***Early Marianas Mission***

*University of Guam, Oct 2015*

Beginnings:

* SV’s first encounter with people in 1662 en route to the Philippines. Is it too much to say that SV immediately feel in love with the island and its people? In his view they had very little and were a forgotten people. “The Lord sent me to evangelize the poor,” he wrote to his superiors after his first contact with the people there.
* “Poor” because they had little of the material things of the world, they lived at the edge of the world, and had nothing (like precious minerals) to offer the Spanish in repayment for their efforts. But also “poor” because they lacked an understanding of Christ and the salvation offered them .
* Could they have been left to themselves and have been saved? Of course, and Jesuits who had already been sent to China and other parts of Asia would have recognized this. But SV and his companions were a bit more fundamentalistic in their theological understanding of salvation.
* Spain’s interest in the Marianas. It was clear that the islands had no precious minerals or other source of wealth. SV had to override the objections of the Governor of the Philippines by appealing to Maria Anna to begin the mission.

Early mission:

* SV came to bring salvation to these people, with the love and the peace that was supposed to be the hallmark of that salvation.
* He refused to accept a military guard because at first he regarded soldiers as incompatible with his mission of people. His companions were 31 lay volunteers, Filipinos and Mexican, chosen because of their skills (builder, backsmith, teacher, etc) and exemplary lives. Two, including Pedro Calungsod, were only twelve years old and chosen because of their good soprano voices. Ages ranged from 12 to 60. There were three muskets in all, but no cannon.
* Mission began in mutual good will and acceptance, with exchange of gifts at the welcome feast in Hagatna and a general desire to receive the priests (except for one or two hesitant voices).
* SV mission approach: work with children; forming line of children singing religious couplets on entering a village; instruction before baptism generally.

Early violent encounters:

* Aug 1668: Fr. Luis de Morales arrived from Saipan with a severe wound in his leg, received from a lance while administering baptism. Fr. Luis de Medina came in with face wounds received in Nisichan (village near Mangilao) on Guam. Mexican man and Filipino catechist killed off Tinian.
* July 1669: Catechist Lorenzo killed on his way to baptize a child in Anatahan.Jan 1670: Fr. Luis Medina and companion killed on Saipan.
* Clashes over cultural matters: fear that baptism was poisoning the children (already in danger of death)–although this was no longer a real issue on Guam after the first year or two.
* Other cultural conflicts: destruction of the skulls of ancestors (they were in fact not just objects of respect but objects of religious veneration used for divination)–yet this could have been handled a different way, as it had in China decades earlier. Likewise the destruction of the mens’ houses (urritaos).
* Mexican boy killed (July 1671) gathering wood; Spanish rounded up suspects, killing one by accident; siege on the presidium in Hagatna. Gradual build up of hostile feelings spiraled because of actions.
* Other cultural misunderstandings that inevitably broke out–eg, the later challenge of a Jesuit brother to a Chamorro man he publicly accused of cheating him (1674); the challenge of a Jesuit to a youth caught nightcrawling around the girls dorm; the insistence of a priest that a girl be married to one of the Filipinos rather than work in the urritaos house. These cultural conflicts probably had a cumulative effect on local people, though–“Enough is enough”: speech of Hurao (1671), Aguarin (1676).
* Possibly also the effects of inter-island rivalry between villages. “The friend of my enemy is my enemy.”

Escalation of Violence:

* After the early deaths, change of heart on the part of the mission. SV finally asked for military help to protect the mission, requesting 200 men to protect the mission. He might have been happy to die for the faith, but he didn’t want the mission to end in failure. He forbade his helpers to punish those who attacked them. He even released Hurao after the siege of Hagatna stockade.
* The first troops arrived three years after SV’s death, and Spanish governor appointed to take over authority. By 1675, then, the usual Spanish colonial apparatus was in place: troops to protect the missionaries and civil authority to enforce citizenship on people. Militia now under the authority of a governor rather than the Jesuits.
* Increase in number of military: 20 in 1675, 14 more the next year, 30 in 1678, 20-40 more in 1680.
* Spanish take offensive, with the troops sent to open the villages on Guam to missionaries, picking up those responsible for earlier killings and ensuring that people received the missionaries well. Later, troops retaliate whenever they are met with force in a village, even if no lives are lost. Some villages burned, and one or two village chiefs executed as a warning to others not to resist the troops. In all, about 30 offenders killed in years 1674-1680.
* Troops were mostly recruits picked up on shipboard, some heading for penal colony in the Philippines, inducted into service. They were untrained and unhappy–a disgrace to Spain, said one of the missionaries–and they took advantage of people–extorting possessions from islanders and chasing women. Two were killed by their own commander for crimes they committed against the people (probably rape of schoolgirls)
* Chamorro Christians (Ignatio Hineti, Antonio de Ayhi, Alonso So’on) marched with Spanish troops into villages. Chamorros responsible for killing resistors in these places. Matapang, eg, was killed by people of Rota and body sent to Spanish in 1680.
* Arrival of Jose Quiroga and Jose Saravia, new governor, coincided with the start of a peaceful era beginning in 1680.

Towns on Guam:

* The Spanish certainly encouraged the people from small hamlets to move into the larger villages, if only to be closer to the church. The Spanish exercised a certain push, as they rounded up people and moved them into town.
* But there was also a draw for local people. The attractions included titled positions of authority bestowed on Chamorro leaders, and land in town as well as the right to continue farming their land outside. Once islanders were assured they would not lose their land, they were more easily persuaded to move to town.
* Some of the people were reluctant to move at first, but by 1680 most of Guam had been settled into the seven large towns.
* Hagatna in 1680:

Villagers worked alongside Spanish troops to build new roads and improve mountain trails. The Spanish also initiated development programs to teach the townspeople new trades and to assist in the cultivation of their plots. Some people had begun planting corn besides the traditional root crops. Besides pigs, the Spanish had introduced other animals–sheep and goats, chickens, pigeons, geese and ducks. There were 30 head of cattle on the island and 7 horses, more for the use of the military than the farmers. European farm animals and crops were then just beginning to become an integral part of life in the Marianas.

Tobacco had become a favorite crop by this time and was quickly becoming the usual medium of exchange. One Jesuit wrote: “People have become so addicted to tobacco that men and women, boys and girls, walk around with pipes. In the past their only substitute for money was iron..., but now they value tobacco above all else, and tobacco has become the common currency with which one can buy and obtain anything.”

Cotton, too, was introduced as a crop about this time. Those older members of the militia, who had been selected for their skills, taught some of the islanders how to weave on a loom. Before long, weaving was passed on to others. “In a short time all learned the art,” wrote one Jesuit. Clothes had become fashionable in the eyes of the people on Guam, just as they eventually would to people all over the Pacific. It would not be long, the missionaries anticipated, before the last of the people in the Marianas were clothed.

Violence of 1684:

* Attack on the presidium while Quiroga was in the north with half the militia (70 men) to pacify those islands. Weapons smuggled in by 30 men during mass–attack on the Jesuits and military, several killed (2 SJs, 4 Spanish)..
* Spanish priest exhorted the others in the stockade to take up weapons and fight for the honor of God and the king (just what SV didn’t want to happen). Presumably they saw themselves as fighting for the survival of the mission.
* Quiroga and 70 troops were under assault on Saipan, forced into stockade, but emerged and fought their way to the shore where they sailed back to Guam. Quiroga lost half his troops and 2 Jesuits killed.
* At Quiroga’s return, the siege was ended and peace restored. Death toll: perhaps 80 lives in a single year, the most bloody year during this period. Half the 12 Jesuits killed during the entire period lost their lives that year.

Lessons Learned:

* The encounter that began in peace ended up in sporadic violence–not so much war as resentment that exploded into violence at times. Close to the type of thing that local people, not Europeans would call war. In other words, not a sustained conflict over months or years. Nature of warfare among Pacific peoples: posturing and expression of contempt, but stopped after one or two casualties.
* Misleading to call this “Chamorro vs Spanish” since the island population was so divided by that time. Many people in favor of the missionaries, and a number of the killing of those responsible for the early violence were carried out by Chamorros themselves. Ignacio Hineti and four others led companies of their people to support the mission. On the other hand, some of the soldiers married to local women deserted and fought on the other side.
* The 1684 uprising was the last major conflict of the period. When it ended, hostilities all but ceased in the islands, and people settled into the designated villages.
* The reduction of the northern islands was resumed in 1694 the people of Tinian and Gani were resettled on Guam. By 1699, nearly 2,000 people brought to Guam. But small community left on Saipan for some years.
* The so-called “war” was over, but the period of the real abuses was just beginning–when governors took advantage of the people and the soldiers for their own financial advantage.

Reckoning the Damage:

* The number of Chamorro deaths in battle reported in the Spanish accounts is 57, but there are probably about 110-120 Chamorro lives lost in hostilities over a 30-year period. This would average out to 4 a year throughout the entire period 1668-1699.
* The Spanish would have lost 12 Jesuits and 26 mission helpers, in addition to some soldiers throughout the same period. The death count for the Spanish party averaged out to about two a year.
* By comparison, a single epidemic in 1689, with colds, stomach aches, fever and diarrhea, claimed more than 166 lives before the end of the year. This is more than the number of Chamorro lives claimed during the hostilities with the Spanish throughout the entire 30-year period.
* The loss of life continued unabated during the time of “peace” on the island–1690-1710. Between 1698 and 1702–a peaceful period–there were an average of 240 births and 600 deaths a year, yielding a net loss of 1,800 people during these five years alone.
* It is clear that the depopulation of the Marianas during this period was due far more to epidemics spread by European ships than to the muskets and swords of the Spanish.
* Population loss: 40,000 to 4,000 in 42 years (1668-1710). Comparable to loss on Kosrae of 3,000 to 300 during the period 1850-1890 because of epidemics.

Conclusion:

* No doubt the mission started with the best of intentions, on both sides. But went bad and the cycle of hostility increased in force and frequency. We can and should study why (unless we want to embrace simple myths on all this).
* Clear loss of population due to disease (although the destruction of villages and crops, and the resettlement in towns certainly contributed to the loss). Cultural disruption was also severe–but let’s not call this “cultural extermination.” Continuity of the tradition (eg, emphasis on death customs) throughout the years as new cultural elements were adopted.
* Jesuit commitment to the small island group: number of Jesuits grew from 6 to 20 at highest (1690), and then dropped to 4 or 5 for most of the 18th century. Volunteers from all over Europe (Austria, Italy, Bohemia, Netherlands, Germany) came, encouraged by the hope of martyrdom. Seventy Jesuits in all over the course of a century–longest serving was Jacobo Chavarri, Italian brother pharmacist who spent 48 years in the islands.
* Gift of the faith did not come cheap, either for the those bringing it or those receiving it.