

CHARLES E. O'NEILL, S. J.

## THE MISSIOLOGY OF EUSEBIO KINO

### *Definition of Term and Scope of Paper*

*Missiology* or *missionology* is a twentieth-century term. The concept, however, existed in previous centuries although without the selfconsciousness that has evolved in this century. By *missiology* is meant the study of the purpose and methods of spreading the gospel in regions and among populations where the Christian faith is unknown or less well known.

In Italian both *missiologia* and *missionologia* are heard; in the Italian version of this paper I choose *missiologia* over *missionologia* because *missiologia* is becoming more popular and is closer to the French and English terms, *missiologie* and *missiology*.

Eusebio Kino, born and raised in a given period and culture, formed his missiology, his theology of missions, as a man of his times. In this paper we want to understand his mind on this theme. Since Kino could not have known the term *missiology* and since he did not write self-consciously upon the topic, one must search for his thought in various writings and in his action. Proceeding in this fashion, one can, without anachronism, formulate the missiology of Kino.

We will also want to see how his thought conforms or contrasts with twentieth-century missiology. Therefore I will first set forth a twentiethcentury statement of missiology. Then I will examine the characteristics of Kino's missiology. And finally I will sum up ways in which Kino was «modern» and ways in which Kino's mind differs from the typical missiology of the late twentieth-century.

In looking for an exposition of late twentieth-century Catholic missionology, one can hardly do better than cite *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the apostolic exhortations published by Pope Paul VI on 8 December 1975 <sup>(1)</sup>. Let me list in brief declaratory statements the missiology of this document:

The purpose of the Church is to evangelize.

To evangelize is to preach Jesus Christ, without whom there is no evangelization. Evangelization must penetrate a culture, but must retain its transcendental message. There are close ties between evangelization and human development: the social obligations preached in evangelization promote peace, justice, development and liberation. In human development, evangelization seeks to overcome famine, diseases, indigence, illiteracy and neo-colonialism.

Evangelization judges imperfect every political system. Political liberation carries within itself the germ of its own negation. In liberation the Gospel rejects violence, which always calls forth further violence.

The Church respects a wholesome secularity which recognizes the legitimate autonomy of earthly realities; this mentality is not the same as secularism that rejects God. Evangelization respects popular religiosity and, also, non-Christian religions. Evangelization must be worldwide.

The Church is universal, incarnating itself in the local churches; the message of the Gospel should be expressed in the «anthropological» language of the various peoples of the world. Evangelization requires lay participants in various ministries.

### *Missiology of Kino*

Now let us search out the characteristics of the missiology of Eusebio Kino. As we go along in setting forth these characteristics, well before I reach a concluding summary, the reader/hearer will be able to perceive certain aspects which show Kino as a man of the seventeenth century and certain aspects which, despite the passage of almost three centuries, show him to be lastingly «modern».

---

<sup>(1)</sup> *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 68 (1976) 5-76. English edition: *Rome, Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*, 1976.

## 1. Divine Providence

In the universal providence of God the time had come for these particular peoples of California and Pimería to receive the gospel. It was in accord with that providential provision that he, Eusebio Kino, had been sent to them. Evangelization, Kino liked to repeat, is the most divine of human deeds, for it brings salvation to those who do not have it (2). Thus the work the missionary does is God's work.

In consequence, under providence Kino can proceed fearlessly; he attributed his safety among unknown Indians to divine protection (3). In Kino's missiology we have the key to his intrepidity as he traveled without arms in unknown regions.

Despite this lofty concept of divine providence Kino was, surprisingly enough, preoccupied with the comet he observed on several occasions (1680-1681). For the comet foreboded evil (4). Kino, the astronomer and the cosmographer, was also the victim of the astrological views of his times.

## 2. Salvation

Evangelization was bringing salvation to those who had it not. These Indians, Kino wrote, can now *«save themselves eternally»* (5). Previously, they were, without Christ, subject to the devil. Whatever obstacles arose in the missions were to be seen as trials to be overcome with heavenly favors so as to move toward the goal of eternal salvation of souls (6). The calumnies that were often spread concerning the Pimas were stirred up by the devil, and *«served to hinder and delay the eternal blessing of salvation of these poor creatures»* (7).

It was precisely for this transcendental purpose that Kino had personally gone to the missions: to obtain his own salvation *«but not less so the conversion and salvation of the pagan natives»* (8).

The eternal purpose of his mission Kino kept ever clear even when he was promoting temporal development. The planting of seed, the reaping of crops served him as a reminder of the harvest of souls, copiously to be reaped with heaven's favor (9).

---

(2) *Kino... Duchess*, 76 and 84.

(3) *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 321; II, 117. *Favores Celestiales*, 151; 253.

(4) *Kino... Duchess*, 104 and 142.

(5) *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 94; II, 250. *Favores Celestiales*, 8; 349.

(6) *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 102; 217. *Favores Celestiales*, 12; 83.

(7) *Kino's Historical Memoir*, II, 32. *Favores Celestiales*, 194.

(8) *Kino... Duchess*, 92.

(9) *Kino... Duchess*, 152. *Kino's Saeta*, 161.

### 3. Worldwide Perspective and Zeal

Although God's salvific will is universal, the divine plan requires human evangelists. To spread the opportunity for salvation by human enterprise according to God's will was the motive for Kino's explorations.

It was not restlessness or curiosity that kept him moving north and west, but rather a zeal as insatiable as was that of his model Francis Xavier. It is observable, of course, in Kino's writings that he had a zestful relish for exploration, but his basic motivation for facing the hardships of frontier travel was religious. And when he was criticized for moving about too much. Father General Tirso González recognized the religious reasons for Kino's behaviour <sup>(10)</sup>.

Kino wished to missionize the entire California coast, which in turn would provide useful communication with Japan and China, - China whither young Kino had yearned to go. He wished also to find the commonly imagined northern passage between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans <sup>(11)</sup>.

### 4. Other religions

Kino reported that the Pimas and their neighbors lacked the religious traditions, cult, clergy and philosophy that Christian missionaries found in, for example, China and Japan. For that very reason, he concluded, more missionaries should promptly be sent to join in the rapid evangelization that was more readily achievable in the lands he was exploring. According to his observation, the local Indians venerated the sun as a remarkable thing: evangelized concerning the Creator, they readily understood that He created the world and all its creatures <sup>(12)</sup>. In an exceptional case he spoke of a priest of a native religion. A Quiquima captain killed a Noabonoma priest who was actively opposing the entry of Christianity. Since such opposition was malevolent and evil, Kino did not condemn the act; nor did he expressly condone it. Rather he saw it as a sign that these «gentiles» were serious about their readiness to receive Christianity <sup>(13)</sup>.

---

<sup>(10)</sup> *Kino... Duchess*, 83. *Kino's Plan*, 33. *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 94. *Favores Celestiales*, 8. *Correspondencia... Generales*, 46.

<sup>(11)</sup> *Kino Reports*, 121. *Correspondencia... Generales*, 71. *Kino's Historical Memoir*, II, 258. *Favores Celestiales*, 356. *Kino's Plan*, 33.

<sup>(12)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, II, 270. *Favores Celestiales*, 365.

<sup>(13)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, II, 169. *Favores Celestiales*, 292.

Although he did not record evidence of cult and prayer among the new «conversions» – as he termed the peoples and their areas – he repeatedly reported their religious reception of the gospel message. He constantly registers their requests for a resident missionary. He respected their popular piety which prompted them to offer babies for baptism even before they themselves could be prepared for it by catechumenate instruction <sup>(14)</sup>.

These lands, where Christianity had not previously been preached, he called *gentilidades*, which Herbert Eugene Bolton translated into English as *heathendoms*. By «lands of the gentiles» Kino means «lands of pagans». Kino held a quite territorial conception of Christendom. Beyond the confines of lands where Christianity is known and lived, beyond the confines of the frontier areas that had been «reduced» and «converted, » there lay the lands over which the devil had a dominion he was loath to lose. Hence Satan sought to cause problems and create obstacles to prevent the peaceful «conquest and conversion» of these regions lest he lose what he held <sup>(15)</sup>.

The entry, conquest, reduction, conversion of these areas was a wrenching away from the empire of the devil. The incorporation of these lands into the empire of his Catholic majesty, the king of Spain, was their integration into Christendom. The secular colonial activity and the religious missionary activity went hand in hand for the service of «both majesties», the Divine Majesty and the human majesty of the king of Spain <sup>(16)</sup>.

## 5. Spanish Colonial Empire

The colonial «reduction» was, in Kino's eyes, liberation. It was the process whereby peace and justice were established. The king of Spain, be he Charles II or Philip V, was the guarantor of the well-being of these subjects who passed from a formless diabolical empire, where intertribal warfare raged and penury prevailed, to the orderly stable empire of peace and prosperity under the Catholic monarch <sup>(17)</sup>.

---

<sup>(14)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 286; 290; 308; 370; and *passim Favores Celestiales*, 128, 130, 143, 180; and *passim*

<sup>(15)</sup> *Kino... Duchess*, 196. *Kino's Saeta*, 107. *Kino's Historical Memoir*, II, 72. *Favores Celestiales*, 219.

<sup>(16)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, II, 34; 273. *Favores Celestiales*, 196; 367.

<sup>(17)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 85; 88; 105; 202; 303; II, 32; 72; 101. *Favores Celestiales*, 3; 5; 15; 75; 140; 194; 219; 242.

Philip V according to Kino was like a «*new and most Christian Atlas*» who had the responsibility of holding this «*new world of souls in his Catholic hands*». It was his role to bring western North America to the Catholic Church <sup>(18)</sup>.

To Kino, the benefits of the colonial empire for the Indian outweighed any loss. As a matter of fact, I do not recall seeing in Kino's writings any statement concerning any loss, spiritual or material. Implicitly, he seems to say: conquest is liberation. Because the «reduced» Indians were given not only the religious opportunity for salvation, but also the temporal benefit of military protection that freed them from the perennial marauding of violent neighbors, the king of Spain brought prosperous safety not enslavement. Therefore the «conquest» of new areas was in Kino's eyes not some regrettable domination but rather «*happy obedience and fortunate vassalage*» <sup>(19)</sup>.

To eliminate fear of «reduction» and to distinguish more clearly its benefits, Kino obtained from the king a five-year exemption for his new Christians from the tax of obligatory labor. This exemption was then generalized and extended to twenty years by the royal *cédula* of Charles II of 14 May 1686, lest the levy of labor frighten off the prospective converts <sup>(20)</sup>.

The *conquista*, in Kino's concept, had to win the Indians by kind treatment not by arms. He boasted that he personally had never had nor had ever needed military protection. He denounced the excessive violence of the repression that followed the killing of Father Francisco Xavier Saeta. On another occasion he condemned the conduct of a brutal avaricious lieutenant <sup>(21)</sup>.

The authority of the royal responsibility mentioned above was to be exercised, according to Kino, with restraint, indeed with pacific charity. In those critical weeks that followed the killing of Saeta, Kino soberly pleaded for compassionate and comprehensive reflection on the reality he and his fellow European Christians were living through. He recalled Tertullian's words: «*The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians*». Kino, not wanting it to be made the seed of more bloodshed, made this recommendation: «*We must not for any reason fail to try to remedy our own errors, faults,*

---

<sup>(18)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, II, 43; 224. *Favores Celestiales*, 200; 331.

<sup>(19)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 95; *Favores Celestiales*, 8.

<sup>(20)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 108-109. *Favores Celestiales*, 16-17. *Kino and Manje*, 36, 40, 59.

<sup>(21)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 145; 163; II, 124; 250. *Favores Celestiales*, 40; 53; 259; 349.

*defects, harshness or severity, and our narrowness, displays of temper and foolish resentments. Our common sense, prudence, and Christian charity has to solve and overcome these difficulties in dealing even with these most barbaric peoples, winning them for our most Catholic King and for our eternal God* (22).

## 6. Peace without pacifism

Yet Kino, who sought justice and peace, was not a pacifist. He boasted of the loyalty and bravery of his Pimas in the enduring struggle against the Apaches, who periodically made raids from the northeast. The Pimería, in his view, constituted a march, a brave buffer province on the northern frontier that gave Christian New Spain, and particularly the province of Sonora, military protection against the pagan marauders. «*During the past fifteen years,*» he wrote in 1703, «*our Indians of the Pimería have on various occasions fought with valor and loyalty against the enemies of the province of Sonora... to the benefit... of those brought into the faith years ago*» (23).

Kino did not shrink from verifying the evidence of a Piman victory over the Apache. In April of 1698 he viewed the bodies and also the spoils taken in battle. To military authorities he relayed the news of «*the fortunate event*» (24).

Yet he was a peacemaker, and sought to put an end to the longlasting hostilities between tribes he met in his exploratory journeys. It is the devil, Kino preached, who stirs up hostility and killing so that slayer and slain may go to hell. He invited the Indians to become peaceful Christians and give up war. With God's help, Kino reported, he established peace on the lower Gila River. In preaching against war, Kino excepted the case in which it was necessary to fight against the enemies of the faith; to die in such a battle resembled martyrdom (25).

And Kino was, of course, a peace-making mediator between Spaniard and Indian as well as between Indian and Indian (26). After the killing of Saeta, mentioned above, Kino emphasized how few Pimas had participated in the violence against the padre and

---

(22) *Kino's Saeta*, 83.

(23) *Kino's Plan*, 32.

(24) *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 181. *Favores Celestiales*, 63.

(25) *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 197. *Favores Celestiales*, 70.

(26) *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 248; 288. *Favores Celestiales*, 104; 129.

the village. After persuasive mediation Kino had the satisfaction of fostering and witnessing the reconciliation in which Spanish generals embraced Pima-leaders <sup>(27)</sup>.

## 7. Respect and kindness for the Indian

The Indian was kind and friendly; therefore the colonizer had to cultivate kindness toward the Indian. Kino, in constantly repeating the fact of the observed mildness and friendliness of the Pimas, the Yumas, the Quiquimas and the Indians of the California peninsula, is in effect constantly exhorting his fellow-Europeans to correspond in such a way as to favor evangelization <sup>(28)</sup>.

His thesis, an antidote to racism, can be paraphrased this way: These peoples are civilized - except for Christian faith and technological development. Both of these benefits can be extended to them without force. Let civilization be extended in a civilized way <sup>(29)</sup>.

Kindness to the Indian should be, he argued, the hallmark of a civilized and civilizing entry into the new territories. *«Thanks to the Most High, by means of the celestial favor of this very wonderful and pacific charity, more will be attained now than by ordinary human agencies and by the military labors of arms and wars»* <sup>(30)</sup>.

Kino's personal respect for the Indian manifested itself in his esteem for the caciques and captains, whose human leadership qualities he admired. It is shown perhaps even more in his reliance upon translators when he first announced the gospel to tribes he met on his exploratory journeys; while it is true that he was helpless because of ignorance of the local language, it is equally true that he was thus commissioning a Christian neophyte to share in the evangelizing which was the *«most divine of human works»*. Similarly at his home mission and in outlying stations he formed lay catechists who thus shared in the sacred ministry <sup>(31)</sup>.

Kino's missiology included indigenous self help. The mission was not simply to receive passively from benefactors. It was to

---

<sup>(27)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 149. *Favores Celestiales*, 43.

<sup>(28)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir* II, 94; 160; 185; and *passim*. *Favores Celestiales*, 235; 286; 305.

<sup>(29)</sup> *Correspondencia... Generales*, 85. *Kino... Duchess*, 135, 175.

<sup>(30)</sup> *Kino's Historical Memoir*, I, 99. *Favores Celestiales*, 10.

<sup>(31)</sup> See, for example, «El Coro» in index of *Kino's Historical Memoir*, and *ibid.*, II, 271. «Coro, Capitán» in index of *Favores Celestiales*; *ibid.*, 365. *Kino and Manje*, 59, *Kino's Saeta*, 148-149.



produce for itself <sup>(32)</sup>. Here too is evidence of Kino's understanding of human dignity as well as of his own human practicality.

Unlike Jesuit missionaries in some other parts of the world who, for good reason, had a policy of separating the Native American Christians from the Europeans, Kino had positive views on the presence of colonists. He who respected the Indian also respected the colonist, and favored the introduction of colonial families (not individuals) into the new territories. He foresaw advantages for the human development and temporal prosperity of his indigenous neophytes. He recommended that on the frontier the government spend money for families and their farms rather than for soldiers and forts, which in the context would be unnecessary <sup>(33)</sup>.

## 8. Promotion of human development

While the standard of living and the level of technology varied according to tribe and territory, Kino in his explorations found indigence, lack of food and clothing, poor water supply and other aspects of underdeveloped human living. <sup>(34)</sup> Facing these conditions, he considered the promotion of material development as an essential element of the Spanish-Indian encounter, of the Christian-pagan encounter.

His personal campaign for human development involved animal husbandry and agriculture, irrigation and architecture. His concern and skill in raising livestock can be seen in the frequent repetition of numbers of heads of horses, mules, burros, cattle, sheep and goats that were in given missions and dependencies. The skills and labors that Kino praised in Saeta, he also cultivated himself <sup>(35)</sup>. (It is significant that Eusebio grew up in a rural village). There was also a dimension of social responsibility in his husbandry. Any established mission should, in Kino's view, supply the wherewithal for the establishment of new missions. The common good demanded a sense of sharing <sup>(36)</sup>.

Each time Kino described a mission station, his pragmatic mind and eye wove the material scene in with the spiritual: church, residence, corrals and fields, along with praying, teaching and singing. His missionary aim was to evangelize, yes, but at the same

---

<sup>(32)</sup> *Kino... Duchess*, 212.

<sup>(33)</sup> *Kino's Plan*, 33. *Kino's Historical Memoir*, II, 178-179. *Favores Celestiales*, 298-299.

<sup>(34)</sup> *Kino and Manje*, 184, 186, 264.

<sup>(35)</sup> *Kino's Saeta*, 54.

<sup>(36)</sup> *Kino... Duchess*, 212. *Kino Reports*, 99, 103, 113, 119.

time to form prosperous pueblos <sup>(37)</sup>. He seems, moreover, never to have had a crisis or complex in keeping priorities clear among the diverse functions he performed. Another contribution of Kino to secular human development is to be found in his advancement of cartographic and geographic knowledge. I need only mention it here for the topic is being treated in another paper of this symposium.

## 9. Profile of the model missionary

We can conclude this survey of Kino's missionology with the profile he sketched of the model missionary.

The volunteer for the foreign missions should, Kino recommended, cultivate devotion to Christ suffering, kindle zeal for souls and practice acceptance of comfortless living <sup>(38)</sup>.

What the mature missionary should be, Kino portrayed in his presentation of the words and ways of Father Saeta. First and foremost, the missionary should have «*a strong and loving concern for the temporal and spiritual welfare of impoverished and destitute people*»; indeed, he should have for them the affection of a father and a mother in the face of difficulties <sup>(39)</sup>. He should pray often, work hard and accept suffering. He should maintain a sense of tolerance. These qualities Kino judged more important than intelligence and eloquence <sup>(40)</sup>.

## Conclusion

In conclusion let us pick out the characteristics of Kino's missionology which, in the development of doctrine, are now passed over in silence or are positively excluded in post-Vatican II missionology. His acceptance of a dimension of astrology, wherein a comet transmits a foreboding message, seems all too quaint.

Already well before Vatican Council II, Catholic theology emphasized missions as the «planting of the Church», and, reflecting on the universal salvific will of God, thought more positively concerning the salvation of the unbeliever. The Second Vatican

---

<sup>(37)</sup> One example among others: *Kino's Saeta*, 154-155.

<sup>(38)</sup> *Kino... Duchess*, 81-82.

<sup>(39)</sup> *Kino's Saeta*, 192-195.

<sup>(40)</sup> *Kino's Saeta*, 192-193; 196-201. The entire Book VIII, pp. 182-217, is most rewarding reading on these themes. The Spanish is found on the even-numbered pages; the English translation on the odd-numbered pages.

Council adopted a positive attitude toward other religions, and precluded a view of lands, where the gospel has been less preached, as lands under the dominion of the devil.

The Church, particularly in the twentieth century, professes a relativism toward political structures, which, as Paul VI pointed out in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, carry within themselves limitations; all political liberation contains the germ of its own undoing. Thus Kino's colonialism is passé. His adulation of Philip V as the royal Catholic Atlas – a mentality shared by other missionaries – prompts interesting historical reflection when one considers that 66 years after Kino's death Charles III, son and heir of Philip V, expelled all Jesuit missionaries from Spanish America.

Let us see which characteristics of Kino's missiology have proved perennial or indeed seem strikingly modern: Perennial is the primacy of the transcendental message of salvation in Jesus Christ, whatever work may be done for promotion of temporal development.

Perennial and modern are his promotion of peace and justice; his teaching of the need for reconciliation among peoples, even after distrust and discord; his judicious acknowledgement of the need of military force to deter or to repel marauders.

Human development is a twentieth-century theme which Kino in his day constantly promoted. He lifted up the standard of living wherever he went, and he fostered mutually humanizing, civilizing, intercultural relations.

Kino had a world vision that went beyond the frontiers he explored (and the means of travel of his day). He loved the Pimas and the Pimería, where he incarnated the universal Church, but simultaneously his mind embraced China and Japan, Spain and Rome, indeed the globe.

Kino's model of the missionary was perennial in its tracing of a self-sacrificing minister of Christ; it was quite modern in portraying him as necessarily tolerant of the unlettered, less technologically developed folk to whom he was missioned. Perennial and modern, too, was Kino's associating lay ministers in his apostolic work.

Eusebio Kino lived up to his own model with coherence and fidelity. He might well be pleased that he is remembered by the State of Sonora and the State of Arizona for his husbandry of livestock. (Was there some vanity in his often reporting the number of head?) But assuredly he would be more pleased to be seen in history as the self-sacrificing pastor of a human flock in need of a humane shepherd, a pastor with a rather clear concept of what he was doing.