

THE CATHOLIC FRIAR JUNÍPERO SERRA AND THE PURITAN PASTOR JONATHAN EDWARDS: REPRESENTATIVE “MODELS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY”

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ABSTRACT

THE Spanish and British presences in America have traditionally been understood as opposites if not antagonistic. However, recent academic studies are showing that the coincidences are higher than the differences. This essay continues with this innovative approach, from a religious perspective. Two fundamental characters are taken as models in order to understand the Catholic and puritanical presence: the Franciscan friar Junípero Serra and the Protestant pastor Jonathan Edwards. They were both spiritual and historical references to Catholics and Protestants. They were contemporary characters whose goal, beyond religious faith and vocation, was conditioned by political circumstances and internal religious disputes.

KEY WORDS: Calvinism, Catholicism, Puritanism, friar, missions, United States.

RESUMEN

La presencia española y británica en América han sido tradicionalmente entendidas como opuestas cuando no antagónicas. Sin embargo recientes estudios académicos están poniendo de manifiesto que las coincidencias son incluso más numerosas que las diferencias. Este ensayo continúa esta novedosa aproximación desde una perspectiva religiosa. Se toman como modelo dos personajes fundamentales para entender la presencia católica y puritana, el fraile franciscano Junípero Serra y el pastor protestante Jonathan Edwards, referentes tanto para católicos como para protestantes. Dos personajes contemporáneos y cuyo apostado, más allá de la fe y vocación religiosa, estuvo condicionado por circunstancias de índole política e internas contiendas religiosas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: calvinismo, catolicismo, puritanismo, frailes, misiones, Estados Unidos.

Recent historical approaches to Spanish and British presence in American territories present interesting and innovative revisionist models, breaking with the traditional and widely-accepted view which holds that the Spaniards, on the one hand, were conquerors and the British, on the other hand, were colonizers. In *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (2006) and in *Puritan Conquistadores: Iberianizing the Atlantic 1550-1700* (2006) John Elliott and Jorge



Cañizares-Esguerra respectively take a new approach to the so-called “Discovery of America.” They also shed new light on the meaning of the discovery for both the British and for Spaniards, that is to say, for Protestants and Catholics. Elliott argues that the social, political and economic structures of the British and Spanish societies in the New World shared far more similarities than differences. Cañizares-Esguerra goes a step further. He proposes an interpretative model on the basis of which the Puritan experience in America is a continuation of the Spanish model, to the point that it is possible to argue that there is a common Atlantic history. Be that as it may, it seems clear that there is a new research line, which promises to bring about interesting results.

Regardless of whether one agrees or not with the above-described proposal, it is clear that there are certain aspects, including terminology, which are imprecise, or even incorrect. The term “conqueror,” for example, is regularly used with a negative connotation. Its use is both imprecise and incorrect, in spite of which it has lived over the centuries. Curiously, there were attempts at dismissing the term ever since it was first coined. In the “Ordenanzas Ovandinas” [Royal Ordinances], which King Philip II promulgated in 1573, he ordered the following: “Los descubrimientos no se den con título y nombre de conquistas, pues aviéndose de azer con tanta paz y caridad como deseamos, no queremos que el nombre dé ocasión ni color para que se pueda azer fuerça ni agravio a los indios.”¹ The present study is not meant to be exhaustive nor conclusive. I am simply presenting some hypotheses, which may give way to a more in-depth critique in the future. Having made this clear I should quote from Padre Francisco Palou, who is particularly noted for his popular and widely-quoted bibliography of Junípero Serra. The prologue of this work concludes as follows: “Acuérdate de tu fragilidad y tendrás comprensión de la mía.”²

Catholicism and Protestantism have traditionally been understood as being two different conceptions of Christianity. What is more, a good number of approaches understand the two as different, even opposing, models concerning religious presence in the “New World.” From a Biblical perspective, European religious people see America as a clear and indisputable sign of divine providence. In *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Cotton Mather established a temporal link between the Protestant Reformation in Europe and the discovery of America. He argued that Puritanism interprets human actions neither on the basis of casual principles nor on human will. More specifically, his work is an interpretation of history in relation to a pre-established divine plan. Catholic historiography has also seen the hand of Divine Providence in Columbus’ journey. In *Relazioni Universali*, Giovanni Botero argues that “afirmó que fue la providencia divina lo que causó el rechazo de las propuestas de Colón por parte de los reyes de Francia e Inglaterra, cuyos países

¹ “Discoveries should be neither called nor named conquests. They are moved by a peaceful and charity spirit and we would under no circumstances want the term to be misguidedly understood as a chance to grieve the Indians.” [All translations from Spanish into English are mine].

² “Remember your own fragility and you will be able to understand my fragility.”



caerían posteriormente presa de la herejía suprema del calvinismo. En su lugar, Dios depositó América en las manos seguras de castellanos y portugueses y de sus piadosos monarcas” (qtd. Elliott 184). Elliott goes on saying: “Los franciscanos que habían emprendido la evangelización de las Indias establecieron una asociación aún más estrecha entre la conversión del Nuevo Mundo y la convulsión religiosa del Viejo” (184). Protestants consider that the religious debate in America takes place within Christian principles.

John Winthrop’s “A Model of Christian Charity,” a sermon which he delivered in 1630, includes the “city upon a hill” analogy, which was meant to remind his flock that the eyes of the European population were upon them. Winthrop was interested neither in “convincing” Catholics nor in stirring up interest in the evangelization of the natives. His focus was on the theological reform of Lutheranism. Catholics, on the contrary, were interested in expanding the frontiers of Christianity, in general, and of Catholicism, in particular, for which they based themselves on the “reconquest” model. That is to say, the conversion of the unfaithful changed into the conversion of the natives. In short, Catholics were not interested in Protestants, which is the reason why they placed their attention on the Indians.

Puritan Protestants viewed America as the Promised Land (i.e. their particular Garden of Eden), where they would be able to develop their theocratic utopia. The Protestant Reformation and, more specifically, Puritans rejected any religious precept whose origin was historical but had no Biblical support. It is true that Jesus had ordered the disciples to preach his teachings. Yet not even His “Great Commission” (“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,” Matthew 28: 16-20) was valid for Luther, who interpreted such mission as being limited to the Apostles of the Lord. The Calvinist version of the Reformation, to which American soil fervently held, does not place great emphasis on the evangelizing function in any of its five points. This is the reason why prior to the nineteenth century Puritan missionaries were limited. John Elliott, “Apostle to the Indians,” and the Moravian Brethren, who were concerned about Christianizing the natives living in territories of present-day Ohio and Pennsylvania, are the exception that proves the rule.

John Elliott proposed a Christianizing model based on the “Praying Indian” towns, which were communities peopled and self-governed by converted Natives. Praying towns, which were removed from white settlements, were stable settlements where Indians could retain their own customs—including their language—and their legal system. The idea behind the praying towns was to train Native “missionaries,” who would convert the members of their community to Christianity. The first Native American minister was Daniel Takawampait, who was ordained at Natick (Massachusetts) in 1681. A total of 14 praying towns were established. King Philip’s War put an end to Eliot’s project. In spite of the fact that four praying towns were restored after the war, they had a short future. His legacy was the translation of the Bible into the Massachusetts language, which he finished in 1658 and published in 1661 and 1663. He also wrote a number of reports on the progress of Christianity among the Indians, of which *Brief Narrative* was probably the last. This report provides an interesting description of the conditions of evangelization among the Natives as well as on the relation between Natives and recently-arrived colonists.



On the contrary, Catholic clergymen considered the conversion of the Natives as the main goal of their religious mission. There were already religious missionaries in Columbus's first journeys; yet it was in the sixteenth century when the different religious orders (the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Mercedarians, the Augustinians, the Jesuits) of the Christian mission acquired a rank category. Philip II's rulings reveal that religious orders had the right to evangelize:

17. Si vieren que la gente es domestica y que con seguridad puede quedar entrellos algun religioso y ouiere alguno que huelgue de quedar para los doctrinar e poner en buena policía lo dexen prometiendole de boluer por el dentro de vn año y antes si antes pudieren.

26. Hauiendo frailes y religiosos de las ordenes que se permiten passar a las Indias que con deseo de se emplear en seruir a nuestro señor quisieren yr a descubrir tierras y publicar en ellas el sancto evangelio antes a ellos que a otros se encargue el descubrimiento y se les de licencia para ello y sean faboresçidos y proueidos de todo lo necesario para tan sancta y buena obra a nuestra costa.³

Depending on whether we look from the perspective of a Protestant or a Catholic, God's presence in America is understood in different social and historical terms: Reformation or Counter-Reformation. Catholics were (and are) greatly concerned by the question "What shall I do to be saved?," whereas Protestants were centered on "How shall I know if I am saved?"⁴ In both cases salvation is the core element of the religious experience. Differences aside, salvation is not the sole point in common between Protestants and Catholics. Both political and religious interests shaped the settlements and internal religious arguments, which also played a role in the evangelization process. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) and Friar Junípero Serra (1713-1784) are two of the most well-known and important representatives of Protestant Calvinism and Christian Catholicism, respectively. Differences between the Puritan pastor and the Franciscan friar are significant both on personal and religious-philosophic terms. Being a Catholic, the latter was single and unmarried, while Edwards had 12 sons and daughters. Serra was born to a humble farm worker family from Majorca. Edwards' family, on the contrary, was renowned in New England, for his father, Timothy Edwards, was pastor in East Windsor (Connecticut) and his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729), was one of the most important and influential religious leaders of his time, to the point that his nickname was "Pope Stoddard." Serra travelled

³ "17. Were you to see that people are tame and that it is safe for a priest to remain among them, a priest shall stay to teach these people and he shall come back in no more than a year's time or earlier if possible.

⁴ "26. Were there to be friars and priests from the orders who are willing to go to the Indies to serve our Lord, they shall be allowed to discover the land and to preach the Gospel. They shall be given priority to undertake the discovery and they shall be provided with every necessary means to carry out such a saintly mission."

⁴ Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco include a third question referring to the Puritans in America: "What am I in the eyes of God?"



quite a lot and into wild and unexplored territories, where he established missions. As for Edwards, he spent most of his life in Northampton, a safe and civilized territory which had been founded 50 years before his birth. In addition, he was hand-picked successor by this grandfather to succeed him in the pulpit where he stayed until 1751. Beyond their respective biographies, it is also possible to find differences concerning their religious conception. The most outstanding dissimilarity has to do with the issue of whether or not our souls are foreordained to salvation.

Nevertheless, it is possible to find certain similarities. In addition to being contemporary, both of them were determined and committed men with a clear religious calling. The two of them had a solid university training in Philosophy and Theology (Friar Junípero completed a PhD in Theology in 1742 and supervised several dissertations as well as taking part in more than 100 exams) and, most importantly, both of them represented Christianography among their respective religious models, Catholicism and Puritanism. Serra and Edwards respond to the “Model of Christian Charity,” which Winthrop had proposed a century before on the grounds of his own religious perspective. However, their actions were made conditional to their different theological beliefs. The sociopolitical circumstances in which these two men lived (i.e. independency and Enlightenment) and the particularity of the religious reality (Halfway Covenant and the Sacred Congregation for Propagation of the Faith) show that in addition to Calvinism and Catholicism there were other factors which shaped religion, both for the British and for the Spaniards. In political terms, the independency process, which would conclude two decades later, was emerging in the British colonies. Inasmuch as Charles III in Spain was the personification of Enlightened Despotism (even though clergymen succeeded in holding back some reforms inspired by the Count of Aranda, Floridablanca or Campomanes), it is clear that the Church and the state responded differently to social needs. It is also worth noting that within the Catholic milieu, the Jesuits were expelled and within the Protestant milieu there was an important split with the Arminists led by Charles Chauncy.

1. SPANISH ENLIGHTENMENT AND AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

As previously mentioned, traditions had stereotyped the behaviour of Spanish and British people in America. Bartolomé de las Casas is continuously mentioned as the instigator of the famous “Black Legend” of the Spanish colonization which was widely used by the “enemies” of Spain. Nonetheless, the approach to our more notorious characters is not very scientific. In the case of Junípero Serra, Juan R. Navarro, Mexican editor of one of the first facsimile editions of the life of Fray Junípero Serra wrote in 1852:

Por nuestra parte preferimos recrearnos en la contemplación de esas conquistas espirituales, en que sin más armas que la razón se extendían las fronteras del mundo civilizado; preferimos contemplar a esos varones, más celestiales que terrenos, más



ángeles que hombres, renunciar a todos los goces de la vida social para ir a procurar el bien de salvajes desconocidos [...] (9)⁵

Coming closer to our time, 1988, the Dominican friar Lorenzo Galmés Mas, Serra's biographer, began the section corresponding to "The Missionary Awakening" with the following words:

Los primeros en enterarse fueron, después de Dios, los santos. Varón religiosísimo, contaba siempre con la ayuda de lo Alto. Hombre práctico, tenía en cuenta también los resortes humanos que le convenía mover. Impetró la intercesión de la Virgen María, madre que nunca desatiende. Y puesto que de asunto de América se trataba, pidió la intercesión de San Francisco Solano[#_edn1][i], apóstol de América. Convinco de que la idea impulsora que llevaba dentro venía de Dios y estaba bendecida por El, no quedaba más que aprovechar la primera ocasión que se presentase para ponerla en práctica. (45)⁶

Regarding his North American journey, in the entry corresponding to the "Blessed" Junípero Serra signed by Salustiano Vicedo (O.F.M.) in the Franciscan Index of Saints and Blessed, we read:

La preocupante herida de su pierna ulcerada hacía tan torpe y pesado su caminar, que otros, en su lugar, se hubieran dado por vencidos, quedando a la vera del camino, mientras con nostálgica pena habrían visto cómo los demás compañeros continuaban la marcha. Pero Fr. Junípero no se rinde.⁷

These three quotes are full of emotional words but, without underestimating the divine prophetic hand, the heroic personality of the friar, or the romantic narration—"Al frente iba fray Junípero Serra, con un crucifijo en la mano y alas en el corazón" (Galmés 95)⁸—secular academia requires a more down to earth and pragmatic explanation to understand human acts and actions. Indeed, the faith and personality of the character are the driving forces that inspire his acts, but to what extent did his education determine his actions? What were the circumstances that motivated these actions?

⁵ "For our part, we prefer to recreate in the contemplation of those spiritual conquests, in which armed only by reason extended the frontiers of the civilized world; we prefer to look those men, more heavenly than terrestrial, more angels than men, renouncing to all pleasures of social life to go to seek the welfare of the unknown wild [...]."

⁶ "The first to hear after God were the saints. A very religious man, he always had help from the above. A practical man, he also took into account the human springs that he had to conveniently move. Entreated the intercession of the Virgin Mary, mother who never neglects. And since it was an American issue, he asked for the intercession of San Francisco Solano [#_edn1] [i], Apostle of America. Convinced that the idea driving in him came from God and was blessed by Him, he had to seize the first opportunity to implement it."

⁷ "The worrying ulcerated leg wound made so clumsy and heavy his walk, that others, instead, would have given up, leaving the road, while with nostalgic grief have seen other companions continuing their march. But Father Junípero did not give up."

⁸ "In front there was friar Junípero Serra, with a crucifix in his hand and wings in his heart."



Such questions are not taken into consideration when studying Edwards since we have much more information with respect to his education. When he was a student at Yale he wrote two essays: "Notes on Natural Science" and "The Mind." In the latter, Edwards asks himself interesting questions: What is reality? What are the objectives of human knowledge? What does true freedom consist of? Is it possible for man to love more than just himself? In short, Edwards' concern, explicitly mentioned in "The Mind," was the distinction between the "external world" and the "internal world," demonstrating his certainty on the importance of the study of the internal over the external. His metaphysical concern, essential and defining of all his philosophy and theology, is clearly shown in these first writings. In his earlier scientific studies, and "The Mind" can also be classified as scientific, it's obvious that his intention was to harmonize scientific empiricism with an idealistic philosophy and puritan theology. In these two works, Edwards, young arrogant, was trying to cover and explain all the mysteries of the universe, mental and material. With respect to his professional career, it was not an easy time to devote himself to religious life. Civilian and religious forces were fighting for power. The prelacy was unwilling to lose the prerogatives they had historically possessed and the secular power controlled each and every movement, action and sermon of the prelates, especially if these were young and inexperienced.

These were extremely delicate times for young ministers, as stated by Ola E. Winslow in *Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758*, when declaring that any young man who took charge of a pulpit in America in 1727 was certainly a rebellious man, whether it be against the old order within the Church or against the new one out of it (Winslow 96). Things had quite changed since the arrival of the Arbella on the coast of New England when the aspiration was to create a theocratic state based on the "Covenant" that God had established for his people.

The so-called theocracies of New England never lost sight of them, and whenever their own deeds were called in questions they endeavoured, after the example of John Winthrop, to exonerate themselves according to the first principles of contractualism. John Cotton put the case for the limitations of rulers as bluntly as any radical of the eighteenth century: neither magistrates nor ministers, he said, should "affect more liberty and authority than will do them good, and the People good," and so it is necessary "that all power that is on earth be limited" (Miller 409). The "belief in social and religious exclusivity and uniformity" that, according to Kuklick (9), characterized the first Calvinist colonists at the beginning of the 17th century, had disappeared one century later. By the end of the 17th century the situation was extremely complex. The Salem witch trials reflected the critical moments lived, or rather, the critical moment experienced by the theocratic principles, in danger of losing their pretensions. In 1699, a group of the most successful traders from Boston (Simon Bradstreet, John Leverett and William Brattle) founded the Brattle Street Church. As Larzer Ziff states:

They signified their adherence to the faith of the fathers by founding that church on the Westminster Confession of faith jointly entered into by Presbyterians and Congregationalists during the revolutionary period in England [...] But the church order they sought was one that, cleansed of the crudities of primitive Puritanism, would reflect the dignity of their stations and the politeness of their times. (268)



The situation worsened at the beginning of the 18th century as the ideas of the French Enlightenment lead to the theoretical basis needed by those who supported independence. The Republican principle by which power is in the hands of those governed and not in those who govern will also reach the religious sphere. The study of "The First Great Cause" seen in the Bible loses interest in favour of understanding "The Book of Nature." The final outcome will be the independence of North America. This confrontation between secular forces and the clergy will also take place in Spanish America. The "Bulas Alejandrinas" ("Alexandrine Bulls") granted by Pope Alexander VI to the Catholic Monarchs, which legitimized the American process after Columbus' arrival, conferred the right to conquer and to evangelize the inhabitants of the new territories. The cross and the sword arrived shoulder to shoulder to the American territories and, depending on the historians we turn to, they either favour the political or the religious aspect. Indeed, the crown was responsible for setting the salary of the friars; thus, the evangelization process became de facto a matter of State. Following this principle, the King was the final authority of all religious orders, i.e., civilian authority. From the first years of the conquest, such standard began to be questioned, especially by those who truly had a missionary or proselytizing vocation.

During the first years of the 17th century, a Franciscan missionary, Brother Diego Delgado, evangelist of the Yucatan, confronts Captain Mirones, who abused and mistreated the natives (leading to the riots in Saclum). Subsequently, he even dares to challenge Bishop Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano during his visit to the Mission of Espogache (Florida) when the Bishop informs him that the King of Spain had sent the friars and he replies that they obeyed their religious superiors and not the King. In general, missionaries headed towards an extremely delicate situation since, on the one hand, they were responsible to their parishioners but, on the other, if they defended them from the abuses of the soldiery, they would be accused of disloyalty. The friars thought that the natives obeyed the Monarch "solo por la predicación del evangelio" (Henderson 183). In other words, it was a mutual benefit and, if at all, the Monarch's gold would result in their own benefit.

But it would be in the 18th century when, during the reign of Charles III, the final rupture took place or, at least, the separation between Church and state. The expulsion of the Jesuits due to the Esquilache riots and the missionary policies in Paraguay and Brasil in 1767, are its clearest examples. Maximizing the events that took place in California, we can even assert that the missionary adventure of the 18th century can be considered as the last great institutional collaboration between Church and State. It is precisely due to the expulsion of the Jesuits that Franciscans and Dominicans extended their areas of influence. The Franciscans sent a missionary committee⁹ and it is then when Father Serra became conscious of the possibilities opened for him. The letter written by Serra to the superiors of San Fernando School

⁹ Saint Francisco Solano (1549-1610). Franciscan missionary and preacher of Argentina and especially of Peru, where he was buried (Lima).



on October 17, 1767, becomes significant. In it he shows his discomfort for having been entrusted with Sonora instead of California:

El Señor Gobernador de California Don Gaspar de Portalá explicó sobre todos su pena; pero en fin nosotros nos quedamos sin Californias, sin infieles y quizás sin misiones. (sic). (*Escritos* I, 148)¹⁰

The reason had to do with the number of inhabitants of both regions since, while in California “había tantos millares de infieles que en la California están a la puerta esperando santo bautismo [...] no sucede en Sonora, en donde es menester andar muchas leguas de despoblado para encontrar con un infiel. (*Escritos* I, 148).¹¹ According to José Vasconcelos, in “La idea franciscana en la conquista de América,” the conquest of Mexico was not only the consequence of desire or ambition to obtain material and natural wealth, but also the “celo de los franciscanos que buscaban almas que convertir. Y la conversión suponía la enseñanza no solo de las verdades religiosas, también la ciencia toda y las artes de la civilización europea” (159).¹² This is precisely what Father Serra expected to do in the Californias.

The first aspect we should take into account is that the expansion of the Californias was eminently political and not mythical in origin—let us recall the former with Ponce’s search of the fountain of eternal youth—neither religious nor economical. It was due to reasons of state that the crown will exclusively resort to the missionaries since their proselytism will serve as a means to obtain political interest. Russia was a threat from the north and the British had also begun to establish themselves in the Pacific coast. The occupation even took place hastily and without the preparation of other expeditions. Brother Diego Delgado’s maxim that obedience was due to the acceptance of the Gospel is implicitly understood by the state. If the crown had previously collaborated with the mendicant orders, now the opposite occurs. Father Serra was not only acquainted with the life of Diego Delgado but also with that of another Franciscan missionary who, like him, had dedicated his life to the missions, Brother Juan de Paiva, his counterpart in Florida in 1662. He knew of his problems when he defied civil power and there is no doubt that he had learned from his predecessors and would not make the same mistakes. The subtlety used in his letters to the authorities is noteworthy; mainly in the letters sent to Antonio María de Bucarelli y Ursúa in which he complains about the problems and troubles with Governor Felipe de Neve. Let us not forget that Bucarelli presided over the “Junta de Guerra y Real Hacienda” (“War Council and Royal Revenue”) which elaborated the Provisions Regulations for the new settlements on May 19,

¹⁰ “The Governor of California, Gaspar de Portalá, explained everyone his sorrow, but in the end we were left without Californias, no infidels and perhaps without missions.”

¹¹ “were thousands of infidels in California waiting for Holy Baptism [...] not common in Sonora, where it was necessary to walk many miles of deserted land to find an infidel.”

¹² “[...] the zeal of the Franciscans who sought to convert souls. And conversion supposed teaching not only religious truths, but also Science and the arts of European civilization.”



1773. Here we see one written to Fernando de Rivera y Moncada on July 20, 1775, where he makes more or less clear who his superior is:

Ahora (carísimo mío) expongo a Vuestra Merced que estas ovejas descarriadas son de mi cargo, y soy el responsable de ellas, no en el Tribunal de Cuentas de México, si no en otro muy superior a aquél, y así Vuestra Merced no se admire si en el negocio propuesto declinare algo en importuno. (*Escritos* III, 89)¹³

Serra's problems with civil authorities were constant, especially with Pedro Fages and Felipe Neve previously mentioned. The root cause of the problems is, in both cases, the same: the confrontation or disagreement between the civil interests represented by Fages and Neve and Father Serra's religious interests. In both cases, Father Serra was only and exclusively interested in the establishment of the missions and their security. Nevertheless, Pedro Fages' concern was the security of the province, while Felipe Neve did not promote the foundation of new missions thinking about the expansion of the Empire as professor Hilton states:

Lo cierto es que Felipe de Neve tenía instrucciones más complejas y otros problemas en que pensar, además de la fundación de misiones. Debía fomentarla población civil y el desarrollo económico de la provincia y mantener una sana capacidad defensiva, sobre todo a partir del año 1779, año en que España declaró la guerra a Gran Bretaña. (110)¹⁴

2. THE HALF-WAY COVENANT AND THE COLEGIOS DE PROPAGANDA FIDE

As mentioned, at the beginning of the 18th century the religious fervor and passion that animated those early religious settlers, both fanatical and adventurers, had been decreasing. The colonies from the South and from New England were becoming more and more economically important in the vast British Empire. A considerable part of the people remained hostile and indifferent to the religious precepts founded by their ancestors. The "Halfway Covenant" established as a Solomonic solution failed. The population was facing a number of problems, both internal and external, which had been brewing and dragging almost from the first settlements.

The commitment of the "Halfway Covenant" was understood by many as harmless. In New England, those who did not belong to any particular church, or

¹³ "Now (my dearest) I present Your Honor these sheep which are under my care, and I am responsible for them, not in the Court of Accounts of Mexico, but in another which is superior, and Your Honor don't be surprised if the proposed business declined in importune."

¹⁴ "The truth is that Felipe de Neve had more complex instructions and other problems to think about, besides the founding of missions. He should encourage the civil population and the economic development of the province and maintain a healthy defense capability, especially from the year 1779, the year in which Spain declared war on Great Britain."



did not meet commonly accepted precepts of the “Covenant” established between God and men were denied a number of rights. This situation became somehow strange and the environment in some of the colonies was odd, which kept a hazard for the consequences that could arise. That is why the people agreed to a commitment known as the “Halfway Covenant.” It was a measure to encourage admission into the Church to those who could not fully satisfy the requirements of the original ecclesiastical constitution, in which only the “regenerated” could be accepted as members of the congregation. At the Synod of 1662 in Massachusetts, it was established that those who had been baptized could pass this right to their children even though they had no connection with the church, and that their children could be in the future full members if they ratified this baptism when becoming adults. Nevertheless, they were still denied the right of communion and to vote in church issues. It was such an unusual situation, that the application of the precepts was followed differently depending on the pastor.

In concept, they were tormented by the ontological disputes which involved a challenge to the very essence of their creed. Questions such as “If God is with us, who can be against us?” or “How can I be sure to be one of the chosen?,” which they had never confronted due to its “obvious” response, were not answered equally. Calvin had declared that the “will” uncoated “grace” was sinful. By not sufficiently developing this idea he left his followers an elusive heritage, how to explain the words of the teacher? Some of them came to the conclusion that the meaning of his words had to do with reason and senses; they understood that reason was deceitful and misleading while senses were dangerous and seductive. But not all of Calvin’s words were interpreted in an analogical way; and not just on this principle, but also with the original sin or human will ... Even the most important Calvinist theological principle, “it is God who decides who are saved and who condemned,” began to be questioned within the Church. The group led by Charles Chauncy known as the “Arminists,” whose doctrine gave men an active role in their salvation or condemnation, was gradually gaining both strength and followers.

As for his relationship with the State, the new laws incorporated in Massachusetts in 1691 complied with the utopian dream of Bradford, Winthrop and many others. The utopian “Holly Commonwealth” became by decree a “Real Province.” The governor, designated by the crown, was conferred with the authority to appoint judges and prohibit any act of the Assembly of Representatives, sovereign until then. The right to vote was extended from the “Free Puritans,” the only ones who had until then that privilege, to any free man who had an annual income of 40 s. (shillings) or possessed 50 acres of land or property worth 40 pounds. The colonists also had the right to appeal directly to the King when the amount in dispute was greater than 300 pounds.

The uncertain future of Puritanism and its imminent collapse did not escape the liveliest minds. The series of sermons delivered by John Davenport, *The Saint’s Anchor-Hold in All Storms and Tempests*, are a true reflection of the general frustration. During his last sermon in 1666 John Wilson emphasized his surprise saying “I never thought I would come to know times like these.” It is in this environment in which Edwards developed his pastoral work.



Edwards remained in Northampton until June 22nd, 1750, when he was fired for a series of disagreements with members of his congregation. The expulsion of Jonathan Edwards from his congregation in Northampton on June 22nd, 1750, was a direct result of his loyalty to the Calvinist principles and his rejection to anything alien to its essence. More specifically, his removal was directly related to the admission of members into his church and with the right to receive communion. Paradoxically, he opposed the openness of his grandfather and predecessor, Solomon Stoddard. Years before Stoddard had allowed the sacrament of communion to those who were not “visible saints,” but who recognized themselves as Christians. He understood that the public profession of faith should not be—as it was then—a prerequisite for active participation of the Eucharist. The measure was quickly answered from Boston by Increase Mather, but given the influence of Stoddard and with the support of members of his congregation, that provision was made public and became standard practice. When Edwards succeeded his grandfather he showed no objection to the ideas of his predecessor, something that would later be argued by his detractors. It was in the Spring of 1744, with the backlash of the “Great Awakening” when he first exhibited his feelings before his congregation in Northampton. His “change of attitude” was somewhat surprising, especially when a large number of churches in New England had come to accept and assume Stoddard’s ideas. The confrontation with the members of his parish gradually degenerated over the next five years. In December 1748, when he refused to admit Mary Hulbert as a member of the church if she did not make a public declaration of faith, coexistence deteriorated significantly. The situation became unbearable and in April Edwards resigned.

If Edwards’ pastoral was motivated by its adherence to the religious principles of Calvinism and the “Halfway Covenant,” the mission of Junípero Serra embraced the founding principles of Saint Francis of Assisi and the doctrine taught in the Colleges of Propaganda Fide.

The 13th century has come to be known as the Golden Age of the Middle Ages. The century began with Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) and two “institutions” that would mark the history of humanity in centuries to come, universities and mendicant orders. This is when the universities of Bologna, Paris and Oxford were founded and when St. Francis of Assisi, whose real name was John, founded the Order of Friars Minor, commonly known as the Franciscans, Santo Domingo de Guzmán founded the Order of Preachers or Dominicans, and when the four hermits (Esteban de Cataste, Hugo de Corbaria, Guido de Rosia and Pedro de Lupocavo), during the papacy of Innocent IV founded the order of St. Augustine.

The original apostolic conception of Saint Francis had a double objective, first to Christianize muslims, interviewing in 1219 with Sultan Ayyubid al-Kamil, the then Sultan of Damietta in Egypt, and publishing in his famous *Regula Prima* from 1221 indications on how to become accepted among non-Christians. Another priority for St. Francis was to get closer to the poor and helpless, for they were the ones who best embodied the sufferings of Christ that, ultimately, were the cause for his vocation and religious devotion. González and Cardoza point the consequences this will have in the future:



A los quince años de su fundación, la nueva orden había alcanzado a todas las regiones de Europa y aun más allá de los límites de dicho continente. Además, es importante señalar que sus propios votos de pobreza les permitieron a los franciscanos trabajar entre los pobres y los débiles, y entender algo de sus penurias y tristezas. Es por esto que algunos franciscanos, y dominicos también, se constituyeron en defensores de los pobres y los oprimidos. Esto se vería más claramente siglos después, en tiempos de la conquista de América. (87)¹⁵

Lets forward in time. At the beginning of the 16th century, in 1523, Father Francisco de Quiñones, then General Minister of the order, wrote the instructions that the Franciscan “twelve apostles” should follow to christianize Mexico. They were entrusted to “follow the world preaching the faith with poverty and tasks, raising the flag of the Cross in foreign lands, for by demand died with joy for the love of God and the neighbor, knowing that in these two commandments are gathered the law and the prophets and encouraged them with the following admonition: “Don’t look out for ceremonies and ordinations, but for the Gospel and Rule you promised [...] For you will plant the Gospel in the hearts of infidels, look out that your life and conversation doesn’t separate from this.” Indeed, America will represent the perfect ground for Catholic friars to lead to its ultimate consequences foundational religious principles. In the case of Franciscans in America two founding principles conjugated in unison, the original ideas of the congregation: having the opportunity to evangelize non-Christians which, at the same time, were the poor and disadvantaged. As pointed out by Antonio Gil de Albaracín:

El “Mundo Nuevo”, ofrece a los franciscanos reformados de España la estupenda posibilidad de comenzar en Hispanoamérica, lejos de Europa burguesa, la construcción de una Iglesia apostólica y pobre, como la de los primeros tiempos, cuyo ideal coincide con las metas originales de la Orden de San Francisco.¹⁶

That is, it would be a secularization of the spiritual principle that is the ultimate fundamental objective of Father Serra in the founding of the missions. The model implemented in the California missions is practically the same as in Sierra Gorda, as described by his friend Francisco Palou in his Serra’ biography. In chapters VII and VIII the monks’ modus operandi is described combining religious training with mundane issues such as cropping patterns and occupations of the natives. Junípero Serra intended to create autarkic missions which did not necessarily had

¹⁵ “Fifteen years after its founding, the new order had reached all parts of Europe and even beyond the boundaries of the continent. It is also important to point out that the vows of poverty allowed Franciscans to work among the poor and the weak, and understand some of their hardships and sorrows. This is why some Franciscans and Dominicans, constituted as defenders of the poor and the oppressed. This would be clearly seen centuries later, in times of the conquest of America.”

¹⁶ “The “New World” offers the reformed Franciscans from Spain the great possibility to start in Latin America, far from bourgeois Europe, the construction of an Apostolic and poor church, as in the early days, which ideal coincides with the original goals of the Order of St. Francis.”



to rely on the outside. They would complete the ultimate principles of Saint Francis: spiritual and material aid to the defenseless.

It will be in the “Colleges of Propaganda Fide” where the original Franciscan sense of evangelization is recovered. The General Chapter of Toledo from 1633 promoted the creation of a number of special schools for the training of missionaries establishing the rules that would govern. R. Cazares and F. Mejía masterfully synthesized. This company [Christianization of Indians] demanded that the monks engaged in christianization in border territories had special training, since afterwards they should spend ten years with tasks involving the conversion of infidels. They received a new spiritual training that emphasized the spirit of the Franciscan Rule.

The first of these schools-monasteries was the *Querétaro* and was founded in 1683 by another Majorcan, Brother Antonio Llinás de Jesús. The importance of this type of establishments it is quite obvious when having a look at the number of permits and orders needed for its opening. Fernando Ocaranza mentions in his work *Capítulos de la historia franciscana* (I 283) how one of these schools, the Celaya school, reached its University status in 1729, as the Franciscan general commissioner of New Spain, Fernando Alonso González delightedly announced to the Secretary of the province of San Pedro and San Pablo of Michoacán. According to Ignacio Osorio Romero, the schools of *Propaganda Fide* (Santa Cruz in Querétaro), Guadalupe (in Zacatecas), San Fernando (in Mexico) and San Jose (in Orizaba) took charge of occupying the territories that were abandoned by the Jesuits.¹⁷ These convents “maintained their independence and autonomy from the *Provincias de la Orden* due of the specific aims they needed to meet” (148-149). After the creation of these schools, monks with missionary vocation should join one of them. In the case of Junípero Serra, he was included to Colegio de San Fernando de Mexico, founded in 1734, becoming the most recognized “fernandino.”

The creation of the school under the request of Fray Antonio Margil, prefect of *Propaganda Fide* missions in the West Indies in 1734, was not exempt from some controversy, as it was felt that there was no place for two schools in the same city, Mexico, where there was already the school of San Buenaventura. If we analyze deeply into the reasons why this school was dedicated to San Fernando—obviously Fernando III El Santo (the Saint) o Fernando III de Castilla (1199-1252)—we will understand the type of teaching that was intended to apply. It was this King who introduced the Franciscans in Castile as the Spanish Reconquest progressed to the point that he was a Franciscan Tertiary too and died wearing the Franciscan habit. His virtues were the faith and the strength and this aspect would protect him in

¹⁷ The brothers designated to substitute Jesuits in California were the following: Brother Junípero Serra, Brother Francisco Palou, Brother Juan Moran, Brother Antonio Martinez, Brother Juan Ignacio Gaston, Brother Fernando Parron, Brother Juan Sancho de la Torre, Brother Francisco Gomez y Brother Andres Villaumbrales. In Tepic, other five brothers joined them, originally from Sierra Gorda: Brother Jose Murguia, Brother Juan Ramos de Lora, Brother Juan Crespi, Brother Miguel de la Campa and Brother Fermin Lasuen.



both America and Spain. Fernando III embodied both the heroic and the holy side of the Spanish Catholic monarchy.

The Apostolic schools of *Propaganda Fide* were both training and religious centers. From this fact we can infer, as it is obvious, that they should have had excellent libraries, probably the best it could have been found in New Spain. They also enjoyed a large autonomy on the one side due to the distance to the Iberian Peninsula and on the other side due to the quaint features conferred by its missionary nature. At the end of 17th century there was a renovation of the Franciscan movement (fact that leads me to think that probably this could be one of the causes that makes Serra travel to America) that will have a special significance and acceptance in American continent. The center of the Franciscan movement reform will be the *Propaganda Fide* schools. Brother Junípero Serra considered the *Propaganda Fide* school of San Fernando his home, even beneath the missions he founded.

The sense of belonging to San Fernando school impressed a certain character, a connection feeling to a “special family.” Serra’s idea was magnifying Christianity, yes; magnifying the Franciscan ideal, yes but all these aspects should have an influence in the enlargement of his Apostolic School of San Fernando. He wrote in a letter to Father Rafael Verger on June 20th, 1771:

En fin si algún día ha de ser (como he ohído decir) el Colegio de San Fernando la corona de los colegios, me parece que ahora se le entra por la mejor ocasión. Y si no hemos de tener por ridículo, ni imposible, lo que aquellos venerables padres que formaron las leyes de nuestros colegios juzgaron hazedero, y el Santísimo Padre Innocencio Undécimo confirmó de que los colegios en las misiones puedan erigir conventos sujetos al Padre Guardián y Discretorio del colegio, y que de ellos, con el tiempo, se pueda formar provincia disponer las cosas para que ya no lo veamos nosotros, vean algún día nuestros sucesores la santa Provincia de California hija del Colegio de San Fernando. (*Escritos* II, 24-25)¹⁸

I would like to draw interest from the final part of the letter, which mentions: “nuestros sucesores la santa Provincia de California hija del Colegio de San Fernando” (our successors could see some day the Holy province of California, daughter of the School of San Fernando.) Is he having in mind the Jesuit Reduction Plan from Paraguay? Is he insinuating that the establishment of a theocracy it is possible in the new territories? Lastly, it is very significant that this hypothetical “Holy province of California” it is not neither a faith conquer, nor Franciscans conquer but the “daughter of the School of San Fernando.”

¹⁸ “Finally, if a certain day may happen (as I heard it would) the San Fernando school will become the crown jewel of all schools, I think that now it may be the best occasion. And if we may not consider it as being ridiculous or impossible, what these fathers, that initially founded the laws of our schools, thought it was righteous. The Most Blessed Father Innocencio Undécimo confirmed that the missions’ schools could establish convents subdued to the Father Guardian and the school’s Discretorio, and that over time, our successors could see some day the Holy province of California, daughter of the School of San Fernando.”



Junípero Serra and Jonathan Edwards were two characters that despite of their prominent differences of religious interpretation performed their doctrinal labor according to the theological principals that concerned the essence of the Franciscan Catholicism and the Calvinist Protestants. In both situations, a series of events conditioned their preaching labor. The missionary responsibility in America, it would be correspondent to the establishment of a determined religious model that it is represented by the missions; in the case of the Puritanism in America, the religious principles resulted from the reformed Calvinist theology can be developed down to its late consequences. In this sense, Edwards represents the same principles for the Protestantism, as Serra represents for Catholicism. In both situations the deep Christian faith shapes the missionary and/or the preaching essence: on the one side, based on the Franciscan precepts for the Spanish one and on the other side, based on Calvin's teachings for the New England one.

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