

precise description of the contents, including topics covered, rhetorical strategies, methods of exhortation, and religious or secular orientation. The combination of her perceptive analysis of the genre and the catalogue Newton has compiled means that *Learning to Behave* is sure to be a useful resource for any historian of gender, childhood, education, or American culture.

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William B. Taylor — *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. xiv, 868.

For historians of colonial Mexico, William Taylor's name has long been a byword for quality and influential work. His two previous books challenged accepted notions of land tenure and showed how the use of criminal documents had potential to elucidate the patterns of daily life. His books are already classics in the field, required reading for many an undergraduate and any graduate student. This latest work does not disappoint: in fact, Taylor has surpassed his previous achievements with a book which surely will become a classic and standard reading for anyone with more than a passing interest in the field.

This book is centred around two main questions. First, Taylor wishes to assess the effects of the Bourbon reforms upon the parish priests of New Spain. These reforms — the result of the new administrative thrust following the replacement of the Hapsburgs by the Bourbon dynasty — had far-ranging consequences for the place of religion in colonial Latin America. Their aim was to limit the power of the church and to bring it more securely under the control of the state. One major element of these reforms which particularly affected parish priests was the secularization of parishes, that is, the transfer of many parishes from control by the regular clergy to the secular clergy. The second major question derives from the first: Taylor delves into the connection between these reforms and the participation of parish priests in the 1810 Hidalgo revolt which led to Mexican independence. The prominence of such revolt leaders as Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos — both parish priests — and many other less celebrated parish priests who were participants in the insurrection makes this a particularly important question.

Taylor chose to focus upon two major regions: the archdiocese of Mexico in the centre of the nation and the diocese of Guadalajara further to the north. He does, however, also include a great deal of information about jurisdictions within the diocese of Puebla. The choice of these two ecclesiastical units corresponds with his premise. It was in the archdiocese of Guadalajara — precisely in the town of Dolores — that the 1810 movement for independence began. This approach also allows Taylor to compare the impact of the Bourbon reforms upon both places as well as to measure the societal changes which resulted in a comparative manner.

The book is divided into three parts. The first section serves as an introduction,

dealing with the issue of the Bourbon reforms and their effect upon religion in New Spain, the regions studied, and regional patterns. Finally, Taylor discusses the historiography and major issues of the study of religion in colonial Mexico.

The second section covers the lives, careers, and functions of parish priests. Part of this section concentrates upon what could be termed the practical aspects of priesthood. Taylor discusses the education that priests received, their competitions for places, their careers, and the way in which they made a living. He also examines the participation of priests in the life of the communities in which they lived. They not only served as judges but were important figures in the community. Their role was that of community leader if their parishioners respected them. Of course, not all priests lived up to this standard, and many communities denounced their priests to the bishops or even to the inquisition. Nevertheless, priests were powerful figures in these small communities; they expected respect and deference and often had considerable power to punish parishioners physically: by beatings, whippings, hair pulling, hair cutting, and even a stay in the parish jail.

The last section focuses upon the parishioners. Taylor examines their participation in local celebrations, their enthusiasm for religious figures such as Santiago (Saint James Moorslayer) and the Virgin of Guadalupe, and their participation in *cofradías* (lay sodalities). The parish priests are not absent from this discussion; rather, Taylor shows their role in channelling the faith and zeal of parishioners into these activities. Taylor then examines the relations between the parish priests and the communities. He describes the lay network of officials such as *fiscales*, sacristans, cantors, and schoolmasters who worked for or with the parish priest. The priest also had to deal with the community government, and their relationships were not always peaceful. Taylor examines the most common sources of conflict as well as the way disputes were conducted and resolved.

The extent of the research undertaken by Taylor to write this book is staggering. He does not seem to have left any stone unturned, and the richness of detail and analysis which this brings to his text is splendid. He is able to provide an in-depth analysis for each of his chapters. Each chapter can stand alone, but leads subtly towards his conclusions. No doubt other readers will be struck by different chapters, but I found "Sanctions and Deference" and "Saints and Images" to be particularly interesting in their analysis of the social patterns at the centre of religious life in parishes. The book is quite long but, unlike many other authors, Taylor does not resort to filler and long disquisitions. Rather, his text is simply written with solid bases of research and documentation.

Taylor finishes by examining the role of parish priests in the Hidalgo revolt of 1810 in light of the changes and tensions in late-colonial Mexico that he documents throughout the book. He notes that the participation of parish priests in the insurrection has both been exaggerated by some authors and underreported by others. He found a total of 97 priests who either supported or allegedly supported the movement. This number is increased as the *vicarios*, interim priests, and hacienda chaplains are included, but the total is still only 145. Taylor concentrates on the career and participation of José María Morelos to explore the role of priests in this movement. Morelos better represents the typical priest as revealed by the previous

chapters than Hidalgo. Morelos embraced the insurrection partly because he believed in the messages of his calling so fervently. The values of charity, personal sacrifice, hierarchy, and mutual obligation led him and many other priests to join the movement, yet without questioning the Catholic doctrine in which they were formed. Taylor ends with the notion that the Bourbons were the cause of their own demise because their reforms, while they attacked old patterns of custom and tradition, put into doubt their divine right to power. Religion was the fundamental expression of colonial rule and, while priests were allied with governors, the empire was safe. It is through the changes to religion in the eighteenth century that we can understand the shift in loyalties and the explosions of rebellion of the early nineteenth century.

This book will naturally be read by specialists of the field, but it would be a great pity if historians of religion in general did not also take it up, if only to examine the sections of particular interest. Such a fine example of scholarship should be read widely.

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Susan Eva Eckstein — *Back from the Future: Cuba under Castro*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. Pp. 286.

So much attention has been given to Cuba and Castro in both the press and academia over recent months that in some ways it is difficult to imagine an author, much less a reviewer, saying anything new. In February 1996, when Cuba downed two civilian aircraft piloted by Cuban Americans and registered in the United States, the United States Congress passed the highly controversial Helms-Burton Bill, directly affecting Canada and other nations trading with the island and provoking much comment across North America. In the face of worldwide condemnation of the Cuban initiative, Havana proved obdurate, refusing to apologize and indeed using only slightly veiled threats to suggest that further violations of the nation's "sovereignty" could expect the same reaction. While cooperating in the search for survivors, Castro accepted no blame at all for the incident, which he said was entirely the fault of the Cuban-American community in Florida and its backers in the United States.

Almost seven years after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and nearly six since the end of the Soviet Union itself, this outpost of a largely forgotten cold war is still alive if not exactly kicking very hard. Despite assurances year after year from the American right that the Castro dictatorship was on its last legs, the regime in Havana still has control over the whole island, there is no anti-Castro insurgency or even serious opposition movement in the republic, and, despite pushing 70, the *líder máximo* shows little sign of exhaustion or interest in early retirement.

Indeed, 1995 is said by Cuban government officials to have been the year of a long-awaited slight improvement in the economy. The suggestion is that for Castro-