown's permission, because of the too rapid increase in the number of convents. But the viceroys gave their permission much too readily for new buildings in the Spanish colonies. In 1616 this order was reaffirmed, and the viceroys were reprimanded for disregarding the earlier order.⁵¹ In order to reduce the number of convents, Pope Paul V in 1611 issued a bull abolishing all monasteries not occupied by at least eight residents.⁵² Yet these orders had little effect, for by 1790, out of the 3,387 official houses registered in Mexico City, 1,935 belonged to the church. Of that number only 223 or twelve per cent were educational or charitable institutions. The religious orders

⁴⁹Gruening, Mexico, 178.

⁵⁰Simpson, Many Mexicos, 77.

⁵¹Mecham, Church and State, 28.

⁵²Haring, Spanish Empire, 189.

owned 538 of the houses, the sisterhoods 875, and the rest of the 1,935 were owned by the Inquisition, ecclesiastical courts, and the cathedral chapter.⁵³

Archbishop Alonso Montufar⁵⁴ in a letter written to the Council of the Indies in 1556 describes the manner of building the new churches and monasteries in this way:

Some check should be put upon the extravagant expenditures, excessive personal services and sumptuous and superfluous works for which the monastic brotherhoods are responsible in the villages of these Indians, entirely at the cost of the latter. . . . The Indians are driven there like beasts of burden, five or six hundred of them, without pay or even a mouthful of food, and compelled to come four, six, and twelve leagues to work. . . . Some Indians die of the scant food and of this work to which they are not accustomed. . . . and if the Indians do not come they are thrown into jail and whipped. . . . The personal service of these Indians in the monasteries is excessive; they serve as gardeners, porters, sweepers, cooks, sextons and messengers without receiving a penny. . . . And the cost of all these edifices and the rich and superfluous adornment is secured by assessments levied upon these wretched people. . . .⁵⁵

Thus, after making a very zealous beginning in New Spain, the members of the religious orders enjoyed a period of relaxation. Unfortunately, many friars lost their apostolic fervor and humility during this phase. After the conquest

⁵³Gruening, Mexico, 183.

⁵⁴See Appendix.

⁵⁵Gruening, Mexico, 174.

and relatively quick conversion, they had only routine, monotonous tasks to do. Simplicity was replaced by luxury and monastic discipline was relaxed as had already happened in Spain.⁵⁶ Many of the friars coming to New Spain to serve with the regular clergy desired self-indulgence and a life of ease. Those with little chance of advancement or distinction in Spain came to Mexico. The monasteries in the larger cities often became havens for idle friars. In the remote areas, a worthless friar could exploit the Indians in any way he desired.⁵⁷

A bitter clash occurred between the religious orders and the secular priesthood during the term of the second archbishop, Alonso Montufar, and continued to the end of the colonial period. When the seculars arrived they found that the orders had many of the best locations and were reluctant to transfer their parishes to the secular priests. The two groups quarreled about the collection of tribute, tithes, and the administration of the sacraments. Since the tribute tax paid by the Indians was used to support the colonial government and secular priesthood but not the orders, the

⁵⁶ Haring, Spanish Empire, 187.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 206-207.

friars interfered in its collection as much as possible. In the Indian towns where the municipal government was controlled by members of the religious orders, the friars concealed the number of tribute-paying Indians by exempting all natives who served in churches and convents.⁵⁸

The religious orders like all the other colonial landholders had to pay the tithe or ten per cent tax on the sale of farm produce and increase of stock from their lands, in order to support the secular church. The regular clergy greatly resented making this payment to the church for they felt it denied them of an income for their services to the Indians.⁵⁹ Their only sources of income were alms given by the people, and the rent from their vast properties.⁶⁰ During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the orders persistently claimed the privilege of being exempt from the tithe. Even after the crown ordered the monastic organizations to pay the tithe, the religious orders avoided some of the tax by fraudulently reporting revenue produced from property.⁶¹

⁵⁸Priestley, Mexican Nation, 109.

⁵⁹Bancroft, Mexico, III, 134.

⁶⁰Gorham D. Abbot, Mexico and the United States, 90.

⁶¹Bancroft, Mexico, III, 134-135.

The third area of disagreement, the administration of the sacraments, developed because of the papal concessions which had granted to the orders the right to perform all ecclesiastical duties if no parish priest was available or the bishop was too far away. The regular clergy would not relinquish these privileges to the secular clergy, causing the issuance of a series of conflicting royal and papal promulgations on the subject. The Council of Trent in 1547 issued the statement that no clergyman could have jurisdiction over lay persons unless subject to his bishop's authority; yet, this edict was stubbornly ignored by the religious orders in Mexico.⁶² When the secular clergy refused to ordain friars as priests, the king declared they should be ordained when necessary. The regular clergy then complained of the restrictions the seculars placed on those friars who were ordained, such as the exclusion from administering the sacraments, and the limitation of performing mass for the Indians only. In 1557 King Philip approved a papal bull granting ordained regular clergymen the right to administer the sacraments in Indian towns. The crown rescinded this privilege in 1583, and reinstated it in 1585.⁶³

⁶²Haring, Spanish Empire, 187-188.

⁶³Priestley, Mexican Nation, 110-111.

Both sides, regular and secular, presented their claims against each other regarding jurisdictional and sacramental privileges to the king. The crown supported the secular church against the religious orders while the friars were backed by the people and the officials of the local governments in New Spain.⁶⁴ Outside of the cities with Spanish population, the regular clergy had the advantage over the secular. They knew the native tongue while most of the secular priests never attempted to learn it. In general while there were abuses among the orders, the secular clergy was generally thought of as being of a baser character, and more motivated by self-interest than the friars.⁶⁵

King Philip II of Spain began efforts to weaken the friars' power as early as 1559, by secularizing the convent towns, but met with much resistance on the part of the orders. Due to the extraordinary powers given to the religious organizations by the pope and the quasi-feudal nature of the corporations, the royal government of Spain had much difficulty in curbing their power. In 1569 the king limited their tenure to ten more years, at the end of which their duties were to be taken over by the secular priests. The friars

⁶⁴Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution, 46.

⁶⁵Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 220-221.

protested that ten years was too short a time to properly prepare the Indians for such a change, and if transferred too quickly would result in the loss of the work already done. The same argument was still being expounded by the friars a century later.⁶⁶ In 1576, the king issued a decree forbidding the religious orders from acquiring any more property, but this order as well as those which followed were ignored.⁶⁷

In 1717 King Philip V, first of the Bourbon line to rule Spain, declared that the large number of convents and monasteries was a burden and a hindrance to the increase of agriculture, and public wealth, and thereafter no new convents were to be established. With papal approval the king in 1734 decreed that for the next ten years no additional members of religious orders could be admitted to New Spain. Twenty years later, the Spanish monarch forbade any friar to interfere in the drawing up of a will. In 1775 King Charles III ordered that convents and monasteries could not be heirs or legatees of wills.⁶⁸ In 1804 Charles IV went so far as to order that real estate belonging to charitable and benevolent institutions in New Spain be taken over by the state, but this measure was repealed before it was enforced.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Simpson, Many Mexicos, 79-80.

⁶⁷Mecham, Church and State, 47.

⁶⁸Haring, Spanish Empire, 189-190.

⁶⁹Mecham, Church and State, 47-48.

The most striking example of the crown's efforts to suppress the orders was the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. By the eighteenth century the Society of Jesus was well established with schools and colleges all over Mexico, and missionary activity in northwest Mexico, California, and Arizona.⁷⁰ By that time the society was very wealthy, with much property and money that had been left to it by generous patrons.

Regardless of its wealth, the society continued to quarrel with the royal government and secular church over the payment of the tithe. In the seventeenth century there had been a bitter ten year struggle by the Jesuits against the secular church as represented by Archbishop Juan de Palafox y Mendoza.⁷¹ This disagreement began as a quarrel over the payment of tithes, but expanded into a dispute over whether the Jesuits would comply to the dictates of the diocesan chapter.⁷² The quarrel finally ended with Palafox's recall to Spain, and the Jesuits were made to recognize the authority of the diocesan chapter and pay the tithe.⁷³ After the

⁷⁰Schlarman, Mexico, 151.

⁷¹See Appendix.

⁷²Bancroft, Mexico, III, 122.

⁷³Simpson, Many Mexicos, 80; Bancroft, Mexico, III, 129-130.

Jesuits realized they could not escape this taxation, they simply paid as little as possible. Being in great favor with King Ferdinand VI, the society in 1750 drew up a contract with the king by which they acquired privileges not granted to the other religious orders. They paid only one dollar out of every thirty-one as their tithe, instead of one out of every ten as the other orders did. When these facts were presented to Ferdinand's successor, Charles III, he and his council declared this contract null and void.⁷⁴

The reason for the expulsion of the Jesuits has been debated, but presumably Charles III felt the society had grown too strong and desired to free the crown of clerical influence.⁷⁵ With the eighteenth century and the new philosophies of the importance of the individual in Europe, much criticism was directed at the Catholic Church and its most militant defender, the Society of Jesus. After they had been expelled from Portugal and France, Charles III signed a decree in March of 1767 condemning the six thousand Jesuits in Spain to exile.⁷⁶ A simple law expelling the Jesuits in New Spain would have raised too much protest and perhaps might

⁷⁴Bancroft, Mexico, III, 430.

⁷⁵Simpson, Many Mexicos, 176.

⁷⁶Schlarman, Mexico, 159-161.

have resulted in open rebellion. Through their domination of the schools and system of missions the Jesuits were indeed very influential among the people of the Spanish colonies. Therefore, the expulsion had to be planned and executed with the utmost secrecy. On June 24, 1767 Viceroy Croix, and royal visitor, Jose de Galvez, sent troops with sealed instructions into every Jesuit establishment in Mexico. The officers quietly arrested all of the 678 Jesuits and escorted them to Veracruz where they boarded ships.⁷⁷ Most of the exiled Jesuits went to Bologna, Italy.⁷⁸

When the public did learn of the expulsion, the resulting riots in New Spain almost got out of control. The royal visitor, Jose de Galvez, felt these people needed a lesson in obedience to their royal government; therefore, he hastily established courts in small towns outside of the capital in New Spain, and dealt out harsh punishment to rebelling Indians and mestizos⁷⁹ alike. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that Father Miguel Hidalgo's⁸⁰ uprising broke out in some of these same towns forty-three years later.⁸¹

⁷⁷Simpson, Many Mexicos, 177.

⁷⁸Schlarman, Mexico, 165.

⁷⁹A mestizo was of mixed blood, part Indian, and part Spanish.

⁸⁰See Appendix.

⁸¹Simpson, Many Mexicos, 177-178.

At the time of their expulsion, the 678 Jesuits consisted of 123 coadjutors, 137 escolares, and 418 priests. Of the total group 464 were native Americans, 153 were Spanish, and 61 were from other countries. Their establishments consisted of one casa profesa, twenty-three colleges, eight convents and seminaries, five resident houses, one house of probation, and 103 missions.⁸² They owned twenty-seven haciendas which were then taken over by the state.⁸³

The expulsion of the Jesuits was a heavy loss for New Spain. Their missions had kept the Sonora tribes quiet. They had tried to uphold the standards of colonial education in their schools, which were the best in Mexico. Jesuit plantations and haciendas were efficient models for the rest of the colony.⁸⁴

In 1810 petitions from the colonists were presented to the Cortes⁸⁵ of Spain to readmit the Society of Jesus into the Indies for missionary work and educational activity. This campaign had little effect until Pope Pius VII reinstated the society on August 7, 1814. King Ferdinand VII

⁸²Bancroft, Mexico, III, 431.

⁸³Schlarman, Mexico, 164.

⁸⁴Simpson, Many Mexicos, 178.

⁸⁵In 1808 Napoleon forced the abdication of Ferdinand VII in order to place his own brother on the throne. This liberal Spanish junta ruling in their monarch's absence, called together representatives to serve as a legislative body called the Cortes.

appointed a board in September of 1815 to restore as much of the seized property to the Jesuits as possible. On May 9, 1819 the society was reinstalled at the college of San Idelfonso in New Spain.⁸⁶ In 1820 the Spanish Cortes was able to again expel the society because of the very antiecclesiastic Constitution of 1812 to which Ferdinand VII had been forced to swear allegiance. Also the liberals in Spain and the colonies wished to suppress all the religious orders.⁸⁷ The second expulsion order was carried out in January of 1821 in New Spain.⁸⁸

The extension of the religious orders into the outlying areas was carried out by the establishment of missions, a vital part of the Spanish colonial system. The mission program in the New World began with the Jeronymite fathers who in 1512 gathered the Indians on the islands in the Antilles into villages in order to save them from extinction. Bartolome de Las Casas' colonization efforts in Venezuela and Guatemala were also forerunners of the mission. In Mexico, Vasco de Quiroga, member of the second audiencia, gathered Indians into villages on the shores of Lake Patzcuaro.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Bancroft, Mexico, III, 446-447.

⁸⁷Schlarman, Mexico, 206-207.

⁸⁸Bancroft, Mexico, III, 447.

⁸⁹Herring, Latin America, 181.

The mission was an agent of the state as well as the church. This establishment helped the colony expand while providing defense positions along the frontier. An annual subsidy from the state of several hundred pesos was provided for nearly all the missions. The more important the mission was politically and economically to the state, the larger the subsidy. When necessary the state also sent troops to provide military protection for exposed missions.⁹⁰

Three types of missions were founded by the friars in New Spain. First was the mission of occupation, which was erected in territory already under Spanish control. Secondly, there was the mission of penetration often established by military conquest and requiring the presence of troops for protection. The third type of mission was built to provide shelter for those who traveled to the larger missions. With this idea in mind Franciscan Father Serra built his chain of California missions two walking days' distance apart.⁹¹

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the semi-civilized tribes in the central and southern regions of Mexico were reduced to virtual serfdom, while those on the frontier in the north were hostile and unused to fixed villages and

⁹⁰Haring, Spanish Empire, 213.

⁹¹Schlarman, Mexico, 129.

labor. Therefore, the colonists were not eager to establish encomiendas in these areas, and did not want the obligation of civilizing the wild tribes. This meant the northern frontier was a wonderful opportunity for the mission. The king paid for the missionaries' equipment, transportation, the erection of buildings, the keeping of a small group of soldiers for protection, and the annual subsidy. During the seventeenth century the missionaries carried Spanish culture and Catholicism into Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Coahuila, but failed in their attempt to penetrate lower California.⁹²

In the first half of the eighteenth century mission activity was very successful, but after the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 progress was much slower. In this century as in the previous one, the missions were protected by soldiers stationed in frontier forts called presidios. Twenty-four missions were scattered up and down the Rio Grande in New Mexico by 1744, with about 12,000 converts, yet thirty years later this number had not increased. In Texas some twenty missions were established beginning in 1716, with the most successful in and around San Antonio and Goliad having about 2,000 followers in 1762. Between 1746 and 1756 earnest missionaries founded twenty-four settlements between

⁹²Rippy, Latin America, 88-89.

the Nueces and Panuco Rivers, in a region called Nuevo Santander. The Jesuits established twenty-three missions in Lower California from 1697 until their expulsion. Occasionally in Texas, Nuevo Santander, and Upper California, Spanish and mestizo settlers founded small villages near the missions.⁹³

In the closing decades of the eighteenth century there was a decline in the missionary activity. The one exception was the Franciscan effort in Upper California. Beginning in 1769, the Franciscan friars settled 20,000 natives into nineteen communities by 1806.⁹⁴ Father Junipero Serra's chain of missions covered a six hundred mile distance from San Diego to San Francisco. The last Spanish mission was founded in northern California in 1823, after which they began to disappear gradually.⁹⁵

The secularization of these missions in the remote areas did not proceed as rapidly as the secular hierarchy of the church desired. The friars believed that secularization would be the ruin of the work they had done with the Indians, but perhaps the ease and wealth of their positions had

⁹³Ibid., 103-106.

⁹⁴Ibid., 105.

⁹⁵Herring, Latin America, 182.

something to do with their resistance.⁹⁶ Yet when the ecclesiastic hierarchy decided a mission was of enough importance, they sent a priest to replace the friar. Unfortunately members of the secular clergy were seldom interested in the physical or spiritual conditions of the Indians in these missions. Many missions after being operated successfully by the friars, deteriorated rapidly after secularization, and the Indians returned to practicing idolatry.⁹⁷

Much polemic literature has been written about the missionary activity in New Spain. Critics have charged that some of the friars overworked and underfed the Indians in the missions. They have raised the question whether the economic and cultural progress of the Indians living in the missions surpassed that of the Indians living under secular guidance.⁹⁸ While usually benevolent, the friars were despotic, and as a result the Indians never learned responsibility under the mission program. The Indians' education at the mission consisted of a few prayers and hymns that they had learned by rote. As for the permanency of the conversion to Christianity, when the friars were recalled in the

⁹⁶Simpson, Many Mexicos, 80.

⁹⁷Bancroft, Mexico, III, 712-713.

⁹⁸Haring, Spanish Empire, 201.

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Indians reinstated their old idols and began to live as their ancestors had done.⁹⁹

Ecclesiastics and staunch supporters of the church have praised with glowing terms the schools, churches, orphanages, and hospitals that were built from the southern end of Mexico into the upper half of California as a result of the missionary activity. Not only bringing the faith to these native people, the friars are credited with teaching them the practical skills of farming, animal raising and building.¹⁰⁰ Today most Mexicans, for better or for worse, are loyal to the Catholic Church as opposed to state worship largely because of the stout hearted friars who captured their imagination four hundred years ago.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Parkes, Mexico, 109.

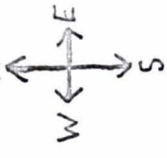
¹⁰⁰Kelley, Altars, 120-122

¹⁰¹Simpson, Many Mexicos, 81.



MAP 2

IMPORTANT MISSIONARY
CITIES OF COLONIAL MEXICO
PRIOR TO 1800



CHAPTER V

THE SECULAR CHURCH IN NEW SPAIN

After the first fifty years the secular church became the prominent ecclesiastic power in Mexico, replacing the friars and missionaries. By that time a formal organization of dioceses and an archdiocese had been created with the support of both king and pope. Church councils were held to dictate policy by this clerical organization, and special courts such as the Inquisition operated as a part of this establishment. Indeed, the wealth of the secular church became so great during the colonial period as to force the crown to take definite steps against the church's further acquisition of land. Occasionally the secular clergy did clash with the civil authorities, but most of the time they cooperated to their mutual advantage. Such cooperation meant that in some areas the Indians were neglected by the secular clergy in their efforts to minister to the Spanish population living in the cities. Like the rest of Mexican society, advancement within the priesthood depended upon birth and racial factors. Unfortunately, this practice often prevented worthy men from rising.

The ecclesiastical hierarchy was established very early in the Indies. In 1504 the crown created an archbishopric

and two bishoprics for Hispaniola, but did not fill the appointments until after the 1508 papal bull granting to the crown the right of patronage over the new churches. Because most of the population had shifted from Hispaniola to the other islands in the Indies, in 1511 the old sees were annulled and replaced by new centers of authority in Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico, as well as Hispaniola.¹

Before the conquest, and hence before a single conversion had been performed in New Spain, an episcopal see was created for the new area and a bishop appointed. Pope Leo X established the new diocese known as Cozumel in 1518, because of reports brought back by Francisco de Cordoba and Juan de Grijalva concerning the coastal area of Yucatan. Emperor Charles V exercised royal patronage and assigned the first bishop to the area, Dominican friar Julian Garces. When it was discovered that Cozumel was more than an island, the territorial boundaries of the first see were extended to include Yucatan. Yet this bishopric remained unoccupied until further extensions in 1526 annexed Tabasco, the Veracruz district including Chiapas, and located the episcopal seat at Tlaxcala, eighty-five miles east of the Mexican capital. Bishop Garces reached New Spain in October, 1527 and

¹Haring, Spanish Empire, 183.

took possession of his see.² Upon realizing it was impossible to operate at Tlaxcala without a cathedral, the episcopal seat was again moved in October, 1539 to the new city of Puebla de los Angeles, twenty miles south of Tlaxcala. This city had a sumptuous church and the bishop's residence for the diocese remained there.³

In 1527 the second bishopric was created for Mexico City and the regions south and west by the Spanish Emperor.⁴ Pedro de Gante, Flemish Franciscan lay brother who had come to Mexico in 1522, declined the new bishopric. Then on December 12, 1527, Emperor Charles V bestowed the position on an ecclesiastic residing in Spain, Juan de Zumarraga, guardian of a Franciscan convent in Spain.⁵

In 1531 the jurisdiction of these two dioceses was no longer adequate. Conditions were such that some towns in the two territories were as far as one hundred and sixty leagues⁶ from the city where the bishop resided and visitation

²Camillus Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 268; Bancroft, Mexico, II, 296-297.

³Catholic Encyclopedia, XIV, 747d.

⁴The king's right to establish dioceses was included in the papal bull of 1508 which stated that the pope was too far away and unaware of local conditions to create bishoprics. Meham, Church and State, 30.

⁵Bancroft, Mexico, II, 297-298.

⁶During this time the old Spanish land league was 2.63 miles. Encyclopedia Americana, XVII, 143a.

was almost impossible. The second audiencia, with royal approval, considered the problem of episcopal organization in New Spain, and decided to limit the area of the Tlaxcala bishopric in 1532. Then the Council of the Indies in 1534 divided New Spain into four bishoprics, Mexico, Michoacan, Tlaxcala and Oaxaca. Each diocese was limited to a radius of fifteen leagues around the cathedral town. The area between any two neighboring sees was to be equally divided but the actual divisions caused many disputes.⁷

After the establishment of these four dioceses the Council of the Indies recommended to the king that later bishoprics be created as the need arose, and also advised that an archbishopric or metropolitan see with superior power be created.⁸ Accordingly the later dioceses were established immediately after each new area was colonized. By the end of the first forty years these new bishoprics included Chiapas in 1538, Guadalajara in 1548 and Yucatan in 1561.⁹ Chiapas belonged to the Archdiocese of Guatemala from 1734 until the middle of the nineteenth century when it was reunited to the ecclesiastic province of Mexico.¹⁰

⁷Priestley, Mexican Nation, 107.

⁸Bancroft, Mexico, II, 390-391.

⁹Haring, Spanish Empire, 183-184, n. 13.

¹⁰Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 629.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the number of dioceses in New Spain had been increased to nine. Added to those which had been created in the sixteenth century were Durango in 1620, Monterrey under the title of Linares in 1777, and Sonora in 1779.¹¹ The diocese of Durango included Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, and New Mexico, and the Linares diocese served San Luis Potosi, Saltillo, and Tamaulipas. When the Sonora bishopric was created its territory included the Californias, and Sinaloa.¹²

Until 1544 the Mexican dioceses were under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Seville in Spain. Then on January 31, 1545 the Archdiocese of Mexico was created.¹³ A papal bull on July 8, 1547 changed the bishopric of Mexico to the position of archdiocese having jurisdiction over Yucatan, Tlaxcala, Michoacan, Oaxaca, Guatemala, Chiapas, Nicaragua, and Honduras. Juan de Zumarraga, Bishop of Mexico, was elevated to the position of first archbishop in 1548, the year he died.¹⁴

The position of archbishop headed the hierarchy of the

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.; Bancroft, Mexico, III, 692-693.

¹³Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 268.

¹⁴Bancroft, Mexico, II, 556.

secular church in colonial Mexico. Ten archbishops became viceroys, pointing to the close relationship of church and state.¹⁵ The duties of this high office consisted of supervising and administering vacant sees when they occurred, and selecting nominees for the chapters¹⁶ of the dioceses and archdiocese of Mexico. When making such selections preference was to be given to nominees who graduated from the Universities of Mexico, Lima or Spain, or clergymen who had served in cathedrals, or those chosen by the king and Council of Indies by right of patronage.¹⁷

As head of the church the archbishops called together the bishops at intervals to hold church councils in Mexico City for the purpose of revising the code of clerical law for the Mexican Church.¹⁸ Originally the Laws of the Indies required the permission of the crown for holding such councils. Later the American archbishops were allowed to call such provincial councils without appeal to the king, but merely with the consent of the viceroy. The viceroy

¹⁵Gruening, Mexico, 180-181.

¹⁶The chapter was the group of dignitaries who resided in the episcopal city of the diocese with the bishop and assisted him in carrying out his duties. The more important the diocese was the larger the cathedral chapter would be. Bancroft, Mexico, III, 691.

¹⁷Ibid., 690.

¹⁸J. Monte de Oca y Obregon, "Archdiocese of Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 269.

attended these meetings as the king's representative. Only bishops could vote at such councils, not attending canons, superiors of the religious orders or presbyters. All decisions of the church councils were sent to the king for royal approval and then to the pope who would order them published in the province where the council had been held.¹⁹

During the colonial period three such church councils were held in Mexico. Archbishop Alonso de Montufar called the first council in 1555, attended by the viceroy, four bishops, the audiencia, and a few other officers. They took up such matters as the collection of tribute from the Indians, and the reformation of morality within the clergy, as well as church administration. The second council, which met in 1565, called by Archbishop Montufar, dealt mainly with the obligations imposed on the church by the Council of Trent which had met two years earlier.²⁰ The third provincial council, called in 1585 by Archbishop Moya de Contreras,²¹ was the most important of the three councils during the colonial period. The drafting of a code of church discipline, rules for contacts between ecclesiastical and

¹⁹Mecham, Church and State, 36.

²⁰Priestley, Mexican Nation, 111.

²¹See Appendix.

civil authorities, and the adoption of a new catechism resulted. Pontifical sanction was granted at this time for the resolutions of all three church councils. The viceroy and king added their sanction in 1591, thus making the authorization of the decrees official.²²

Below the archbishop and bishops, the most important groups in the secular organization were the members of the Inquisition and other clerical courts. No institution of the church has brought it more criticism than the Inquisition and its official tribunal, the Holy Office. Such criticism was directed at the Inquisition's methods of torture, secrecy, and trial procedures. For centuries this medieval ecclesiastic tribunal was looked upon in Spain as only another means of extending papal authority. Not until the fifteenth century when Isabel was confronted with the task of uniting Castile, was the usefulness of the Inquisition in Spain recognized. Jews, Moslems, and doubtful Christians presented a real menace to the new Christian state that was emerging. The Inquisition did its work of preserving the faith and combating heresy so thoroughly that within a few generations all Spain was forced into orthodoxy.²³ Historians estimate that approximately thirty-two thousand

²²Priestley, Mexican Nation, 113.

²³Simpson, Many Mexicos, 166.

persons were burned at the stake, seventeen thousand were burned in effigy, and two hundred and ninety-six thousand persons were imprisoned, while the property of all those convicted was confiscated during the Inquisition's three hundred year period of activity in Spain.²⁴

The Holy Office did not begin to fully operate in New Spain until 1571 when Emperor Philip II felt the growing number of Portuguese Jews warranted its presence.²⁵ Prior to that time the priests who accompanied Hernan Cortez had been granted the title of inquisitor from the Bishop of the Indies, and used this authority in 1522 to try an Indian for adultery. Father Martin Valencia, leader of the Franciscan friars who came to New Spain in 1524, was also delegated inquisitor, but never exercised this authority. When the Dominicans arrived the inquisitors became more active, for the Dominicans had dominated the Holy Office in Spain. Bishop Juan de Zumarraga became inquisitor in 1537, and in the seven years he held the office brought one hundred and forty persons to trial, thirteen being Indians.²⁶

When formally established as a distinct corporation in New Spain in 1571, the tribunal of the Holy Office was made

²⁴Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 9.

²⁵Simpson, Many Mexicos, 167. Portugal was annexed to Spain in 1560.

²⁶Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 267-268.

up of three inquisitors, and a treasurer. Each drew an annual salary of three thousand pesos, paid by the canonries of the cathedrals in their districts.²⁷ The inquisitors were royally appointed and responsible only to the crown. An oath to aid the Holy Office and guard its privileges was taken by the viceroy. The viceroy in turn was to report any invasions of royal patronage by the judges of the Inquisition, and the inquisitors had to gain the viceroy's approval before any of their rulings could be published.²⁸

The civil and church authorities were closely united in carrying out the work of the Inquisition. The civil government executed the decisions of the Inquisition, inflicting corporal punishment when decreed, and administering and collecting the fines imposed. The close alliance of political and inquisitorial power can best be illustrated by citing the offices held simultaneously by two viceroys. Moya y Contrera was not only first inquisitor general of Mexico, but archbishop and viceroy. Bishop Juan de Palafox y Mendoza was also inquisitor-general, visitor-general and viceroy.²⁹

²⁷Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 263.

²⁸Mecham, Church and State, 40-41.

²⁹Ibid., 42.

The purpose of the Holy Office was twofold. First, the Inquisition served the moral and religious function of maintaining the purity of dogma and faith in New Spain.³⁰ Secondly, the Holy Office served the political purpose of closely watching all persons considered dangerous to the civil government. Investigations into the private lives of all cleric and lay officials could be made by the office before or after arrest.³¹

The Inquisition censored literature to keep out heretical writings during the early colonial period, and new political theories and philosophies dangerous to the colonial government during the later period.³² While the impression exists that the Holy Office was very thorough and complete in its censorship, this is not true. The institution did adopt measures against the admission and circulation of certain writings in the colony, and demand a listing of all books in private libraries and commercial establishments. These measures were merely precautionary warnings and resulted in few confiscations.³³ The lists of permitted books from the libraries throughout Mexico provides an interesting

³⁰Ibid., 40.

³¹Haring, Spanish Empire, 204-205.

³²Ibid.

³³Irving A. Leonard, Baroque Times in Old Mexico, 80.

glimpse into the variety of literature available. A comparison with books in New England at the same time is enlightening for both regions are usually assumed to have shared a deprivation of literature, the New Englander by choice and the Mexican by the Inquisition. This is certainly disproved by the booksellers' lists in both areas, and even indicates a similarity in worldly taste.³⁴ While the Inquisition's censorship did help to keep most of the public loyal and orthodox, the writings of the eighteenth century philosophers were smuggled into the colonies, and even found their way into the private libraries of ecclesiastics.³⁵

The terrifying secrecy of the Holy Office made its power much more effective. A man usually did not know he was under investigation until the officers of the Inquisition appeared at his door in the middle of the night. From that time until the auto de fe³⁶ no one outside the walls of the Holy Office saw him or knew anything of the case. The accused never learned the charges against him, and his only part in the examination was to try and answer a series

³⁴Ibid., 163-164.

³⁵Haring, Spanish Empire, 205.

³⁶Auto de fe literally means act of faith. It was the public ceremony of the Inquisition in which the sentences of the accused were read.

of ambiguously worded questions. If this was not conclusive he was put to torture. This often took a great deal of time, and occasionally the accused died in the process. Even at the height of its activity, the Holy Office in New Spain only averaged the completion of thirty-four cases a year.³⁷ This was few in number when compared to the many cases handled in Spain by the Inquisition.

The torture used to establish guilt or innocence varied from one Holy Office to another. This torture was considered not as a punishment but as a means to an end. The most often employed methods of judicial torture in New Spain were knotted ropes which applied pressure to the legs and arms, and the water treatment which was cold water funneled down the accused's throat. After the torture those not confessing their wrongs or incriminated by other witnesses were pronounced innocent.³⁸

The public announcement of punishments, the auto de fe, was held in a corner of the public square in Mexico City in the presence of viceroy, officials and crowds of spectators.³⁹ The first auto de fe was held on February 28, 1574

³⁷Simpson, Many Mexicos, 170.

³⁸Ibid., 168-169.

³⁹Parkes, Mexico, 106.

after two years of trying suspects. Seventy-four convicts marched out on the scaffold in the square to hear their sentences pronounced by the judges of the Holy Office. The crimes varied from bigamy to Judaizing. Thirty-six of the men, mostly Englishmen from one of John Hawkins' captured ships, were accused of being Protestant schismatics. The punishments ranged from death to beatings.⁴⁰

Those condemned by the Inquisition consisted of three groups, relajados, reconciliados, and penitentes. The relajados were either burned in person or effigy, the sentence being carried out by the civil government. Those burned in effigy had either died by suicide or had escaped. The reconciliados had recognized their error and begged pardon. Allowed to live, they received harsh punishments such as exile, imprisonment, and always confiscation of all property. The penitentes, whose crimes did not warrant the death penalty, suffered various milder punishments for their wrongs, but all included confiscation of property.⁴¹

In 1538 Charles V of Spain declared that Indians were not to be tried by the Holy Office. Just a few years prior

⁴⁰Simpson, Many Mexicos, 168.

⁴¹Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 263-264.

to this decree Bishop Zumarraga had tried and burned at the stake a Texcocan chief for making sacrifices to idols.

When this event became known in Spain, the Inquisition was forbidden to proceed against Indians.⁴² Such a heavy penalty it was believed would stop the Indians from becoming Christians. Also, the Indians' state of conversion was not considered perfect, and their property too little to support the office through confiscation and fines.⁴³

The Holy Office fell into disuse in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The last signs of activity appeared from 1812 to 1815 when two priests, Miguel Hidalgo, and Jose Maria Morelos,⁴⁴ were tried for treason. The civil authorities interrupted both cases before completion, and put the two men to death before firing squads.⁴⁵

The Inquisition exercised its authority in New Spain until the archbishop of Mexico on September 27, 1813 decreed its extinction by order of the Spanish Cortes.⁴⁶ On June 21, 1814 it was reinstated and then definitely

⁴²Ibid., p. 263.

⁴³Simpson, Many Mexicos, 171.

⁴⁴See Appendix.

⁴⁵Simpson, Many Mexicos, 171-172.

⁴⁶Bancroft, Mexico, III, 701.

abolished in 1820 by King Ferdinand VII after the liberals had gained power again in Spain.⁴⁷

In its two hundred and fifty year existence in New Spain the Holy Office had burned at the stake only about fifty people. Yet, the amount of real estate seized through its policy of confiscation was enormous. In 1649 alone the Inquisition acquired property worth three million pesos through the auto de fe.⁴⁸

On behalf of the Holy Office it can be stated that the inquisitors were generally men of the highest character and integrity. The small scale of its operation in New Spain meant that the Inquisition did little damage, and most Spaniards approved of its aims. The institution presented a menace chiefly to foreigners and Jews.⁴⁹

In addition to the Inquisition there were other clerical courts, the fueros eclesiasticos. These courts operated to give special privileges to the clergy. The priesthood did not appear before ordinary tribunals for crimes committed, but rather before their own court system. This exemption from civil law dated back to the fourth and fifth centuries

⁴⁷Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 263.

⁴⁸Gruening, Mexico, 179-180.

⁴⁹Simpson, Many Mexicos, 167-168.

in Spain. Organized by dioceses these courts were of three kinds, those for Indians, those for Spaniards, and those which handled matters of wills, chapels, and pious works.⁵⁰

The ecclesiastical courts had no jurisdiction over non-Catholics and could not sentence Indians to hard labor or fine them. The jurisdiction of such courts was gradually reduced by the crown. The decree of October 25, 1795 stated that civil courts were to have jurisdiction of all grave offenses committed by clerics. Any question of jurisdiction between civil and ecclesiastical courts was settled by the viceroy. Appeals from decisions of the ecclesiastical courts could be carried all the way up to the pope until 1606. After that time all cases had to be definitely decided in the colonial clerical courts.⁵¹

Litigation concerning royal patronage was not to be tried in the ecclesiastical courts. As a result, all cases concerning disputes between the religious orders and the secular clergy, the administration of the church, disagreements over boundaries of bishoprics, and impediments to the filling of benefices were heard in civil tribunals even

⁵⁰Mecham, Church and State, 34-35. Other privileged groups possessing their own tribunals outside the hierarchy of royal courts in the colonies included the military, various corporations of merchants, and the mining industry.

⁵¹Ibid., 35.

though the subjects involved were spiritual in classification.⁵²

Below the archbishop, bishops and clerical court members came the bulk of the secular church organization, the ordinary parish priests. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this priesthood was tremendously important in colonial politics, society and wealth.⁵³ In general the secular clergy resided in the cities, administering the sacraments and preventing religious backsliding, while the religious orders labored with the Indians. Ultimately the number of clergymen in New Spain became disproportionate to needs of the Mexican society because the wealth of the church attracted too many men into the seminaries of Mexico and priests from Spain.⁵⁴ In 1644 the city council of Mexico City asked King Philip IV to send no more priests as there were already six thousand placing an economic drain on the colony and doing little good.⁵⁵ During the eighteenth century the number of priests in Mexico was approximately the same, five to six thousand.⁵⁶ The census of 1810

⁵²Ibid., 35-36.

⁵³Haring, Spanish Empire, 179.

⁵⁴Leonard, Baroque Times, 44.

⁵⁵Robert N. McLean, That Mexican!, 59.

⁵⁶Parkes, Mexico, 105.

reveals only about four thousand secular priests out of a six million population in New Spain, and about the same number of regular clergymen.⁵⁷

The power of the clergy over the Indians is not surprising for through the collection of fees, use of the confessional, and maintenance of the schools and charitable institutions the Indians were easily dominated.⁵⁸ Yet it has been charged that the Indian villages while giving the appearance of being what the state and church desired really never belonged to either. Superficially the Indians supported, tolerated and worked for the clergy, but there was an underlying negative spirit working against the clergy's power.⁵⁹

The secular clergy tended to be more concentrated in the cities than in the small communities or rural areas. Perhaps this concentration developed because the Spanish language and culture flourished in the larger towns. Hundreds of priests did live in the small villages or traveled on horseback and mule to the remote areas to minister to the natives. Yet for the size of the country and thousands of

⁵⁷Bancroft, Mexico, III, 737.

⁵⁸Callcott, Church and State, 10.

⁵⁹Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution, 45.

villages there was an unequal distribution of priests favoring the large cities. In many rural areas the priest remained a stranger who visited the fiesta and came two or three times a year to perform marriages, baptisms, and burials. From this uneven distribution came a natural allegiance of the priests to the interests of the upper classes in Mexico. The church could look for little support from the rural population where the clergy and religious life were almost two different things. The care of the church building and religious activities went on without the visiting priest just as well as when he was there.⁶⁰

Critics have charged that the interests of the secular clergy, like those of the friars, shifted from soul to property. Observation of ritual by the Indians meant more to the clergy than the Indians' morality. If the natives came to mass on Sunday the priesthood was satisfied. The city clergy was far too interested in inheriting estates at the deathbeds of the rich to care properly for the spiritual guidance of their followers.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibid., 57-59.

⁶¹ Brenner, Idols Behind Altars, 129.

During the sixteenth century the church was reluctant to admit Indians, mestizos, Negroes, or creoles⁶² to the priesthood. In 1539 an ecclesiastic junta in Mexico City decreed that a few mestizos, and full blooded Indians should be admitted to the lower ranks of the religious orders to aid the priests. Yet in 1555, the first Mexican church council denied the admission of mestizos, Indians, and Negroes to the orders.⁶³ During the first century the educational facilities in New Spain were too poor even for the training of creoles. Mestizos were not thought of as likely candidates for the priesthood because of their illegitimate birth and upbringing by ignorant mothers. Later when a degree of colonial stability was achieved both creoles and mestizos were admitted.⁶⁴

The hesitation of the church to allow natives to become priests because of their lack of ability does not coincide with the government policy of allowing the natives to hold public offices. As early as 1530, the audiencia of Mexico

⁶²Mestizos were natives of mixed Indian and Spanish blood, and creoles were Mexican born Spaniards.

⁶³Haring, Spanish Empire, 216.

⁶⁴Ibid., 188.

was permitted by the Council of the Indies to appoint Indians as mayors or councilmen. Finally, a royal order in 1588 stated that mestizos were to be ordained as priests, and it may be assumed that the order was carried out, for in 1636 the king ordered the Mexican Church to refrain from ordaining so many priests, especially mestizos and illegitimates.⁶⁵

Since most of the prelates, viceroys and governors were royally appointed Spaniards, they naturally favored other peninsular Spaniards. The creoles resented this favoritism greatly, for while they composed the bulk of the priesthood in the secular church, the European born Spaniards possessed the real power.⁶⁶ The crown decreed on May 2, 1792, that one half of the benefices of the cathedral were to be conferred on creoles, but Mexican Archbishop Haro modified this order by declaring that creoles should only be granted lower offices in order to maintain their submissiveness. By 1808, as a result of this policy, all the bishoprics in Mexico except one, and the greater part of the canon stalls and curacies were occupied by peninsular

⁶⁵Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 275-276.

⁶⁶Haring, Spanish Empire, 188.

Spaniards.⁶⁷ Mexican statesman and historian, Lucas Alaman,⁶⁸ recorded that six out of every seven bishops and archbishops in the year 1813 were Spaniards from Europe. Under the Hapsburg rulers of Spain an ecclesiastic career had been possible for creoles in the colonies, but the Bourbon line of Spanish monarch ended such opportunities with their policy of selecting only Spanish born clerics for advancement in the government and church.⁶⁹

The clergy grew steadily richer throughout the colonial period. Of course, the support of such an extensive and powerful ecclesiastical organization performing the educational, charitable, and religious duties for the colony did require much revenue. This financial support for the secular church in New Spain was secured through several sources. Legally, the king possessed all the revenue collected by the church in the New World according to the papal bull of 1501. This decree stated that in return for assuming the financial obligation of sending all the clerics to the New World, and assisting in the building of their churches, the crown possessed the right to use the revenues

⁶⁷Bancroft, Mexico, III, 683.

⁶⁸See Appendix.

⁶⁹Haring, Spanish Empire, 209-210.

collected as it saw fit. Fortunately for the church, the Spanish monarchs chose to devote the greatest part of this revenue to the clergy, bishops, hospitals and other pious establishments.⁷⁰

One of the major as well as the earliest sources of ecclesiastical revenue was the tithe. As early as 1523-24 this tax amounted to over five thousand pesos in Mexico City alone, and Veracruz netted one thousand pesos annually in tithes. Such money during these early years was used by the crown to equip churches and to pay salaries to priests.⁷¹ This tax of ten per cent on the proceeds from the sale of all produce grown on Mexican soil was imposed upon the Indians as well as the Spaniards in 1532 by royal order.⁷² The religious orders complained of being made to pay the tithe for the support of the secular church, and often falsely reported revenue from their property to evade payment.⁷³

In each diocese the revenue from the tithe was usually divided into four parts, one for the bishop, another for the

⁷⁰Mecham, Church and State, 29.

⁷¹Bancroft, Mexico, II, 159.

⁷²Ibid., III, 666.

⁷³Ibid., 134-135.

religious orders, and the remaining half divided into nine parts called novenos. Of these nine parts, one and one-half went to the body of the church administering the temporalities; four parts went to the lower clergy; one and one-half parts were given to hospitals; and the remaining two-ninths went to the king, who usually spent it on churches. If the tithes collected in the diocese were not enough to pay the clerics the established amount due them, the crown paid the balance.⁷⁴

The tithes were collected by the officers of the royal treasury and it was the viceroy's duty to see that no one was overlooked.⁷⁵ The collection of this tax from the Indians was carried out by arrendatarios, officers who bought the right from the crown. All the products of flocks, farms, and herds were subject to the tithe. Hiding income was punishable by excommunication. The church also sent demandantes to collect alms from the Indians. They traveled with mule trains and took the image of the saint for which they were collecting with them. Since tithes and alms were often paid in produce, priests set up their own markets.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Mecham, Church and State, 29.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶McLean, That Mexican!, 59-60.

The collection of fees for funerals, marriages, baptisms, and from the sale of medals, candles and other items, including indulgences, provided another source of ecclesiastic income. Often these fees were made excessively high, for only twenty years after the conquest the queen had to reprimand the priests in the colony for charging fees far in excess of the services offered.⁷⁷ The sale of indulgences or bullos de cruzada, brought much revenue. The bulls had originated at the time of the crusades, and were then used in Spain to confer recognition on those who fought bravely against the Moors. These decrees granted various indulgences to the purchaser in New Spain. Some granted dispensations to the living, others shortened the time that deceased friends and relatives would have to stay in purgatory, and still others freed a person from restoring stolen goods. This latter type of bull could only be sold if the thief had not committed the crime with the belief that he might escape punishment by purchase of the indulgence. The total amount of exempted stolen goods could not exceed nine hundred ducats in any two-year period, and the price of the bull depended on the amount of stolen goods. In 1803, the sale of such bulls netted two hundred

⁷⁷Gruening, Mexico, 175.

salve their consciences for misconduct toward the Indians. Regardless, by gift, legacy, and purchase the church and its religious orders owned at least half of the property in Mexico by the end of the colonial period.⁸⁰

Since surplus liquid capital in Mexico was scarce there was little organized banking, and landowners borrowed from the church. Because the Spanish colonial society was based on agriculture, it did not produce a surplus of capital for investment. There was little in which to invest capital except land and mines, for industrial development was non-existent in the colony. In addition, most of the landed aristocracy had an inherited tradition of extravagant spending.⁸¹ Helen Phipps, a twentieth century historian and economist, comments on the real estate mortgages held by the church as follows:

As money came easily to the ecclesiastics and as the Church fulminated against usury, they were indulgent creditors. They lent at six, five, and even four per cent, and allowed the debt to run on from generation to generation, provided interest payments were prompt. Real estate mortgages, as a rule, were nominally for a period of ten years, yet the mortgager felt perfectly sure that he would not be called upon for the principal at the end of the period, if he kept up the interest, but usually he was at liberty to pay the whole debt when he pleased. Some mortgages, however, were 'irredeemable' by

⁸⁰McLean, That Mexican!, 60-61.

⁸¹Haring, Spanish Empire, 191.

agreement. The clergy preferred this form naturally, as it gave them a perpetual investment without further effort on their part. Mortgaged property was bought and sold freely without consulting the creditor, but could not be divided. Since borrowing was so easy, it is no wonder that landowners continued to invest all capital that came into their possession in this substantial and tax-free form of wealth and to depend upon the never-failing source for their working capital.⁸²

Thus, during the three centuries under the Spanish crown the church prospered greatly in Mexico, being rich in lands, buildings, and income. With approximately five thousand secular clergymen in 1800, the real estate value of the property owned by the church amounted to two or three million pesos. After the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, fewer pieces of land passed into the possession of the church.⁸³

By having so much revenue-producing property and income, the church represented a threat to the economic success of the Spanish colony. The stimulus of private ownership by many individuals was missing. The "dead hand" of the church prevented ecclesiastical lands from changing owners or being divided.⁸⁴ Money was withdrawn from public

⁸²Mecham, Church and State, 47.

⁸³Bancroft, Mexico, III, 695-696.

⁸⁴Haring, Church and State, 45.

circulation by the church's collection of tithes and alms. Even among the clergy this income was not fairly distributed, for the parish priests existed on about one hundred pesos a year while the bishops were among the richest men in Mexico.⁸⁵ By 1800 the archbishop of Mexico received an annual income of one hundred and thirty thousand pesos from property alone, and incomes of one hundred thousand pesos were received yearly by the bishops of Puebla, Valladolid, and Guadalupe.⁸⁶

From earliest colonial times, the crown tried to prevent the church from acquiring excessive ownership of land. In 1535 Charles V made it illegal to give lands to the church. This measure as well as those that were later passed were never enforced.⁸⁷ After the Jesuit expulsion in 1767, the crown recovered many estates held in mortmain. In 1796 the crown imposed a fifteen per cent tax on all property sold to the church. Then in 1804, it was decreed that all property belonging to benevolent institutions was to be taken over by the state. This also applied to sums invested as loans on property. So much economic distress

⁸⁵Parkes, Mexico, 117.

⁸⁶Gruening, Mexico, 183.

⁸⁷McLean, That Mexican!, 61.

was caused by this measure that less than three per cent of the huge amount involved was collected the first year, after which the law was repealed.⁸⁸

In spite of the political measures taken against the acquisition of property by the church, most of the time the secular clergy and civil authorities cooperated with each other. One of the first and few clashes involved Juan de Zumarraga, Bishop of Mexico diocese and an outstanding early clergyman, versus the first audiencia.⁸⁹

Emperor Charles V of Spain had appointed the members of the audiencia and sent them to New Spain to investigate charges against Cortez. This small group was not only the highest court in Mexico, with administrative, advisory and judicial functions, but was to supervise all other officials. At this same time the Emperor felt that the presence of a bishop in Mexico City might help put to rest some of the rumors concerning Spanish cruelty to the Indians. Therefore, in December, 1527 the Emperor appointed Franciscan friar Juan de Zumarraga to be the new bishop. Being eager to begin his new task, Zumarraga sailed for New Spain without waiting for papal confirmation of his appointment. Bishop-elect Zumarraga and four members of the first

⁸⁸Callcott, Church and State, 61.

⁸⁹Schlarman, Mexico, 85.

audiencia journeyed to Mexico, where they were met by the fifth member of the audiencia, Nuno de Guzman.⁹⁰

As it developed, the main purposes of this audiencia were to discredit Hernan Cortez and to look for silver and gold, not to establish peace and justice. The group under Guzman's leadership oppressed the Indians, branding them with hot irons, and shipping them to the Antilles as slaves.⁹¹ Guzman seized encomiendas and distributed them to his friends under the pretext of destroying Cortez and other conquistadores, a design that the crown encouraged. As a result, the whole Indian population faced annihilation. Zumarraga listened to the grievances of the Indians and after repeatedly admonishing the audiencia, smuggled a letter out of the country to the Council of the Indies. Because of this action, in 1530 the membership of the audiencia was changed, and men of loftier character appointed.⁹²

The charge that Zumarraga used the pulpit too much to comment on the acts of government officials meant that the second audiencia was granted power to restrain his actions and interference. Checked in this way, Zumarraga turned his zeal in another direction, the destruction of heathen relics.⁹³

⁹⁰Ibid., 79.

⁹¹Ibid., 80-81.

⁹²Simpson, Many Mexicos, 35.

⁹³Bancroft, Mexico, II, 298-299.

In 1532 Zumarraga returned to Spain without funds but determined he would be heard concerning betterment of conditions for the Indians. The title of "protector of the Indians" was bestowed on him, and the authority to examine the system of tributes to try to bring about their reduction. The audiencia was to assist him as much as possible. After formally being consecrated bishop in Spain on April 27, 1533, Zumarraga sailed back to New Spain to carry on his work.⁹⁴

During his absence from Mexico the second audiencia had advised the crown that a new form of government should be created which would be more effective than the audien-
cia. Thus in November, 1535, the king appointed a viceroy as his representative.⁹⁵ The audiencia then became an advisory group for the viceroy and in his absence acted as an ad interim administrative body.⁹⁶

The new head of the colonial government, the viceroy, also held the titles of governor, captain general, president of the audiencia, superintendent of the royal exchequer, and vice-patron of the church. Being vice-patron of the

⁹⁴Ibid., 387.

⁹⁵Schlarman, Mexico, 85-86.

⁹⁶Rippy, Latin America, 64.

church meant that the viceroy had many duties dealing with ecclesiastical affairs. The collection of the tithes, out of which the churches, schools and charitable institutions were built and the salaries of bishops and priests paid, was now supervised by the viceroy.⁹⁷ He also exercised the right of presentation for the crown, which was the choice of candidates for church offices.⁹⁸

The first appointment of viceroy by the king was indeed excellent because Don Antonio de Mendoza, who held the office from 1535 to 1550, was a man of great ability and worked closely with Bishop Juan de Zumarraga. Together they were responsible for bringing the first printing press to Mexico, and establishing the University of Mexico.

Zumarraga, dedicated to education, did not forget the instruction of native girls. Since there were so few nuns to teach the native girls, he trained lay-women teachers. His devoted spirit is revealed in this letter written to the king:

That which most occupies my thoughts; to which my will is most inclined and my small forces strive, is that in this city and every diocese, there shall be a college for Indian boys learning grammar at least, and a great establishment with room for a large number of daughters of the Indians.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Schlarman, Mexico, 92-93.

⁹⁸Mecham, Church and State, 33.

⁹⁹Kelley, Altars, 91-92.

Shortly before his death Juan Zumarraga was designated first archbishop of Mexico. Only nine days after the documents arrived Zumarraga died, on June 3, 1548 at the age of eighty.¹⁰⁰ Although this outstanding prelate was credited with denying himself the necessities of life, he left a will revealing that he was a man of property, possessing houses in Veracruz and Mexico City, an encomienda, numerous slaves, horses and mules, as well as money.¹⁰¹ Zumarraga's position as archbishop was next filled by friar Alonso de Montufar on June 13, 1551, a notable Dominican and officer of the Inquisition. His term as archbishop was marked by a clash between the religious orders and secular clergy, and the holding of the first two church councils in Mexico over which he presided. Montufar died on March 7, 1572 shortly after officially establishing the Inquisition in New Spain. His successor, Pedro de Moya y Contreras, presided over the third provincial church council.¹⁰²

With its power to regulate colonial life through the churches, schools, Inquisition, and governmental affairs, special privileges, and vast wealth, the secular church

¹⁰⁰Bancroft, Mexico, II, 556.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 557-558.

¹⁰²Priestley, Mexican Nation, 109-110.

occupied a preponderant place in New Spain. Throughout the colonial period the secular clergy guarded its position very carefully, even to the point of weakening another part of the Catholic Church, the religious orders. While the secular clergy endeavored to protect the Indians, and provided millions of pesos for pious establishments, many critics feel that the conversion of New Spain had been accomplished too easily for it to be permanent, and that the secular clergy like the friars began to rest on its laurels too quickly.¹⁰³

¹⁰³Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution, 42.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CHURCH

During the colonial period the church in Mexico had vast power and wealth. Much of this power was necessary to carry out its widespread responsibilities. Such responsibilities included not only the conversion of the Indians, but the transference of the cultural heritage of Spain. The church operated the schools, primary to college level, as well as the hospitals and other charitable institutions. Intellectual life in Mexico developed under the guidance of the church, and the arts and sciences were directly influenced by this powerful ecclesiastical organization.

The greatest achievement of the colonial church in Mexico was its missionary work with the Indians. The conditions favoring such efforts included (1) the similarities between the native and Christian religions;¹ (2) the outstanding zeal of the early missionaries; and (3) the support of both the local and royal governments.²

¹See Chapter II for a discussion of these similarities.

²Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 180.

The first favorable condition, the similarities between the native and Christian faiths, meant that very few new religious ideas were introduced to the Indians. The Christian faith blended easily with Indian paganism. The policy of the friars was to avoid abrupt changes in practices and ideas. The ritualistic observances that the church brought to Mexico, such as the pictures and images of saints, the bells and incense to accompany the sacrifice of mass, the colorful robes of the priests, and the religious holidays with their parades and music, all added to the success of the clergy in their missionary work.³

Secondly, the early missionaries were very zealous. Quite often those first friars were fanatically narrow in their views, but in holiness of life and devotion to duty they were not to be surpassed. They provided an outstanding work force during the early conversion period.⁴ With good will and faith they set about the spiritual conquest of New Spain with an energy equal to that of Hernan Cortez himself. In an amazingly short time the friars had completely replaced the native priests as the leaders of Indian society.⁵

³Parkes, Mexico, 106-108.

⁴Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 136.

⁵Parkes, Mexico, 72-73.

Thirdly, the government supported the missionary work by paying the friars' passage to New Spain and caring for them until they could establish communities of their own. The king paid for the construction of the first monasteries, and gave presents of silver services, wine, oil, and candles to the poorer establishments. Also, the friars had special concessions granted by the pope and ratified by the king allowing them to perform the duties of regular parish priests without the authorization of a bishop if no secular clergymen were available.⁶ After establishment the missionaries could not expect much financial support of their work by the Indians. The king's tithe and Spanish encomenderos' contributions provided the revenue for the new buildings. The Indians provided the labor which they gave freely.⁷ Ordinarily when new churches were built, one-third of the cost was paid by the royal treasury, and the remaining two-thirds by the Indians and the encomenderos. The Indians actually bore the entire two-thirds burden, for they not only provided the manual labor, but also worked for the encomenderos, enabling them to pay their part.⁸

⁶Haring, Spanish Empire, 185-186.

⁷Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 263.

⁸Mecham, Church and State, 29.

The conditions hindering missionary efforts by the clergy included (1) the indifferent and sometimes hostile attitude of the Spaniards toward the conversion of the natives; (2) evil examples set by many Spaniards; (3) mistreatment of the Indians; (4) the unworthiness of later priests; and (5) conflicts among the religious orders themselves, and between the regular and secular clergy.⁹

The hostile attitude of the Spaniards toward the conversion of the natives was caused by the competition between the Spaniards and the clergy over the use of Indian labor. The Spaniards complained of the number of monasteries, the number of servants employed by them, and the excessive number of feast days which were lost work days for the encomenderos.¹⁰ Even though the possession of an encomienda carried with it the obligation of indoctrinating the Indians, there were relatively few who paid much attention to the rule. Some Spaniards, charging that the priests incited the Indians to rebellion, tried to discredit the missionaries with scandal, and finally stopped giving alms for their support.¹¹

⁹Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 180.
See Chapter IV for earlier discussion of the clash between the regular and secular clergy.

¹⁰Gruening, Mexico, 178.

¹¹Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 206.

The king had expressed hope that contact between the Spaniards and Indians would increase the spread of Christianity, but to the contrary; the mingling of the two groups only provided the Indians with Spanish examples of greediness, loose sexual habits, dishonesty, and general low morality. Drinking, while common before the conquest, became only more prevalent after contact with the Spaniards. Bishop Zumarraga in 1529 outlawed the manufacture and sale of pulque, the native alcoholic drink, but his order had little effect.¹²

As a whole the later priests left much to be desired in morality and character. Toribio Motolinia, an early Franciscan friar, contrasts the early missionaries with the later clergymen when he describes the latter's lack of perseverance, preference for preaching to Spaniards only, and even disliking the Indians and being unwilling to minister to them.¹³ Yet the need for priests was so great at the beginning of the colonial period that the church authorities were forced to use the unworthy and fraudulent. They stated their position on the subject this way, "We hold it a lesser evil that there be priests to administer the

¹²Ibid., 207.

¹³Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 215.

sacraments even though they be of an undesirable character than that the natives be wholly without the sacraments, especially the holy rite of baptism."¹⁴

The missionary efforts were also hindered by the rivalry among the religious orders themselves. In many instances the orders were more interested in acquiring property than in their work of conversion. Not only were the various orders jealous of each other, but within each order there were quarrels between the Spanish and creole members over equality of rank. Simultaneously the religious orders were engaged in a struggle against the secular clergy which lasted to the time of independence.¹⁵

The four methods used by the early friars to convert the natives were teaching, preaching, the use of force and authority, and the suppression of idolatry. The teaching and preaching blended together as one method. It became the practice of the early missionaries upon reaching their assigned city or village to choose a site for the construction of a building in which to instruct the children. This building would be one long room where the Indian children could sleep and be taught, plus smaller rooms. The

¹⁴Ibid., 217.

¹⁵Bancroft, Mexico, III, 705-706.

friars understood what the Roman Catholic Church has always understood, the difficulties of converting an adult and the advantages of training a child. When the buildings were ready the Indian chiefs were instructed to bring their children. Instead the chiefs substituted the children of their slaves and servants. In so doing, the chiefs greatly deceived themselves, for those children brought to the friars did learn to read and write. Many of the children educated by the friars later became mayors and other Indian officials.¹⁶

The adults were also assembled and the priests tried to teach Christian doctrine to them. Out of fear of Hernan Cortez and the other conquistadores these early converts listened to the priests. Some of them learned the Latin prayers, but most understood little and continued in their idolatrous religion.¹⁷

The catechism then used by the Franciscan friars contains the religious instruction given the Indians. Beginning with the directions for making the sign of the cross, the catechism explains the Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, and Salve Regina. The Fourteen Articles of

¹⁶Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 143-144.

¹⁷Ibid., 146.

Faith are then detailed, followed by the Ten Commandments. Next the five commandments of the Catholic Church are given, these being (1) to attend mass on every Sunday and feast day; (2) to make at least one confession during Lent; (3) to receive the Eucharist at Easter; (4) to abstain and fast when the church requires; and (5) to contribute the first-fruits of all produce including livestock, plus their tithes. After this the seven sacraments of the church are enumerated; venial and mortal sins are explained, and the method of absolution. The catechism ends with simple prayers.

All the material in the catechism was to be learned by the Indians before they could receive the sacraments, but in some cases the priests were content if the convert crossed himself and said the Ave Maria and Pater Noster. Before most priests would hear the Indians' confessions or administer matrimony, an understanding of the Articles of Faith had to be expressed.¹⁸

Unquestionably the use of force and authority played a part in converting the Indians, but it has been overstressed by critics of the church. True, the beloved Franciscans did use the whip frequently when dealing with their

¹⁸
Ibid., 158-161.

charges. Letters from the bishops of Mexico to the king criticize the monks for excessive use of force, but the secular clergy enjoyed discrediting the friars in every possible way. After the issuance of a royal decree forbidding the punishment of Indians, Friar Jeronimo de Mendieta, wrote the commissioner-general of his order in 1562 stating that if the friars did not have the authority to punish and correct the Indians they would not be able to preach and administer the sacraments, for he concluded, "These people are so low and miserable that if one has not all authority with them he has none." In the opening years the use of force was important in the missionary work, but it fell into the background as more and more Indians came under the constructive influence of the teaching and preaching of the friars.¹⁹

The suppression of idolatry proved to be a tremendous undertaking for the friars, and led to the charge that the early clergy destroyed many valuable Indian records telling of their history and culture.²⁰ The task of destroying idols and pagan temples commenced in 1525 with the missionaries in the capital city. Shortly thereafter, all the

¹⁹Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 169-172.

²⁰Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution, 37.

temples and shrines in Mexico City, Tlaxcala and Guaxocingo²¹ were demolished. Gradually the priests and their helpers, the sons of chiefs, worked their destruction through all the occupied territory.²² Bishop Zumarraga reported in 1531, that as of that date twenty thousand idols and five hundred temples had been destroyed. Being missionaries and not archeologists they felt that all ties with the pagan religion must be destroyed as obstacles to Christianity.²³

Defenders of the church state that many Aztec hieroglyphics were destroyed by the conquistadores and Indians before the first missionaries came.²⁴ In preconquest days Indian temples served as fortifications and were customarily destroyed by the Aztecs. Hernan Cortez insisted on the destruction of the pagan temples and idols. When Cortez's allies, the Tlaxcala Indians, entered Texcoco one of their first acts was to burn the principal palaces and archives.²⁵ The early missionaries who wrote histories spoke only of destroying temples and idols, not writings. By 1530 the

²¹Guaxocingo is now known as Huejotzingo. See Map II, for locations.

²²Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 164.

²³Schlarman, Mexico, 130.

²⁴Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 258.

²⁵Schlarman, Mexico, 130.

missionaries distinguished between prohibited and non-prohibited paintings.²⁶ Later during the religious reforms of the nineteenth century many of the translations of Indian writings and records in cleric establishments throughout Mexico were destroyed.²⁷

As for the effectiveness of such destructive efforts by the church to stop idolatry, it was fear of the Spanish more than anything else that kept pagan exhibitions away from the public eye. Indeed, the old preconquest rites retained their hold on many of the converts. To destroy the superstitions of the past and to cast aside idols to whom so much had been attributed by the natives was no small task, and in the more isolated areas was never accomplished.²⁸

Mass baptism was an integral part of the missionary work. Baptism alone was not a violent break for the Indians from their religious past. Perhaps this accounts for the eagerness of the natives to be baptized.²⁹ In 1531, Bishop Zumarraga credited the Franciscans with a million baptisms in a seven year period of activity. Friar Motolinia states that some of the early missionaries baptized

²⁶Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 258.

²⁷Kelley, Altars, 41-42.

²⁸Bancroft, Mexico, II, 79.

²⁹Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 69.

fifteen hundred persons in one day, and altogether baptized four million Indians in fifteen years.³⁰

Since so few Indians understood Spanish during the early years, the friars had a difficult time translating the doctrine into the native tongue through interpreters. Yet the friars persevered and it was hoped that the influence of baptism might aid in bringing an understanding of the faith. Toward this end a mania developed among the missionaries to bestow the sacrament on the natives. All the church required was that the Indian listen for a few days to the teaching of the doctrine before his baptism. This was avoided by some natives who appeared at the site of the ceremony and were baptized along with the others.³¹

Those wishing to be baptized were arranged in groups, the children being placed in front. The entire ritual was performed on a few select natives and the rest were sprinkled with water. In giving the Indians Christian names, one day all the males were baptized Juan and the females, Maria. The next day the names of Pedro and Catalina were issued and so it continued every day through the lists of saints' names.

³⁰ Haring, Spanish Empire, 186.

³¹ Bancroft, Mexico, II, 174-175.

A slip of paper with his new name was given every native in case he forgot or had to prove his identity or baptism.³²

While these mass baptisms were justified on the grounds of necessity, doubts arose concerning the legality of such informal baptisms. The pope settled the matter by decree on May 15, 1537 confirming all baptisms already performed. He further stated that henceforth salt, candle, saliva, and cross should be applied to several out of a large group, but oil and water must be given individually to each person.³³ The first church council in 1555 discussed mass baptisms and agreed that only two days a week, Sunday morning and Thursday afternoon should be baptism days.³⁴

Unfortunately conversion by baptism was often only temporary. The Indian accepted the ceremonial rite but seldom understood the true purpose of it. The easy submission of the Indians to baptism was taken by the church as evidence of their conversion to Christianity, but to the Indians submission was often a way to win favor and grace from the new conquerors.³⁵

³²Ibid., 175.

³³Ibid., 176.

³⁴Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 230-231.

³⁵Tannenbaum, Peace by Revolution, 45-46.

Idolatry declined and conversion increased greatly in Mexico after the vision of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531. On December ninth, only ten years after Cortez's victory, an Indian named Juan Diego on his way to hear mass had a vision that the Blessed Virgin appeared to him on the path near Tepayac outside of Mexico City. She told him to go to Bishop Zumarraga and ask him to build a chapel in her honor there on the side of that very hill.³⁶ The first day Juan Diego was turned away by the bishop. The next day the bishop asked for a token of some kind. The third day, the twelfth of December, the Virgin Mother commanded Diego to climb the hill of Tepayac and gather roses.³⁷ When Juan presented the roses to the bishop, the inside of his cloak in which the roses had been carried, bore the image of the Blessed Mother. This same image is still venerated at the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe.³⁸

After the apparition Juan Diego withdrew from civil pursuits and devoted himself to religious service, living a life of celibacy, and dying in 1548 at the age of seventy-four.³⁹ Diego testified that the Blessed Mother appeared to

³⁶Schlarman, Mexico, 133.

³⁷Gruening, Mexico, 235.

³⁸Schlarman, Mexico, 134.

³⁹Bancroft, Mexico, II, 407, n. 71.

him again later in his life.⁴⁰ He and his family received pensions from the crown for the rest of their lives.⁴¹

Before the conquest, on the site of the shrine built to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe had stood the temple of Tonantza, pagan goddess of earth and corn. She was worshipped throughout Mexico by various names.⁴² Many writers and historians, even men of the church, feel that the similarities of the Virgin to the pagan diety are too great to have been coincidental. Some argue that the painting is not authentic but a ruse to convert more Indians. Others believe that the Blessed Virgin appeared as an Indian closely resembling the pagan goddess in this picture as evidence of her purpose to prove that the Indian had a soul worth saving like the white man.⁴³

The picture itself is painted on a coarse native cloth, ayate. The represented Virgin is standing with her right foot on a crescent moon supported by a cherub with her hands clasped on her breast. She is dressed as a woman of rank wearing a richly embroidered rose colored tunic with a belt of velvet around her waist. A mantle or cloak covered with

⁴⁰Schlarman, Mexico, 134.

⁴¹Downing, The Mexican Earth, 128.

⁴²Gruening, Mexico, 236.

⁴³Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 305-306.

stars rests on her shoulders, and she wears a ten point crown on her head.⁴⁴ The Lady of Guadalupe is dark, with straight Indian hair parted in the middle, and has Indian features.⁴⁵

Arguments advanced against the authenticity of the miraculous painting include the following: (1) Bishop Zumarrage wrote nothing on the subject; (2) Friar Juan Torquemada, an influential contemporary of that period, states in his writings he did not believe the painting miraculous; (3) artistic faults are evident in the painting; and (4) the ayate, or cloth supposedly worn by Juan Diego, is not of the usual measurements of the mantles worn in that day, but is longer and narrower.

Defenders of the authenticity of the origin of the painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe base their case on (1) native manuscripts giving accounts of it; (2) the testimonies of aged people; and (3) the extensive miracles claimed at the shrine by many writers.⁴⁶

Regardless of such arguments the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe is in the blood of the Mexican. As one Indian

⁴⁴Bancroft, Mexico, II, 406.

⁴⁵Downing, The Mexican Earth, 130.

⁴⁶Bancroft, Mexico, II, 407, n. 69.

writer so aptly expressed it, "The day when the Virgin of Tepayac is no longer venerated in this land, not only will the Mexican nationality have melted away, but even the very memory of the inhabitants of present day Mexico will have vanished."⁴⁷

In 1835 an investigation into the genuineness of the existing painting proved it was indeed the one depicted on the mantle of Juan Diego. After asking that the picture be taken down for altar repairs, the heavy weight of the picture attracted attention to the five boards upon which it stretched.⁴⁸ These boards were the top of Bishop Zumarraga's own table, bearing an inscription from the bishop certifying the picture. The antiquity of the boards and wooden nails was verified by the committee too.⁴⁹

On the site of the vision of Our Lady of Guadalupe a chapel was built around the spring, and a magnificent church constructed to house the venerated painting.⁵⁰ The cost of this church is estimated at from half a million to eight hundred thousand pesos. Work was begun on the church in 1695 and was completed in 1709.⁵¹ In 1737, Our Lady of

⁴⁷Schlarman, Mexico, 588.

⁴⁸Bancroft, Mexico, II, 407-408.

⁴⁹Ibid., 408, n. 72.

⁵⁰Ibid., 406.

⁵¹Ibid., 406, n. 66.

Guadalupe was proclaimed patroness of Mexico, in 1910 of Latin America, and in 1945 of America.⁵²

Following its missionary achievements, the next great accomplishment of the church in colonial Mexico was its work in the field of education. At that time education was the duty of the church and largely her financial responsibility. The universities, colleges, and schools were all operated by the church, for the clergy was the only educator.⁵³ The early friars in a few years had primary schools to teach doctrine in every important Indian town in the present states of Tlaxcala, Puebla, Jalisco, Hidalgo, Michoacan, Veracruz, Morelos, and Guerrero.⁵⁴

In the early period of New Spain, the Indian children were gathered in numbers up to a thousand in the patios and porches of the monasteries and churches to be taught. The first two such schools were established by the Franciscans, one at Texcoco in 1523 by Pedro de Gante, and the other in Mexico City in 1525 by Father Martin de Valencia. Later schools teaching industrial arts were also founded for the Indian boys and girls. During the early colonial period the

⁵²Schlarman, Mexico, 597, n. 29.

⁵³Kelley, Altars, 85.

⁵⁴Simpson, Many Mexicos, 69-70.

schools for the Indian children outnumbered those for the sons of the Spanish.⁵⁵

The church-operated Indian schools kept their courses very simple, teaching arithmetic, reading, writing, religion, and politeness.⁵⁶ Actually the major part of all instruction was religious in nature. Music was not taught for its own sake but as an aid in learning parts of the religious material. In the industrial schools carpentry, masonry, tailoring, painting, weaving, metal-working, and later printing were taught.⁵⁷

In 1530 Bishop Zumarraga petitioned Empress Isabel to send women teachers for the education of Indian girls. There were eight such schools for girls by 1534, where the girls not only studied the catechism, but sewing and other practical arts.⁵⁸ The girls stayed in these schools from the age of five until puberty when they married students from the monasteries. Unfortunately these schools disappeared after only a generation from a lack of support and insufficient lay-women teachers.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Haring, Spanish Empire, 225.

⁵⁶Kelley, Altars, 86-87.

⁵⁷Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest, 148.

⁵⁸Schlarman, Mexico, 136.

⁵⁹Haring, Spanish Empire, 227.

In 1547 a school for homeless mestizo boys, San Juan de Letran, founded by Viceroy Antonio Mendoza and Bishop Zumarraga was operated by the Franciscans and supported by the crown and public charity. Failure came a few generations later when the number of children dropped from a high of two hundred in the 1550's to between sixty and eighty in the 1570's and even these children were no longer cared for properly. A similar school for mestizo girls, Nuestra Senora de la Caridad, had the same fate.⁶⁰

Some of these first schools were intended to be colleges to train the Indians to be teachers and missionaries to their own people. Such a school was the first college for the Indians, Santa Cruz College in Tlaltelolco, the native section of Mexico City. Founded largely through the efforts of Bishop Zumarraga, this institution began operation only thirteen years after the conquest on January 6, 1534.⁶¹ This college preceded such facilities for Spanish children. Here the boys from the families of Indian chiefs studied Latin, logic, philosophy, music and medicine. The students ate and slept together in an open dormitory. Their instructors were outstanding men, but after 1548 the administration of the college was turned over to Indian

⁶⁰Haring, Spanish Empire, 228.

⁶¹Kelley, Altars, 96.

graduates and the college fell into ruin. Jealousy on the part of laymen and ecclesiastics concerning the education these Indians were receiving as opposed to that of Spanish youths also helped account for its failure. The viceroys after Velasco withdrew support from the school and it died from a lack of funds.⁶²

By 1553 there were three major colleges in Mexico, Santa Cruz at Tlaltelolco for Indians, San Juan de Letran for mestizos, and another for the creoles and Spaniards. When the Jesuits entered the missionary field later in the sixteenth century they founded many more colleges for the creoles and Spaniards. Yet in order to obtain university courses, students from Mexico had to travel to Spain or Europe.⁶³

Beginning in 1533 Bishop Zumarraga and Viceroy Mendoza petitioned the crown for permission to found a university in Mexico City. The royal decree establishing the University of Mexico was not signed until 1551, yet this was fifty-six years prior to the founding of Jamestown, Virginia. The teaching staff of the university was composed of friars, outstanding laymen and priests. In 1581 a faculty of medicine

⁶²Haring, Spanish Empire, 226-227.

⁶³Crivelli, "Mexico", Catholic Encyclopedia, X, 259.

was added and in 1775 an anatomical amphitheatre for medicine.⁶⁴

In theory university instruction was available to all, even Indians and mulattoes, until the eighteenth century. At that time the prejudice against the increasing numbers of mixed-blooded persons in the professions prevented their further admission.⁶⁵

The fees at the university were not excessive and placed the instruction within the reach of most Spaniards. Later in the colonial period, degrees became more expensive and graduates were supported by wealthy patrons in order to meet the costs of a doctoral degree. This degree as well as all the professorships at the university were decided by public oral examination. Between 1553 and 1775 approximately thirty thousand bachelor degrees, a fair number of master degrees, and one thousand doctoral degrees were conferred by the university.⁶⁶

A second university was founded at Guadalajara in 1791.⁶⁷ By the end of the colonial period New Spain had forty colleges

⁶⁴Schlarman, Mexico, 139.

⁶⁵Haring, Spanish Empire, 231.

⁶⁶Priestley, Mexican Nation, 152.

⁶⁷Ibid., 153.

and seminaries in all, nineteen of which prepared students for degrees.⁶⁸

The influence of the church on education in colonial Mexico was not always good. While the universities, seminaries, elementary and secondary schools were all founded and operated by the clergy, the ecclesiastical teaching and content of instruction were of doubtful value. Indoctrination and memorization were overstressed, and the training of independent thought and character were often neglected.⁶⁹

The medieval Catholic tradition that the Spaniards brought with them was that the church should care for the needy and sick. The church-supported hospitals not only cared for the sick in the Spanish colonies, but served as poor-houses for the aged and blind. Ordinarily one hospital was located near the cathedral and was supervised by its bishop, while others were attached to monasteries and important churches. The Franciscans and Augustinians were the most active religious orders in founding hospitals. Members of societies called confraternities, made up of voluntary lay members serving without pay, worked in the hospitals of Mexico too.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Haring, Spanish Empire, 224-225.

⁶⁹Rippy, Latin America, 111.

⁷⁰Haring, Spanish Empire, 195.

The earliest hospital in New Spain was the Immaculate Conception in Mexico City, a two story building that was largely subsidized by Hernan Cortez. In 1530 Pedro de Gante founded the Senor San Jose hospital in Mexico City exclusively reserved for Indians. Bishop Zumarraga supervised the building of another hospital, Del Amor de Dios, completed in 1540 for the use of Spaniards and Indians. This hospital was placed under the support and patronage of the crown. Shortly thereafter, Bishop Zumarraga wrote the Council of the Indies urging that three hospitals be built on the road from Veracruz to Mexico City, since hundreds died of fevers on this route. In addition to local outbreaks of sickness from 1520 to 1576 there were three major epidemics in New Spain.⁷¹

For the most part, Mexico, like all the other Spanish colonies, never had enough hospitals even in her large cities. The whole province of Guadalajara, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had only six hospitals. In some dioceses the financial resources were not adequate to support the hospitals because bequests and gifts went as endowments for masses and chapels rather than for public

⁷¹Haring, Spanish Empire, 193-194.

charities.⁷² From 1532 to 1793 only twenty-nine hospitals are listed as having been established.⁷³

During the colonial period the two most effective methods of transferring European culture to Mexico were language and religion. These two objectives were the aims of all the educational programs of the church. A certain amount of receptiveness by the natives, already religiously inclined, made this undertaking somewhat easier. Yet because the church and state were both authoritarian institutions, scarcely had the ecclesiastical hierarchy been organized before they isolated Mexico against heresy and the new ideas emanating from the Reformation and Renaissance in Europe. Thus, the only civilizing agent, the Catholic Church, shaped Mexican society and culture into a medieval way of life.⁷⁴

Religion was the theme of most of the books printed in Mexico during the colonial period. Today approximately eighty copies of these works, published in Latin, Spanish, and native tongues during the first century after conquest, still exist. After the first printing press was installed

⁷²Ibid., 196.

⁷³Schlarman, Mexico, 140.

⁷⁴Samuel Ramos, Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico, 26.

in Mexico City in 1535, others were placed at Puebla, Veracruz, and Guadalajara. A government license was required for all printers, and the Inquisition loomed in the background surveying the character of all printed matter.⁷⁵

The Indians did produce a few books of their own after the Spaniards gave them the Spanish language and alphabet. Most native writers chose to write about their tribal histories. Archeologists and historians still study and interpret these documents in order to harmonize them with information obtained from cultural findings.⁷⁶

Scholars within the church preserved rich sources of knowledge in the field of Aztec culture and Mexican anthropology.⁷⁷ Father Toribio Benavente, or as he was known, Friar Motolinia, wrote Historia de los Indios de Nueva Espana; Father Juan Torquemada wrote Monarquia Indiana; Father Jeronimo de Mendieta contributed Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana; Father Vetancourt wrote Teatro Mexicano; and Father Beaumont his observations in Cronica de Michoacan.⁷⁸

A Jesuit school to develop writers of Mexican history was founded in the late eighteenth century. While not

⁷⁵Priestley, Mexican Nation, 167.

⁷⁶Ibid., 168-169.

⁷⁷Haring, Spanish Empire, 235.

⁷⁸Priestley, Mexican Nation, 169.

actual participants of the conversion, these men wrote with a style which is much more readable than the earlier writers. This group of Jesuit historians includes Mariano Veytia, Andres Cavo, Francisco Alegre, and Francisco Clavigero, all creoles.⁷⁹

The friars wrote religious works for the Indians in the native dialects of their particular areas. Between 1524 and 1572 the missionaries wrote sixty-six books in Nahuatl, the Aztec tongue, and its related languages, five books in Mixteco, and five in Zapatica. In all they contributed about one hundred books in the native languages.⁸⁰

Superstition clouded the minds of most persons in New Spain during the colonial period. Phenomena of the sky such as comets and eclipses were still considered signs of coming calamity. Thunderstorms and earthquakes sent the people fleeing to churches to beg forgiveness for their sins. If they lived through such events they felt it was only through the intercession of some favorite saint or the Blessed Mother. Life to them was full of both miracles and punishments from God. Yet with religious emphasis playing such an

⁷⁹Ibid., 170. All these Jesuit writers are in the Appendix.

⁸⁰Schlarman, Mexico, 130-131.

important part in their everyday life, most of the colonists persisted in what was a low level of morality, even for that age.⁸¹

There were few achievements in the arts and sciences in Mexico during the Spanish colonial era. Architecture, as a tool to beautify the churches, advanced more than any other related field. Even today the Spanish religious sentiment is visible in Mexico as expressed in the architecture of almost every town and village. Without exception, a church was erected in the center of town or on top of a slope, making its towers and dome the first visible objects of the community. Around this church was the heart of civilian life, the market place, the village park, and the government buildings. With its beauty and strategic location the church materially as well as ideally occupied a high vantage point.⁸²

The architecture of the very first churches and monasteries was primitive, copied largely after the pagan temples torn down, plus the need to make them as strong as fortresses. The simplicity resulted from the combination of good taste and poverty. The Romanesque arch became heavier and

⁸¹Rippy, Latin America, 95.

⁸²Ramos, Profile of Man and Culture, 77-78.

lower than in Spain and the walls sloped outward. The pioneer monks used paintings on the walls in their places of worship, developing a technique characteristic of both the European style and native fresco.⁸³ Today fortress-monasteries of this first architectural style can be seen at Huejotzingo and Tepeaca in the state of Puebla, Actopan in Hidalgo, Acolman in Mexico, and Atlatlahucan in Morelos.⁸⁴

About fifty years later there was a change in style, for the clergy and government officials wanted the baroque design used in their churches and palaces, even though the Indians were not good at imitating it.⁸⁵ This architectural style of the seventeenth century is seen in such churches as Jesus Maria completed in 1621, and San Lorenzo completed in 1650, both in Mexico City.⁸⁶ Most baroque structures are in the shape of a Roman cross, while others have a single nave. Their exteriors are highly ornamented with columns between which are niches for saints. The arches meet in curved triangles which are topped by cupolas. The doors are heavy wood with carved panelling. The towers and the dome are usually covered with glazed tile.⁸⁷

⁸³Brenner, Idols Behind Altars, 36.

⁸⁴"Mexico", Encyclopedia Americana, 800.

⁸⁵Brenner, Idols Behind Altars, 87-88.

⁸⁶"Mexico", Encyclopedia Americana, 800.

⁸⁷Priestley, Mexican Nation, 164.

From the borrowed baroque style developed an original Mexican style of architecture, the exuberant churrigueresque. The eighteenth century churrigueresque churches, such as Santa Rosa and Santa Clara in Queretaro, and Del Carmen in San Luis Potosi, differ from the baroque mostly in ornamentation.⁸⁸ The interior is profusely decorated with reredos, gilded pilasters, columns with Corinthian capitals, and statues of saints. The facade and towers are ornamented with carved stone. The single nave roof and glazed dome are the same as in the baroque.⁸⁹

Toward the end of the eighteenth century a movement back toward the sober classic tradition of architecture occurred, as expressed in the Church of Nuestra Senora del Carmen in Celaya and the Palacio Real in Guanajuato.⁹⁰ With independence church building stopped, and it was many years before the Mexican artists found their next source of inspiration, secular idealism.⁹¹

The cathedral in Mexico City is that city's masterpiece of colonial architecture. Architects of diverse schools

⁸⁸"Mexico", Encyclopedia Americana, 801.

⁸⁹Priestley, Mexican Nation, 164-165.

⁹⁰"Mexico", Encyclopedia Americana, 801.

⁹¹Parkes, Mexico, 115.

worked on its construction, for it is a product of three centuries. Yet the general concept of the original architect was followed. The baroque style of the seventeenth century, and the churrigueresque of the eighteenth century were largely kept out.⁹²

Education, the arts, charitable institutions and social life were all under the guidance of the church in colonial Mexico because of the medieval way of life that existed. During that time the greatest of the church's accomplishments was its conversion of the natives to Catholicism. Today, approximately two hundred and forty years after Mexican independence, and after repeated attempts to destroy the church and its power, that country is still very strongly Catholic because of this early, outstanding missionary work. The colonial schools operated for the Indians by the church included manual training as well as religious instruction, and the fundamentals of reading and writing Spanish. Much of the heritage and culture of Spain was transplanted to Mexico by the church. While little literature was produced in the colonial period, higher education was not neglected, for forty colleges and seminaries had been established by the time of independence.⁹³

⁹²Priestley, Mexican Nation, 165.

⁹³Haring, Spanish Empire, 224-225.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

During the time of the conquest of Mexico the Roman Catholic Church in Spain became very powerful and wealthy. Queen Isabel had allied herself with the church and the Christian faith in order to unify Spain. The Spaniards were very zealous about their religion, having conquered the Moslems after centuries of struggle on the peninsula, and continued to combine idealism and warfare in their ventures into the New World. Spanish Catholicism was a paradoxical religion, for while requiring strict observation of church ceremonies and acceptance of doctrine, it never influenced the everyday morality of the Spanish. Unfortunately, the morality of the Spanish clergy was not much above the public standard.

In the colony of New Spain, as in the mother country, the church was closely affiliated with the state. Bishops and archbishops received governmental appointments. The monarchs of Spain enjoyed so many ecclesiastic privileges under their patronage that they were the virtual heads of the church. Such conditions meant that the church functioned as a branch of the civil government in Mexico, teaching

loyalty to the crown and supporting all royal edicts, except those not favorable to the church.

Catholicism blended easily with the pagan religion of Mexico because of their similarities, which included the idea of one supreme being, many lesser saints or deities, the use of the confessional and baptism, the priesthood, and belief in an afterworld existence. The church accepted some of the native rituals, such as dancing, feast days, and pageantry, as a part of Mexican Catholicism. The church thus linked itself to the past and made the new religion more acceptable for the natives.

From the West Indies, Hernan Cortez and his expedition introduced Christianity into Mexico. Cortez's methods of conversion, while positive in nature, were in some instances quite harsh. Cortez also introduced the economic work system known as the encomienda to Mexico in order to pay his soldiers with land and to provide a permanent source of labor. This system had practically annihilated the natives of the West Indies, and clergymen such as Bartolome de Las Casas complained to the public and king, seeking legislation outlawing the encomienda. The New Laws of 1542, abolishing the encomienda, were repealed when the crown realized there was no suitable substitute for the work system in the colony at that time. The majority of the clergy in Mexico did not

want to abolish the system, only to improve the working and living conditions of the Indians under the system.

After the conquest the first religious order to arrive in Mexico to perform missionary work was the Franciscan. Then came the Dominicans, Mercedarians, Carmelites, Benedictines, Jesuits, and other orders. The early friars enjoyed jurisdictional privileges not usually granted to missionaries because there was so much work to be done in Latin America and so few priests to do it. Later when the secular priesthood arrived the friars were reluctant to turn their duties and parish establishments over to them. When the Jesuits began to appear as a threat to the crown, they were expelled from all the colonies. In spite of efforts by the king and secular church to weaken their position, the religious orders were still influential and wealthy at the end of the colonial period. Jealousy among the orders had directed some of their activity away from the Indians and toward competition with each other in the building of great monasteries and churches throughout Mexico. The later friars had lost much of the fervor and devotion of the early missionaries who had worked so diligently with the natives.

The ecclesiastic organization of the secular church was firmly established with dioceses and an archdiocese fifty years after the conquest, replacing the religious orders in

importance. This hierarchy was headed by an archbishop, followed by bishops, and parish clergymen. The Inquisition and ecclesiastical courts operated as a part of this clerical establishment. The secular church became extremely wealthy in Mexico, receiving its revenue from tithes, alms, fees, rents on property, tribute, revenue bulls, and mortgages. While the kings of Spain issued many decrees against the acquisitiveness of the secular church, none was effective.

The spiritual and cultural achievements of the religious orders and secular clergy in Mexico included their missionary work, and establishment of schools, colleges, hospitals, and other benevolent institutions. In order to convert such a large number of natives the church used four methods, teaching, preaching, use of force and authority, and the suppression of idolatry. In the opening years the use of force was important in missionary work, but it was replaced by the more constructive influences of teaching and preaching. The suppression of idolatry by the friars and priests led to the later charge that the church destroyed many of the preconquest native writings and records in their zeal to destroy pagan idols.

The church had complete control of education in Mexico and began by establishing more schools for the Indians than

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APPENDIX

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Aguilar, Jeronimo de, was born in the late fifteenth century in Spain, and traveled to America with one of the first expeditions to the newly conquered West Indies. On one trip from Darian to Santo Domingo he and his companions were shipwrecked off Yucatan. Only he and one other man were spared by the Indians. After living with the natives of Yucatan for eight years he understood the Mayan language quite well. In 1519 Hernan Cortez rescued Aguilar, and he stayed with Cortez's expedition serving as interpreter until the final occupation of Mexico City. He later took part in other military expeditions, dying in 1526 or 1527. Hijos de J. Espasa (ed.), Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada, (Barcelona, Spain: 1922), III, p. 631.

Alaman, Lucas, was a Mexican statesman and historian born in Guanajuato, Mexico on October 18, 1792. In 1814 Alaman went abroad, and remained in Europe eight years. As a deputy from Guanajuato to the Spanish Cortes in 1819 he interceded in behalf of rebellious Mexicans. Returning to Mexico after independence he held public offices under Anastasio Bustamente and Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. The liberal ideas with which he had come in contact in Europe made him a reactionary in politics and religion, and he was responsible for some of the bad relations between the United States and Mexico during his political career. Alaman organized the government archives and founded the Natural Museum. His historical works include Disertaciones historicas (3 vols.), published in 1844, and Historia de Mejico desde la epoca colonial hasta nuestros dias (5 vols.), published 1849 to 1852. Lucas Alaman died June 2, 1853. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1960), I, p. 308.

Alegre, Francisco Javier, was a Jesuit historian born in Veracruz, Mexico, November 12, 1729, who died in Bologna, Italy, August 16, 1788. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1747, and acquired a reputation as a scholar of the classics. Alegre occupied a chair at the Jesuit College of Habana, and later at Merida in

Yucatan. After the expulsion of Jesuits from Mexico in 1767, he settled at Bologna where he lived the rest of his life. His works were many, including Historia de la provincia de la Compania de Jesus in Nueva Espana, published in Mexico in 1841. Considering the persecution of the Jesuit Order in the Spanish colonies during the time in which Alegre wrote, there are no attacks upon the Spaniards or Spain in his works. Charles G. Herbermann, and numerous collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), I, p. 281d; Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1960), XVIII, p. 813; and Hijos de J. Espasa (ed.), Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada (Barcelona, Spain: 1922), IV, p. 374.

Cavos, Andres, was Jesuit historian born in Guadalajara in 1729, who died in Rome in 1794 where he settled after the Jesuit expulsion by Charles III. He wrote a chronicle of events from the date of Spanish conquest in 1521 to the year 1767 for the City of Mexico. Bustamente edited and continued the chronicle to 1836, but not with Cavo's impartiality. This work was published in Jalapa, Mexico in 1870, with the title, Los tres siglos de Mejico durante el gobierno espanol. Hijos de J. Espasa (ed.), Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada (Barcelona, Spain: 1922), XII, p. 712; and Charles G. Herbermann, and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), III, p. 468e.

Chavero, Alfredo, was a Mexican writer interested in the archaeology and history of his country as well as politics. He lived from 1841 to 1906. In 1862 Chavero was elected to public office during the French occupation. During the Maximilian affair he began to write for the periodicals, principally histories. He wrote biographies of Montezuma, Friar Sahagun, and Siquenza e Itzcoalt. Chavero's monumental work is Antiquedades mejicanas. He also wrote for the theater. Hijos de J. Espasa (ed.), Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada (Barcelona, Spain: 1922), XVII, p. 120.

Clavigero, Francisco Saveiro, was born in Veracruz on September 9, 1731, and died in Bologna, Italy, April 2, 1787. At the age of seventeen Clavigero entered the Society of Jesus, and became very interested in the valuable collection of documents on Mexican history and antiquities deposited there by Siguenza y Gongora. In Bologna after the Jesuit expulsion, he founded a literary academy and pursued his studies in Mexican history, compiling his Historia antica del Messico, published in Cesna, 1870. His style is cultivated, and he has done much to rectify the inaccuracies of preceding writers. His other published works include Storia della California. Some of his work reveals Clavigero's resentment against the Spanish for expulsion. William Hickling Prescott, History of the Conquest of Mexico and History of the Conquest of Peru (New York: Random House, n. d.), pp. 34-35; and Charles G. Herbermann and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911) IV, p. 8d.

Cordoba, Francisco Hernandez de, was born in the late fifteenth century in Spain, and died in Cuba in 1518. He is credited as the discoverer of Yucatan. His expedition reached Yucatan in 1517 whereupon it was defeated in the bay called Mala Pelea, and then explored the coast of Campeche. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1960), VII, p. 688, XVII, p. 821.

Cordoba, Pedro de, was born around 1460 at Cordoba, Spain, and died on the Island of Santo Domingo in 1525. He studied at the University of Salamanca in Spain, and entered the Dominican Order there. In 1510 Cordoba went to Santo Domingo in the West Indies, founding the Santa Cruz province. He was a zealous protector of the Indians and friend of Bartolome de Las Casas. Cordoba's book, Doctrina Cristiana para instruccion e informacion de los Indios por manera de historia, was published by order of Bishop Zumarraga in 1544 in Mexico, and was one of the earliest catechism books written in the New World. Friar Pedro was the first inquisitor appointed in America, and had the reputation of an outstanding priest, respected by the clergy, laity, and Indians. Charles G. Herbermann and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), III, p. 601.

Cortez, Hernan, was born in Spain in 1485 and died there in 1547. His family, being of minor nobility, sent him to study law at the University of Salamanca in 1499. After two years of study, Hernan sought a life of adventure. In 1504 he sailed to Hispaniola (Santo Domingo) in the West Indies where he assisted in campaigns against the Indians. In 1511 Cortez joined Diego Velazquez in the conquest of Cuba and was named mayor of the city of Santiago de Cuba. Velazquez after news of Juan de Grijalva's exploration of Yucatan entrusted the conquest of Mexico to Cortez. However he reversed the commission, and Cortez set sail disregarding the reversal of orders in February, 1519 with eleven ships, seven hundred Spaniards, and ten small pieces of field artillery. The eighteen horses he took proved to be quite valuable. From Yucatan, Tabasco, to Veracruz he established his own government independent of Velazquez and began his conquest of the Aztec Empire. Cortez entered the Indian capital Tenochtitlan on November 18, 1519. Early in 1520 Velazquez sent a group of about one thousand men to subordinate Cortez, but instead they joined forces with Cortez who had hastened to the coast to meet them. In his absence from Tenochtitlan open revolt broke out and upon the conqueror's return, the Spaniards retreated on June 30, 1520 out of the city. Cortez again took possession of the city in August, 1521. He then undertook several expeditions to other parts of Mexico as far as Honduras. Charges by suspicious rivals caused Cortez to plead his case at the court of Madrid. While there from 1528 to 1530 he was well received but had suffered a diminution of power. The court ruled that the viceroy was to have charge of civil administration, while Cortez was to handle only military expeditions. After many frustrating experiences in the colony with Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, Cortez returned to Spain in 1540, where he was coldly received at court and neglected. He was buried at Seville, but his remains were later moved to Mexico City. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1960), VIII, p. 25-26.

Duran, Diego, was a Dominican monk born in Mexico shortly after the conquest. His work, Historia de las Indias de la Nueva Espana y los Islas de Tierra Firme, while finished in 1581, was not published until 1867. Duran based his work on the Codice Ramirez, ancient Mexican writings, and from Spaniards and Indians contemporary

with the conquest. Charles S. Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest of Mexico (Durham: Duke University Press, 1930), p. 326.

Gante, Pedro de, was a Flemish missionary who served for Spain in Mexico. He was probably born in Ghent in 1509, and died in Mexico in 1572. He was implied by some to be an illegitimate relative of Emperor Charles V. Gante entered the order of St. Francis while quite young, and was one of the first three friars to arrive at Veracruz on August 13, 1523. After he learned the native language he started his school at Texcoco in 1524, teaching one thousand students at a time. Not only reading, writing, and the catechism were taught but also music, and later painting and sculpture. In 1527 this school moved to Mexico City. While considered for various advancements within the Church, Gante preferred his humble position. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1960), XVIII, p. 824; and Hijos de J. Espasa (ed.), Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada (Barcelona, Spain: 1922), XXV, p. 720.

Garces, Julian, was the first bishop of New Spain, appointed in 1526 by Pope Clement VII at the request of Emperor Charles V. Having been chosen as bishop of Yucatan, this diocese was modified to include the southeastern coast of Mexico, and in 1527 Bishop Garces took possession of his see at Tlaxcala. Upon realizing it was impossible to operate at Tlaxcala without a cathedral the see chapter was moved in 1539 to the new city of Puebla de los Angeles which had a sumptuous church. Royal approval was granted in 1543, and since then the bishops have resided at Puebla. Garces died in 1542. Charles G. Herbermann and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), X, p. 268d, p. 794c; XV, p. 737c.

Grijalva, Juan de, was born in 1490 in Spain, and died in 1527 in Nicaragua. He sailed from Cuba in 1518 to complete Francisco Cordoba's discoveries the year before, exploring from Yucatan up to modern Veracruz. He gave his name to the Grijalva River. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1960), XIII, p. 473.

Hidalgo y Costilla, Miguel, was the first leader in the Mexican War for Independence. He was born in the state of Guanajuato on May 8, 1753, and was killed at Chihuahua, Mexico, on July 30, 1811. Hidalgo was a parish priest who early in his life was noted for his interest in promoting industry in Mexico. He is said to have introduced silk worms, and did much to encourage the culture of vineyards. Because this conflicted with the Spanish colonial policy which discouraged all manufacturing or agriculture which could interfere with revenue, his vines and plants were destroyed. Such pressures, plus his influence with the Indian, drove him to rebellion against Spain. When the conspiracy planned for Nov. 1, 1810, was disclosed and some arrests made, Hidalgo was forced to take action on September 16, calling together the Indians of his parish and raising the standard of revolt. With his army of 20,000 men, mostly Indians, Hidalgo captured Guanajuato on September 29, and then took Valladolid, and other cities. Finding himself outside of Mexico City without enough ammunition, he retreated. In November the Spanish forces began the offensive, and crushed the revolutionaries near Guadalajara on Jan. 17, 1811. Hidalgo was tried by the Inquisition, and degraded from the priesthood. He was executed on July 30, 1811 by a government firing squad. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1960), XIV, pp. 169-170.

Las Casas, Bartolome de, was born in Seville in 1474, and educated at the University of Salamanca. In 1510 he took his holy orders in the New World, and sailed with expeditions to Cuba in 1511 and 1512. In 1514 Las Casas began his crusade against the encomienda and repartimiento systems. He appeared before the Spanish king in 1515, and upon the monarch's death in Jan., 1516, was placed at the head of a commission to alleviate wrongs suffered by the Indians. Las Casas returned to Spain in 1517 still not satisfied. His plan for substituting Negro slaves for Indians failed as well as his model colony on the mainland. Then in 1522, he retired to a Dominican convent in Hispaniola. In 1530 he resumed his mission to save the Indians, beginning with the fierce tribes of Central America. After this attempt failed, in 1539 Las Casas was sent to gather Dominican recruits in Spain, and wrote his best known work, Brevisimo relacion de la Destruycion de las Indias occidentalis. In 1542 he wrote Veynte Razones in defense of the

Indians. The emperor offered him the bishopric of Chiapas in southern Mexico in 1544, which he accepted. Encountering much disloyalty and opposition to his authority he left for Spain in 1547, retiring from politics and spending most of his last years in convents in Spain. He died July, 1566. William Benton (ed.), Encyclopaedia Britannica (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1957), XIII, p. 732.

Loyola, Saint Ignatius, was the founder of the Society of Jesus. He was born in 1491 at the Castle of Loyola, Azpeitia, Spain, and died in Rome on July 31, 1556. As a youth Loyola became a soldier, and soon an officer of the army. After a serious wound he began to read the lives of the saints, and decided he should combine his military efforts with the ideals of a saint. When well Loyola set out to become a knight of Jesus Christ. After a year of solitude, prayer, and penance in a cavern his character was changed. In 1524 he began a course of study at the University of Alcala which was to last eleven years. From there he traveled to the University of Paris in 1528, receiving his M. A. in 1535. Ill health prevented him from getting his doctorate in theology. His band of followers, ten thoroughly educated university men, formed the Society of Jesus on Aug. 15, 1534, taking the oath of poverty and chastity. In 1537 with permission of the pope all were ordained priests. In 1540 Pope Paul III established the Society as a new religious order and Ignatius was elected the first general of the society. After this missionaries were sent to Portugal, Germany, Ireland, and other parts of the world. Loyola remained at Rome to draw up the constitution for the society, and founded two Jesuit colleges there in 1551, and 1552. When he died in 1556, the Society of Jesus had one thousand members in twelve provinces, and about one hundred convents. Loyola was beatified on July 27, 1609, and canonized May 22, 1622. His remains are in Rome. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1960) XVII, pp. 814-815.

Marina, Dona or Malintzin, was born in Coatzacoalcos, probably in the early years of the sixteenth century of a noble family. She was sold as a child into slavery to the Tabasco Indians. After Cortez invaded Mexico she became his interpreter and mistress. Their son, Don Martin Cortez, attained considerable importance in

Mexico. Marina later married Juan de Jaramillo, and was living as late as 1550. New International Encyclopedia (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1916), XV, p. 90.

Mendieta, Jeronimo de, was a Franciscan missionary to Mexico born in Spain in 1525. He came to New Spain while quite young and learned the native language as well as history and customs. A speech impediment kept him from preaching Castilian to the Spaniards, so he addressed the Indians in their language without stammering. His love of the Indians impelled him to speak against the Spanish colonists. He also wrote and spoke of the secular clergy during his lifetime without mercy. In 1571 Mendieta began to write his account of the Indians' conversion to Christianity, Historia ecclesiastica indiana. This work was not completed until 1596, for during those twenty-five years Mendieta performed government duties as well as religious. After finishing the manuscript, it was sent to Spain and Mendieta had no further knowledge of it. No writer later than Torquemada ever quoted it until San Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta acquired the manuscript in Madrid, and had it printed in Mexico in 1870. In his five volume work Mendieta displays and exaggerates the vices and wrongs of the colonists, and even goes so far as to flout the government. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1960), X, pp. 185-186, XVIII, p. 602, p. 804.

Mendoza, Antonio de, was born in Spain in 1485, and was the first of Mexico's sixty viceroys. He was appointed by Emperor Charles V of Spain in 1529, and held that office from Nov., 1535 to Oct., 1550. Mendoza's administration was the longest and had the best record in the history of that colonial government. While slow to act, Mendoza was a man of reform, developing agriculture and mining, establishing the Mexican mint, introducing the printing press, encouraging education, and founding the first university. In 1551 he was appointed viceroy of Peru, and died in Lima in 1552. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1960), XVIII, p. 627, p. 823.

Montesino, Antonio, was a Spanish missionary, the date of whose birth is unknown, and who died in the West Indies in 1545. Montesino entered the Order of St. Dominic

and resided at the convent of St. Stephen, in Salamanca, Spain. There he was noted for his piety, love of strict observance, his eloquence and moral courage. In Sept., 1510 he landed with the first band of Dominicans in Hispaniola under the leadership of Pedro de Cordoba. He was the first to publically denounce in America as disgraceful the enslavement and oppression of the Indians. Called to Spain in 1512, he pleaded with the king, who took immediate steps to better conditions. In June, 1526, Montesino accompanied several hundred colonists to the eastern coast of the United States, probably where the English later founded Jamestown, or as some think New York. Upon the failure of this colony he returned to Santo Domingo. In 1528 Montesino went to Venezuela with twenty Dominican sisters. He was the author of Information juridica in Indorum defensionem. Hijos de J. Espasa (ed.), Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada, (Barcelona, Spain: 1922), XXXVI, p. 609; and Charles G. Herbermann and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), X, p. 534b.

Montezuma, surnamed Xocoyotzin and called Montezuma II, was a chief or emperor of ancient Mexico. He was born in 1479 and died June 30, 1520 in Tenochtitlan, Mexico. Montezuma became chief of the Aztecs in 1503, and was the native ruler at the time of the Spanish invasion. His people carried on constant war with their neighboring tribes, the Tarascans and Tlascalans. When news of Juan de Grijalva's expedition in 1518 was brought to Montezuma he was greatly alarmed because of the ancient prophecy that foretold that Quetzalcoatl, the white god, would come again to rule Mexico. He sent presents to Cortez who had landed at Veracruz in April, 1519, and tried to prevent him from entering Tenochtitlan. Cortez however was well received by Montezuma, and because of Montezuma's conciliatory policy the Aztec emperor lost the respect of his subjects and became the hostage of the Spanish. In June, 1520, when the Aztecs attacked the Spanish quarters in Tenochtitlan, Montezuma attempted to end the hostilities, but was wounded by thrown stones and died a few days later. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1960), XIX, p. 405-406.

Montufar, Alonso, was the second archbishop of Mexico. He was born in Spain in 1489, and died in Mexico, March 7, 1572. A Dominican and qualificator of the Inquisition in Granada, Montufar resided at the Santa Cruz convent in Spain until 1551 when Charles I appointed him archbishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumarraga's successor. He presided over two Church councils, 1555 and 1565. Hijos de J. Espasa (ed.), Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada (Barcelona, Spain: 1922), XXXVI, p. 812.

Morelos y Pavon, Jose Maria, was born in Morelia, then called Valladolid, state of Michoacan, Mexico on Sept. 30, 1765, and died in Mexico City on Dec. 22, 1815. With some Indian ancestry, Morelos worked many years as a muleteer. At the age of thirty he entered the college of Valladolid, and was ordained a priest. In 1810 Morelos joined the rebellion launched by Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla who had been a rector of the college at Valladolid during Morelos' days as a student. After Hidalgo's death, Morelos kept the cause alive in the north. He defeated the Spanish in several battles and held seige for sixty-two days against the viceroy's forces at Cuautla before he withdrew. Later he captured Oaxaca and Acapulco. He was made captain general in November, 1813 by the Congress of Chilpancingo. On November 6, 1813 Morelos proclaimed the independence of Mexico from Spain, after which he drafted a republican constitution for the new country. He was defeated by Augustin de Iturbide at Valladolid and taken prisoner. Morelos was shot as a traitor after his trial by the Inquisition, and his remains are in Mexico City. The present state of Morelos was named in his honor. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1960), XIX, p. 448.

Motolinia, Toribio de Benevente, came with the twelve Franciscan missionaries in 1523 to New Spain, after Cortez's request. Their humble attire and bare feet drew the exclamation of motolinia from the Indians, which meant "poor man". Benevente was so pleased with the word and its meaning that he assumed it as his own name. He traveled on foot over Mexico, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. While gentle, charitable, and meek with his charges, he was one of the fiercest opponents of Bartolome de Las Casas. Toribio was made guardian of a Franciscan convent at Texcoco, and labored here baptizing more than four hundred thousand natives. He died in the convent

of San Francisco in Mexico City, but the year is uncertain. Because of his personal work with the natives and knowledge of their language, he acquired much information about the Indians and their institutions. His great work, Historia de los Indios de Nueva Espana, is in three parts. The first deals with the religion and rites of the Aztecs, the second part relates the conversion of the natives to Christianity, and the third discusses the character of the nation, including astrology and agriculture. Like most early writers in Mexico, Father Toribio's history is full of miracles and startling occurrences, yet amid this pious incredibility is much substantial information. Although Motolinia's work was never printed, much of it has certainly found its way into subsequent works. William Hickling Prescott, History of the Conquest of Mexico and History of the Conquest of Peru (New York: Random House, n. d.), pp. 309-311.

Moya de Contreras, Pedro de, was the third archbishop of Mexico. He was born in Cordoba, Spain, the year being unknown, and died in Madrid in 1591. Moya took his doctorate in theology at the University of Salamanca, and was then given charge of the school at the cathedral of Canarias, and was made inquisitor in Marcia. In 1571 he was sent to Mexico to establish the tribunal of the Inquisition, and two years later was appointed archbishop of Mexico. After the death of the viceroy in 1584, Moya was put in charge of the government and served as viceroy until Oct., 1585, when the new viceroy arrived. In 1591 he was named President of the Council of the Indies, but only served one year before his death. Moya wrote many long letters which have been published under the title of Cartas de Indias. Hijos de J. Espasa (ed.). Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada (Barcelona, Spain: 1922), XXXVI, p. 1545.

Ortiz, Tomas, was the superior who headed the first group of Dominican missionaries to Mexico in 1526. He became commissioner of the Inquisition, but returned almost immediately to Spain. Friar Domingo de Betanzos succeeded him. Charles G. Herbermann and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), X, p. 262d.

Palafox y Mendoza, Juan de, was the bishop of La Puebla de los Angeles in Mexico. He was born in Spain, June 24, 1600, and died in Spain, Oct. 1, 1659. After completing his studies at the University of Salamanca, Palafox was appointed a member of the Council of the Indies at the court of Madrid. In 1629 he was ordained a priest. On Dec. 27, 1639 he was consecrated bishop of Puebla, Mexico, and at the same time appointed visitador general of Mexico. Palafox arrived in June, 1640, and had much trouble with the religious orders whose privileges and exemptions he looked upon as encroachments on his episcopal jurisdiction. May, 1642 he received orders to take temporary charge of the government in place of the viceroy who had been accused of mismanagement, and sympathy with Portuguese rebels in New Spain. At the same time Palafox was appointed archbishop of Mexico. During his five months of viceroyalty he corrected financial troubles, and destroyed many pagan idols and antiquities collected by previous viceroys. In 1647 Palafox began to differ bitterly with the Jesuits over numerous privileges and exemptions the order enjoyed. Although Pope Innocent X in 1653 ruled in favor of Palafox and his arguments, the bishop was transferred back to Spain in Nov., 1653 where he spent the rest of his life. His literary works consisted chiefly of pastoral and historical treatises published in Madrid in fifteen volumes in 1762. Charles G. Herbermann and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), XI, pp. 414-415.

Sahagun, Bernardino de, was a Franciscan friar who was a contemporary of the conquest in Mexico. Born in Spain, Sahagun was educated at Salamanca, and then took his vows to St. Francis. In 1529 he came to Mexico and was the guardian of several conventual houses successively until he relinquished these to devote himself unreservedly to the business of preaching and compiling works dealing with the antiquities of the Aztecs. While doing these literary labors Sahagun continued to occupy the position of lecturer in the College of Santa Cruz. His greatest work, Historia Universal de Nueva Espana, is divided into twelve books. The first eleven are occupied with the social institutions of Mexico, and the last with the conquest. On the

religion of the country he is very detailed. After several other religious and philological works, none of which have been published, Sahagun died in 1590 in Mexico City. William Hickling Prescott, History of the Conquest of Mexico and History of the Conquest of Peru. (New York: Random House, n. d.), pp. 52-53.

Siguenza y Gongora, Carlos de, was a Mexican born scholar who wrote articles on philosophy, antiquarian matters, and mathematics. He lived from 1645 to 1700. His most important work was a chronicle and compilation he wrote for two poetic competitions and which he entitled Triunfo parathenico. Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1960), XVIII, p. 804.

Torquemada, Juan de, was a provincial of the Franciscan order who came to New Spain in the middle of the sixteenth century. As the conquerors were still living he had the opportunity to gather the particulars of their enterprise. He added to this information the traditions of the natives, and histories of other early missionaries. He wrote of all the Mexican institutions, political, social, and religious from the earliest time to his own. While bearing the mark of bigotry and some errors, such as his misconception of the chronological system used by the Aztecs, his work, Monarchia Indiana, was of great value and has been consulted and copied by many other historians. William Hickling Prescott, History of the Conquest of Mexico and History of the Conquest of Peru (New York: Random House, n. d.) p. 34.

Valencia, Juan Martin de Boil, was born at the villa of Valencia in Spain in the middle of the fifteenth century, and died on Aug. 31, 1534. He entered the Franciscan order in Spain, and in 1523, when past the age of fifty, was chosen to lead the first group of twelve Franciscans to begin conversion work with the Mexican Indians. Valencia never acquired the use of the native language in Mexico, but led a very holy life setting an example for others to follow. Father Martin presided over the first ecclesiastical synod in New Spain, held July 2, 1524. At the same time he established the Custody of the Holy Gospel, and was elected first custodian. Valencia died after ten years of laboring in Mexico. His love of poverty was so great that when his

friends wanted to replace an old board on his coffin with a new board, such a noise was heard within the sepulcher that the old board was quickly replaced. Charles G. Herbermann and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911) XI, p. 734; and Charles S. Braden, Religious Aspects of the Conquest of Mexico (Durham: Duke University Press, 1930), p. 125.

Veytia, Mariano, was born of a highly respected family at Puebla in 1718, and published Historia Antiqua in Mexico City in 1836. After his education, he traveled to Spain and Europe. The rest of Veytia's life in Mexico was devoted to literary work, especially national history. Having position and wealth all manuscripts were available to him. Of all his many works only Historia Antiqua was published. This history covers the first occupation of Mexico to the middle of the sixteenth century at which point his work was terminated by death. The date of his death is not known, but probably was not later than 1780. William Hickling Prescott, History of the Conquest of Mexico and History of the Conquest of Peru (New York: Random House, n. d.) p. 18.

Zumarraga, Juan de, was born in Spain in 1468 and died in Mexico in 1548. For many years he was the guardian of the convent of Abrojo in Spain. In Dec., 1527 he was appointed bishop of the newly created see of Mexico. Zumarraga greatly guided and developed the Mexican missions, but is charged with destroying Aztec manuscripts. Among his accomplishments in Mexico were a school for Indian girls, the introduction of the printing press, founding of various hospitals, especially in Mexico City and Veracruz, and his impetus to agriculture, industry, and manufacturing for he brought trained laborers from Spain to teach the natives. His see was elevated to archbishopric in 1548, the year he died. Zumarraga left many letters and other literary items. Charles G. Herbermann and collaborators (eds.), Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), XV, p. 767a; and Encyclopedia Americana (New York: Americana Corporation, 1960), XXIX, p. 739.

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