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SCTR 175R
Research Paper: Topic Statement & Sources
January 30, 2014

The Eschatological Economy of the Franciscan Missions: Santa Clara de Asís

In this paper, I want to study the Franciscan Spirituals' radical interpretation of evangelical poverty and how that shaped their missions in Alta California. While their sense of mission was shaped by Francis and Clare's embrace of poverty, it was also shaped by a particular form of apocalypticism. Interpreting their new world missions as so many "New Jerusalems" (Rev 21), they sought to transform the landscape into an abundant garden and its peoples into productive saints. The economic success of their missions was thus a kind of religious imperative, even while they embraced personal simplicity and poverty. This is particularly true of the Santa Clara de Asís Mission, which was among the most economically successful of the Alta California missions.

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