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**MISSIONARY EFFORTS AMONG THE TARAUMARA INDIANS**

**THESIS**

**Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate Division of  
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By  
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**MISSIONARY EFFORTS AMONG THE TARAHUMARA INDIANS**

APPROVED:  
(see original for signatures)

## PREFACE

I have been interested in the Tarahumara Indians for a number of years. In 1957, I went with my father on a tour of the construction of the Chihuahua al Pacifico Railroad, which crosses the Tarahumara country. Two years later, desiring to learn Spanish, I spent a summer helping with the construction of this railroad at the town of Cuiteco. It was during that summer that I became acquainted with the Paul Carlsons, Wycliffe Bible Translators, who are working with the Tarahumaras. From February to May of 1963 I lived in Samachique, in the middle of the Tarahumara country, learning Tarahumara and helping with the Carlsons' work in their absence. I was recently accepted as a member of the Wycliffe Bible Translators and hope to return to the Sierra Tarahumara.

The purpose of this thesis is to help people who work with the Tarahumaras to become acquainted with what has been done previously, both good and bad, and to impart a better understanding of the Indians. It is also an attempt to fill some of the many gaps which occur in Tarahumara history.

A great deal has already been written on the Jesuit work and only a summary is given here. The most difficult chapter to do research on was "Franciscans and Secularization." Very little information on this period is available unless a person can spend years in research. Perhaps the three most valuable places to do research on the Tarahumara history are the Bancroft Library at the University of California, the Latin American Collection at the University of Texas and the Parral Archives, which were recently microfilmed by the University of Arizona. Probably the most valuable source was lost when the Chihuahua City Archives burned a few years ago. Much of the research for this thesis was done in Spanish and I hold the responsibility for the translations.

A great many people have given invaluable help. My advisor, Dr. John McNeely, and many other teachers, missionaries and friends, both in the United States and Mexico, offered suggestions and contributed to the thesis. The authors of some of the works cited, such as Father Gerard Decorme, Campbell Pennington, Francisco Almada, I. Thord-Gray, José Carlos Chávez, Mrs. Paul Carlson and Ken Hilton all offered help and encouragement. Several members of my family contributed by printing the pictures and drawing the maps. Edwin Lent and John Mayner checked for English mistakes and Mrs. Dick Crawford patiently typed the thesis.

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## MISSIONARY EFFORTS AMONG THE TARAHUMARA INDIANS

### CHAPTER I

#### THE TARAHUMARAS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

As the Sierra Madre Occidental stretches down the western half of Mexico and enters the southwestern part of the State of Chihuahua, it becomes known as the Sierra Tarahumara. Forty-four thousand square kilometers of mountain peaks, mesas, rugged canyons, small valleys and high plains make up this region.<sup>1</sup> This is the home of the Tarahumara Indians. The Indians call themselves *Rarámuri*, a word that probably comes from *rara* (foot), *juma* (run) and *ri* (a participle).<sup>2</sup>

Ever since colonial times, two distinct ecological regions have been recognized in the Sierra Tarahumara and are known as the Tarahumara Alta and the Tarahumara Baja.<sup>3</sup> The larger of the two regions, the Tarahumara Alta, consists of the highlands. A number of its peaks rise above eight thousand feet and the Cerro de Mohinora in the southern part of the area reaches close to ten thousand feet.<sup>4</sup>

The mountains are covered mostly with a soft, easily weathered volcanic tuff which has resulted in many weird rock formations and caves. Heavy snows and temperatures well below zero are common during the winter. Abundant forest of pine, Douglas fir and oak cover the mountain slopes.<sup>5</sup>

Criss-crossing the Tarahumara Alta are hundreds of miles of deep rugged canyons, which make up the Tarahumara Baja. Several of these canyons approach the Grand Canyon of Arizona in size and awesomeness and at least one of them,

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco R. Almada, *Geografía del Estado de Chihuahua* (Chihuahua, 1945), 102. This includes the *municipios* of Guerrero, Temósachi, Ocampo, Uruáchic, Chínipas, Maguarichi, Guazapares, Urique, Satevo, Bocoyna, Belisario Domínguez, San Francisco de Borja, Batopilas, Morelos, Guadalupe y Clavo, Belleza, Nonoava and Olivos.

<sup>2</sup> All notes on the language come from the author's study of Tarahumara and K. Simón Hilton, *Tarahumara y Español* (México, 1954), unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup> Almada, *Geografía*, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Almada, *Geografía*, 56. Sources differ as to the heights of the peaks and waterfalls, and the depths of the canyons. Only approximations are given here.

<sup>5</sup> Wendell C. Bennett and Robert M. Zingg, *The Tarahumara* (Chicago, 1935), 3-4, 48.



the Barranco del Urique, is reported to be six thousand feet deep.<sup>6</sup> The first white man to visit the canyon was the Jesuit priest, Father Juan Salvatierra, in 1684. Along with an Indian chief, he approached the canyon on horseback. He later said:

On discovering the precipices, such was my terror that I immediately asked the governor if it was time to dismount, and without waiting a reply, I did not dismount, but let myself fall off on the side opposite the precipice, sweating and trembling all over with fright; since there opened on the left, a chasm whose bottom could not be seen and on the right, some perpendicular walls of solid rock. In front was a drop of four leagues, at least, not a gradual slope but violent and steep, and the trail, so narrow that at times it is necessary to travel by jumps, for not having a place in between to put your feet.<sup>7</sup>

The vegetation in the bottom of the canyons is semi-tropical. Parrots<sup>8</sup> as well as the anopheles mosquito<sup>9</sup> are sometimes seen. "In these places the traveler begins to sweat from 7 in the morning, even in winter, and can at the same time contemplate along the edges of the high mountains the whiteness of snow."<sup>10</sup>

The Spaniard early began to dig into mineral wealth of this region and silver, gold, copper and other minerals have been found in abundance. The most famous of the mines, Batopilas, has produced native silver for nearly two hundred fifty years.<sup>11</sup>

Most of the mineral wealth is found in the canyons which form the spillways for the numerous rivers which drain the area. The Urique River with its various tributaries joins the Chínipas River to form the Río Fuerte. This, along with the Mayo and Yaqui rivers, winds its way across the flat plains of Sinaloa and empties into the Gulf of Lower California. On the other side of the continental divide, the San Pedro and Florida rivers combine with the Río Conchos before emptying into the Río Grande.<sup>12</sup> The rivers run to capacity during the rainy season, which comes between July and September, and the few roads

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<sup>6</sup> Campbell White Pennington, "The Material Culture of the Tarahumar and their Environment." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1959), 71.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Javier Alegre, S.J., Historia del la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España (Rome, 1959), IV, 67-68.

<sup>8</sup> Francisco del Paso y Trancoso, Relaciones del Siglo XVIII Relativas a Chihuahua (México, 1930), I, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Bennett and Zingg, The Tarahumara, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Francisco M. Plancarte, El Problema Indígena Tarahumara ("Memorias del Instituto Nacional Indigenista", V; México 1954), 14.

<sup>11</sup> Bennett and Zingg, The Tarahumara, 7-8, and Almada, Geografía, 297.

<sup>12</sup> Bennett and Zingg, The Tarahumara, 6-8, and Plancarte, El Problema Indígena Tarahumara, 14.

which today reach into the mountains are often impassable during this time.<sup>13</sup> The ninth largest waterfall in the world, the Cascada de Basaseáchic, is found in the *municipio* of Ocampo, with a continuous drop of about one thousand feet.<sup>14</sup>

It is in this rugged, inhospitable land that the Tarahumara Indians live. Archeological reports suggest that they have been in western Chihuahua for two thousand years, since the most ancient findings are similar to those of the Basketmaker Culture.<sup>15</sup> When the Spaniards first came to northern Mexico, the Tarahumaras lived further out on the high plains and valleys toward Chihuahua City and Parral, where farm land was more fertile and in more abundance. Gradually, with the constant pressure of the Spaniard and other Indians, they drew back into the rugged mountains and canyons, where their cave-dwelling type of life has remained practically unchanged down to the present day.<sup>16</sup>

Since the seventeenth century, the number of Tarahumaras has remained fairly constant<sup>17</sup> and today the population is approximately forty-four thousand.<sup>18</sup> Seldom do they live in towns but rather in scattered family groups and all attempts to draw them into communities have been strongly resisted.<sup>19</sup> Many of the Tarahumaras are semi-nomadic, leaving their crude log cabins and caves in the high mountains and moving down into the warm canyons when winter is approaching.<sup>20</sup>

Another reason for the semi nomadic way of life is the soil, which is shallow, stony and of spotty distribution. The Indians maintain themselves on a corn-pumpkin-bean agriculture and each family will usually have a small herd of goats (and sheep) to provide wool and manure and perhaps a couple of cows for plowing.<sup>21</sup> Corn makes up the bulk of the diet and it is from corn that *tesgüino*, a type of corn liquor, is frequently made and drunk by the Indians.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Plancarte, *El Problema Indígena Tarahumara*, 11, and Pennington, "The Material Culture of the Tarahumar", 63-69.

<sup>14</sup> Almada, *Geografía*, 72.

<sup>15</sup> Bennett and Zingg, *The Tarahumara*, 356-359.

<sup>16</sup> Pennington, "The Material Culture of the Tarahumar", 4, 62, and Bennett and Zingg, *The Tarahumara*, 357.

<sup>17</sup> Pennington, "The Material Culture of the Tarahumar", 59-61.

<sup>18</sup> Plancarte, *El Problema Indígena Tarahumara*, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Pennington, "The Material Culture of the Tarahumar", 42, and Bennett and Zingg, *The Tarahumara*, 355-356.

<sup>20</sup> Plancarte, *El Problema Indígena Tarahumara*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Bennett and Zingg, *The Tarahumara*, 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 28, 45-47.

The lack of an adequate diet and harshness of the climate combine to create many illnesses, especially at an early age.<sup>23</sup> Only within the last few years has modern medicine made an impact at all in the Sierra and one of the Tarahumara leaders, who had felt its influence, said that "he didn't know how they lived before they had medicine and that many more used to die."<sup>24</sup>

Those who live to manhood and are able to keep healthy develop a tremendous endurance, which is famous in many parts of the world. A race where a wooden ball is scooped up on the top of the foot and slung while running almost at full speed, will sometimes last two days and nights.<sup>25</sup> Varied accounts credit the Tarahumara with running down deer and other animals.<sup>26</sup> The Indians told the author that when López Mateos was inaugurated as President of Mexico, a group of Tarahumara men ran from Guachochi to Mexico City in four days and nights.<sup>27</sup> A truck from the National Indian Institute went along with the runners, allowing them to alternate running and riding every twenty five kilometers.<sup>28</sup> Only one outsider, the legendary Jesuit priest Herman Glandorff, who died at Tomóchic in 1763, was ever reported to have kept up with the fleet-footed Indians.<sup>29</sup>

Few people have lived with the Tarahumara and become a part of their culture. Most people know of them only from watching them stoically walk along the streets of Chihuahua City or Juárez, looking for work or begging for food. The Archbishop of Chihuahua, Dr. Antonio Guízar y Valencia, explains, however, that the Tarahumara does not beg in the sense that begging is usually thought of. When he uses the word *córima*, he is saying "Give me something because you have and I do not."<sup>30</sup> Their stoic attitude is only what is presented to the outsider or *chabochi*, as the Tarahumaras call him.

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<sup>23</sup> Plancarte, El Problema Indígena Tarahumara, 69 -73.

<sup>24</sup> Donald H. Burgess, Personal Diary, February 22, 1963.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with an unknown Tarahumara Indian, May 3, 1963, and Plancarte, El Problema Indígena Tarahumara, 53-54, and El Herald (Chihuahua), August 7, 1960, 5-B.

<sup>26</sup> Carl Lumholtz, Unknown Mexico (New York, 1902), 282, and Peter Masten Dunne, S. J., Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara (Berkeley, 1948), 4-5, and Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka, In the Land of Cave and Cliff Dwellers (New York, 1893), 238-240, 382.

<sup>27</sup> Burgess, Personal Diary, February 26, 1963.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Paul Carlson, Associate Director of Mexican Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, November 4, 1963.

<sup>29</sup> Herbert Eugene Bolton, The Rim of Christendom, (New York, 1960), 22.

<sup>30</sup> El Herald (Chihuahua), August 6, 1960, 5-B.

Photo 1. Tarahumaras in Chihuahua City.

When by themselves, walking along a mountain trail, the stoicism disappears and there is almost an incessant flow of musical-sounding language, frequently broken by laughter.<sup>31</sup> It is interesting that the word *chabochi* not only refers to an outsider, but also to a yellow spider. A similar word, *chaboa*, means whiskers, which along with *chabochi*, perhaps gives a hint as to what the Indians think of outsiders.

Linguistically, the Tarahumaras belong to the Uto-Aztecan<sup>32</sup> group, and several related tribes border the Tarahumara. Near Guadalupe y Calvo in the south live four thousand Tepehuán Indians. To the northwest, in the region of Uruachi, Moris and Chínipas live 1500 Guarojios. Around five hundred Pima Indians are in the area of Guerrero and Ocampo.<sup>33</sup> Formerly, there were other tribes inhabiting the surrounding areas.<sup>34</sup>

Within the scattered Tarahumara tribe there are dialectical and cultural differences which caused the early Jesuit missionaries to consider the areas around Batopililla, Cuiteco, Pamáchic and Samachique as distinct *naciones*.<sup>35</sup>

This, then, is the Tarahumara Indian and his rugged homeland that the missionary has encountered for more than three hundred years. In proportion to the amount of missionary effort that has been concentrated on the Sierra Tarahumara, the visible results have been few. The story, however, of the missionaries' struggle against insurmountable difficulties constitutes one of the most thrilling chapters in North American history.

Not only was the early struggle against the physical environment and the rebellious Tarahumara, but against a disintegrating Spanish Empire and an emerging new republic as well, to say nothing of the marauding Apache Indians. Today the country has become stable and the Tarahumara peaceful, but the physical environment and the reclusion of the Tarahumara still present tremendous obstacles to the missionaries.

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<sup>31</sup> Burgess, Personal Diary, April 3, 1963.

<sup>32</sup> Alfred Louis Kroeber, Uto- Aztecan Languages of Mexico (Berkeley, 1934), 16.

<sup>33</sup> Plancarte, El Problema Indígena Tarahumara, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Pennington, "The Material Culture of the Tarahumar", 1.

<sup>35</sup> Pennington, "The Material Culture of the Tarahumar", 2.

map #2 Land of the Tarahumara

## CHAPTER II

### JESUIT MISSIONS

The earliest missionary work among the Tarahumara Indians was carried on by the Society of Jesus, noted pioneers and scholars of the Catholic Church. They suffered untold hardships and finally, when their missions began to prosper, circumstances in Spain suddenly caused the whole Jesuit system in the New World to be abandoned.

The struggle started in 1607.<sup>36</sup> The Jesuits, already having made *entradas* into the Tepehuán tribe, began to look toward the bordering Tarahumaras. The initial thrust was made by Father Juan Fonte, whose purpose was not only to spread Christianity, but also to stop the warfare that existed between these two tribes. His efforts were suddenly cut short when he was killed in the "Tepehuán Revolt"<sup>37</sup> in 1616.

A new foothold for the Jesuits was provided with the founding of the mines of Parral, about 1630,<sup>38</sup> and soon work among the Tarahumaras was undertaken in earnest. The years that followed, however, were filled with revolts and disappointments. There was even an outbreak of wizardry, such as was going on in New England at precisely the same time.<sup>39</sup> The Indians had been misused by the Spanish miners and farmers. Attempts of forced labor in mines within the Sierra Madre Occidental were partially the cause of some of the revolts.<sup>40</sup> It is reported that one miner used five Tarahumara slaves in his refinery in 1649.<sup>41</sup> In the Parral mining and farming area, however, there is little evidence of the Tarahumaras being misused. "The influence of the Jesuits and the fear of uprisings may have been sufficient reason for a policy of caution."<sup>42</sup>

The missionaries themselves made many mistakes. The Jesuit policy had been to move the Indians into centers where working with them would be an easier task and could be done on a more permanent basis. Among the scattered,

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<sup>36</sup> Dunne, Early Jesuit Missions, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>38</sup> Almada, Resumen de Historia del Estado de Chihuahua (México, D.F., 1955), 56-57.

<sup>39</sup> Bolton, The Rim of Christendom, 21, and Dunne, Early Jesuit Missions, 195.

<sup>40</sup> Robert C. West, The Mining Community in Northern New Spain: the Parral Mining District (Berkeley 1959), 117.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

semi-nomadic Tarahumaras this policy was a failure from the beginning.<sup>43</sup> Many of the black robes were killed. Others were driven out, but returned again and again. The fact that so many of them had been martyred only added to the determination of those who took their places.

Only part of the Tarahumara tribe was ever rebellious, but those who showed interest in Christianity often gave the priest more cause for anxiety than those who rebelled. Father Joseph Neumann, of the Sisoguichic Mission, wrote:

We find little eagerness among our new converts who prepare for baptism. Indeed some only pretend to believe, showing no inclination for spiritual things, such as prayers, divine services, and Christian doctrine. They show rather a lazy indifference to everything good, unlimited sensual desire, an irresistible habit of getting drunk, and stubborn silence in regard to hidden pagans, and so we cannot find them and bring them into the fold of Christ.<sup>44</sup>

Because of this, many of the missionaries became discouraged and some even asked to be sent to other areas.<sup>45</sup> Thus, these early missionaries were reflecting a feeling which would plague missionary efforts among the Tarahumara to this present day.

Father Neuman was one, however, who remained strong and had the unusual insight into problems facing him. In 1682 he wrote:

It is not sublime theology or subtlety of knowledge in any of the other sciences that is needed in the work of instilling Christian doctrine into these people. There is need only of the gentleness of the lamb in directing them; of invincible patience in bearing with them; and, finally, of Christian humility, which enables you to become all things to all men, to disdain no one, to perform without shrinking the meanest task....<sup>46</sup>

While Father Neumann was still active, during the first part of the eighteenth century, the missions began to prosper. By 1763, when the Bishop of Durango, Don Pedro Tamarón y Romeral, made his second visit to the missions, the priests

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<sup>43</sup> Bolton, The Rim of Christendom, 22.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Joseph Neumann, Jesuit priest, July 29, 1686, quoted in Dunne, Early Jesuit Missions, 149.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Neumann, February 20, 1682, quoted in Dunne, Early Jesuit Missions, 151.



were serving fifteen missions and fifty pueblos in the Tarahumara Alta.<sup>47</sup> At least eighteen priests, serving many missions, were reported by 1767.<sup>48</sup>

Not only had the black robes learned many lessons, but Spain, in an effort to hold its empire together, had sent word "to all governors, captains, judges, and officials of the provinces,"<sup>49</sup> that no cause for rebellion should be given to the Indians, so that money formerly used in subduing the Indians could be used elsewhere. A new Indian policy developed from this. When a Tarahumara left a pueblo, he was no longer pursued or considered a rebel, thus eliminating one of the main causes of the rebellions.<sup>50</sup>

This time of peace and prosperity among the Tarahumara missions, however, was only the lull before a storm that would leave the entire Jesuit system in both North and South America abandoned.

On June 24, 1767, the Viceroy of Mexico, the Marqués de Croix, opened an order from the King of Spain, Carlos III, and read:

I invest you with my whole authority and royal power that you shall forthwith repair with an armed force to the house of the Jesuits. You will seize the persons of all of them, and dispatch them within twenty-four hours as prisoners to the port of Vera Cruz, where they will be embarked on vessels, provided for that purpose. At the very moment of each arrest you will cause to be sealed the records of said houses, and papers of said persons, without allowing them to remove anything but their prayer books and such garments as are absolutely needed for the journey. If after the embarkation there should be found in that district a single Jesuit, even if ill or dying, you shall suffer the penalty of death. I the King.<sup>51</sup>

The message was sent throughout Mexico and in Chihuahua, Don Lope de Cuéllar, the Governor of Nueva Vizcaya, had the unhappy task of assembling the Jesuits of the Sierra Tarahumara and sending them south.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Pedro Tamarón y Romeral, *Demonstración del Vatísimo Obispado de Nueva Vizcaya*, 1765, cited in Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of the North Mexican States and Texas* (San Francisco, 1886), I, 588.

<sup>48</sup> Antonio Sterkianowski, *Destierro de los Jesuitos Misioneros*, MS, and Rafael de Zelis, *Catálogo de los Sujetos de la Compañía de Jesús que Formaban la Provincia de México el Día del Arresto, 25 de Junio de 1767*, both cited in Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions*, 255.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Neumann, *Historia Seditioum*, April 15, 1724, quoted in Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions*, 191-193.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Order of Carlos III, King of Spain, quoted in Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, (San Francisco, 1883), III, 438.

<sup>52</sup> Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions*, 231.

Antonio Sterkianowski, a Polish priest who was among those expelled from the Tarahumara missions, left an account of the removal. In reflecting back on the situation, he said that it was quiet and without incident. The fathers had always insisted to the Indians that "they keep the peace and render obedience to the King of Spain,"<sup>53</sup> and now, with the opportunity to set a supreme example for the Indians, the priests could do no less.

The Jesuits were gone from the Sierra Tarahumara for one hundred thirty years. King Fernando VII of Spain had authorized the return of the Jesuits to the New World on May 20, 1815, and General Antonio López de Santa Ana, the Dictator of Mexico, issued decrees in 1843 and 1856 stating that the Jesuits could reestablish their work in Northern Mexico among the Indians.<sup>54</sup> Because of lack of personnel and revolutionary disorders, however, it was not until September 9, 1900, that definite action was taken by the Jesuits. On that date in Saltillo, Coahuila, Father Antonio Arocena was appointed as Superior of the missions to be reestablished. Fathers José Vargas and Pablo Louvet along with Brother Nicasio Gogorza were to accompany him.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Sterkianowski, *Destierro de los Jesuitos Misioneros*, quoted in Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions*, 232.

<sup>54</sup> Almada, *Apuntes Históricas de la Región de Chinipas* (Chihuahua, 1937), 186-187, and Ocampo, *Historia de la Misión*, XV-XVI, and José Arlegui, *Cronica de la Provincia de N.S.P.S. Francisco de Zacatecas* (México, 1851), 427.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from José Alzola, S. J. to Antonio Arocena, S. J., September 9, 1900, quoted in Manuel Ocampo, *Historia de la Misión de la Tarahumara* (México, no date), xvi.

(photo 2) Catholic Church in Temoris

As to the purpose of the new mission it was stated:

The purpose of the mission is the same that the first Priests of this province proposed when they went to announce the Gospel to those people: to bring them to the knowledge of God Our Lord and to the refuge of the Catholic Church.

As they begin to establish themselves in towns in which families of white or of a mixed race reside, they will use great prudence and tact in relations with them, procuring their good spirit, strengthening them in order to eradicate vice, to avoid illicit relations and to try to establish life among them with the frequent offerings of the sacraments.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, work among the Tarahumaras was again begun in earnest. It grew until in 1955 a reported thirty-five priests and forty-four religious workers were educating fifteen hundred Indians in six schools.<sup>57</sup> Modern methods of teachings, such as the use of recordings and the radio, were being used.<sup>58</sup> In Sisoguichic, there is a hospital. New churches are being built and some of the old ones, such as the one at Gueguachique<sup>59</sup> are being rebuilt. The Jesuits have written a number of works on the Tarahumara language since their return. Among these is a Tarahumara-Castilian dictionary compiled by Father José Ferrero in 1924.<sup>60</sup> Father David Brambila has written a large grammar called Gramática Rarámuri,<sup>61</sup> and has been in the process of compiling an extensive dictionary. The Jesuits also plan to translate the four Gospels into Tarahumara.<sup>62</sup>

On the fiftieth anniversary of the reopening of the Jesuit work with Misión Tarahumara, as the Jesuit work is called, gained its independence. A decree of the Congregación Consistorial of Rome made the mission independent of the Diocese of Chihuahua, of which it has been a part of since 1900.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the many advances made by the Jesuits, much of their work is still in the pioneer stages. There is a large number of gentile Tarahumaras, as the Christian Indians call them, who still reject outsiders and will have nothing to do with Christianity.<sup>64</sup> In some areas the only evidences of Catholic influence are in

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<sup>56</sup> Letter from Alzola to Arocena, quoted in Ocampo, Historia de la Misión, xvi.

<sup>57</sup> Ocampo, Historia de la Misión, 111-112.

<sup>58</sup> Burgess, Personal Diary, June 24, 1959.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., March 3, 1963.

<sup>60</sup> José Ferrero, S. J., Diccionario Tarahumar-Castellano (México, 1924).

<sup>61</sup> David Brambila, S. J., Gramática Rarámuri (México, 1953).

<sup>62</sup> Burgess, Personal Diary, March 3, 1963.

<sup>63</sup> Almada, Resumen de Historia, 362.

<sup>64</sup> Filberto Gómez González, Rarámuri: Mi Diario Tarahumara (México, 1948), xiii, and La Raza Tarahumara. Investigación Realizada Por el Departamento del Trabajo (México, 1936), 115.

the festivals and dances where they have been mixed in with the pagan rites of the Indians. Many of the missions can be reached only by horseback or walking. Father Infante Díaz, of Norogáchic, who lived in the Sierra for eight years, has such a large area to cover that he can visit some of his mission points not more than once a month.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Burgess, Personal Diary, March 3, 1963.

## CHAPTER III

### FRANCISCAN EFFORTS AND SECULARIZATION

While the Jesuits were gone from the Sierra Tarahumara between 1767 and 1900, the missions were not completely abandoned, but only disintegration could be expected. The missionaries who took the Jesuits' place knew almost nothing of the Tarahumara language. Apache raids kept everything in an unsettled state. The Spanish Empire was struggling to hold itself together and when the Mexican Republic emerged, revolutionary governments did not have much time for isolated Indian groups.

The Jesuits had scarcely been expelled when arrangements were made for other missionaries to take over the Tarahumara missions. The Viceroy, who was the King's direct representative as the civil head of the church, said in his instructions to Captain Cuellar:

.....you will advise the most illustrious Bishop of Durango, whom I will have forewarned, so that he will begin to send secular priests to the missions that the Jesuits left, and also you will write the commissioner of the Zacatecas in order that he carry out according to my orders, the sending of some missionaries of the College of *Propaganda Fide* that there is in that city of the Order of Saint Francis.<sup>66</sup>

Soon, fifteen Franciscan friars from the *Colegio de Propaganda Fide de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas*<sup>67</sup> and nine secular clergy from Durango<sup>68</sup> were headed toward the Tarahumara missions. Because of the shorter distance, those from Durango arrived first. By this time, however, things had apparently changed and by order of the Viceroy, Captain Lope de Cuellar removed the secular clergy, leaving the missions to the Franciscans,<sup>69</sup> whose vicar had visited the Tarahumara missions several years before.<sup>70</sup> This must have greatly chagrined the Bishop of Durango, Don Pedro Tamarón y Romeral, who

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<sup>66</sup> Instructions of Viceroy to Captain Cuellar, quoted in Almada, *La Región de Chínipas*, 184.

<sup>67</sup> Bancroft, *North Mexican States*, I, 654, and Almada, *La Región de Chínipas*, 188.

<sup>68</sup> Almada, *La Región de Chínipas*, 188.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, and Almada, *Resumen de Historia*, 118-120, and Fray José Antonio Alcocer, O. F. M. *Bosquejo de la Historia del Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y sus Misiones*, 1788 (México, 1958), 147.

<sup>70</sup> Silvestre Terrazas, *Apuntas Históricas* (Chihuahua, 1909), 6.

had recently made two trips through the Sierra Tarahumara himself<sup>71</sup>, and had already secularized some of the missions of the Tarahumara Baja.<sup>72</sup> The Viceroy's action did not destroy his hopes, however, and the next year he took a number of his secular clergy to the state of Sinaloa, from where he planned to send them to the Tarahumara missions which were still vacant. The Viceroy again put a stop to his plans.<sup>73</sup>

When the Franciscans arrived and began to look over their missions, they found many of the temporalities missing. Lope de Cuellar had made an inventory of the missions and had taken up many of the belongings, which were placed under the care of the Administration of Temporalities.<sup>74</sup> Cows, pigs, sheep, mules, household goods and church ornaments were among the things taken.<sup>75</sup> Besides, people living near the unprotected missions must have undoubtedly taken many things.

The friars quickly complained about the things taken but were unwilling to take charge of the temporalities themselves. One of the things that had led to the expulsion of the Jesuits had been resentment over their owning so much land and the rumored material prosperity of their missions.<sup>76</sup> Apparently the Franciscans wanted to avoid anything similar. This was in spite of the fact that the friars received only three hundred to three hundred fifty pesos a month. Don Lope de Cuellar said that this was not enough to take care of costs and he suggested that the Indians raise foodstuffs to help pay for the mission work.<sup>77</sup>

This attitude of the Franciscans can be better understood by looking at the parallel situation in Texas, which certainly must have influenced the Sierra Tarahumara. In 1767, the College of Querétaro had taken over the missions in the Pimería Alta and Baja in Sonora, leaving their missions in Texas to the Franciscans from Zacatecas.<sup>78</sup> Before long, the Franciscans were accused of personal gain in the temporal administration of the missions. Because of this, in

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<sup>71</sup> Pedro Tamarón y Romeral, Demostación del Vastísimo Obispado de Nueva Viscaya, 1765 (México, 1937), 1, and Eleanor B. Adams, ed., Bishop Tamarón's Visitation of New Mexico, 1760 (Albuquerque, 1954), 1.

<sup>72</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, I, 587, 588.

<sup>73</sup> Almada, La Región de Chínipas, 188-189.

<sup>74</sup> Francisco Antonio Carrillo, A Report by the Administrator of Temporalities, March 14, 1778, as quoted in Almada, Resumen de Historia, 118-119.

<sup>75</sup> As quoted in Almada, La Region de Chínipas, 181-191.

<sup>76</sup> Javier Alegre, Memorias Para la Historia de la Provincia que tuvo la Compañía de Jesús en Nueva España (México, 1940), II, 206.

<sup>77</sup> Alcocer, Bosquejo de la Historia del Colegio, 159.

<sup>78</sup> Carlos E. Castañeda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936 (Austin, 1942), V, 25-26, and Frederick C. Chabot, Indians and Missions (San Antonio, 1930), 25, and Bolton, Guide to Materials for the History of the U.S. in the Principal Archives of Mexico (Washington, 1913), 394.

1780, the Senior Council of the College of Guadalupe of Zacatecas sent a petition to the Commandant General of the Internal Provinces, Teodoro de Croix, asking to be relieved of the administration of these temporalities, "a task alien to their ministry."<sup>79</sup> They asked that property and other temporalities be divided among the Indians, keeping only the churches, priest's quarters and things necessary for spiritual administration. Some of these Texas friars eventually found their way to the Sierra Tarahumara.<sup>80</sup>

The complaints about the missing temporalities did not go unheeded, but many years passed before things were settled. The Viceroy had ordered that the goods be returned in 1768, but even then many of the things taken could not be accounted for.<sup>81</sup> By 1778, a great number of the missions had been deprived of lands by nobles and some were never returned.<sup>82</sup>

In that same year, the action taken by Lope de Cuéllar of taking up the temporalities, came under strong criticism by the Administrator of Temporalities, Francisco Antonio Carrillo. In a report to the Junta Municipal of Chihuahua, he said that Lope de Cuéllar "should have made it known to the superior government of his Excellency, the Viceroy, that all the goods of said missions were property of the natives and should not have taken one thing from them."<sup>83</sup> If the few difficulties, he went on to say, that presented themselves at first could have been resolved, the Indians would have been freed from the oppression that they had suffered for so many years and much money would have been saved the Royal Treasury. He declared that his Majesty preferred the well-being of the twelve missions above everything else.

Because of those difficulties and outside pressures, the Franciscans were gradually forced to take a more active part in the handling of the temporalities. Cattle were sent to the mission from the plains of Chihuahua, but they did not do very well in the mountains. Some of the missions began to raise grain and other crops, and the Indians were induced to plant a little corn and beans.<sup>84</sup> It was not until 1794, however, that the matter was reasonably solved. The Visitor General, the Conde de Gálvez, had asked for restitution and the matter was finally settled

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<sup>79</sup> Casteñeda, Our Catholic Heritage, 25-26.

<sup>80</sup> Letter of the Viceroy concerning the transference of three Texas missionaries to Tarahumara, June 9, 1779, as cited in Bolton, Guide, 397.

<sup>81</sup> Almada, La Región de Chínipas, 232.

<sup>82</sup> Almada, Resumen de Historia, 118.

<sup>83</sup> Carrillo, A Report, as quoted in Almada, Resumen de Historia, 119.

<sup>84</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, I, 654, and Alcocer, Bosquejo de la Historia del Colegio, 160, and Paso y Trancoso, Relaciones, II, 36.



before the Junta de Enajenaciones of Mexico.<sup>85</sup> As the years went by, nevertheless, the missions did not advance much in becoming self-sufficient. The stipend which the Spanish government had been paying the friars was suspended after Mexico gained its independence.<sup>86</sup> As late as 1830, governors of Chihuahua were giving economic aid to the friars in order that the work might continue.<sup>87</sup>

Even though there was a lack of material prosperity, mission life was carried on as usual. Masses and *doctrinas* were held throughout the week. Native officials were appointed in each establishment,<sup>88</sup> as the Jesuits had done.<sup>89</sup> There seemed to be little response, however, from the Indians. Most of them wandered in the mountains, free from any control. One friar wrote: "The Great Shepherd can perhaps leave his ninety-nine sheep to search for that one that is lost; but we cannot do it, else we should lose both."<sup>90</sup> This attitude, however, was perhaps one reason the missions were not more successful. It must be noted that the "Great Shepherd" left the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness, in order to find the one lost sheep, and that he said, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinful person who repents than over ninety-nine upright people who do not need any repentance."<sup>91</sup>

The Franciscans were able to keep the missions going but it was inevitable that there should be a decrease in the mission population during the years immediately following the Jesuit expulsion. The areas around the missions of Huehuachi, Samechi, Pamachi and Guagusivo, for example, boasted a population of 1,518 in 1763, but by 1786 it had dropped to 1,115.<sup>92</sup> Today the spelling of these places has changed to Guaguachique, Samachique, Pamáchic and Guaguebo.

The decrease in population and many of the other difficulties that the friars faced were not helped by the lack of communication that there must have been between the two nationalities during those early years.<sup>93</sup> Few of the Tarahumaras could speak Spanish with any fluency, which is true even today, and it must have taken the Franciscans several years to learn Tarahumara. The Franciscans, however, probably had access to the writings of Tomás de Guadalupe, which

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<sup>85</sup> Almada, *La Región de Chínipas*, 232, and Bancroft, *North Mexican States*, I, 656.

<sup>86</sup> Almada, *Geografía*, 109.

<sup>87</sup> Almada, *Gobernadores del Estado de Chihuahua* (México, 1950), 13, and Almada, *Resumen de Historia*, 193.

<sup>88</sup> Bancroft, *North Mexican States*, I, 655.

<sup>89</sup> Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions*, 193-195.

<sup>90</sup> As quoted in Bancroft, *North Mexican States*, I, 655.

<sup>91</sup> Luke 15:7, William's Translation.

<sup>92</sup> As quoted in Bancroft, *North Mexican States*, I, 655.

<sup>93</sup> Gerard Decorme, S.J., *La Obra de los Jesuitas Mexicanos* (México, 1941), I, 491-492.

must have greatly helped them. Father Guadalajara was the Jesuit priest who is considered the founder of the Tarahumara Alta. Before his death in 1720, he wrote what he called A Grammar, Dictionary and General Treatise on the Tarahumar, Guazapar, and Cognate Languages.<sup>94</sup>

The government, of course, was interested in the Indians learning Spanish and becoming a part of the Spanish culture, so the friars were ordered to teach the Indians Spanish.<sup>95</sup> For many of the friars, struggling to learn Tarahumara, this must have seemed the easiest way out. In the long run, however, this has not proven true. The more effective way has been to teach the Indians how to read and write in their own language and then teach them Spanish.<sup>96</sup> For the Franciscans, struggling to keep the missions together, this took time. In fact, only in recent years has this theory been put into large scale practice in Mexico.<sup>97</sup>

Eventually a number of friars became proficient in the language and published works on Tarahumara. A German- Tarahumara dictionary, Tarahumarisches Wörterbuch, was compiled by Friar Matthaues Steffel, which was published in 1809. The head of the Tarahumara missions, Miguel Tellechea, wrote a short grammar in 1826 called Compendio Gramatical para la Inteligencia del Idioma Tarahumaro. This work was published again in 1900 for the use of the returning Jesuits. Friar Tellechea encouraged his colleagues to learn the language well by saying:

Have much care in learning not only the words and terms, but also the accent and good pronunciation of them, upon which especially depends the understanding of this language. I want, finally, to give my understanding and skill of the said language to all the priests, my brothers, because they (without doubt better than I) could gather by such a means the most abundant fruits of the Lord's vineyard.<sup>98</sup>

Carl Lumholtz, who spent more than a year exploring in the Sierra Tarahumara during the 1890's adds emphasis to the importance of knowing the language. He says that the Tarahumaras were so impressed when someone learned their language that they were often easily cheated and he wrote:

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<sup>94</sup> Dunne, Early Jesuit Missions, 200, Alegre, Memorias, II, 154.

<sup>95</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, I, 656.

<sup>96</sup> Memorias del Instituto Nacional Indigenista, V, 96, and VI, 254-255.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., VI, 254-255.

<sup>98</sup> Miguel Tellechea, Compendio Gramatical para la Inteligencia del Idioma Tarahumaro (Puebla, 1900), 68-69.

When I expressed my surprise at the ease with which he allowed himself to be swindled, he replied that the Mexican "spoke so well." They are so delighted at hearing their language spoken by a white man that they lose all precaution and are completely at the mercy of the wily whites, who profit by their weakness.<sup>99</sup>

As the years went by, the missions changed hands several times. Sr. Tamarón y Romeral's wishes were finally fulfilled and the regular clergy were replaced by secular clergy. This seemed to be the normal process in developing an area. The Catholic historian, Carlos E. Castañeda, says:

Missionaries, members of the religious Orders, have been and always will be the pioneers who enter new fields before a regularly constituted ecclesiastical jurisdiction can be set up. But as soon as a new diocese is erected it then becomes a duty of the prelate to develop a diocesan clergy to carry on and spread the work.<sup>100</sup>

Usually, the wealth accumulated over the years was distributed among the Indians while the church, priests' quarters and things that pertained directly to them, were turned over to the newly appointed parish priest. "The mission as such disappeared, and a new self-supporting community came into being."<sup>101</sup>

The process of how this came about, however, sometimes involved many difficulties. Lay neighbors often looked at it as an opportunity to grab lands or exploit Indian labor.<sup>102</sup> The secular priests were often without experience and their dedication was not always as great as the regular clergy. Often the missions were in a deplorable state even before the secular clergy took over. The Viceroy, Revilla Gígedo, said in 1793:

Pitiable is the state of those which were put in charge of secular priests, since most of them are without ministers, and those serving are doing so ad interim against their will, repeatedly offering their resignations, which are not accepted because there is nobody to take their places.<sup>103</sup>

Several of the missions in the Tarahumara Baja had been secularized even before 1767.<sup>104</sup> In 1830, the Franciscans from Zacatecas turned their remaining

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<sup>99</sup> Carl Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (New York, 1902), 415.

<sup>100</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, VII, 251.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 35.

<sup>102</sup> Bolton, *The Rim of Christendom*, 595.

<sup>103</sup> Revilla Gígedo, 1793, as quoted in Bancroft, *North Mexican States*, I, 656.

<sup>104</sup> Bancroft, *North Mexican States*, I, 587, 588.

missions in the Tarahumara Baja over to the College of Santiago of Guadalajara, of the same order,<sup>105</sup> but by 1849, these also were secularized. This occurred after the death of Fray Francisco de Jesús Muñoz, who had administered four of the missions since 1838.<sup>106</sup> Several of the missions in the Tarahumara Alta were secularized by 1793,<sup>107</sup> about the same time that the Texas missions were secularized.<sup>108</sup> The process in the Tarahumara Alta was also complete by about 1849.<sup>109</sup> Toward the end of the century, the missions again changed hands. A religious group called the Josefinos, whose founder was Father José María Vilaseca, took over the missions and labored in them until the Jesuits returned in 1900.<sup>110</sup>

Almost nothing is known of the work during these last years of the nineteenth century. The missionary activities must have been very limited when Carl Lumholtz wrote his memoirs, he mentioned only a few priests who were active among the Tarahumaras. One of the priest's reactions to the Indians was similar to that of former missionaries. He said that they were lazy about coming to Mass and often got drunk. They would eventually all revert to their pagan ways, he felt. He saw great potential in the Tarahumaras, however, and compared their minds to "rough diamonds".<sup>111</sup>

Most of the churches, of course, were still standing and perhaps occasionally used by the Indians. Lumholtz reports that the church at Tónachic still had oil paintings hanging on the walls along with a few other decorations. There was an air of decadence about the place and he says:

It was rather anomalous to see the poor, naked Indians outside the door, for whose benefit all this had been done. A woman was sweeping away the dirt from the swarms of bats that nested in the ceiling.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Almada, La Región de Chínipas, 274.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>107</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, 657.

<sup>108</sup> Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage, V, 46.

<sup>109</sup> Almada, Resumen de Historia, 120.

<sup>110</sup> Ocampo, Historia de la Misión, xv, and Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada, LIX (Madrid, 1928), 569-571.

<sup>111</sup> Lumholtz, Unknown Mexico, 202-204.

<sup>112</sup> Lumholtz, Unknown Mexico, 230.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE APACHES AND THE TARAHUMARA MISSIONS

There is one reason for the decadence of the Tarahumara missions that is not often considered — the Apache Indians. Exactly how the missions were affected is not always easily determined, but only a glance at historical documents is necessary to realize that the effect must have been tremendous. Almost all of Northern Mexico felt the impact of the Apache raids. The state of Chihuahua was especially hard hit as the Apaches penetrated far into Tarahumara country and into Durango.<sup>113</sup> Occasionally Tarahumaras would join with the Apaches, but often they suffered along with their Spanish neighbors. It was essential to the security of the northern provinces that the Tarahumaras remain peaceful and efforts were made by the government to insure this.

The Apaches were already raiding in Chihuahua when the Jesuits were expelled. Between 1748 and 1772, it was reported that approximately four thousand persons were killed by the Apaches and there was a property loss of about twelve million pesos.<sup>114</sup> Some of the abandoned Jesuit missions in Sonora were attacked by the Apaches and were harassed even after the Franciscans took over. One hundred fifty thousand pesos had been offered to found Apache missions in Coahuila and Texas,<sup>115</sup> but little could be accomplished by the missionaries. Entire settlements and ranches had to be abandoned.<sup>116</sup> The Apaches had always made their living by hunting, so retaliation against the white invaders came almost naturally. They were masters at hit-and-run raids and at ambushes. When pressed too closely by troops, they would quickly accept peace, keeping it only as long as it was beneficial to them.<sup>117</sup>

When the Tarahumaras suddenly found themselves without the influence of the Jesuit priests, some of them began to side with the Apaches. This brought about an investigation by the Governor of Nueva Viscaya, José Fayni. It revealed that a number of Tarahumaras were stealing horses and mules from Chihuahua

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<sup>113</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, 595, and Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies (Norman, 1954), 202-203.

<sup>114</sup> Viceroy Don Antonio Bucareli y Ursua to Julián de Arriaga, Secretary of State, January 27, 1772, cited in Alfred Barnaby Tomas, ed., Forgotten Frontiers (Norman, 1932), 5-6.

<sup>115</sup> Bolton, The Mission As a Frontier Institution in the Spanish- American Colonies (El Paso, 1960), 8.

<sup>116</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, 596, 598, and Thomas, Forgotten Frontiers, ix.

<sup>117</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, 594, 597-598.

City and trading them to Gila Apaches for chamois and arrows. Approximately one thousand seven hundred Tarahumaras were supposedly involved.<sup>118</sup>

The seriousness of the matter is shown in the "General Report of 1781" of the Caballero de Croix. He writes:

In another letter, No. 304, November 23, '78, presenting to your Excellency the reasons for my delay in the above province, I set forth that I suffered from the serious drawback of bad faith on the part of the Tarahumare who, now allied with the Apache and now alone, were the agents of many hostilities; that in Mexico an extensive file of papers concerning the matter was delivered to me; and that others were added on my ingress into Chihuahua. The roots of some evils having been illustrated and made clear, if their remedy were postponed the provinces would be lost and the contagion would extend to those which now enjoy quiet of peace.<sup>119</sup>

From the state of Sonora came other reports of the tribes uniting against the Spaniards and of these tribes, "especially the Tarahumarans, united with the Apaches, perpetrate unheard-of horrors."<sup>120</sup> Approximately 1,674 persons had been slaughtered in Nueva Viscaya between 1771 and 1776 by the Apaches,<sup>121</sup> and if their forces were strengthened, they were almost uncontrollable.

More companies of soldiers were rushed to the northern frontier<sup>122</sup> and measures were taken to hold off hostilities. New officials were appointed with the object that

....they defend themselves, and punish with advantage the insults of the enemy Indians: that they make safe their lives, homes and properties and that they affirm their love to the service of God, of the King and of the country...<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Bucareli to Arriaga, April 26, 1773, and July 27, 1773, cited in Thomas, Forgotten Frontiers, 6.

<sup>119</sup> Teodoro de Croix, "General Report of 1781", quoted in Thomas, ed. and translator, Teodoro de Croix (Norman, 1941), 122-123.

<sup>120</sup> Article from the Chief Imperial Post-Office Gazette of the Empire, Cologne, 1786, quoted in Ignaz Pfefferkorn, Sonora, trans. Theodore E. Treutlein, (Albuquerque, 1949), 301.

<sup>121</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, 594.

<sup>122</sup> Bucareli to Arriaga, July 27, 1773, cited in Thomas, Forgotten Frontiers, 6, and Pfefferkorn, Sonora, 301.

<sup>123</sup> Parral Archives, G-19, Administración y de Guerra, August 13, 1777.

Good results could not be seen, however, because detachments of soldiers had to be diverted for mail, getting horses for New Mexico, carrying strong boxes "and quiet unrest which was remarked in various pueblos of the Tarahumare."<sup>124</sup>

Steps were taken to pacify the restless Tarahumaras. The use of Tarahumara labor in the mines and *haciendas* was prohibited and it could only be used in the construction of buildings.<sup>125</sup> Rules of the government and commands were issued so that the Tarahumaras would be obedient and not leave their pueblos without permission of their chiefs, the local judge or, in his absence, the missionary. If any Indian was found outside his pueblo without this written permission, he was arrested. These rules were known as *reglas de juego*.<sup>126</sup> Also, to help insure peace, squads of Tarahumara militia were organized under the Spanish troops,

...so that upon those who are the most active and warlike has been put a gentle bridle, which is acceptable and honorable, in order to lead them into the best conduct, to make them useful for the defense of the country, and to make possible the subjection of the rest of the Tarahumare.<sup>127</sup>

Plans were made to allow certain Tarahumaras to go before the Visitor General, Bernado de Gálvez, to give him their complaints and discuss matters with him.<sup>128</sup>

Between the efforts of the government and the Franciscan missionaries, rebellion among the Tarahumara was held to a minimum. "Alcaldes' Reports," taken from the archives in Parral, gives us some of original sources about the Tarahumaras who did rebel, although the evidence is often slim. They tell of Tarahumaras joining with the Apaches, with white men and raiding by themselves. A report of October 27, 1784 says:

On this day I was advised that last night about eight o'clock the Indians fell upon this Jurisdiction at a place they call Arroyo de los Mimbres, a distance of about one and one-half leagues from this district. They

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<sup>124</sup> Croix, "General Report", quoted in Thomas, Teodoro de Croix, 119.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 123, and Parral Archives, "Cuaderno de las Cuentas de los Indios Yaquis y Tarahumaras que Trabajaron en Parral desde 24 de Feb. de 1776 como También de los que Pasaron a la del Caimón", G-4, Administrativo.

<sup>126</sup> Croix, "General Report", quoted in Thomas, Teodoro de Croix, 123, and Alcocer, Bosquejo de la Historia del Colegio, 155, and Almada, La Región de Chínipas, 227.

<sup>127</sup> Croix, "General Report", quoted in Thomas, Teodoro de Croix, 124.

<sup>128</sup> Bernardo de Gálvez, Instructions for Governing the Interior Provinces of New Spain, 1786, Trans. Donald E. Worcester ("Quivira Society Publications", XII; Berkeley, 1951), 133.

killed two blind men who had come from Chiguagua (Chihuahua), and the boys whom they brought as guides. They killed the two beasts that they had and carried away three of a citizen of this district: and although with only four citizens that I could gather, I left as soon as notice was given me. I only returned with the bodies and I observed that the enemies were about ten, and that they were Apaches and Tarahumaras according to the arrows that they left and that their retreat was in the direction of Tarajena.<sup>129</sup>

Other reports, written in 1786, also give evidence that the Tarahumaras and Apaches had joined forces. "The Agents of all these iniquities appeared to be Apaches and some rebellious Tarahumaras with them."<sup>130</sup> On the night of November 20, twenty fell on a ranch and fought all night. The identity of the Indians was uncertain and it could only be said that they spoke "some phrases in Castilian, and others in the Tarahumara language, and Apache."<sup>131</sup>

The above report suggests that people other than Apaches and Tarahumaras were involved in some of the raids. This is borne out in another report. Five Indians fell on a ranch about three leagues to the west of Parral. Six mules and seven horses were carried off and a woman, a widow who was on her way from this ranch to Parral, was wounded. The marauders were followed by a lieutenant and some soldiers who were stationed nearby, but they were unable to overtake them. The lieutenant reported that the signs which were left appeared to be those of Tarahumaras. The wounded woman said that of the two that attacked her, one appeared to be a Tarahumara and the other was certainly a white man.<sup>132</sup>

At times the Tarahumaras raided by themselves. On one occasion, at a place close to Parral, two Spaniards were attacked by three Tarahumaras and stripped of their clothing. A burro that was loaded with wood was lanced and the Indians made off with a saddle and the clothing. Later, the same day and in the same area, these Indians made another raid, making off with three mules loaded with wood.<sup>133</sup> On another occasion, twenty-five horses were stolen from a corral. The Indians were followed but the pursuers could only get close enough to tell that they were Tarahumaras.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Parral Archives, "Noticias que por el Orden del Cavallero de Croix Rendian los Alcaldes de este Real Sobre las Incursiones de los Indios a esta Jurisdicción Durante los Años de 1778 a 1787", G-32, Guerra, October 27, 1784, elsewhere cited as "Alcaldes' Reports".

<sup>130</sup> "Alcaldes' Reports", March 1, 1786.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, November 9, 1786.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, April 21, 1787.

<sup>133</sup> "Alcaldes' Reports", August 6, 1782.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, August 21, 1781.



The results of the Tarahumara raids were sometimes more drastic. On October 23, 1783, what appeared to be a group of Tarahumaras fell on a ranch, killing the owner. From there they went to the ranch of José Baca, killing one of his sons and one of his daughters. The Indians then moved on to another ranch where they set fire to the door of the house and killed a woman and a two-year-old baby.

From there they went to the edge of the Real de Minas Nuevas where they killed several others, left wounded Alberto Martínez and a daughter of José Baca and took from another ranch of that district horses and mules.<sup>135</sup>

The obtaining of livestock seemed to be one of the principal aims of the raids. Two hundred sixty sheep were driven off from one *hacienda* and only ninety-three of these were recovered. The remainder were killed and skinned by the Indians. Whether this was done by Tarahumaras or Tepehuanes, however, is uncertain.<sup>136</sup>

It is easy to see why the government was so interested in quickly replacing the expelled Jesuits with other missionaries and why certain officials were so outspoken about the missing temporalities. If the Tarahumaras had completely joined forces with the Apaches or with other rebellious tribes, such as those of Sonora,<sup>137</sup> or if they had simply rebelled without joining outside forces, the results would have been devastating. As it was, only a relatively small portion of the Tarahumaras participated in the raids. Their very way of life — living in isolated, scattered family groups — helped to prevent a large-scale up-rising. Viceroy Gálvez showed an understanding of this matter when he wrote:

I am not convinced that all this tribe can be of bad faith, nor closely allied with the Apaches. If this were certain, they would have brought Nueva Vizcaya to the last stage of its ruin; but it would be worse, if it promoted and accelerated the effects of an inconsidered severity.<sup>138</sup>

Though the Tarahumaras did not continue to present a major threat, there was always that possibility, while the Apaches continued to harass the country for over a hundred years. The Tarahumaras, as well as the white man, suffered from

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, October 23, 1783.

<sup>136</sup> "Alcaldes' Reports", July 6, 1782.

<sup>137</sup> Pfefferkorn, *Sonora*, 295, 301.

<sup>138</sup> Gálvez, *Instructions for Governing*, 61.

these depredations, which means that the missions also must have suffered. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, two Apaches named Rafael and José Antonio were charged with more than three hundred deaths.<sup>139</sup> From the Río Bravo to within the borders of Durango, settlers and peaceful Indians were kept in fear.<sup>140</sup>

The Tarahumaras, having few material possessions, were probably not as subject to Apache raids as were the white men, but the stories of their sufferings are numerous. On about September 30, 1806, three Tarahumara babies were being taken to the closest priest for baptism. The party was attacked by the band of Rafael and José Antonio, and the two men killed. Later, as the party returned to their homes, they were attacked again and one of the women was murdered. Not long after this, another Indian and his wife were killed by the same band. The hostile Apaches then moved to another place where three muleteers, carrying supplies to Batopilas, were murdered. While they were fighting, one of the four captives that the Apaches help, a Tarahumara man, escaped.<sup>141</sup>

At times, the Tarahumaras fought back, while at others, retreat seemed to be the best policy. In the Sierra de Papigochi, a Tarahumara man was killed. Two days later, the culprits, Rafael and José Antonio, were encountered by a group of Tarahumaras. In the fight that followed, two captives were taken from the Apaches, along with Apache horses and supplies. The Apaches later recovered their lost goods in another skirmish, "except for a horse, a leather shield, two swords and a blanket."<sup>142</sup> One of the Apaches received two wounds in the body from darts. Once, two young Tarahumara men were fishing on the edge of the river. Rafael apparently approached unobserved and lanced one of them through the arm and side. The other one escaped and hid.<sup>143</sup>

The Tarahumaras suffered not only directly from the Apaches but also from the good intentions of the Mexicans. In a desperate effort to stop Apache raids, rewards were offered for Apache scalps. At least one hundred pesos were offered for a male scalp, half that for a female and for a short time, twenty-five pesos were offered for the scalp of an Apache child.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, 595, and Silvestre Terrazas, Apuntes Históricas (Chihuahua, 1909), 6.

<sup>140</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, 595.

<sup>141</sup> Carpeta 45, legajo 20 (name of archive not mentioned) quoted in Terrazas, Apuntes Históricas, 74.

<sup>142</sup> Carpeta 35, legajo 24, quoted in Terrazas, Apuntes Históricas, 77.

<sup>143</sup> Carpeta 41, legajo 20, quoted in Terrazas, Apuntes Históricas, 75.

<sup>144</sup> Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, 599, and John Russell Bartlett, Personal Narrative of the Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua (New York, 1854), I, 322.

The offer of such a price for scalps attracted a number of people from the United States. It also encouraged unheard of atrocities to be committed. It is told how an American named James Johnson induced a large party of Apaches to come to a certain place to trade. Johnson had his goods, which consisted mostly of flour, placed in an advantageous position, near which was concealed a loaded cannon with chain and canister shot. As the Indians were dividing the goods, the cannon was fired, killing a number of the terrified Apaches. Johnson's crew then opened up with small arms and more of the Indians were killed. The Apaches who escaped sought vengeance at every opportunity and Americans were no longer trusted.<sup>145</sup>

The best known of the Americans who profited from the scalp hunting was noted frontier adventurer, James Kirker. His life consisted of such things as operating the copper mine at present-day Santa Rita, New Mexico,<sup>146</sup> and serving as a scout for Colonel Alexander Doniphan on his expedition into Mexico.<sup>147</sup> His most noted activity, however, was scalp hunting. He and a large number of American riflemen, which included some Delaware Indians, were induced to help rid Northern Mexico of the Apaches and to profit from the scalps taken.<sup>148</sup> They were successful at first but the wily Apaches soon proved hard to find. In order to keep the scalp hunting profitable, scalps were taken from the most available source. There is very little difference between an Apache scalp, a Tarahumara scalp and a long-haired Mexican scalp, and all of these were taken.<sup>149</sup> The practice was draining the treasury<sup>150</sup> and since a number of Mexicans were against the Americans being in Mexico anyway,<sup>151</sup> scalp hunting for profit was soon abandoned. To have known that peaceful Tarahumaras were the object of scalp hunters must have greatly perplexed the Franciscan missionaries.

The Tarahumaras played an important part in helping the Mexicans against the Apaches. They were used as scouts by the Mexican troops. One of them in particular became famous for his deeds. He was called Mauricio Corredor, or Indio Mauricio. He has been described as "a man of daring valor, notable rifleman and distinguished example of an industrious race, honorable and valiant, worthy of better fortune."<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 205-206, and Bartlett, Personal Narrative, 322-323.

<sup>146</sup> Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 228.

<sup>147</sup> William Elsey Connelley, Doniphan's Expedition (Topeka, 1907), 388.

<sup>148</sup> Niles' National Register, LVII, 19, and Connelley, Doniphan's Expedition, 388 and Owen P. White, Trigger Fingers (New York, 1926), 28.

<sup>149</sup> Hall, "Sonora", MS, cited in Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, 601.

<sup>150</sup> Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, 288, and Connelley Doniphan's Expedition, 388, and White, Trigger Fingers, 34.

<sup>151</sup> Niles' National Register, LVII, 19.

<sup>152</sup> Terrazas, Apuntes Históricas, 97.

In 1880, a group of three hundred fifty Mexican soldiers, volunteers and Tarahumara scouts entered some mountains close to the Texas border known as Tres Castillos, searching for Apaches. Besides their regular pay, the troops were to receive the regular "premiums for scalps of warriors, according to the law for live women and children, and two thousand pesos for Victorio," the famous war-chief, "however he is presented."<sup>153</sup> They were led by Colonel Joaquín Terrazas, who for forty-nine years fought against the Apaches and in civil wars.<sup>154</sup> At sunset, clouds of dust were seen in the distance and the troops prepared for a fight. When the Apaches saw the troops, a number of them left the main group and approached the troops.

When the Indians came within about four hundred meters, at full speed, two of the Arisiáchic (Tarahumaras) advanced to the front of the column, shooting at them. The one (Apache) who was in front fell and then the others retreated to the hills where the main body of Indians was.<sup>155</sup>

In the fight that followed, the Apaches were soundly defeated. The Apache who first fell was Chief Victorio. The Tarahumara who fires the shot was Mauricio Corredor. For this deed, he was awarded a nickel-plated rifle.<sup>156</sup> New light will be shed on this subject in a book, soon to be published, by José Carlos Chávez, the Civil Registrar of Chihuahua City, who has spent twenty years doing research on the Apaches of Chihuahua.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Apache raids in the Sierra Tarahumara had ceased. Carl Lumholtz mentions only that the Apaches were well remembered in certain Tarahumara villages.<sup>157</sup> Tarahumaras today still speak of Apache raids. One folktale tells how Tarahumaras gave some bad beans to the Apaches in order to make them sick. The name of one of the towns, Naráachi, means a place where someone cried, referring to when some Apaches were forced from a cave by the smoke from a fire which Tarahumaras started at the entrance.<sup>158</sup> Ruins of houses, built on vantage points, suggest means of protection against the invaders. The Apache raids, combined with the state of confusion

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<sup>153</sup> Memoirs of Joaquín Terrazas, quoted in Terrazas, *Apuntes Históricas*, 94-95.

<sup>154</sup> Terrazas, *Apuntes Históricas*, 99, and House Executive Doc., 46 Cong., 3 Sess., House Doc. 6, II, 162.

<sup>155</sup> Memoirs, quoted in Terrazas, *Apuntes Históricas*, 97.

<sup>156</sup> Carlisle Graham Raht, *The Romance of Davis Mountains and Big Bend Country* (El Paso, 1919), 271, and Paul I. Wellman, *Death in the Desert* (New York, 1935), 192.

<sup>157</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 223.

<sup>158</sup> Pennington, "The Material Culture of the Tarahumar," 31.

resulting from the Jesuit expulsion and the revolutionary times, caused the missions in the Sierra Tarahumara to fall into almost complete ruin.

## CHAPTER V

### BAPTIST AND EVANGELICAL METHODIST MISSIONS

At the beginning of the twentieth century a renewed interest was taken in the Tarahumara missions. Not only did the Jesuits return, but a number of Protestant groups became interested in the Tarahumara Indians. The Protestant missionaries, as the others, have found the work difficult. Some of them, intending to work with Tarahumara-speaking people, find it easier and more fruitful to work with those who speak Spanish. Much of their work has been only spasmodic. Some of it, however, is beginning to produce results which are being noted even by the President of Mexico, and the lives of the Tarahumaras this work touches are being changed.

The first of these groups to look at the direction of the Sierra Tarahumara was the Baptist. Their work has been going on in Mexico since 1880<sup>159</sup> and a church was founded in Chihuahua City on June 22, 1902.<sup>160</sup> Its first pastor and director, John W. Newbrough, came in 1905.<sup>161</sup> In about 1924 an unusual incident occurred. A man named Bustillos, the Public Minister in the town of Bocoyna, in the Sierra, had been watching with shame how the Tarahumaras were being mistreated. One Sunday morning, with a pistol strapped to his side, he entered the First Baptist Church of Chihuahua City. He told the congregation how the Indians were being exploited and asked the church to do something about it.<sup>162</sup>

As a result, the pastor of the church, Reverend Mateo M. Gurrola, who is today pastor of the First Baptist Church of Juárez, was sent by the Mexican Baptist Convention to explore the field. Accompanying him was Juan Francisco González, who is now dead. The first expedition lasted eight days and the towns of Bocoyna, Sisoguichi, Creel and others were visited. Reverend Gurrola continued making trips until a full time worker could be appointed.<sup>163</sup> Antonio Rosales Pérez, from Monterrey and who now is dead, also, was appointed by the convention in 1927.<sup>164</sup> He was one of three appointed to work in the Mexican

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<sup>159</sup> Letter from Lynn E. May, Jr., Research Director of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, December 7, 1962.

<sup>160</sup> "Los Bautistas en Chihuahua", Chihuahua en su CCL Aniversario, ed. Lic. Salvador Caballero B. (Chihuahua, 1960), 208.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., and Almada, Resumen de Historia, 337-338.

<sup>162</sup> Interview with Mateo M. Gurrola, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Juárez, November 15, 1962.

<sup>163</sup> Interview with Gurrola.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., and La Luz, Tomo I, Numero I (November, 1927), 13, and Alejandro Treviño, D. D., Historia de los Trabajos Bautistas (El Paso, 1939), 372.

Indian tribes. The two others were sent to the Zápotec and Tarascan tribes.<sup>165</sup> Sr. Pérez' work consisted of exploration, visiting a number of Indian towns, preaching and giving out literature. His headquarters was at Bocoyna.<sup>166</sup> He reported on his work at a meeting of the Convention and on mentioning his need of a car, one was quickly provided.<sup>167</sup>

Interest in the Baptist missions came from several different areas. Half of Sr. Pérez' salary was paid by the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas, and its president, E. G. Domínguez, said that his convention wanted to continue paying it.<sup>168</sup> Medical doctors also expressed interest. Dr. F. L. Meadows, a medical missionary in Mexico, said that he wanted to visit the Sierra Tarauara during his vacations.<sup>169</sup> Another medical missionary, Dr. C. DeWitt Dawson, of San Bonito, Texas, actually spent a few weeks in the Sierra Tarahumara. He visited numerous places, giving shots and medical aid to the Indians.<sup>170</sup>

Soon work was begun on a small chapel at Choguita. The Unión Femenil Nacional Bautista, meeting in its eighth session in Monterrey, gave four hundred pesos to help with the building of the chapel.<sup>171</sup> In that same year<sup>172</sup> and during the following year, 1928, special collections were taken for the Indians by the Unión Bautista de Jóvenes of the Baptist Church in Chihuahua. In one meeting, Mr. Gurrola proposed that the Unión take a special offering for the chapel that the Tarahumara were building. It passed unanimously and a small collection was taken up. Mr. Gurrola called to the attention of the treasurer that he should send the money quickly to the Indians.<sup>173</sup>

Following Antonio Pérez, Vicente Guzmán was sent to continue the work.<sup>174</sup> Then, in 1944, Reverend Jesús María Rodríguez and his wife, Julia, took over the mission and remained there for about three years. During this time, Mrs. Rodriguez conducted a daily school which a sizable number of children, mostly Indian, attended. Their work prospered but a lack of educational facilities for their

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<sup>165</sup> La Luz, 4.

<sup>166</sup> La Luz, 13, and Treviño, Historia de los Trabajos, 372.

<sup>167</sup> La Luz, 13.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Dr. C. DeWitt Dawson, retired medical missionary, March, 1962.

<sup>171</sup> Actas de la Décima Octava Sesión de la Convención Nacional Bautista de México (Monterrey, 1927), 39, 41.

<sup>172</sup> "Informe que Riene la Tesorera de la U.B. de Jóvenes Correspondiente al Año de 1927" (in the files of the First Baptist Church of Chihuahua City).

<sup>173</sup> Minutes of the Unión Bautista de Jóvenes, October 26, 1928 (in the files of the first Baptist Church of Chihuahua City).

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Gurrola, and Treviño, Historia de los Trabajos, 372.

two children finally caused them to leave the work. Today, their daughter is a nurse and their son is studying in Chihuahua City. Mr. And Mrs. Rodríguez reside in Parral, where Mr. Rodríguez is pastor of the Baptist church.<sup>175</sup>

There were a number of converts in those first years. One of the first was Antonio González, whom Mr. Gurrola baptized. Mr. Gurrola had hopes of his becoming a minister, but being interested in planes, he came to Chihuahua city to study flying. He was later killed in a plane crash.<sup>176</sup>

The efforts of these Baptist missionaries were notable but, as happened previously, "the principal obstacle that they encountered was a lack of knowledge of the language of the Indian race that they tried to evangelize."<sup>177</sup> Gradually the Convention had to suspend work in this field until a worker who knew the language could be found. Today, the Convention has no workers among the Tarahumaras, but there has been a renewed interest. Baptist young people of Chihuahua have several times attempted to organize a caravan which would carry food, clothes, medical supplies and the Gospel to needy people in the Sierra.<sup>178</sup> Occasionally food and clothes are sent by the Convention<sup>179</sup> and beginning in October, 1962, one hundred pesos a month are being sent to help with the effort.<sup>180</sup> Santos Morelos, an Indian man with experience in helping the Tarahumaras, is interested in returning to Choguita where he formerly lived and it is hoped that Mr. Rodríguez will return and be in charge of the work.<sup>181</sup> For the present, José Quesada, who gave the land for the chapel at Choguita, is attending to the mission.<sup>182</sup>

Shortly after the Baptist work started, another group began which would soon direct some of its efforts toward the Sierra Tarahumara. It was called La Misión Evangelista Mexicana, established on November 4, 1926, with the purpose of creating a center in Chihuahua City where the Holy Scripture could be taught.<sup>183</sup> The founder was Ezequiel B. Vargas, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and a man of much prayer. The work that he started grew and spread until in 1960 there were missionary centers and points of preaching in the states of

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<sup>175</sup> Interview with Jesús María Rodríguez, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Parral, December 23, 1962, and Interview with Gurrola.

<sup>176</sup> Interview with Gurrola.

<sup>177</sup> Treviño, *Historia de los Trabajos*, 372.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Abel Gómez, then Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Chihuahua City, January 27, 1963.

<sup>179</sup> Letter from Roberto Porras Maynes to Guadalupe Zamarrón, December 3, 1962.

<sup>180</sup> Letter from Maynes to Teobaldo Quezada, November 9, 1962.

<sup>181</sup> Letter from Maynes to Quezada, and letter from James M. Short, Southern Baptist Missionary for Chihuahua, December 2, 1963.

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Gurrola.

<sup>183</sup> Ezequiel B. Vargas, "Opúsculo de la Misión Evangelista Mexicana", *CCL Aniversario*, 206.



Chihuahua, Durango, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Zacatecas and San Luis Potosí. These included twenty churches, six daily schools, one preparatory school for workers and one primary school. Within the last few years, the mission has become associated with the Evangelical Methodist Church of the United States.<sup>184</sup>

From this group sprang a mission within a mission, La Misión Evangelista Tarahumara. The action that led to this actually had its beginnings years before. "In my childhood," Sr. Vargas said:

I had listened to my elders relate the campaigns against the rebellious Apaches and a feeling of repulsion seized my young heart when I heard it said that the fruit of those campaigns was the numerous scalps taken from the valiant Indians, who with their rustic arms defended the ground where they had first seen the light. This repulsion increased drastically when I realized that in some of these forays the persecutors of those unfortunate inhabitants of the forests attacked, not against the guerillas that walked in the Sierra with arms in hand, but against the peaceful Indians, whose occupation was to work in their small piece of land with the hope of recovering a small bit of fruit in order to remedy their most urgent necessities.<sup>185</sup>

In later years, Sr. Vargas, watching the Tarahumaras as they came to Chihuahua City seeking food and escape from the winter cold of the mountains, determined to do something for them. The Tarahumara women often had no place except the side of the hill to have their babies.<sup>186</sup> As a result of these incidents the new mission was established. A home for the Indians — called the Oasis of the Indians — was built just west of Chihuahua City, near the old Chuvíscar Dam.<sup>187</sup> It consists of a number of houses, which are valued at more than fifty thousand pesos,<sup>188</sup> where the Indians can stay on their trips to the city. The Director of the Oasis, Daniel Flores, has hopes that a clinic and a carpenter shop provided with electricity will soon be built.<sup>189</sup> The only requirements for people who use the Oasis are that they must be Tarahumaras,<sup>190</sup> and that they must not drink.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Ezequiel B. Vargas, "Opúsculo de lo Misión Evangelista Mexicana", CCL Aniversario, 208.

<sup>185</sup> CCL Aniversario, 206.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Ezekiel Vargas, General Superintendent of La Misión Evangelista Mexicana, December 21, 1962.

<sup>187</sup> El Heraldo (Chihuahua) February 13, 1963, 6, and CCL Aniversario, 206.

<sup>188</sup> Interview with Vargas.

<sup>189</sup> El Heraldo, February 13, 1963, 6.

<sup>190</sup> CCL Aniversario, 206.

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Vargas.

Sr. Vargas has also helped with the education of a number of Tarahumaras, teaching them in the preparatory school, Vida y Verdad, in Chihuahua City. There is also a school in San Juanito as well as centers in Guachochi, Creel, and Gajesúchic.<sup>192</sup> The school at San Juanito was founded by Miss Alta Dixon, who had gone to the Sierra in 1932 to help Sr. José Flores and his wife. Sr. Flores and his wife were the first workers sent by Sr. Vargas to the Tarahumara Indians. They went in 1928 and "the field," Sr. Flores said, "proved to be more difficult than I had thought. My wife and I had to pilgrim together."<sup>193</sup> His wife, María, adds:

We had to pray much and although we were willing to give our lives for souls, we also had to shed tears. We traveled by foot two years, day after day in order to reach various villages, with our belongings on our backs. Sometimes we passed the day without food....I still marvel today at the strength God imparted to us.<sup>194</sup>

A church was built at San Juanito in 1938 and Miss Dixon's school began in 1942. They both have grown and new workers have been added to the staff.

Some of the boys who have been educated under Sr. Vargas now occupy government and other positions of leadership.<sup>195</sup> At times, those who are educated in Chihuahua City and return to the tribe have a difficult transition. They receive their education in Spanish and in an environment foreign to their own and then return to the tribe, where the pull of the old ways is still very strong and is sometimes very hard on them.

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<sup>192</sup> CCL Aniversario, 206.

<sup>193</sup> 30 years Among the Tarahumara Indians, printed for anniversary services, San Juanito, May 25, 1958.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., and El Heraldo, February 13, 1963, 6.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

A number of the Tarahumara boys at Sr. Vargas' school come from the area around Samachique, located high in the Sierra, surrounded by deep *barrancas*. It is here that for nearly twenty years, Kenneth S. Hilton, living with his wife and four children, has been patiently analyzing the Tarahumara language and translating the New Testament. He belongs to a group of missionary-linguists known as the Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, a dual organization. Approximately fourteen hundred missionaries belong to this group<sup>196</sup> and are dedicated to the purpose of translating the New Testament, at least, for the more than two thousand tribes that do not have translations. At present they are working on more than three hundred languages and dialects.<sup>197</sup> They are paid no salary and each member must find his own support.

Mr. Hilton has been with this organization almost since its beginning in 1934. Its founder, William Cameron Townsend, got the idea when he was selling Bibles in Central America. He realized that many of the people to whom he was trying to sell Bibles could not understand Spanish.<sup>198</sup> He then spent fourteen years translating the New Testament for the Cakchiquel Indians, a large tribe in Central America.<sup>199</sup> He was amazed at the marvelous change which took place in this tribe as a result of their having the Scriptures in their own language. It became evident that this could happen in other tribes if there were enough missionaries to do the job, so a school was started in Arkansas to train potential translators to deal with the linguistic problems they would face.<sup>200</sup>

It was to this school, today called the Summer Institute of Linguistics, that Mr. Hilton and his wife, Martha came in 1940. During that summer, he talked to Eugene Nida, who is now head of the American Bible Society. About 1936, Mr. Nida had spent "the latter part of September until Christmas time, first at Tonachi and then later at a school near Creo [Creel?] for approximately one month."<sup>201</sup> His reasons for going to the Tarahumara area were several:

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<sup>196</sup> Mariana Slocum and Sam Holmes (ed.), Who Brought the Word (Santa Ana, 1963), 16.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>198</sup> Kenneth L. Pike, The Work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and of Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc., Reprint from The Bible Translator, X, no. 2, April, 1959.

<sup>199</sup> Slocum and Holmes, Who Brought the Word, 7.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 7-8, and Pike, The Work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, 8.

<sup>201</sup> Letters from Eugene Nida, Executive Secretary of the American Bible Society, December 9, 1963.

First, because it seemed to be the kind of region for which my own experience in the western part of the United States would be most satisfactorily adapted; second, it was a relatively large area in which the Uto-Aztecan language was spoken. I was keenly interested in this family of languages and therefore desirous of getting further acquainted with some representative. At the same time, I certainly did not realize how difficult work in the region would be since, as you yourself know, it is one of the least touched areas of Mexico. The problems of acculturation have not been so acute as in other areas and therefore the indigenous culture pattern has been much more difficult to influence significantly.<sup>202</sup>

After that summer the Hiltons went to Mexico City, unsure of where they would work. While in Mexico City Francisco M. Plancarte, the author of El Problema Indígena Tarahumara, persuaded them to go to Guachochi to work with the Tarahumaras. Barely having enough money to make the trip, the Hiltons finally arrived in Guachochi. They lived at the Escuela Normal about two weeks before building themselves a small house. As they began work on the language, they found that Guachochi was not an ideal place to be because not many of the Indians lived very close, making it hard to get language helpers.<sup>203</sup>

So a survey was made of the region. An official of the Asuntos Indígenas went with Mr. Hilton, calling meetings of the Indians in the different areas to discuss the possibility of the missionary's staying there.<sup>204</sup> The place that seemed in the center of the Tarahumara country was Samachique. It would take two and one half days on horseback to get there from the nearest road, but a road was being surveyed to go to the El Carmen mine at La Bufa, which would pass close to Samachique.<sup>205</sup> The word Samachique means a place where there are springs, so the location seemed ideal.

The Gospel of Mark had been started in Guachochi and language helpers were found in Samachique in order to continue the translation work. One of the first of these was Ramón López. Ramón had attended the little school in Samachique and later went to Mr. Vargas' school in Chihuahua City.<sup>206</sup> As he helped with the translation and began to read and understand the Scriptures in his own language, he decided to follow the way of Christ. He told how his

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Personal Interview with Kenneth S. Hilton, Wycliffe Bible Translator, May 23, 1963.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Interview with Hilton; and Ethel Wallis, He Purposeth a Crop (Santa Ana, 1956), 13.

<sup>206</sup> Interview with Hilton; and Ethel Wallis, He Purposeth a Crop (Santa Ana, 1956), 15.

grandparents often told him that if he ever did anything wrong, he would go to a place of punishment when he died. Because of this he leaved in great fear. As he read of Christ, he said, he realized that there was another side to what his grandparents had told him. He found that in Christ he could live a rich and abundant life, without fear of death.<sup>207</sup> To follow Christ "was an unforgivable sin in the sight of the tribal elders. On one occasion he was publicly rebuked and reprimanded by tribal leaders and told to go back to his ranch."<sup>208</sup> He had a serious illness and his young wife died, but all of these tragedies only strengthened his faith.<sup>209</sup> Today Ramón has remarried and is the leader of the young, growing church in Samachique. He is the head teacher in the school of about one hundred pupils and is many times called upon to represent his people before the State and National governments.

In October of 1951, Paul and Ellen Carlson and their family went to help the Hiltons in their work with the scattered tribe.<sup>210</sup> Mr. Carlson, a chemist, radio technician and former restaurant owner,<sup>211</sup> is a graduate of Wheaton College, where he was on the wrestling team and where he met his wife. Missionary work is essentially a process of breaking down barriers and the Carlsons had a multiple approach. Ellen's sewing machine, socials around a campfire<sup>212</sup> and the Carlson's children, Esther, Cristina, Roy and Kathy, all helped to break down barriers with the shy Tarahumaras. Mr. Carlson began to study medicine because of the need for medical help in the tribe and today the village witch doctor is a regular visitor at the Carlsons'.

There are a number of Mexican families also living in Samachique that have responded to the work of the missionaries. One of them is the family of Antonio Loera. This family has been a good friend to the Hiltons and the Carlsons and has helped them many times. In his own right, Antonio is a missionary. During the winter of 1963, one of the Indian men, Bernabé Acosta, was dying with tuberculosis. His stomach became bloated and he could not eat.

Bernabé died while his wife had gone out and I (the author) was trying to figure out a way to help him. Four Indians went to dig a grave and Antonio made a box. Just before he died, I wrote a letter asking the doctor to come and was looking for someone to take it to Guachochi. The night before, Bernabé had asked us, "How do I ask for pardon?"

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<sup>207</sup> Sermon of Ramón López, March 14, 1963, cited in Burgess, Personal Diary, March 14, 1963.

<sup>208</sup> Wallis, He Purposeth a Crop, 15.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 16, and Interview with Hilton.

<sup>210</sup> Wallis, He Purposeth a Crop, 18.

<sup>211</sup> Burgess, Personal Diary, July 29, 1959.

<sup>212</sup> Wallis, He Purposeth a Crop, 18.

Antonio replied that God would hear it in Spanish or Tarahumara. I added that we must put our trust in Christ and that only he could heal us. . . . We carried him to the grave in a pickup and buried him lighting a candle at the grave's head. There was no ceremony.<sup>213</sup>

Believing that Bernabé could ask them to go with him to the land beyond, his family did not go to the burial.

A number of young people, with whom the Carlson and Hilton children grew up, have gone on to school in Chihuahua and are beginning to return to the Sierra. Bilingual Tarahumaras are not easy to find and the National Indian Institute often hires them as *promotores*, to help with teaching in the schools or with medical work. One example in particular is outstanding. Dorotea Viniegra used to help the Carlsons in their house, which was always full of visiting Tarahumaras. She learned a few English expressions and when the Carlsons went on furlough for a year in California, Dorotea went with them. During that year, 1959-1960, she attended Grossmont High School and her grades were all B's and C's. After returning, she enrolled in nursing school at the Palmore Methodist Hospital in Chihuahua, where she has been at the head of her class in surgical nursing. She will graduate in April, 1964, and will probably return to help her people. Before going to California, Dorotea had never been beyond Creel.<sup>214</sup>

As a result of the work of the missionaries and the National Indian Institute, Samachique has become a model showplace for what could happen to an Indian community. There is the school with basketball and volleyball facilities, and a small dining room where two meals a day are served the students; a clinic which usually has a doctor; a communal store; a truck; an electric light plant; a bath house and apple orchards.<sup>215</sup> A carpenter's shop is being equipped and a small church is being built.

In an effort to reach the Tarahumaras scattered down in the canyons, Mr. Carlson has set up a radio station, soon to be in operation. Simple receivers will be placed down in the canyons and lessons on school subjects, hygiene and music will be included in the broadcasts.<sup>216</sup> Samachique has come a long way since 1930, when Wendell Bennett and Robert Zingg were there doing research which resulted in their book, The Tarahumara. They wrote, "Samachique is one of the

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<sup>213</sup> Burgess, Personal Diary, February 22, 1963.

<sup>214</sup> Letter from Esther Carlson, December 3, 1963.

<sup>215</sup> Agustin Romero, "El I.N.I. en La Tarahumara", Acción Indigenista, 103 (January, 1962), 4.

<sup>216</sup> El Heraldo (Chihuahua), August 1, 1960, 4-8.

most isolated pueblos in the whole Tarahumara territory. The Indians have relatively few contacts with outsiders. Practically no one speaks Spanish."<sup>217</sup>

The work at Samachique has not been without its disappointments. It has been slow and most of the Indians outside the Samachique area are yet to be touched. Many of the people still look on Christianity as something brought in by outsiders and not applicable to their way of life. Some of those who professed to follow Christ have returned to the old ways.<sup>218</sup> "How many are there who are afraid to come out fully for Christ because they don't want to leave their corn beer and the drunken orgies...."<sup>219</sup> Mr. Hilton wrote:

We are thankful for the small nucleus of true believers to whom the living Christ is a Reality. Pray for them, too, that they might not only stand firm against the full current of the false religious and social standards of their people, but that they might also exert a vigorous influence for the evangelization of the tribe.<sup>220</sup>

Mr. Hilton has almost finished the translation of the New Testament. He has also compiled a Tarahumara-Spanish dictionary. Mrs. Carlson has done work on Tarahumara folktales and a small hymnal has been prepared. Mention should also be made of an English-Tarahumara dictionary,<sup>221</sup> although the compiler is not a missionary but a Swedish-born soldier of fortune, General I. Thord-Gray. General Thord-Gray has fought in a number of wars, including the Mexican Revolution.<sup>222</sup> His 1170 page dictionary includes bits of geological, archeological and anthropological findings. Today he resides in Coral Gables, Florida.

When the New Testament is finished, the Hiltons and Carlsons will probably move on to another field. There are still more than two thousand tribes like the Tarahumaras that do not have the Scriptures translated into their own language. Work still remains to be done with illiteracy. Recently a Tarahumara man opposed the school so strongly that the leaders of Samachique area had him brought in at rifle point to talk to him. After discussing the matter, their differences were settled.<sup>223</sup> There is the possibility that changes will have to be made in the translation for the different Tarahumara dialects. The second generation will

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<sup>217</sup> Bennett and Zingg, The Tarahumara, vii.

<sup>218</sup> Wallis, He Purposeth a Crop, 15; and Personal Interview with Hilton; and Burgess, Personal Diary, April 21, 1963.

<sup>219</sup> Letter from Kenneth Hilton, March 14, 1954, quoted in Wallis, He Purposeth a Crop, 22.

<sup>220</sup> Letter from Hilton (no date), quoted in Wallis, He Purposeth a Crop, 21.

<sup>221</sup> I. Thord-Gray, Tarahumara-English, English-Tarahumara Dictionary (Coral Gables, Florida, 1955).

<sup>222</sup> Thord-Gray, Gringo Rebel (Miami, 1960), 25.

<sup>223</sup> Burgess, Personal Diary, April 3-4, 1963.

perhaps help to finish up the work. Esther Carlson, a senior at Stanford University is applying for membership with the Wycliffe Bible Translators and has hopes of returning to work with the people with whom she grew up.



## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

It has been 356 years since Father Juan Fonte made contact with the Tarahumaras. The missionaries have seen revolts, expulsion and deep disappointments. The missions fell into almost complete ruin during the nineteenth century, but since 1900 the work has surpassed anything previously done. More and more Tarahumaras are becoming educated and contact with the outside world is increasing.

A railroad was recently completed across the Sierra Tarahumara, a factor which will have a great effect on the Tarahumara missions. It was begun in 1900 by A. E. Stilwell, an enterprising financier. He had dreams of building a line which would make Kansas City several hundred miles closer to the Pacific Ocean than anywhere in California. It was to begin in Kansas City, go down through San Angelo, Texas, Chihuahua City, across the Sierra Tarahumara and end on the Gulf of Lower California. The construction went well at first, but the Mexican Revolution, bankruptcy and the rugged *barrancas* of the Sierra Tarahumara all but stopped the work. In 1951, Mexico decided to give it a try and by using twenty-four bridges and seventy three tunnels, they were able to cross the mountains. It is one of the most modern and scenic railroads in North America, passing within a few yards of the edge of the Barranca del Urique (Barranca del Cobre). Places which formerly took two or three days to reach by horseback, such as Cuiteco, are now easily accessible.

Although the missionaries have done much and the rugged mountains are becoming more accessible, the main problem still remaining is the conviction that in most cases Christianity is still something brought in by outsiders and run by outsiders. Only in rare instances can it be seen as something vitally identified with the Tarahumara way of life. "Do you wonder," said Ramón López, as he spoke in a Mexico City church,

why the seed of God's Word sown among the Tarahumaras has been slow to sprout? We were always taught by the old ones that Mexicans were children of the devil, black spiders; and that Americans were snakes. When these outsiders came to talk to us about spiritual things it

seemed impossible that they should have anything to teach us, the "sons of God."<sup>224</sup>

Having the Scriptures in their own language has already broken down some of the barriers and taught the Tarahumaras many things. Those who make up the young church are themselves slowly beginning to carry the Scriptures to the *barrancas*. As this happens, Christianity will no longer be the religion of the *choboches*, but will be fully incorporated into the Tarahumara culture as well.

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<sup>224</sup> Sermon by Ramón López, quoted in Ellen Carlson, Tarahumara Sequel (for He Purposeth a Crop), MS, no date, 1.

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