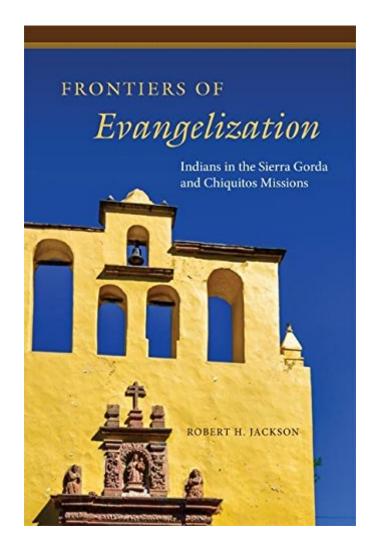


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Frontiers Of Evangelization: Indians In The Sierra Gorda And Chiquitos Missions





Synopsis

The Spanish crown wanted native peoples in its American territories to be evangelized and, to that end, facilitated the establishment of missions by various Catholic orders. Focusing on the Franciscan missions of the Sierra Gorda in Northern New Spain (Mexico) and the Jesuit missions of Chiquitos in what is now Bolivia, Frontiers of Evangelization takes a comparative approach to understanding the experiences of indigenous populations in missions on the frontiers of Spanish America. Marshaling a wealth of data from sacramental, military, and census records, Robert H. Jackson explores the many factors that influenced the stability of mission settlements, including the indigenous communitiesâ [™] previous subsistence patterns and family structures, the evangelical techniques of the missionary orders, the social and political organization within the mission communities, and epidemiology in relation to population density and mobility. The two orders, Jacksonâ [™]s research shows, organized and administered their missions very differently. The Franciscans took a heavy-handed approach and implemented disruptive social policies, while the Jesuits engaged in a comparatively â œkinder and gentlerâ • form of colonization. Yet the most critical factor to the missionsâ [™] success, Jackson finds, was the indigenous peoplesâ [™] existing demographic profilea "in particular, their mobility. Nonsedentary populations, like the Pames and Jonaces of the Sierra Gorda, were more prone to demographic collapse once brought into the mission system, whereas sedentary groups, like the GuaranA- of Chiquitos, experienced robust growth and greater resistance to disease and natural disaster. Drawing on more than three decades of scholarly work, this analysis of crucial archival material augments our understanding of the role of missions in colonization, and the fate of indigenous peoples in Spanish America.

Book Information

File Size: 13432 KB Print Length: 209 pages Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0806157720 Publisher: University of Oklahoma Press (July 21, 2017) Publication Date: July 21, 2017 Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC Language: English ASIN: B073VCH7SS Text-to-Speech: Enabled X-Ray: Not Enabled Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #590,916 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #48 in Books > History > Americas > South America > Bolivia #156 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Americas > Latin America > Mexico #531 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Tribal & Ethnic > Native American

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