

A Survey of *Southwest Texas*

MADE BY

Rev. J. Will Harris, LL. D.

Founder and President of the Polytechnic Institute
of Puerto Rico (1912-1937), now re-
siding in Dilley, Texas

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FOUR COUNTIES: Dimmit, LaSalle, Frio and
Zavala, are used as affording more or less what
would be true of the average cross section of
this Southwest portion of Texas as to,

1. SOIL,
2. POPULATION,
3. SCHOOLS,
4. CHURCHES,
5. CONCLUSIONS,
6. RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTTO:

"What is crooked is to be made straight,
And the rough roads are to be made smooth,
And all mankind is to see how God can save."

—John the Baptist

A Survey of Southwest Texas

1. SOIL AND PRODUCTION

The terrain begins on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, gradually increasing in elevation in a north-westerly direction over rolling hills fronting on the Rio Grande, 150 miles wide, terminating one thousand miles in the Northwest among mountains thousands of feet high, giving a varied climate with unforeseen possibilities of production from semi-tropical to the snowy covered mountains in the Northwest, citrus fruits and papayas to the finest flavored apples with all the varied kinds of fruit between. The Nueces, Frio and Pecos rivers drain the territory. Annual rain fall is least in the territory along the Rio Grande. The land is in spots tilled by farmers. Irrigation is used where water from rivers or artesian wells permits. Dry farming is less hazardous and most land in cultivation is dry farmed. Any place is a real garden if it rains at the right time to mature the crops. Large scale irrigation will break any man without other means of support. It takes daring ingenuity and adherence to rigid program for a dirt farmer to succeed in this territory, due to lack of regular rains. A well-balanced stock farm with some irrigation but principally dry farmed land will support a family on an independent basis and sufficient funds for the education of his children and a guarantee for his old age. But this kind of farming is only partially followed.

It is not strange, therefore, that cattle raising has been and is the principal vocation of the Southwest-erner. Once hundreds of thousands of sheep were herded all over this territory. Grass burrs, needle grass, scrubby mesquite and coyotes drove out the sheep in the late eighties. In their place came the large fenced cattle ranches in sizes from a few sections up to hundreds of sections of land. These have endured longer than sheep ranches. We are now in the beginning of the end of those large cattle ranges, due to high value of range land and to ever increasing taxation. The small stock farms are now producing a greater number of cattle per acre and a higher quality of meat which in turn brings a higher price and larger returns to a greater number of people who live on the land. Where now ranchers often go broke on one hundred sections of land which has supported principally his family in the city, there will come very soon one hundred families living on the land, owners of their section—and a total of 100 families living and owning the land once used to support one family. This means greater cultural advantages for a hundred times as many people.

In addition, it is claimed and partly proven that oil underlies all this territory. There are no industries except for small shops for repairing autos and farm implements. And yet the potential, undeveloped and unknown resources of this Southwest are sufficient to

provide endless years of scientific pioneering if we had eyes to see and a will power to bring these resources to light and to reality. Good highways, railroads and landing fields provide ample transportation. The mercantile business is purely local, generally sufficient for usual demand. Five small banks, well conducted, meet a real demand for the four counties for cash and short time loans. Two Federal agencies, the Production Credit Association giving 4½% short term loans and the National Farm Loan Association giving 4% long term loans on land, have made it possible for anyone with a small capital to buy his land and livestock and tools. They have incidentally brought down the higher rates of interest from all loaning companies.

2. POPULATION

The changes in ownership have come about during the last fifty years to affect the population. One was when up to about 1900 it was an exceptional case if a man did not own his homestead and cattle free of debt. Absentee ownership is now general. Some few small farms have recently been bought and paid for, supposedly, by their owners who expect to make the farm their home. Usually a man buys a ranch or farm and places a hired man on it. There have also come changes in the racial population of this territory. With the exception of towns and ranches actually bordering on the Rio Grande, the population was fifty years ago Saxon. At the point of the sword the Mexican armies were driven out of Texas in 1836, though be it forever remembered that many Mexicans not only fought with and for the independence of Texas, but also became loyal citizens of Texas. The Mexicans have now all but taken possession of this district, not with sword and battle, but with the plow, hoe andariat in clearing off land, building fences, in doing the hard, heavy work of the forerunners of civilization. Through their skill as mechanics, their tact as merchants and their diligence as farmers, they are now slowly but surely becoming leaders and will finally be the rulers of this territory known as the Southwest.

This is due not to a decreasing virility of the Saxon but to his sterility in the reproduction of families. The previous large Saxon families are gone. One or two or at the most three children sometimes, but quite too common no children is the style of this passing generation of married couples along their childless march to racial extermination. On the other hand, the Latin American welcomes his children as a gift from God. His small house overflows and fills the streets of the town and the yards of his country home. The children create a mutually helpful play life, making clay pigeons, etc., as our Saviour is said to have done from the mud in the streets. They consider children their greatest asset. To show the trend of the times, let us take two Saxon families who lived here in 1880:

Family H:	Children		Children
First Generation	8		
Second Generation	21	Should have been	64
Third Generation	20	Should have been	512
	<hr/>		<hr/>
A total of	49	Should have been	576
Family R:			
First generation	9		
Second generation	20	Should have been	81
Third generation	15	Should have been	729
	<hr/>		<hr/>
A total of	44	Should have been	810

Take another example as shown in the school census of the counties named below for the school year of 1944-45:

	Saxons	Latins	Saxons	Latins
Frio	686	1977	25%	75%
LaSalle	498	2073	19%	81%
Zavala	484	2214	18%	82%
Dimmit	572	3343	14%	86%
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	2240	9677	Avg. 19%	Avg. 81%

The above show where the children are to be found. In a democracy for which this land is supposed to be fighting, EQUALITY of Opportunity must be granted and safe-guarded for all alike. The Latin Americans in Texas today are rapidly nearing the million mark. By 1950 we shall probably have over a million Latins with us, 75% of whom are now citizens of Texas. Their children are marrying and making their homes here. The Saxons are marrying and seeking their fortune elsewhere. The Latin American has become an asset to our State under proper leadership and wise cooperation of all citizens there will develop a new order of Christian living in Texas.

3.—SCHOOLS

Our great State of Texas has unknown resources, mineral, industrial and human. Yet notwithstanding all our wealth, our State stands 38th in scholastic standards among the 48 States of the Union. Teachers' salaries are low, and the general setup is such as not to attract, as a life's vocation, those of outstanding teaching ability. Usually the members of the Board of Trustees are successful men in their field but men who have no training either by higher education or by reading that guarantees the wisest direction of a difficult but most important Graded School System. They think buildings make a school. This is an agricultural and animal husbandry district and yet very little if any scientific courses are offered to the youth in High Schools. The courses of study are more adapted to the preparation of students for literary careers than for the modern scientific life which has invaded and enriches all life. It seems that qualification of

teachers is not much emphasized. If she has a license to teach, she is hired and placed in work for which she may have had no special training. For instance, a Latin American youth had finished the Business Administration Course in Texas University, standing as one of the first ten highest students of the University, was employed by the Board of Trustees and placed to teach the most difficult class in school—the First Grade of 90 Latin American pupils (in one room). This was done at a time when there was a vacancy in the High School in the business course. Teachers do unusually good work in spite of the poor management and system. The Grammar Graded School is for Saxons in good buildings, for Latins in separate buildings and not so good. Class attendance is near the 100% mark for the Saxon children and less than 50% for Latins. Teachers loads are light to very small for Saxons and twice too heavy in the Latin grades. Children come from homes where English is not spoken and are plunged into a crowded class room, with a teacher not familiar with the Spanish. She fires away at them, and they do not understand a word she says. The innocent child of American citizens is kept in the same grade for two years, repeatedly fails year after year, until the majority of the Latin American pupils become discouraged and drop out at a low grade. There is a compulsory State School law, yet the Latins are not encouraged let alone forced to attend schools. State aid is granted to all alike. This aid amounts to some 30.00 annually per pupil and is used to maintain separate schools of small classes for the Saxons, a great deal like our private schools in cities. If Saxons want a private school, they should most surely have it, but they should pay for it and not take funds drawn in the name of the Latin American children and given by the State for the education of children of Latin American citizens.

4. THE CHURCHES

There are 54 Christian churches, including 10 Roman Catholic. Everyone doing its best to win the few Saxon children into its particular man-made way of belief; nine different denominational setups—enough to confuse any thinking human being. Religion has not been allowed to function in the pattern of earthly life and needs of man in this life. Religion as held by most churchmen is for the opening of the gates of Heaven to the pious after he has lived his life here below in frustration. People are led to be more concerned about their particular denomination than to unite with all believers in bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth. People went to heaven before Christ Jesus came to this world. Christ the Divine Redeemer came and definitely stated WHY He came, viz. to open up the Way for us all to live on earth and to live more abundantly as brethren in a perfecting fellowship with God and an enriched and an enriching association with our fellowman, to live a

life of "Satisfaction that is popping with novelty and exciting adventure." Take a look at Christ's Manifesto in Luke 4:17-18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for He has anointed me

1. to preach the Gospel to the POOR—the economically disinherited.
2. to proclaim release for the CAPTIVE—the social and politically disinherited.
3. recovery of sight for the BLIND—the physically disinherited.
4. to set free the OPPRESSED—the spiritual and morally disinherited.
5. to proclaim the Lord's year of Favor. (Moffat's transl). Now is the time for the introduction of the 4 objectives into our American Christianity.

For the POOR this is not freedom in poverty but freedom from poverty. For the CAPTIVE it is social and political and racial freedom, from limitations placed on him by man. For the BLIND it is freedom from physical handicaps, due to neglect and ignorance in great part. For the OPPRESSED it is moral and spiritual freedom of the souls of all mankind.

These five freedoms began with Christ's Manifesto and are the 4 objectives of Christ's coming to this world. It is the year of Jubilee for all peoples, all classes, all races, all colors, for Christ looks not as man looks on the outward appearance of a man but upon his heart.

In this manifesto of Christ the believer finds a daily challenge so large and attractive and satisfying, that there will be a constant growing, thrilling work for the child, for the youth, for the prime of life and for old age. No church service can ever drag or fail to attract the masses if its membership is shot through with these five OBJECTIVES of Christ. It is what the world is waiting for, and what has been committed to the Church. The Church has hid it under a bushel—lost it in forms, symbols, exclusive doctrines and rituals. When the Church awakens to the full understanding of what is implied and involved in this MANIFESTO of Christ there will be a revolution, and house cleaning in the heart of every individual believer around the world. Then will follow a rapid extension of the Kingdom of God on EARTH.

Let us now look at the actual setup of the churches here. We are separated into two main divisions, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. The Roman Catholics have their clashing divisions, but these are not allowed to function usually in the same field. These are also confined to the Clergy and to the Sisters, and are not entered into by the laity. The Laity enters any Roman Catholic building wherever found and finds it his house of prayer and worship regardless of his race, class or color. This gives a spirit of solidarity among the members.

This is not true in the Protestant churches. All too often we consider a certain church building as our

only place of obligation and worship. There is often no urge and really a hesitancy to go uninvited to a strange church. Our individual churches often become classy and exclusive. The general rule in this territory is that the Saxon church is for Saxons only. No one is urged to come to the church unless he qualifies and fits in a certain general rule of qualifications, which rule usually does not require an unconditional surrender to Christ. They even go further and maintain an exclusive sectarian doctrine of fellowship. The main purpose of the churches in general is to pay their pastor's salary, if and when he pleases them, and to attend preaching services when convenient. They come to think that set forms of worship or the form of no form at all, coupled with church attendance produce in them and make of them a finished product. In other words, they measure themselves by themselves. The ministry has become a profession and seldom reaches the height of a mission. The preaching is to save the sinners who are not members of the church and to make sure of their eternal life in Heaven if they will join the church. The moral and spiritual FREEDOM is the appeal made regularly from the pulpits, stressing only the fourth and fifth Freedoms; the first three freedoms are unknown or considered unimportant till the souls of all men are secured by membership in the church.

There are too few young people in any church to maintain a wholesome, vigorous youth life for linking up with the great youth movements of our land. Every denomination is zealous in retaining their few children in its particular organization, and rejoices to get children from other denominations. The church should never become the social center for its members. The home is the true social centre of youth. In the home it is perfectly natural and permissible to select congenial individuals into groups, clubs, etc. Such cannot be done in a church and maintain the Christ-like attitude. And yet, the home as a social and religious institution, is now dead. Youths pass their time in movies, in honky-tonks, and in parked automobiles along the dark, shady sides of unpaved streets and wayside roads, instead of in the parlor or lawn of their homes. Our homes are too often only houses. The unattractiveness of a home is multiplied by the children found there, the more children the happier the home. In fact, a home cannot be a home without children. As racial birth control has brought the Saxon race to a point of extermination, the radical sectarianism is bringing the churches into a loss of their power in fullest community welfare, and is leading the churches to their final extermination of themselves and by themselves. Unless some way is soon adopted by which all people who love Jesus Christ, regardless of race, color and class, can work and worship as brethren in the realization of the great objectives for which Christ died, in a solid united effort, the usefulness of the church will end. As God set aside His chosen people, so He will in time have to set aside His chosen church for disobedience to His

revealed will, unless that church follows Christ's precepts more closely.

There are not enough Protestant church members to maintain more than one strong church in any community, and yet there are forty-four churches and nine denominations trying to maintain churches for the exclusive use of the Saxon race. The churches, as are, block the development of a united community for the social and religious life of the people and for the people. The city of Dilley has a population of some 1400 with less than two hundred Saxon people, and only a few Saxon homes have children of school age. The same prevails in the surrounding country with rare exceptions among the Protestants.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The racial and religious setup in the country is not leading to the betterment of the community life and welfare. I think that the generally fine, good, viril-blooded Saxons of this country will come to understand and believe that the Church is the main institution of God in the world; that the main institution of God in the world must exist to accomplish the main purpose of God in the world; that the main purpose of God in the world was clearly stated by Jesus in Luke 4:17-18, in His definite objectives for all believers. 1. To do away with poverty. 2. To make us all brethren. 3. To cure ~~the~~ physical ills. 4. To cleanse the moral and spiritual soul of every believer. I therefore pass from these confusing and unchristian strivings of our churches to the

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that we, as Presbyterians, invite our brethren of other denominations of this territory to unite with us in presenting a solid Protestant front in a united effort of service to all human beings in this territory. Great and broad tolerance of the right of believers in things not essential to salvation must characterize the Christian Church. Since many Saxons do not understand the WHY of so many denominations (many of whom attend no church service because of this confusion of sectarian setups), and since Latins are generally free of all our complicated background, it is now our opportunity to extend the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Latins especially free from all denominationally divided theories, and to the Saxon now confused non-church members. Requirement for membership should be faith in and acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and their Saviour. New church members should be taught the full implications of Luke 4:17-18. This to be an interdenominational, Christian work for all, established and supported by all denominations who will cooperate.

Recommended approaches in order noted:

The FIRST APPROACH—A FIRST CLASS HOSPITAL. We have no hospital in this part of Texas

especially for the economically disinherited majority. There are three small clinics, the good intentions of as many doctors. The people are dying like flies without doctors. In one locality the local druggist has to sign burial certificates. He usually states the cause of death as "bowel trouble." A hospital is needed by all not only for curing but for preventing sickness. The people of this Southwest will help generously with the buildings and equipment to cost, for one hundred beds, an estimated \$2,00,000. The main support is planned to be met by the annual payment of insurance by 3,000 families, of \$25.00 to \$50.00 each; doctors' salaries \$50,000, hospital expenses \$50,000; a total expense of \$100,000 annually. That we ask the associated mission boards or Synods and Conferences to hold title to the property and to elect the Administrative Committees, also to be willing to help out in special emergencies. The above are tentative estimates.

The SECOND APPROACH shall be—Building units in every town where work is carried forward. Here again we can reasonably count on local support in the erection costs of the buildings, at least in part. These shall be:

A. A modern, attractive church building, both inside and out, to be air-conditioned, and to remain open for prayer and worship from 5 a. m. to 9 p. m.. The Latins are accustomed and need such a house of prayer.

The same architectural style of building to be used so as to present one single type of building, smaller or larger according to needs of locality, this would help to emphasize the unity and cooperative effort of the Christian citizens.

B. An educational, social and recreational building. There shall be the teaching of the first four grades, in SPANISH, for beginners from our Latin families.

C. A plaza with a central band-stand for the use of the public.

THIRD APPROACH shall be—TRAINED LEADERSHIP of educated ministers, social workers, nurses and Bible Readers, and teachers, able to use fluently both languages. Every church to be regularly supplied by a minister. The social life of the youth to be in the hands of the youth, and all religious services to be zippy as far as necessary to get us out of the ruts.

Fourth Approach—A Capable SUPERINTENDENT. He must know and use the Spanish and English languages fluently, with growing ideas of a church marching under orders to win the world to Christ, as our great friend Robert E. Speer used to ring out, "in this generation."

FIFTH APPROACH — COLANIZATION OF YOUNG MARRIED COUPLES. The establishment of a practical and theoretical demonstration farm for sixty young married couples, where they may learn how to live and grow into abundant living on a stock farm of their own. The plans for this have been fully

worked out in detail and are ready for immediate prosecution.

All the above will take a certain amount of money to start—and a great deal more money to maintain. The human element is far more portentous and difficult to secure, for this requires deeply consecrated personalities of Christian understanding.

The FIVE OBJECTIVES of Christ's Manifesto require of His followers:

1. The eradication of poverty.
2. The establishment of a real brotherhood among men with equality of opportunity for all regardless of class, race or color.
3. The prevention and cure of diseases and the overcoming of physical handicaps, and the preservation of a healthy body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.
4. The salvation and development of the soul of man into the likeness of Christ and
5. To do all this NOW.

This means UNCONDITIONAL surrender to God and the doing of HIS will seven days in every week. This means the lowering of no class, color or race, but the elevation of all mankind to an efficient service for the good of man and the glory of God.

My fellow Texans, we are made up of, approximately, two hundred thousand Saxons and one million Latin Americans. Let us "undertake to take communities where they are, and bring them out where it is very much worth while going." Let us say with the poet:

I cannot do it alone;
The waves run fast and high,
And the fogs close chill around,
And the light goes out in the sky;
But I know that WE TWO
Shall win in the end—
JESUS and I.

Coward, wayward and weak,
I change with the changing sky,
Today, so eager and bright,
Tomorrow, too weak to try;
But HE never gives in,
So WE TWO shall win—
JESUS and I.

Signed,

J. WILL HARRIS,
Dilley, Texas.