

**“ADVANCING THE KINGDOM”: MISSIONARIES AND AMERICANIZATION IN  
PUERTO RICO, 1898-1930s**

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This dissertation examines the role of Protestant missionaries in Americanizing Puerto Rico from 1898 into the 1930s. It contends that Americanization was a dynamic, contingent, multi-directional, and contradictory process that had unintended consequences. These included the development of insular nationalism and Puerto Ricans' employment of Americanization's liberal ideology to make claims against the missionary establishment and the colonial state. Demonstrating that Protestants functioned as an advance guard for the colonial state in the areas of education and health care, it nevertheless argues that many missionaries began to question and then sharply criticized the entire civilizing project because of its harmful effects on most Puerto Ricans' living and working conditions and on the island's natural environment. It also argues that, in addition to its disciplinary aspects, the missionary project had emancipatory effects, including an expansion of the public sphere in terms of content and participation and the introduction of new social and occupational roles for women.

By focusing on relations between non-elite actors, this dissertation contributes to understanding how imperial relations were constructed on the ground. Though sharing fundamental goals with the colonial state, missionaries, unlike colonial officials, spoke Spanish and interacted with Puerto Ricans of all classes. Additionally, women missionaries played an active, highly visible role in this civilizing venture. This study examines missionary reform efforts and Puerto Rican responses to them, paying particular attention to the ways that

missionary and local understandings of race, class, and gender shaped the outcomes of those efforts. It argues that local social and material conditions, ideologies, and practices significantly shaped missionaries' methods and accomplishments or failures. Additionally, it argues the need for carefully historicizing Americanization, for those local actors and conditions were undergoing radical, precipitous changes. Using a case study, for example, it shows how local and metropolitan ideologies of white racial superiority combined to first include and later exclude Afro Puerto Rican women from nursing education. It also argues that some Puerto Ricans embraced the civilizing mission because they, too, were modernizers and advocates of pre-existing reform agendas constructed by Puerto Ricans such as Eugenia María de Hostos.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1918, during World War One, Edith Hildreth implored “all intelligent” Puerto Rican women concerned with the welfare of their families, soldiers, and sailors to enlist in the *Cuerpo de la Policia Femenina* (Woman’s Police Reserve Corps) to assist an anti-prostitution campaign.<sup>1</sup> Affiliated with the San Juan Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, the self-constituted Corps kept under surveillance Puerto Rican women they suspected of being prostitutes and sometimes testified against them in court.<sup>2</sup> They worked with Col. George R. Shanton, head of the Insular Police and former captain in Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders. Like many middle- and upper-class Puerto Ricans, Mayagüez municipal Judge Tomás Bryan strongly supported this campaign, although he feared that publicly testifying in court was not suitable for the “naturally shy” Puerto Rican woman. He entreated Puerto Rican women to participate instead in ways “more compatible with [their] chastity and timidity.”<sup>3</sup>

The rehabilitative element of the Corps’ project perhaps discomfited Bryan less. This “labor of women for women,” which, according to Hildreth, should not be “shifted to [the] masculine shoulders” of Shanton or the judges, provided food, linens, and vocational training to those “unfortunate women” detained—for indefinite terms—in “hospital-prisons” throughout the

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<sup>1</sup> I am using Hildreth’s English-language term for this group.

<sup>2</sup> Hildreth founded the San Juan chapter, the first on the island. It had Puerto Rican officers, missionary Olive Williams as “advisor,” and many elite North American members. “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 Feb. 1916, 14.

<sup>3</sup> “Moral Uplift Given Vigorous Offensive: WCTU Joins Hands With Col. Shanton in Policing Up San Juan,” *El Tiempo/The Times*, 26 July 1918, 5; *La Democracia*, 30 Sept. 1918, 7.

island.<sup>4</sup> Private companies, including Singer Sewing Machine, donated materiel for classes in “decent occupations” deemed appropriate for working-class women. And the American Red Cross donated Salvarsan, the arsenic-based drug used to treat venereal diseases.<sup>5</sup>

Edith Hildreth had left the United States for Puerto Rico in 1906, under the auspices of the Presbyterian Woman’s Board of Home Missions. Her overall rehabilitation project encompassed more than the anti-prostitution campaign. Like the few hundred other mainland Protestant missionaries who preceded, accompanied, and followed her between 1898 and 1930, Hildreth sought to transform all Puerto Ricans, to “regenerate” them into a new way of thinking, seeing, and acting: to “Americanize”—meaning to Protestantize—they.

How did Puerto Ricans, collectively granted United States citizenship just sixteen months earlier, understand their relationship to the United States and this North American woman’s appeal to patriotic and familial duty? How did Americanization bring together this alliance of metropolitan women’s organizations, United States business interests, a protégé of imperial icon Teddy Roosevelt, and Puerto Rican reformers?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “Campaign of Women Police is Most Successful,” *El Tiempo/The Times*, Aug. 14, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> Many detainees objected to this compulsory and painful treatment often applied without adequate privacy.

<sup>6</sup> Male and female Puerto Ricans joined the anti-prostitution campaign. Some formed the “Committee of Social Reforms and Public Charity” to help the women after their release from jail; others worked with their churches or the Red Cross. Ponce was the only sizeable municipality that did not form a women’s police corps. Bourgeois feminists Herminia Tormes and Olivia Paoli instead focused on jobs and literacy. Howard L. Kern, “Special Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico to the Governor of Porto Rico Concerning the Suppression of Vice and Prostitution in Connection with the Mobilization of the National Army at Camp Las Casas,” (San Juan, P.R.: Bureau of Supplies, Printing and Transportation, 1919), 72; Eileen Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race In Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 194-195.

## 1.1 REVIEW OF AMERICANIZATION LITERATURE

“Americanization” is a capacious term, rife with meanings. The colonial state viewed it as a civilizing project that entailed an extensive, multi-faceted modernization program, both formal and informal, which included new, U.S.-designed systems of governance, education, law, and commerce. It also facilitated the access of U.S. corporations to Puerto Rico’s resources, which produced radical, precipitous changes in the political economy. Historian José-Manuel Navarro describes it as “assimilation and de-Puerto Ricanization,” as a policy to “transform the new Puerto Rican colonial subjects from adherents of the Spanish, philosophical, economic, political, and educational system into adherents of the U.S. white Anglo-Saxon-Protestant Male *Weltanschauung*.”<sup>7</sup> Yet historian Angel Quintero Rivera observes that Americanization “resonated with the educated professional sector” of Puerto Rico’s Republican Party that embraced social reform.<sup>8</sup> Sociologist Samuel Silva Gotay points out Americanization’s complexity, defining it as a profound process congruent with the values, principles, dynamics, and institutions derived from turn-of-the-century U.S. liberal capitalism.<sup>9</sup> These interpretations hint at the range of responses to Americanization.

Given how deeply it shaped Puerto Rican experience, Americanization is a central theme in the historiography of Puerto Rico. Traditional historiography of Americanization focuses primarily on the spheres of formal politics and the economy, elaborating increasing class and political polarization, the island’s precipitous capitalist development, and its contentious legal

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<sup>7</sup> José-Manuel Navarro, *Creating Tropical Yankees: Social Science Textbooks and U.S. Ideological Control in Puerto Rico, 1898-1908* (NY: Routledge, 2002), 194, 195.

<sup>8</sup> Angel Quintero Rivera, *Conflictos de clase y política en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1977) as cited in Pedro Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People: Puerto Rico and the United States, 1898-1932* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 169.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico, 1898-1930: Hacia una historia del protestantismo evangélico en Puerto Rico* (San Juan, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997), 277.

status as an unincorporated territory completely subject to the U.S. state.<sup>10</sup> Labor historians, for example, have examined the restructuring of land and labor systems resulting from U.S. corporate investment; the proletarianization of agriculture; expansion of the needle trades and its links to the metropolis; and the growth of the organized labor movement impelled by deteriorating working conditions produced by those changes, new laws permitting collective organizing, and links between the Puerto Rican labor federation (Federación Libre de Trabajo/Free Federation of Labor) and the metropolitan American Federation of Labor.<sup>11</sup> More general histories have characterized colonial politics as predominantly sterile and conflictual.<sup>12</sup> Colonial administrators' arrogance, indifference, and ignorance produced an "imperialism of abandonment," which Creole elites resented. These elites skillfully employed the realm of culture to assert a Puerto Rican national identity that differentiated them from the colonial

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<sup>10</sup> The Treaty of Paris settling the Spanish-Cuban-American War neither designated Puerto Rico an incorporated territory (which presumed eventual statehood) nor referred to eventual independence (as it did for Cuba and the Philippines). It also codified the misspelling of the island's name as "Porto Rico," a mistake not officially corrected by the U.S. Congress until 1932. Puerto Ricans widely and constantly argued about the form their state should take. Some supported statehood, others independence, and still others more autonomy under the U.S. state.

<sup>11</sup> Examples of this extensive scholarship include A.G. Quintero Rivera, *Conflictos de clase y política en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1977); Blanca Silvestrini, *Los trabajadores puertorriqueños y el Partido Socialista (1932-1940)* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial Universitaria, 1978); Gervasio L. García and A.G. Quintero, *Desafío y solidaridad: breve historia del movimiento obrero puertorriqueño* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1982); Yamile Azize Vargas, *La mujer en la lucha* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial Cultural, 1985); A.G. Quintero Rivera, *Patricios y plebeyos: Burgueses, hacendados, artesanos y obreros. Las relaciones de clase en el Puerto Rico de cambio de siglo* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1988); Juan José Baldrich, *Sembraron la no-sembrar: Los cosecheros de tabaco puertorriqueño frente a las corporaciones tabacaleras, 1920-1934* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1988); Mariano Negrón Montilla, *Las turbas republicanas, 1900-1904*, (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1990); Lydia Milagros González, "La industria de la aguja de Puerto Rico y sus orígenes en los Estados Unidos," in *Género y trabajo: la industria de la aguja en Puerto Rico y el Caribe Hispánico*, ed. María del Carmen Baerga (Universidad de Puerto Rico: San Juan, P.R., 1993); Lydia Milagros González, *Una puntada en el tiempo: la industria de la aguja en Puerto Rico (1900-1929)* CEREP-CIPAF (Santo Domingo, D.R.: Editora Taller, 1990); María del Carmen Baerga-Santini, "Exclusion and Resistance: Household, Gender and Work in the Needlework Industry in Puerto Rico, 1914-1920" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY-Binghamton, N.Y., 1996). The last two works also incorporate gender issues; they thus function as a bridge between more traditional labor scholarship and the more nuanced, feminist-influenced scholarship described below.

<sup>12</sup> These include Gordon K. Lewis, *Puerto Rico: Freedom and Power in the Caribbean* (N.Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1963); Truman R. Clark, *Puerto Rico and the United States, 1917-1933* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975); Arturo Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History* (N.Y.: W.W. Norton and Co., 1983); Raymond Carr, *Puerto Rico: A Colonial Experiment* (NY: Vintage, 1984); James L. Dietz, *Economic History of Puerto Rico: Institutional Change and Capitalist Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986);



state—with which they in fact shared many goals. Meanwhile, both sides largely ignored the needs of most Puerto Ricans. These literatures provide the essentials of structural changes, formal political dynamics, and valuable data and descriptions of the living and working conditions of many Puerto Ricans during Americanization. They do not, however, investigate the interactions between Puerto Ricans and non-elite mainlanders who acted outside the formal political realm and were employed by neither the colonial state nor U.S. corporate interests. These works do, however, paint a picture of colonizing relations that, through counterpoint, accentuate the sometimes more harmonious relations between some Americanizers and some Puerto Ricans.

Francisco Scarano's general history, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, functions as a bridge between the literature described above and a more recent literature that has modified the conflict model of colonial relations.<sup>13</sup> This new literature advocates giving due consideration to conditions in Puerto Rico before the U.S. occupation, including pre-existing political, social, and economic conflicts. Like Scarano, these authors have begun to expand the scope of Puerto Rican responses to Americanization. Pedro Cabán, for example, views Americanization through the lens of accommodation and resistance and emphasizes Puerto Ricans' capacity for negotiating with the colonial state. Presenting the most exhaustive study of the colonial state to date and elaborating its connections to all aspects of Puerto Rican society, Cabán nonetheless argues that the U.S., despite its intrusive imperial power, never completely succeeded in remaking Puerto Ricans in the colonizer's image. Other texts further complicate Americanization by shifting the focus to non-elite Puerto Ricans, adding race and gender to class as categories of analysis, methodologies of structural, post-structural, and feminist theory to those of social history, and

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<sup>13</sup> Francisco A. Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia* (San Juan: McGraw-Hill Interamericana, 1993).

demonstrating the fluid nature of both imperialism and Puerto Rican identity. Looking at events and actors closer to the ground, this literature transcends the binaries of nationalism/colonialism to emphasize the complexity of relations among Puerto Ricans and how that shapes colonial relations. These interpretations link multiple aspects of Americanization to identity formation. For example, sociologist Kelvin Santiago-Valles emphasizes the construction of colonial subjects. Looking at crime, delinquency, and violence, he proposes that Americanization's legal and economic changes not only failed to completely remake Puerto Ricans according to plan, but also brought into existence a new category of "deviant Porto Ricans."<sup>14</sup>

This literature includes several important works, including those by María Barceló Miller and Gladys Jiménez Muñoz, that examine how race, class, gender, and national status mediated colonizing relations.<sup>15</sup> These authors analyze differences between the methods, rhetoric, and long-term goals of working-class women and those of middle- and upper-class women in the struggle for the vote. Though both elite and non-elite women employed (different) representations of women's special "nature" to justify women's suffrage, conflicting material and partisan interests thwarted their short-term alliance. Conflict was not limited, however, to inter-class relations. Bourgeois metropolitan and Puerto Rican feminists, working together, persuaded the U.S. Congress to compel reluctant insular legislators to approve voting rights for literate women. For some, this intervention (re)affirmed the need for the metropolitan civilizing mission; for others it denoted betrayal of the island's political and cultural-national interests. Though their conclusions differ, both authors show how women's suffrage became a venue for

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<sup>14</sup> Kelvin A. Santiago-Valles, *"Subject People" and Colonial Discourses: Economic Transformation and Social Disorder in Puerto Rico, 1898-1947* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> María de Fátima Barceló-Miller, *La lucha por el sufragio femenino en Puerto Rico 1896-1935* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán Inc., 1997); Gladys M. Jiménez-Muñoz, "'A Storm Dressed in Skirts': Ambivalence in the Debate on Women's Suffrage in Puerto Rico, 1927-1929," Ph.D. diss., State University of New York-Binghamton, 1994.

intertwined conflicts that did not coalesce neatly along class, gender, or national lines. They also show how Americanization differentially benefited middling and elite women.

Other works in this emergent literature add sexuality as a category for analyzing Americanization. Eileen Findlay, for example, argues that in times of transition such as Puerto Rico's change in sovereignty, sexuality becomes politicized, because sexual norms structure power relations and provide fundamental systems of meaning and organization.<sup>16</sup> She compares a pre-1898, locally initiated anti-prostitution campaign with a colonial-state initiated campaign during World War I (the one in which Hildreth participated), examining the roles of reform and repression as normative instruments. Bringing out the contradictory aspects of Americanization and its interplay with pre-existing relations of power, Findlay shows how some Puerto Ricans used Americanization's rhetoric of democratic rights and new legal system to challenge the racial and class dimensions of the anti-prostitution campaign. These challengers thus thwarted one attempt to re-arrange their lives and incorporate them into the new social order. Laura Briggs further expands the categories for analyzing Americanization, examining how science, medicine, and social science have acted on Puerto Rican women's bodies. She also elevates Americanization itself as an analytical category, characterizing it as the prototype of contemporary globalization. She exposes the racialized, gendered construction of "Puerto Rican difference" and its consequences through examining colonial policies on sex and reproduction. Emphasizing Puerto Rican women's agency and the diversity of their interests, she shows how, at times, Puerto Rican feminists' interests coincided or conflicted with those of both the colonial state and Puerto Rican nationalists. She strongly argues that U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico

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<sup>16</sup> Findlay, *Imposing Decency*.

was “systemic and coordinated, not disjointed” and that it was “as much about making ... the United States modern as it was about domesticating ... Puerto Rico.”<sup>17</sup> Second paragraph.

## 1.2 THIS STUDY’S APPROACH

My work builds on this growing scholarship to study Americanization outside the spheres of formal politics and corporate economics.<sup>18</sup> Like this literature, I understand Americanization as a dynamic, polyvalent, often contradictory, multi-layered, and multi-directional process. I look at Americanization from below, asking questions such as the following: How did non-elite mainlanders and islanders understand, act on, and negotiate different notions of nation, race, class, and gender? How did continued interactions affect such notions? Which Puerto Ricans supported which Americanizing efforts and why?

To answer such questions (and those triggered by the women’s police corps), I examine U.S. Protestant missionary activities on the island. Missionaries have much to tell us about Americanization. Though sharing most colonial officials’ goals, missionaries differed from them in critical ways: they generally lived among the poor and frequently in rural areas, spoke

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<sup>17</sup> Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 16.

<sup>18</sup> Like this literature, mine has been influenced by the growing literature on women, gender, and imperialism. These include Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, ed. *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, ed. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, ed. *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Kumari Jayawardena, *The White Woman’s Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Colonial Rule* (N.Y.: Routledge Press, 1995); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest* (N.Y.: Routledge, 1995); Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri, ed. *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s “History of Sexuality” and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

Spanish, and included many women who regularly engaged with Puerto Ricans. Establishing schools, clinics, and churches, missionaries came into contact with Puerto Ricans of diverse social backgrounds, some as targets of reform and others as fellow reformers. Radical shifts in the political economy were creating new social groups and, for some Puerto Ricans, desires and needs for change that frequently overlapped those of the missionaries. For example, displaced campesinos flocked to the cities, becoming targets of reformers concerned with the physical, mental, and moral effects of overcrowding, poverty, and women's increasing entry into wage work. Additionally, growing numbers of middle-class, educated Puerto Ricans sought a public role, particularly through social reform, in the island's reconstruction. These missionaries have not been sufficiently studied, despite sociologist Samuel Silva Gotay's contention that one cannot understand contemporary Puerto Rican culture without understanding Protestantism's impact on it.

In May 1900, the U.S. implemented the Foraker Act, which established a civil government defining the contours of the new colonial state.<sup>19</sup> It eliminated the Catholic Church's privileged position and opened the island to a vigorous evangelical campaign by mainland Protestant missionaries.<sup>20</sup> Though committed to the legal separation of church and state, these missionaries believed that the U.S. presence in Puerto Rico had been divinely ordained and that they had been "called" to help bring about a new democratic social order.

Like the U.S. commercial interests that saw Puerto Rico as a jumping-off point for ventures in the Caribbean and Central and South America and like the U.S. state, which considered Puerto Rico's location ideal for naval and military purposes, missionaries envisioned

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<sup>19</sup> Puerto Rico had been under U.S. military rule from Oct. 18, 1898 until Foraker took effect on May 1, 1900.

<sup>20</sup> I will use the words "mainland," "continental," and "North American" interchangeably, all referring to those from the United States.

a strategic role for Puerto Rico.<sup>21</sup> For them, Puerto Rico was to be a “laboratory” for experimenting with proselytizing methods, a hub from which trained “native” missionaries would extend the faith—including its medical and educational institutions—to other parts of Latin America, and a “spiritual bridge” between North and Latin America. Devoted to the “colonization of heart and mind as well as body,” these missionaries established schools, daycare centers, orphanages, health clinics, hospitals, and churches—institutions that provided needed services, opportunities for Americanizing, and the means to solidify the Protestant presence.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES IN PUERTO RICO

Most historical treatments of Protestant missionaries in Puerto Rico have been institutional church histories written by church members and focused on a single denomination.<sup>23</sup> Fewer texts (many of them unpublished theses) specifically examine missionaries and Americanization.

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<sup>21</sup> For Puerto Rico’s military importance to the U.S., see María Eugenia, *La presencia militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico 1898-1918: Intereses estratégicos y dominación colonial* (Río Piedras, PR: Edición Huracán, Inc., 1988).

<sup>22</sup> T.O. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Cultural Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> See Carmelo Álvarez Santos y Carlos F. Cardoza Orlandi, *Llamados a construir su Reino (Teología y Estrategía Misionera de los Discípulos de Cristo 1899-1999)*, ed. Luis F. del Pilar (Bayamón: Iglesia Cristiana (DC), 2000); José Aracelio Cardona, *Breve historia de la iglesia presbiteriana en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, 1976); Vere C. Carpenter, *Puerto Rican Disciples: A Personal Narrative of Fifty Years with Christ in the Island of Enchantment* (Tampa, FLA: The Christian Press, 1960); Charles S. Detweiler, *The Waiting Isles: Baptist Missions in the Caribbean* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1930); Rev. Domingo Rodríguez Figueroa, *Vivencias y memorias de un pastor* (Bayamón, PR: Impresos Quintana, 1999); Tomás Rosario Ramos, *Historia de los bautistas de Puerto Rico*, 2nd edition (Santo Domingo, R.D.: Editora Educativa Dominicana, 1979); Dr. Benjamin Santana Jiménez y Dr. Gildo Sánchez Figueroa, *¡92 Años de metodismo en Puerto Rico! (1900-1992)* (Impreso en Jay-Ce Printing, 1992); Joaquín Vargas, *Los Discípulos de Cristo en Puerto Rico: albores, crecimiento y madurez de un peregrinar de fe, constancia y esperanza, 1899-1987* (San José, CR: Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones (DEI), 1988). Broadening the scope to look at Protestant churches as a whole, Donald Moore’s *Puerto Rico Para Cristo* (Cuernavaca, Mexico: Centro Intercultural de Documentación, 1969, Sondeos No. 43) synthesizes fundamental particulars but does not provide substantial socio-political context.

Those that do so tend to be written from a pro-independence perspective and concentrate on the missionaries' imperialistic character and "deculturating" practices. Among these, Daniel Rodríguez's seminal, structural analysis argues that Protestantism was most successful in areas that somewhat maintained the *hacendado* structure (coffee areas) and least successful in the sugar areas, because social relations in the coffee areas had been least disrupted by Americanization. Non-elite Puerto Ricans in the coffee areas, he continues, "substituted" the missionaries and their "communitarian organization" and discourse for that of the *hacendados*, whose domination they sought to escape.<sup>24</sup> Though both missionaries and *hacendados* engaged in seigniorial relations with poorer Puerto Ricans, this totalizing approach, like other structural analyses of Americanization, oversimplifies Americanization, rubbing out particularities that can improve our understanding of cultural imperialism's development on the ground. Framing the missionary project as a monolithic, implacable imperial tool accounts for neither the contingent nature of Puerto Rican-missionary relations nor Americanization's unintended consequences; additionally, it underemphasizes Puerto Ricans' agency.

A more recent (and smaller) literature, in contrast, highlights the complexity of the missionary project. Like the newer works on Americanization cited above, this reflects an overall trend in Puerto Rican historiography: a shift to more nuanced, complex, heterogeneous interpretations that incorporate multiple analytical categories.<sup>25</sup> In *Religión y cambio social en Puerto Rico, 1898-1940*, for example, Nélide Agosto Cintrón argues that the Protestant project was contradictory; it functioned as the ideological underpinning for the increased U.S. economic

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel R. Rodríguez, *La primera evangelización norteamericana en Puerto Rico, 1898-1930* (Mexico, D.F.: ediciones borinquen, 1986). Also see Emilio Pantojas García, *La Iglesia Protestante y la Americanización de Puerto Rico, 1898-1917* (Bayamón, P.R: Documentos 4, PRISA, [1974]) and Jovita Caraballo de Silva, "La iglesia protestante como agente de asimilación y preservación cultural en Puerto Rico," unpublished mss (University of Puerto Rico, 1968), SEPR.

<sup>25</sup> See José O. Díaz, "Gender, Ethnicity, and Power: Recent Studies on Puerto Rican History," *Latin American Research Review* 37.1 (2002): 215-229.

presence that dislocated and immiserated many islanders, yet simultaneously created new social spaces in which formerly excluded Puerto Ricans could act, including expressing their displeasure with said displacement.<sup>26</sup> She does not, however, detail how this unfolded between missionaries and Puerto Ricans. In his definitive overview, sociologist Samuel Silva Gotay gently corrects earlier works in which the rigidity of political standpoint impeded more subtle analysis and neglected the sociological and historical characteristics of religion.<sup>27</sup> Taking an annaliste approach, he interrogates ideology and mentalité, describes the historical roots of denominational differences, catalogs missionary methods and accomplishments, and analyzes conflicts between metropolitan and Puerto Rican Protestants. Presenting a useful theoretical framework, Silva calls for micro-studies to complement his broad, authoritative study.

Though its impetus did not originate with Silva Gotay's call, my work indeed responds to it and has benefited greatly from his. My study examines colonizing relations in Puerto Rico during the first tumultuous decades of U.S. sovereignty through the lens of Protestant missionary reform efforts. Important social bargaining at a critical historical juncture occurred in interactions between missionaries and Puerto Ricans. These interactions occupy the center of my dissertation, which examines relations and events that occurred outside—but linked to and sometimes explicitly supported by—the formal state. I identify specific instances of Puerto Ricans' cooperation with and contestation of missionary efforts in areas such as education, investigating their effects on missionary-Puerto Rican relations. Examining missionaries' goals, methods, accomplishments, adaptations, and failures along with Puerto Ricans' responses to

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<sup>26</sup> Nelida Agosto Cintrón, *Religión y cambio social en Puerto Rico, 1898-1940* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1996). She focuses more, however, on popular Catholicism than Protestantism. See also Mayra Rosario Urrutia's "Hacia un mundo abstemio: la prohibición del alcohol en Puerto Rico" (Ph.D. diss., University of Puerto Rico, 1993), which also fits in this genre.

<sup>27</sup> Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico*; Silva Gotay draws heavily on Rodríguez, explicitly thanking him and Moore.



them provides a picture of Americanization “from below,” incorporating frequently marginalized or overlooked historical actors. For example, poor, isolated rural women, taught to read and write by the missionaries, became “Bible women” who visited other poor Puerto Rican families. This brought not only a new personal freedom to those individual women, but also created new public spaces and roles.

Not surprisingly, different understandings of gender, race, and class emerge as significant influences on Puerto Rican-missionary interactions. The meanings and functions of ideologies can be discerned only in particular situations, and the encounters between metropolitan and local actors promoting, contesting, or negotiating the multiple elements of Americanization offer rich examples for analysis. My study links the ideological to the material, comparing rhetoric with concrete practices and outcomes. It examines, for example, how missionaries made practical choices that contravened their professed ideology when circumstances demanded or allowed so, as in adapting their requirements for admission to nursing school. This approach shows how missionary reforms differentially benefited some Puerto Ricans and highlights contradictory aspects of the missionary project.

My work nonetheless has suffered from certain limitations. I have relied on far more sources produced by missionaries than by Puerto Ricans. Among these, Presbyterian sources outnumber those of other denominations. Though the latter limitation carries fewer consequences, because all the historical denominations generally agreed on goals and methods, these imbalances reflect several issues. As historian Carol Devens has observed, missionaries’ “affiliation with missionary organizations required them to communicate both factual information and personal opinions to their superiors; thus they generated a body of material

unparalleled by nongovernmental facets of the colonial system.”<sup>28</sup> Presbyterians, traditionally builders of institutions in their mission fields, generated a sizeable paper trail dealing with administrative, personal, and fund-raising aspects of the missionary project. Most Puerto Rican Protestants on the other hand, had neither the support of nor the demands from a well positioned bureaucracy with the means to produce and archive relevant material. Memoirs of Puerto Rican converts to Protestantism in these decades tend to be written by ordained clergy, thus excluding the majority in general and women in particular. The Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (SEPR) has a vast, impressive documentary collection, but has not enjoyed the benefits of sufficient funding for restoring, organizing, and archiving the material in climate-controlled conditions. Clearly, position within various hierarchies of power shaped not only the production but also the preservation of documents. I do believe that Puerto Rican sources exist that could partially shift the balance and hope that others will find and make use of those.

## **1.4 CHAPTER ORGANIZATION**

It is important to understand that missionaries were shaped by prior experiences, individual, institutional, and national. In the second chapter I give an overview of the Protestant missionaries’ world and world-view. This includes their attitudes towards the Spanish-Cuban-American War, manifest destiny, and the Social Gospel. I explain the denominations’ organizational structures, funding systems, and designation of Puerto Rico as a “home” rather than “foreign” mission. The chapter provides a sociological profile of missionaries working in

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<sup>28</sup> Carol Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 3.

Puerto Rico between 1898 and 1930 and argues that, despite significant commonalities, missionaries' experiences with Puerto Ricans varied in telling ways. Factors shaping those differences included denominational affiliation, length of time in Puerto Rico, island location, prior missionary experience, fluency in Spanish, training, marital status, race, class, and gender. I argue that racial ideology shaped missionary practices not only "in the field," but also in the process of selecting who should go to the field. I also argue that female missionaries acted in ways that theoretically transgressed dominant Protestant and Puerto Rican gendered and classed notions of appropriate female behavior, demonstrating another contradictory aspect of the civilizing project—and the flexibility of ideology.

The missionary project in Puerto Rico was both extensive and intensive. It sought not only religious conversion, but personal, social, and political transformations. Making Puerto Ricans "Christian citizens" of the U.S. demanded renovating all aspects of Puerto Ricans' lives. Chapter Three presents an overview of missionary programs, demonstrating their diverse methods and targets and explaining "practical Christianity" and "consecrated living," notions fundamental to the civilizing project. Formal and informal links between missionaries and the colonial state provide evidence of their joint goals, including disciplinary practices. Missionary programs also generated benefits. As Agosto Cintrón argued, this included expanding the public sphere, partially accomplished through various youth programs and debates. Some middle-class Puerto Ricans enthusiastically responded to Protestant reform efforts, I argue, because they coincided with a pre-existing, local agenda proposed by reformers such as Eugenia María de Hostos—showing again how local conditions shaped the missionary project.

As Gramsci and his followers have argued, education plays a key role in constructing and normalizing social order—a key goal of Americanization. It does not surprise, therefore, that the

goals of the colonial state and missionaries most precisely aligned in the arena of education. Chapter Four provides an overview of missionary educational programs to demonstrate how missionaries initially acted as an advance guard for the colonial state, establishing schools for those constituencies not being served by the under-financed, under-staffed new colonial state. A case study of the Polytechnic Institute/Instituto Politécnico of San Germán, considered the paramount example of the education project, follows. This school embodied critical elements of Americanization: the dignity of work, modern pedagogy, coeducation, Puerto Rico as a bridge between North and Latin America, appropriately gendered citizen-producers, and modern agricultural practices. I argue that Polytechnic had an influence disproportionate to its size on public policy, especially educational; that it became a venue through which Americanization was contested; and that its trajectory illustrates the effects of local conditions and change-over-time on the missionary project and responses to it.

Puerto Ricans flocked to missionary clinics and hospitals as soon as they opened, reflecting the urgent need for health-care providers for the poor. From prior experiences, missionaries understood how fruitful medical work was for exposing great numbers to Protestantism and its notion of clean living. Chapter Five examines missionary medical work, exploring its goals, methods, accomplishments, failures, and unintended consequences. Using three case studies, it argues that local actors, ideologies, practices, and material conditions significantly shaped this project. All cases involved conflict: the first, between a missionary doctor and the local Board of Health; the second, between a Protestant Puerto Rican nurse and the local political and medical elite; and the third, between missionary administrators and Afro-Puerto Ricans challenging the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing's "whites-only" admission policy. These conflicts demonstrate contradictory aspects of the missionary project,

including reinforcement of class and racial hierarchies. Such contradictions reflect the ambiguities and inconsistencies innate to a venture as complex as “civilizing” and to relations as dynamic as “imperial.” I argue the need for carefully historicizing Americanization, for not only metropolitan goals and approaches, but also local conditions and actors shaped its outcomes. And those conditions were in the process of radical, precipitous changes.

Americanization had unintended consequences. In some ways it strengthened Puerto Rican nationalism, especially after elite Puerto Ricans realized that the United States did not plan to concede political control over the island to them and non-elite Puerto Ricans began blaming the metropolis for the deteriorating, ever more desperate conditions of the 1920s and 1930s. In Chapter Six, I examine two incidents that show that Polytechnic became a venue through which Puerto Ricans attacked or supported Americanization. The first involves the insular legislature’s response to a visit by aviator Charles Lindbergh; the second, a student revolt at Poly. Not only Puerto Ricans, however, began to censure Americanization’s effects. Though some treatments of Americanization portray its agents as irredeemable imperialists, Chapter Six challenges that presumption and shows that many missionaries—despite their original enthusiastic support—started to criticize Americanization. This shift, I argue, shows that Americanization affected not only Puerto Ricans, but its proponents and agents. This chapter explicates that development by examining missionary settlement houses. Missionaries modeled these on the mainland Progressive urban institutions that introduced new immigrants to mainstream U.S. culture and also provided literacy, health, and vocational training. Many Puerto Ricans, especially women, participated in these settlement houses, which both responded to and made visible the immiseration and proletarianization caused or exacerbated by Americanization. The chapter also examines an important component of these institutions: the industrial workshop. These

workshops' production and distribution logistics produced an overwhelmingly female and grassroots network between the metropolis and the colony, illustrating colonizing relationships in informal, non-elite sectors. Settlement-house work, I argue, contained contradictory goals and produced unintended consequences: it attempted to ameliorate Americanization's harmful effects, while simultaneously extending Americanization's reach by inadvertently facilitating the advance of both mainland and local industrialists' interests in the needlework industry. A case study of the largest, best known settlement house, the Marina Neighborhood House (M.N.H.) in Mayagüez, exemplifies another unintended consequence: some M.N.H. graduates initiated claims upon the missionary bureaucracy, using skills developed at the house and grounding their claims in Americanization's ideology. I speculate that the structure and accessibility of the missionary bureaucracy made it a more feasible target for demands than the centralized, colonial state. Additionally, the alliance built to press those claims demonstrates that conflicts emerging from the missionary project did not always break down on national lines.

In the Conclusion, I reprise my arguments; make some speculations, and suggest areas for further research.

Edith Hildreth's primary task was "advancing the Kingdom of God." She did so in another kind of imperial realm: the colony acquired in 1898 by the United States as spoils from the Spanish-Cuban-American War. Hildreth worked in Puerto Rico for sixteen years, leaving in 1922, in a decade in which many missionaries began to lose the optimism she so exuberantly expressed in her call to enlist Puerto Ricans in the Woman's Reserve Police Corps. Just eight years after Hildreth's departure, all but a few missionaries returned to the mainland as churches slashed their budgets in response to the great economic crisis of 1929. Puerto Rican nationalism

steadily rose as did unemployment, hunger, and disease rates. Not only Puerto Ricans believed that Americanization had reneged on its promises of widespread social uplift and meaningful citizenship. In 1920 a missionary complained that all the land in Comerío had been planted in tobacco, leaving little to pasture horses or cows, thus depriving children of milk.<sup>29</sup> Ten years later, a missionary report remarked that a drop in crop prices and the hurricane had left Puerto Rico “in a financial condition never experienced in its history.” It noted that multitudes had “died of direct starvation” and many more indirectly through disease. Lamenting that more than money was needed to solve these problems, it complained that large corporations controlled or owned all the most fertile land.<sup>30</sup> Such comments show that Americanization changed not only the island and its peoples, but also the colonizers.

The Puerto Rican experience shows that Americanization’s processes were dynamic, contradictory, shaped by local conditions—and also shaped the colonizers, leading them to question some basic tenets of the original imperial project. My study attempts to explicate those processes.

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<sup>29</sup> Manuel Andújar, “Superintendent’s Annual Report (For the Mission and San Juan District)”, 1920 *Year Book: Official Minutes: XIX Session, Puerto Rico Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 31.

<sup>30</sup> *Conquests of the Cross in Porto Rico, Report for the Year 1929-1930*, 2. “Baptist Pamphlets, Misc.” SEPR-AH.

## 2.0 CHAPTER TWO: MANIFEST DESTINY AND THE MISSIONARY PROJECT

In 1899, a group of men in New York City gathered to ponder the map of Puerto Rico. These representatives of four mainstream, United States-based Protestant mission boards “knelt around the map ... upon the table and prayed that God might help [them] to enter Puerto Rico in such a way that there might never be any missionary hostility of any kind” on the island.<sup>31</sup> They agreed to divide the island into four regions, granting exclusive jurisdiction for proselytizing in each to a specific single denomination and declaring the two largest cities, San Juan and Ponce, territories open to all denominations.<sup>32</sup> Much was at stake on this new Caribbean frontier: the souls, minds, and bodies of almost one million Puerto Ricans. The first meeting to discuss such arrangements had occurred earlier, on June 20, 1898, after the United States had declared war on Spain but before the U.S. Marines landed in Guánica, on Puerto Rico’s southern, sugar-growing coast. Yet, beforehand, these men were preparing another kind of intervention. And though future

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<sup>31</sup> These men were secretaries of the boards of the Presbyterian, American Baptist, Congregational, and Methodist Episcopal churches. *Christian Work in Latin America* (NY: Missionary Education Movement, 1917), II.324; C.J. Ryder; quoted in Donald Moore, *Puerto Rico para Cristo*, 2/3.

<sup>32</sup> In 1900 this arrangement was modified to allow the following additional denominations to work in Puerto Rico: the Disciples of Christ, United Brethren, Christian Missionary Alliance, Christian Church, and the Lutheran Church in North America. Mission boards occasionally further amended this agreement to adjust to local conditions. *Ibid.*, 2/1-2/4. This comity agreement represents one of the many ways that missionaries imagined Puerto Rico as a “laboratory.” The insular and mainland missionary presses contain many references to this agreement as a prototype for avoiding jurisdictional disputes in future endeavors. W. Henry Grant, “A Word on Missionary Comity,” *Missionary Review of the World* (May 1899): 371. Except for a brief period in the late nineteenth century, Spain had forbidden Protestant evangelizing in Puerto Rico. See Luis Martínez Fernández, *Protestantism and Political Conflict in the Nineteenth-Century Hispanic Caribbean* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002).



court battles over Puerto Rico's status would decide that the U.S. Constitution in its entirety did not follow the flag, eager Protestant missionaries incontestably did.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.1 MANIFEST DESTINY

The United States invaded Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898 and signed a peace protocol with Spain in Paris less than a month later, on August 12. The U.S. Congress did not ratify the Treaty of Paris until February 1900, though Spain and the United States had signed the agreement on December 10, 1898.<sup>34</sup> Heated debates over the imperial nature of the United States-Puerto Rican relationship occurred in the period between signing and ratification of the treaty. The U.S. War Department, under Secretary of War Elihu Root, immediately initiated a formal process of Americanization and commanded affairs through four Governor-Generals. During his five-month tenure, Brigadier General Guy V. Henry, a Christian reformer, radically re-designed Puerto Rican systems of governance, finance, commerce, education, and policing, using U.S. models.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Between 1901 and 1922, the U.S. Supreme Court made rulings in a series known as the "Insular Cases." These controversial decisions declared Puerto Rico an "unincorporated territory," a novel category that granted the U.S. authority to impose systems of governance without the consent of the governed and granted Puerto Rico only limited constitutional protections. For a detailed treatment of these rulings and their implications, see José Trías Monge, *Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> No Cubans, Puerto Ricans, or Filipinos participated in the treaty negotiations. The treaty transferred Puerto Rico without specifying the island's precise legal and political status. It neither designated Puerto Rico an incorporated territory, which presumed eventual statehood, nor referred to eventual independence (as it did for Cuba) and bestowed a juridically ambiguous "Porto Rican" citizenship on the islanders. It also codified the misspelling of the island's name as "Porto Rico," a mistake not officially corrected by the U.S. Congress until 1932. For the latter, see Gervasio Luis García, "I am the Other: Puerto Rico in the Eyes of North Americans, 1898," *Journal of American History* 87, no. 1 (June 2000): 49-51.

<sup>35</sup> A Presidential Insular Commission, given the task of reporting "on all matters relating to currency, laws, taxation, judiciary, public improvements, education and civil affairs generally," had recommended sweeping and fundamental changes in the island's administration. U.S. Dept. of War, U.S. Insular Commission, *Report of the United States Insular Commission Upon Investigations made into the Civil Affairs of the Island of Porto Rico* (Washington, D.C.:

In May 1900 the U.S.-formulated Foraker Act established a civil government that defined the contours of the new colonial state. Under Foraker, the U.S. President appointed the governor, attorney general, auditor, and commissioner of education. An eleven-member Executive Council, appointed by the governor and including the attorney general, auditor and education commissioner, combined legislative and executive functions, acting as both cabinet and upper legislative house.<sup>36</sup> The lower House of Delegates (the Cámara) comprised thirty-five popularly elected representatives. Legislation was subject to gubernatorial veto, which could be overturned by a two-thirds vote of both houses—an unlikely prospect given the composition of the Executive Council.<sup>37</sup> An elected Resident Commissioner represented the island at the federal level as a non-voting participant in the U.S. House of Representatives. The governor’s power also included the right to grant franchises for the development of infrastructure, allowing the colonial state to act as an instrument of capitalist development.

The U.S. military occupation of Puerto Rico de facto disestablished the Catholic Church, eliminating its privileged position and opening the island to a vigorous Protestant evangelical campaign. Eager missionaries did not wait for formal constitution of the colonial state; instead, in the words of mission official Arthur James, “long before the civil government was established the island was again occupied; this time in the name of the King of Kings.”<sup>38</sup> Soon after the war concluded, several missionaries traveled to Puerto Rico to survey (with the U.S. military government’s assistance) conditions for their mainland mission boards. Baptist Rev. William H.

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Government Printing Office, 1899), 3. Secretary of War Elihu Root, however, overrode its recommendation to substitute English common law for Spanish civil law. Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 54-55. Later, the legal system was Americanized.

<sup>36</sup> The state secretary, treasurer, commissioner of the interior and five locally born Puerto Ricans appointed by the governor made up the rest of the Executive Council.

<sup>37</sup> In addition, the President could veto any bill which overrode the governor’s veto and the U.S. Congress could annul or amend any local legislation.

<sup>38</sup> Arthur James, *Progress and Promise* (NY: Board of National Missions, 1924), 4.

Sloan, for example, on vacation from his missionary station in Mexico, arrived in Puerto Rico in October 1898. Astonished by the “enthusiasm and eagerness” that greeted him, he wondered what “made these people flock so eagerly” to hear his preaching. The only explanation, he concluded, was that God had “permitted tyranny and oppression and poverty in order that a people might be made willing to receive the truth.”<sup>39</sup> In January 1899, Dr. Augustus F. Beard investigated religious and educational conditions for the Congregational American Mission Association. Puerto Ricans’ “extreme poverty” and meatless diet, he reported, had made them “an anemic and bloodless race” in need of uplift. He recommended that missionaries adapt for use on the island “the common sense plan for ignorance and irreligion and poverty” that was “successful among the poor people of our own South, both black and white.”<sup>40</sup>

Sloan’s and Beard’s responses to Puerto Ricans reflected understandings shared by many mainlanders and were rooted in the reasons they supported U.S. occupation of the island. Missionaries’ primary goal was bringing spiritual salvation to Puerto Ricans, yet they understood that as a complex matter entwined with anti-Catholicism, manifest destiny, and liberal democracy. U.S. Protestants predominantly—but not unanimously—had supported intervention against Spain in the Cuban war for independence. Pre-intervention, discussions had focused on Cuba not Puerto Rico, which had brokered a deal for more autonomy from Spain and thus had not joined the rebelling Cubans. After the Treaty of Paris pledged future independence for Cuba, attention shifted to Puerto Rico, with its ambiguous status, and the Philippines. On the mainland, a widespread, heated, public debate about colonization ensued, in which Protestant church officials, church members, and missionaries actively participated.

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<sup>39</sup> Rev. William Sloan, “About Missions: The Gospel in Puerto Rico,” *Christian Index*, 19 Jan. 1899, 79; Angel Luis Gutierrez, “Inicio de la denominación bautista en Puerto Rico,” undated, unpublished photocopy, “Iglesia Bautista: Memorias/Reseñas históricas,” 9, SEPR-AH.

<sup>40</sup> Dr. A.F. Beard, “Porto Rico and Cuba as Fields for Protestant Missions,” *Congregationalist*, 16 Feb. 1899, 84.

The ideology of manifest destiny strongly shaped pro-intervention support among Protestants.<sup>41</sup> It buttressed the pro-war arguments made in Rev. D.L. Leonard's article "Five Epochal Events of 1898." Appearing in the January 1899 edition of *The Missionary Review of the World*, it exemplified arguments made in numerous religious and secular publications, both before and after the war. Referring to U.S. intervention and victory in the war (the import of which he compared to that of the Reformation), he stated that "no national occurrence of such tremendous meaning to mankind was ever more markedly providential in the very best sense of the term." The motives for intervention, he argued, were "not a desire for revenue ... not for glory or conquest ... [but] altruistic, benevolent, humanitarian." Describing the war's outcome as "of a signal value to mankind," he declared that

By this same wondrous piece of divine strategy, America has been suddenly and somewhat rudely, but most effectually, thrust forth from her seclusion from the great world's problems, burdens, perils, and strifes. ... She has been compelled to revolutionize her public policy, and henceforth must needs take her full share of responsibility for the well-being of the race ...; she must stand everywhere for righteousness and humanity, for all the ideas embodied in her free institutions.<sup>42</sup>

Rejoicing that the country had broken from its isolationism, Leonard was articulating the dominant ideology of manifest destiny: the United States had been divinely ordained to civilize backward nations. Manifest destiny cast Spain and its colonies as "backward," meaning Catholic, non-capitalist, and non-democratic. In contrast, the United States had experienced "three centuries enjoying such privileges political, social, and religious as heaven never before bestowed upon any people, and a

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<sup>41</sup> For a thorough discussion of the ideological bases of Protestant support for U.S. intervention, see Rodríguez, *La primera evangelización*, Ch. 2 and Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política*, Ch. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Rev. D.L. Leonard, D.D., "Five Epochal Events of 1898," *Missionary Review of the World* (Jan. 1899): 1-3.

hundred years of such a development as is without parallel in history.” Such good fortune proved that God had chosen U.S. citizens for such a monumental task.<sup>43</sup>

Leonard’s reference to “free institutions” provides a key to the ideological links between the Americanizing projects of the U.S. state and the missionaries. Sociologist Samuel Silva Gotay argues that, despite a constitutional separation of church and state and growing secularization post independence, the notion of a Christian nation formed through a Puritan “Compact” with God persisted in the U.S. Given that republican institutions were the fruit of this Compact, Protestants perceived those institutions as the greatest political accomplishment in history. Consequently it is difficult to separate evangelizing from Americanization and to divorce the evangelizing task from the military, political, and economic tasks. This symbiosis, he reasons, produced an “imperialist theology” that underwrote U.S. expansionism; additionally, this “idea of expansionism as a divinely ordained national destiny *sanctified* the secular conviction of the dominant class and national leaders.”<sup>44</sup>

The intersectionalities of evangelizing and politics can be seen in missionaries’ habitual use of language that explicitly evoked principles of U.S. political ideology and frequent correlation of emancipatory aspects of Protestantism with the U.S.-led “emancipation” of colonial Puerto Rico from Spain. In 1907, for example, Presbyterians in Puerto Rico proclaimed their church a part of “the true republic of God in which no one lords it over another” and described its governance as egalitarian, inclusive, and “of

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 1-2. The other four epochal events were reformation in China, growing Anglo-American friendship, the Russian Czar’s disarmament proposal, and British control of the Sudan and Red Sea. For additional representative articles, see “Methodists Are Imperialists,” *Zion’s Herald*, 1 Feb 1899, 77, 5; N.B.R., “Views from a Geneva Manse: Imperialism,” *New York Evangelist*, 1 Sept. 1898, 69, 35; and “The Duty of Protestantism to Spain’s Former Colonies,” *Congregationalist*, 15 Dec. 1898, 83, 50.

<sup>44</sup> Emphasis original. Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política*, 55, 64. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

the people, by the people, and for the people.”<sup>45</sup> Submission to Catholic priests, in contrast, made popular government impossible.<sup>46</sup>

A principal proponent of this “imperialist theology” was Josiah Strong, a Congregationalist minister, official of the Congregational Home Mission Society, and renowned theologian of the Social Gospel who had worked as a missionary in Cheyenne, Wyoming and the Ohio Valley.<sup>47</sup> In 1885, he published an influential book, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Present Crisis*, which sold 175,000 copies in the U.S. and was translated into several languages. Strong’s writings often appeared on lists of suggested readings in missionary literature.<sup>48</sup> *Our Country* correlated the idea that “the Anglo-Saxon was a superior race designed by God to conquer and populate the world with theories of evolution and Social Darwinism.”<sup>49</sup> Almost a decade before Frederick Jackson Turner introduced his “Frontier Thesis,” Strong had predicted that, after no more public lands were available for settlement, “the world [would] enter upon a new stage of its history—the final competition of races for which the Anglo-Saxon is being schooled.” This “powerful race” would move into Mexico, Central and South America, to the islands, and then to Africa and beyond, he continued, asking “can anyone doubt that the result of this competition will be the ‘survival of the fittest’?”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> “No hay ‘jefes’ en la iglesia presbiteriana,” *LVE*, 27 June 1908, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Rev. Robert McLean, “Artículos Colaborados: ¿PORQUE?,” *LVE*, 4 Aug. 1907, 50.

<sup>47</sup> Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Present Crisis* (NY, 1885); Dorothea R. Muller, “Josiah Strong and American Nationalism: A Reevaluation,” *Journal of American History* 53, no. 3 (Dec. 1966), 487. The American Home Missionary Society had commissioned the book. Strong was situated in the more conservative wing of the Social Gospel movement. Other Social-Gospel leaders included Theodore Munger, Washington Gladden, Lyman Abbot, George T. Herron, and Walter Rauschenbusch.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Speers’s writings also appeared regularly.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963; 3d edition, N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1969), 185.

<sup>50</sup> Emphasis original. Strong, *Our Country*, 174-175, cited in Gossett, *Race*, 188.

Strong's conception of race incorporated the attendant hierarchies of scientific racism and biological determinism. It also reflected the tendency at the time to conflate race and culture. In this schematic, the "powerful race" of Anglo Saxons occupied the top of that scale and the Puerto Rican (sometimes called "Latin") "race" the lower end. These understandings of race shaped missionary practices on the island, as following chapters show. At the same time, these stratified classification systems contradicted fundamental Protestant notions of human equality before God—a contradiction that shaped the missionary project on both the mainland and the island and Puerto Ricans' responses to that project.

This widely accepted notion of race gave rise to another inconsistent aspect of the missionary project. On the one hand, missionaries considered Puerto Ricans inferior physically, intellectually, and morally due to biology and climate. On the other hand, missionaries considered Puerto Ricans educable, capable of transformation—which was, after all, the heart of the Americanization project. Missionaries repeatedly blamed Puerto Ricans' "defects" on the effects of four centuries of Spanish Catholicism. For example, Jamie Duggan, a Baptist working in Ponce, commented that Puerto Rico "was thoroughly saturated in illiteracy, idolatry and the immorality known only to Roman Catholic nations."<sup>51</sup> Attributing these characteristics to Catholicism suggested that conversion to Protestantism would eradicate them. Though such an outcome clearly motivated and encouraged missionaries, it also implied that the conversion process was capable of overcoming or surpassing the slower evolutionary process upon which Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>51</sup> "Glimpses From the Field," *Tidings* 30, no. 8 (April 1911): 10.

superiority was based. And it contradicts their frequently cited biological and climatic theories of race.

Historian Peggy Pascoe, in her study of Protestant missionary women in the Western frontier, points out a similar contradiction in the missionary civilizing project. She argues that both celebrators and critics of the missionary project miss an important point: “the extent to which home mission women challenged racial biological determinism” in their efforts to break down barriers to education and participation in religious activities for their nonwhite “native helpers.”<sup>52</sup> Pascoe’s salient observation applies to the Puerto Rican case, as subsequent chapters will show. All these cracks in missionary ideology shaped missionary methods and outcomes. Additionally, Puerto Rican subjects of the Americanization project used these cracks to maneuver, attempting to adapt that fractured ideology to their own self-defined interests.

Protestants, however, were not seeking a unified race theory.<sup>53</sup> Nor did those who had opposed U.S. intervention in the war object to the inherent racism of manifest destiny. Rather, they opposed expansion for various other reasons. Some objected to the imperial nature of the war’s aftermath. In an article provocatively entitled “Americanism versus Imperialism,” Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler argued that anything less than independence for all Spain’s former possessions would violate the fundamental character of the nation. Additionally, imperial acquisitions would strain the budget, require a large standing army, and “work a mischief to our Union that will more than counter-balance

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<sup>52</sup> Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1839* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 115. For a nuanced analysis of race and home-mission women in the nineteenth century, see Ch. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Gossett argues that, despite customary though limited critiques of class inequalities, even the most radical Social-Gospel proponents failed to publicly critique racial inequalities. He speculates that this failure stemmed from fear that attacking racial hierarchies would suggest a rejection of evolution and they did not want to appear as “sentimental idealists unwilling to take account of the discoveries of science.” Gosset, *Race*, 193, 197.



any good that we can do to Cuba or Porto Rico.” Fearing that colonizing the islands could propel further such ventures, he queried, “Why stop there then? Why not carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ all over the Pacific by shot and shell?” This reference to “shot and shell” emanated from another conflict among Protestants: some argued that expansion was acceptable only if it were by peaceful means; others thought the ends (advancing the Kingdom) justified the means. Cuyler concluded with the warning that “that new word ‘imperial’ sounds far too much like *empire* and *emperor* to be fostered by citizens of a peace loving Christian republic.”<sup>54</sup>

Writing in a religious quarterly, David Starr Jordan harnessed several arguments, including dominant racial ideology, against U.S. sovereignty over Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Comparing the moment of crisis to that over slavery, he argued for an isolationist policy that would allow proper attention to the problems of class, race, and trusts at home. “Compulsory Imperialism,” he continued, transgressed “the axiom of democracy that ‘government must derive its just powers from the consent of the governed.’” Pronouncing that “Civilization is, as it were, suffocated in the tropics,” he further argued that “the proposed colonies are incapable of civilized self-government[,] ... full of alien races, and are not habitable by Anglo-Saxon people.”<sup>55</sup> ...

Methodists, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, subverted the term “imperialism,” trying to remove its tainted association with “old” Europe and “Asiatic despotism.” An 1899 article in *Zion’s Herald* reported that Erving Winslow, secretary of the newly formed Anti-Imperialist League, had been unable to find a single prominent Methodist

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<sup>54</sup> Emphasis original. Rev. Theodore L Cuyler, “Americanism versus Imperialism,” *New York Evangelist* (1830-1902), 21 July 1898, 69, 29.

<sup>55</sup> David Starr Jordan, “Imperial Democracy,” *The New World: a Quarterly Review of Religion, Ethics and Theology* (Dec. 1898): 7, 28.

“willing to pronounce himself an anti-imperialist,” a problem he did not encounter with other denominations. The article confirmed Methodists’ whole-hearted support for intervention, explaining that the islands’ “inhabitants [were] not capable of self-government, and it [had become] our obligation and duty to protect them and teach them to be self governing.” The islanders’ physical, moral and intellectual conditions would be improved under their “paternal care.” That, he continued was imperialism “as we understand it.” “The term ‘imperialism,’ therefore [had] no terror for Methodists, who were ready and willing to deal with the “new problems” that “a determining and favoring Providence” had thrust upon them.<sup>56</sup>

In a similar vein, the Congregationalist American Missionary Association declared that occupation of Puerto Rico was not only a divine “imperative,” but also a patriotic duty.<sup>57</sup>

Presbyterians also employed the tactic of appropriation. Doctor of Divinity Wallace Radcliffe argued that imperialism had “new definitions and better intentions” in 1899: it was “imperialism not for domination, but for civilization; not for subjugation, but for development; not for absolutism, but for self-government.” He went so far as to describe imperialism as “beneficial republicanism” and maintained that “the Church must go where America goes” for “the mission of Presbyterianism is liberty, equality, fraternity.”<sup>58</sup>

Reflecting the divisiveness this debate produced among Protestants, in 1900, Josiah Strong published *Expansion under New World Conditions* to counter anti-imperialist arguments.<sup>59</sup> *Expansion* attacked anti-imperialists as anti-Progress. Though he conceded the

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<sup>56</sup> “Methodists are Imperialists,” *Zion’s Herald*, 1 Feb. 1899, 77.

<sup>57</sup> Charles J. Ryder, *Pioneers in Porto Rico*, (NY: Congregational Rooms, 1900?), n.p.

<sup>58</sup> Wallace Radcliffe, “Presbyterian Imperialism,” *Assembly Herald*, Jan. 1899, 5-6.

<sup>59</sup> Josiah Strong, *Expansion Under New World Conditions* (N.Y., 1900).

difficulty of “reconcil[ing] war with an enlightened conscience,” he argued that the use of force justified the goal.<sup>60</sup>

These reconstructions sought to re-signify imperialism and demonstrated the plasticity of ideology—dynamics that would also occur in Puerto Rico. Along with politicians and business interests, missionaries thus were Americanizing imperialism itself, distinguishing it from the “Old World” that the Monroe Doctrine had banished from the Americas, distancing it from the venality associated with pre-existing colonial relations, and masking the economic, political, and military interests and the violence that fueled the national march toward world power. These conflicts over the nature of imperialism and its effects on the nation paralleled the contradictions between Protestantism’s profession of equality and its inegalitarian ideologies and practices.

## 2.2 THE MISSION

After ratification of the Treaty of Paris, Protestants, even those who had originally opposed the imperial venture, whole-heartedly supported U.S. policies to Americanize Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans. The island’s geographic location made it strategically valuable: it was ideally located for a coaling station for the expanding navy and for bases to protect the planned Panama Canal—both vital to expanding economic interests.<sup>61</sup> In the words of Episcopalian Bishop Whipple, who visited the island in 1900, because it “was close at hand, because its moral and religious condition ... [was] so pitiable, and because of ... its future social and commercial

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<sup>60</sup> Gossett, *Race*, 317. Alfred T. Mahan gave Strong pre-publication comments on several chapters of *Expansion*. Ibid., 489, n. 29.

<sup>61</sup> For a full treatment of these interests, see María Eugenia. *La presencia militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico 1898-1918: Intereses estratégicos y dominación colonial* (Rio Piedras: Edición Huracán, Inc., 1988).

relations with the United States, [Puerto Rico] ha[d] a peculiar and present interest” for both the state and missionaries.<sup>62</sup> Missionaries saw Puerto Rico’s strategic value as a place to train Spanish-speaking missionaries and function as a link between Anglo and Latin America.<sup>63</sup> For U.S. business interests, Puerto Rico promised cheap labor and land, profitable investments, a market, and a bridge to ventures in the Caribbean and Central and South America.

Americanization, an extensive, multi-faceted modernization project, both formal and informal, entailed replacing Spanish systems with U.S.-designed systems of governance, education, judiciary, law, finance, taxation, and commerce and facilitating U.S. corporations’ access to Puerto Rico’s many resources. In her study of Americanization in Puerto Rican public schools, Aida Negrón Montilla employed a sociological definition of Americanization as “the process by which people of alien culture acquire American ways, standards of living, and national allegiance; or the assimilation of American culture by people of foreign birth or heritage.”<sup>64</sup> Scholar Pedro A. Cabán describes Americanization as essentially a “colonizing mission” composed of “three broad policy areas: ideological, developmental, and coercive.” Though distinct, he elaborates, those three areas were “interrelated and mutually reinforcing.”<sup>65</sup> The missionaries operated in all three areas, though expended most energy in the ideological. Broadly disseminating Protestant ideology required institutional development; the missionary churches, schools, orphanages, neighborhood houses, industrial workshops, and child-care centers were means for proselytizing and operating in the developmental and coercive areas.

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<sup>62</sup> “Bishop Whipple in Puerto Rico, *SOM* (April 1900): 207. Whipple, in this instance, was contrasting interest in Puerto Rico with that in Cuba and the Philippines.

<sup>63</sup> Charles S. Detweiler, Chairman of West Indian Committee for Cooperation in Latin America (hereafter CCLA), “Tentative Draft: A Survey of Mission Fields in the Caribbean,” 23 June 1930, Colección Particular, Philo Drury, Folder: CCLA/Correspondencia 1928-1933, SEPR-AH.

<sup>64</sup> Henry Pratt Fairchild, *Dictionary of Sociology* (NY: Philosophical Library, 1944), 10; quoted in Aida Negrón Montilla, *Americanization in Puerto Rico and the Public-School System, 1900-1930* (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1971), ix.

<sup>65</sup> Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 124.

For the missionaries, to Americanize was to Christianize. More precisely, to Americanize was to Protestantize, because, according to the insular Baptist newspaper *El Evangelista*, “Rome did not *Christianize*, Rome only romanized, producing fanatics and non-believers.”<sup>66</sup> To Protestantize meant to socialize Puerto Ricans into mainstream, white, middle-class values. At the outset, missionaries expressed great optimism in their ability to transform Puerto Ricans into “worthy citizens of Christian America,” believing that God “never gave us this million of men, women and children in order that we, a great commonwealth, might hold them still in serfdom and servile fear.”<sup>67</sup> They also expressed abounding faith in Puerto Ricans’ capacity for transformation. An 1899 article described Puerto Ricans as neither “brutes” nor “inferior naturally,” explaining that their “educated men, both white and colored are fine people, who excel in intelligence and courtesy” and could “make good citizens of our republic.”<sup>68</sup>

This optimism coexisted with hegemonic racial ideologies, through which missionaries and the colonial state viewed Puerto Ricans in 1898 as incapable of self-government and justified the colonial relationship on this basis. McKinley’s secretary of war and the principal architect of colonial policy, Elihu Root maintained that Puerto Ricans needed to “first learn the lesson of self-control and respect for the principles of constitutional government” before they could be entrusted with self-government.<sup>69</sup> If Puerto Ricans were immediately given a constitution and directed to live according to it, he continued, they would “inevitably fail.” They needed a “strong and guiding hand” and “with that tuition for a time their natural capacity will, it is hoped,

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66 Emphasis original. “Lo que perseguimos,” *El Evangelista*, 15 May 1910, 5.

67 “Address by Rev. David W. Crane,” EDC, 15 July 1906, 8.

68 Dr. William Hayes Ward, cited in “The Character of the Porto Ricans,” SOM (Aug 1899): 417. Much of the early missionary literature describing Puerto Ricans and the island read very much like the crónicas sent by the conquistadores to the Crown.

<sup>69</sup> Root later became secretary of state. Before joining the government, he was a New York City corporate lawyer whose clients included members of the sugar trusts.

make them a self-governing people.”<sup>70</sup> “For a time” signaled that the colonial state had not committed to a definite time when it would allow Puerto Ricans more autonomy.

Missionary literature abounds with similar characterizations of Puerto Ricans, and missionaries explicitly expressed the joint nature of their and the colonial state’s goals. Methodist minister Benjamin S. Haywood, for example, referred to the insular governor as an “able and far-visioned, cautious and God-fearing State-builder.” Puerto Rico, he propounded, was “reaching out for the progress and prosperity of a new era” and, “in the hands of Christianity, administered under the permission and protection of the American government,” “permanent progress” would be attained.<sup>71</sup>

Like Root, missionaries infantilized Puerto Ricans living in this “youngest child of the Republic.”<sup>72</sup> The trope of paternalism rendered “natural” the discipline that the missionaries thought befitted a given situation. This paternalistic nature of missionary-Puerto Rican relations would become a point of contention between missionaries and many Puerto Rican converts, particularly (male) pastors and ordained ministers.

Puerto Rico’s cloudy legal status, defined by U.S. courts, shaped Americanization. The Treaty of Paris had granted islanders an ambiguous “Puerto Rican” citizenship—rather meaningless since the Puerto Rican “state” had no autonomy. The issue of formal citizenship was constantly and hotly discussed in all public venues on the island and both missionary and colonial-state discourse was replete with references to “progress,” “maturity,” and

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<sup>70</sup> U.S. Dept. of War, *Annual Reports of the Secretary of War, 1899-1903* (Washington, D.C., 1904), 34; quoted in Truman R. Clark, “‘Educating the Natives in Self-Government’: Puerto Rico and the United States, 1900-1933,” *The Pacific Historical Review* 42.2 (May 1973): 220.

<sup>71</sup> Benjamin S. Haywood, “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1911: Porto Rico Mission,” *Year Book: Superintendent’s Annual Report and Official Minutes: Tenth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1911, 19-20. SEPR-AH.

<sup>72</sup> Charles W. Drees, “Annual Report of the Superintendent” *Official Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1902, 14. SEPR-AH.

“citizenship.”<sup>73</sup> Missionaries frequently represented U.S. citizenship and Christianity as interwoven; they used terms such as “intelligent Christian citizenship” and described the U.S. government as “founded upon Protestant principles.”<sup>74</sup> Most missionaries advocated eventual statehood for Puerto Rico.<sup>75</sup> One Methodist highlighted the partnership of the colonial state, churches, and investors necessary for statehood in describing Puerto Rico as “waiting only the assistance of law, sound government aided by intelligent industry, enterprise and moral transformation to some day take its place in the political arena as one of the most favored of States.”<sup>76</sup>

Missionaries’ stalwart commitment to teaching Puerto Ricans was evident in comments like the following by Methodist minister David W. Crane: “It is no slight task laid upon our Government by Divine Providence to bring the people of Porto Rico to the highest standard of American citizenship—and nothing short of that will satisfy God.”<sup>77</sup> The colonial state and missionaries agreed that education was the most critical arena in which to remake Puerto Ricans into “modern Americans” who would earn the rights of full citizenship by adopting mainstream U.S. norms and practices. In 1900, Dr. Victor Clark, head of a commission studying illiteracy (and, soon thereafter, head of the insular Board of Education), expressed the colonial state’s view that “[i]f the schools are made American, and teachers and pupils are inspired with the American spirit, ... the island will become in its sympathies, views and attitude toward life and toward government essentially American. The great mass of Puerto Ricans are as yet passive and

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<sup>73</sup> The Jones Bill bestowed U.S. citizenship (collectively) on Puerto Ricans in March 1917.

<sup>74</sup> “Porto Rican Plans,” *SOM* (Sept. 1905): 691; “What the Children of Porto Rico Need Most,” *SOM* (March 1906): 213; “¿PORQUE PROPAGAR EL PROTESTANTISMO EN PUERTO-RICO?”, *LVE*, 16 May 1908, 388.

<sup>75</sup> “Continental” was the term used to describe mainlander U.S. citizens at the time.

<sup>76</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, “Annual Report of the Superintendent,” Year Book and Official Minutes of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1906, 25.

<sup>77</sup> “Address by Rev. David W. Crane,” *EDC*, 15 July 1906, 8.

plastic. ... Their ideals are in our hands to create and mold.”<sup>78</sup> The colonial state and the missionaries emphatically agreed that the key to “molding” the “plastic” Puerto Ricans was universal public education, the subject of Chapter Four.

Both Protestants and the colonial state benefited from association with the other. On the one hand, visible connections with the colonial state bestowed the entire missionary project with the state’s cachet, which helped increase church rolls. On the other hand, missionaries’ provision of social services won over many Puerto Ricans to Americanization, and thus legitimized the colonial state. The universal exuberance expressed by missionaries at the start of their Puerto Rican civilizing project, however, would change. By the second decade, when rates of conversions slowed and missionaries’ experiences on the ground tempered their idealized visions, their optimism began to diminish.<sup>79</sup> By the third decade, which opened with the Great War and closed with Hurricane San Felipe and the Great Depression, many missionaries openly expressed pessimism and growing disillusionment. Missionary writings somberly described Americanization’s cumulative effects on the island and its people and their rhetoric of transformation and progress through a harmonious partnership with the colonial state and U.S. business interests disappeared. The following chapters will trace that trajectory from enthusiasm for to critiques of the Americanization project.

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<sup>78</sup> *Report of Brig. General George W. Davis on Civil Affairs of Puerto Rico*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 180, quoted in Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 64.

<sup>79</sup> For the rate of Protestant growth in the early decades, see Saenz, *Economic Aspects of Church Development*, p. 143, passim.; 156, passim.



## 2.3 THE MISSIONARY ESTABLISHMENT

This study treats only the “historical” Protestant churches, meaning those that emerged from the Reformation, built institutions, and became the predominant denominations in the United States. It does not include the Quakers, who had a short-lived presence at the turn of the century and reappeared during World War Two. Mennonites also gained influence during and after that war. Nor does it include those churches that, in today’s parlance, are called “Pentecostal” or “Evangelical.” Those churches were numerous during the first decades of Americanization, but were established and led by Puerto Ricans, not “continentals” or “mainlanders.” They thus had a different relationship to Americanization; indeed, the first such church may be seen as a product of Americanization, for it was formed by Juan Lugo, a Puerto Rican who had gone to Hawaii to work in the sugar-cane. There he was introduced to a non-historic fundamentalist Protestantism, which he later brought back to Puerto Rico.<sup>80</sup> In the time period under consideration, “Evangelical” had a different meaning than presently. It simply meant “Protestant” and all denominations used it.<sup>81</sup>

The Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Christian, United Brethren, and Congregationalist denominations comprised the denominations committed to the Americanizing project. All but the Episcopalian Church signed the comity agreement that delineated territorial jurisdiction.

The mission fields in Puerto Rico were governed from the mainland through a well-established administrative structure. In 1898, most denominations had foreign and domestic

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<sup>80</sup> Some Puerto Ricans disenchanted with the U.S. missionaries, including some trained to be pastors and chafed at mainlanders’ control, broke away and founded their own denominations. See Moore, *Puerto Rico para Cristo*.

<sup>81</sup> Ex-Catholic priests also formed two denominations; the Christian Missionary Alliance and the Church of Jesus. The former later merged with the historic churches. See Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y Política*, Ch. 2.

mission boards, and Puerto Rico was categorized as a home mission field.<sup>82</sup> In a public address given multiple times, Alice Cox Wood, a prominent Protestant who had visited Puerto Rico, aptly described the paradox of Puerto Rico's liminal status: "Mission work in Porto Rico is especially interesting as it so perfectly blends the two terms Home and Foreign Missions. We cannot separate them: The Island belongs to us, but the work is among an alien people."<sup>83</sup> Puerto Rico's home-mission status communicated its colonial status and assigned responsibility for supporting Protestant schools and hospitals to the women's home mission boards; female missionaries and their mainland counterparts thus wielded great influence on the project.

Manifest destiny had inspired the home mission movement, a product of Westward expansion.<sup>84</sup> As described in a publication celebrating the centennial of home missions, the goal of "all home mission enterprise has been to capture a continent for God."<sup>85</sup> Before the Civil War, with some exceptions, only married couples were appointed to home missions. Missionaries' wives "were trained in submission, service, and love" and considered subordinate "helpmeets" to their husbands.<sup>86</sup> Such paternalism would continue into the twentieth century and, though modified, was evident in Puerto Rican missions.

Home mission societies grew and strengthened after the Civil War as demand grew with Protestant commitment to serving "the millions of negroes, ignorant, indigent and irresponsible, [who] were thrown upon the mercies of those who had emancipated them (and whose duty it was

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<sup>82</sup> Smaller denominations, such as the Disciples of Christ and the Christian Church, had a single missionary agency.

<sup>83</sup> Alice Cox Wood, "An Address on Porto Rico," from a public speech, *The Situation in Porto Rico*, 1916, BX 9225 W66 A13, ACCN#90-0727a Box 2, PHS.

<sup>84</sup> Many soldiers who fought in the Spanish-Cuban-American-Filipino War had earlier fought Indians resisting their displacement.

<sup>85</sup> Austen Kennedy DeBlois, "Introduction," Charles L. White, *A Century of Faith* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1932), 9.

<sup>86</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing* (Boston, 1868), 25, quoted in Barbara Welter, "She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth-Century America" *American Quarterly* 30, no. 5 Special Issue: Women and Religion (Winter, 1978), 626; "Annual Meeting Report Transcript," Executive Session of Annual Meeting of Woman's Board, 20 May 1910, RG 305 Series 2, 15-6, PHS.

to Christianize and educate and elevate them).” Denominations established home mission boards that would be responsible for training women who could go places and provide services that men could not, such as “into the homes and comfort the sick, clothe the naked and teach the mothers to make better homes.”<sup>87</sup> With these separate home mission boards, Protestant women gained more—though limited—autonomy.

In a monograph emphasizing the home missions’ role in unifying the nation, Herman Morse stated that the home-mission project “operated to interpret to the alien and the stranger the best in American life ... and also to interpret the alien to the country of his adoption.”<sup>88</sup> In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the missionaries worked with Native Americans, non-English-speaking immigrants, Mormons, Jews, and African Americans in the South.<sup>89</sup> Several missionaries in Puerto Rico had earlier worked in the West or South, revealing unbroken—but not unchanged—threads extending from earlier political, racial, gender, and imperial ideologies and practices into the twentieth-century civilizing project.

From the start, the notion of “woman’s work for woman” shaped missionary methods, practices, and goals, although its meaning changed.<sup>90</sup> Protestant women initially had used the term “home mission” to distinguish between domestic and foreign fields. As Pascoe observes, however, “Before long they invested the phrase *home mission* with ideological significance,” interpreting “the ‘home’ as the ideal Christian home of Victorian rhetoric.”<sup>91</sup> As historian Paula Baker notes in her essay on the domestication of politics, women expanded the bounds of the

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<sup>87</sup> Mrs. W. M. Isaacs, “Why,” *Tidings* (July 1901): 6, ABHS.

<sup>88</sup> Hermann N. Morse, *Toward a Christian America: The Contribution of Home Missions* (NY: Council of Women for Home Missions and Missionary Education Movement, 1935), 188.

<sup>89</sup> Secular Progressive settlement-house workers did work quite similar to that of the missionaries. Jane Addams, in fact, had sought a non-religious alternative to this kind of work.

<sup>90</sup> “Woman’s work for woman” was the slogan of foreign missionary work, later also applied to home-mission work and a Presbyterian magazine.

<sup>91</sup> Emphasis original, Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 6.

private sphere by redefining home: “home [became] anywhere women and children were.” During the Gilded Age, Baker continues, women again modified the definition of woman’s sphere, rejecting “sentimentality in favor of the scientific and historical” and stressing “how scientific motherhood, if translated into efficient, nonpartisan, and tough-minded public action, could bring social progress.”<sup>92</sup> This definition fit well Americanization’s modernizing project, and missionary women in Puerto Rico adopted this “strategic essentialism” to support their claims of female moral authority in order to re-order familial relations. These missionaries framed their goals not only in terms of religion, but of social progress that would bring social and material uplift to all. The extent and nature of that social progress would become points of contention between some missionaries and Puerto Ricans.

Women’s participation in the home and foreign missionary movements made the missionary movement the largest U.S. women’s organization between the 1870s and 1900.<sup>93</sup> It had an extensive reach, fabricated through discrete but interlocking local, regional, and national groups. By the early 1920s, for example, the Presbyterian Woman’s Board of Home Missions (W.B.H.M.) had 233,270 members in local women’s groups, 196,214 members in “young people’s organizations,” and forty-five women on the national executive board.<sup>94</sup> These boards also raised significant funds and administered large budgets. In 1911, for example, the Presbyterian W.B.H.M. raised \$557,000 for home missions and owned real estate valued at \$900,000. It completely supported 159 schools and evangelical stations, employed 417 missionaries and teachers; in 1912, it contributed \$44,524.66 to Puerto Rican mission schools.

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<sup>92</sup> Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920,” *American Historical Review* 89, no. 3. (Jun., 1984): 632.

<sup>93</sup> The missionary movement was larger than the temperance and woman’s suffrage movements. Hill, *The World Their Household*, 54-55.

<sup>94</sup> Elizabeth Osborn Thompson, *Woman’s Board of Home Missions: A Short History* (NY: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, n.d.), 13. RG 305-30-16, PHS.

By 1923, the board had raised “from living donors” \$963,557 and its property was worth \$250,000,000.<sup>95</sup> Methodists, in 1914, raised \$816,488 for their home missions.<sup>96</sup>

Women generally made up the boards of directors of home mission societies and occupied most paid administrative positions. Female volunteers administered the local congregational societies. This participation rendered the missionary movement the only Protestant institution in which women exerted considerable power.<sup>97</sup> Pioneering historian of women missionaries, R. Pierce Beaver characterizes the foreign and domestic missionaries as the first feminist movement.<sup>98</sup> The structure of the home missions indeed empowered many women, diffused as it was across geography, denominations, ages, and classes. Adult women incorporated infants, children, and young adults into the missionary project. Among Baptists, for example, parents enrolled infants in the “Baby Jewels,” which accepted monetary contributions in the infant’s name; children younger than ten years old joined “Baby Bands,” pledging ten cents per year; older youth joined the “Missionary Gardeners” or the “What I Cans.” The older ones participated in educational programs focused on missionary activity, joined in fund-raising, and sponsored individual missionaries and projects.

Many mainlanders responded to direct appeals for support of the Puerto Rican project in the English-language missionary press. The “good women” of a Methodist church in Beaver,

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<sup>95</sup> Miss Julia Fraser, “Woman’s Board,” 1912, RG 305-1-15, PHS; *Thirty-fourth Annual Report, WBHM of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, 1913, 31, RG 305-15-9, PHS; *Forty-Fifth Annual Report, WBHM of Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, 1924, 5, RG 305-15-13, PHS.

<sup>96</sup> It raised an additional \$1,096,228 for foreign missions, “El Mundo Religioso: Buenos donativos,” *PRE*, 10 July 1915, 12.

<sup>97</sup> Home mission board elections, however, required ratification by the male-controlled denominational general assemblies. These assemblies were responsible, in the 1920s, for dissolving the separate women’s boards and incorporating their work within unified mission boards. The women’s home-mission boards fiercely objected, but had no power at the general-assembly decision-making level. See Patricia R. Hill, *The World their Household: The American Woman’s Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984).

<sup>98</sup> R. Pierce Beaver, *American Protestant Women in World Mission: A History of the First Feminist Movement in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Erdmans Publishing Co, 1980 [1968]).

Pennsylvania, for example, provided a church bell for a chapel that they supported in Roncador, Puerto Rico.<sup>99</sup> Many groups donated sheets for the Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan.<sup>100</sup> Jamie Prichard Duggan, a long-term Baptist missionary in Ponce, Puerto Rico, published in *Tidings* an article targeted to young female readers. It provided a captivating, thick description of her busy past ten days, including her work with young Puerto Rican females. She concluded by asking whether the mainland youth could “feel that [the Puerto Rican youth] are really your ‘sisters’ praying for you and needing your prayers.”<sup>101</sup>

Duggan’s appeal to sisterly solidarity commonly appeared in missionary literature—especially in appeals for money. Episcopalian Bishop Whipple, for example, reported to his mainland constituency that a Puerto Rican Woman’s Aid Society wanted to build a maternity hospital and asserted that “the means for such a noble work would be provided at once if American women could realize the suffering of their unfortunate sisters.”<sup>102</sup> Ideology, practices, tone, and attitudes, however, made clear that mainlanders were the “big sisters” and Puerto Ricans the “little sisters,” demonstrating a maternalism complementary to Protestantism’s paternalism.

In addition to raising funds, such methods familiarized mainland Protestants with “our new possessions,” thus constructing their imperial identities. The Baptist national missionary publication *Tidings*, for example, presented outlines for a series of programs to study *Advance in the Antilles*, a history of the “Spanish-American War” and Protestant intervention in the Caribbean. Suggested discussion topics included the “new and advanced standard” for U.S.

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<sup>99</sup> Supt. Benj. S. Haywood, “Mission Field Notes,” *EDC*, 1 Aug. 1910, 18.

<sup>100</sup> Grace Williams Atkins, letter to Miss Lincoln, WHMB, 21 Nov. 1903, RG 301.8 Box 16 Folder 34, PHS. Atkins complained that some groups stenciled their names on the sheets or wanted plaques recognizing their donations posted at the hospital. Atkins argued that such practices presented problems for visiting donors who had not imprinted their donations and violated the spirit of giving.

<sup>101</sup> Janie Pritchard Duggan, “A Day with Mrs. Duggan in Porto Rico,” *Tidings* 30.2 (Oct 191): 9-12.

<sup>102</sup> “Bishop Whipple in Puerto Rico,” *SOM* (April 1900): 209.

colonial policy.<sup>103</sup> This demonstrated that Americanization (and its uses) were not unidirectional: Americanization shaped not only Puerto Ricans, but also mainland U.S. citizens—a pattern that following chapters develop.

The feminism (or proto-feminism) attributed by R. Pierce Beaver to the women's missionary movement was limited, contradictory, raced, classed, and gendered. It did not attempt to emancipate all women from the injustices of gender subordination. Instead, this feminism sought to increase white, middle-class women's options by employing a "new, improved" variation on the notion of behavior appropriate for women—with woman defined as white, middle-class, and Protestant. In Puerto Rico, this would produce not inclusive, egalitarian social uplift, but rather greater benefits to whiter, richer Puerto Rican women. This, too, would become a point of contention between missionaries and Puerto Ricans.

## 2.4 THE MISSIONARIES

On July 9, 1924, Christian-Church missionary Olive Gordon Williams excitedly wrote Wilson P. Minton, her supervisor in Dayton, Ohio, that she was "proud as a child with a new toy over my 'Missionary Society'—They are doing lots of house to house visiting for me. I always was a Tom Sawyer when it came to getting others to do my work for me." Not the Tom Sawyer that she professed, Williams's rigorous daily routine included making home visits in the morning before holding church services and running Bible classes and Sunday schools. Additionally, she taught commercial English, typing, and shorthand to boys and supervised thirty-odd women in

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<sup>103</sup> "Workers' Department: Advance in the Antilles," *Tidings* (Jan. 1911): 24-25.

“industrial work.” This consisted of gathering, cleaning, dying, and piercing Chinaberry seeds that were then strung into necklaces and embroidering handkerchiefs—a project she had initiated to create jobs and raise funds. On a weekly basis, she attended various meetings with other missionaries and visited outlying barrios where she made home visits and held prayer services and Bible classes. Unscheduled tasks included supervising funerals and providing medical care.

Eight months later, the ambitious Williams boarded a steam ship to New York City. Weighing just eighty pounds, she was so sick that if “the Captain had seen her before she was aboard his ship he would never have allowed her to go on.” In November 1925, at the age of fifty-eight, Williams died at the Christian Church Home for Ministers in Lakemont, NY.

Williams had worked since 1915 on Puerto Rico’s southern sugar-growing coast in the town of Salinas and the surrounding area—a malaria zone. There she fulfilled her long-standing dream of establishing a settlement house. In addition to her organizational and teaching aptitudes, she possessed effective business skills. In January 1924, she had shipped to the mainland \$218.50 worth of beads and handkerchiefs, paid all bills, and still had “plenty of cash” to fund the industrial work until she received payment for the goods already shipped. She expected to double, in a year, the \$600.00 capital with which she had started that year and planned to use the profit to buy a house, in order to move the industrial work out of the church and to gain protection from her landlord’s rent increases.<sup>104</sup> Such profit was possible because her industrial workshop functioned as one node of an all-female, trans-Atlantic system of production, distribution, and sales. She provided the goods to the network of mainland churchwomen who sold these in their local churches, fairs, and regional and national conferences to

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<sup>104</sup> “Correspondence 1922-1934, Women Missionaries: Victoria E. Adams, Olive G. Williams,” Folder: Iglesia Evangélica Unida, Christian Church, SEPR-AH, hereafter referred to as IEU-2 SEPR-AH.



support the mission work. The many youth groups described above also participated in this promotion, buying, and selling.

In several ways, Williams typified the missionaries in Puerto Rico. Like Williams, the majority were lower middle-class, educated, white women who had felt “called” to missionary work.<sup>105</sup> Though the mission boards did not include wives of male missionaries in their official counts, those women did much the same work as single women missionaries—in addition to raising a family and without receiving an individual salary.<sup>106</sup> In her examination of Protestant women missionaries in the nineteenth century, historian Barbara Welter explains missionary work’s appeal to single women: it provided them “a rare combination of church- and socially-sanctioned activity and freedom.” Female doctors, for example, “found a far more interesting practice, an opportunity to perform operations, to study rare diseases, and to escape a professional life as a poorly paid listener to female complaints, her probable lot had she remained at home.”<sup>107</sup> Filled with descriptions of both the thrills and challenges of their work in a new culture, the correspondence of female missionaries in Puerto Rico supports this interpretation.

Some female missionaries, in addition to high school, attended specialized schools such as the Baptist Missionaries Training School in Chicago or the Moody Bible Institute. Many had college degrees, reflecting the increasing rate of higher education for women on the mainland. Male missionaries, who with rare exceptions were married, ordained ministers, tended to have more education than females, including college and divinity-school degrees.

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<sup>105</sup> A small number of missionaries were neither white nor born in the United States. Among these, the only female I encountered was Nicaraguan Ester Palacios. Males included Methodist Rev. Samuel Culpeper, an Afro-Guyanese, and Presbyterian African-Americans Rev. Howard T. Jason and Rev. J.L. Jarvis. Additionally, several Spanish Catholic priests converted to Protestantism and joined the missionary project.

<sup>106</sup> The boards provided one salary for missionaries with families and another for single women.

<sup>107</sup> Welter, “She Hath Done What She Could,” 634.

Like some missionaries, Williams did not speak Spanish before she arrived in Puerto Rico. Many, however, spoke Spanish fluently, having learned it during earlier missionary work in Latin America. Ida Hayes, for example, the second Baptist missionary to arrive in Puerto Rico in 1899, had worked in Mexico, as had Ella Payne; Methodists Rose Cunningham and Rev. Sydney Edwards had worked in Cuba, the latter for eight years; Rev. C.W. Drees, another Methodist, had worked in Mexico; and Presbyterian Rev. Milton E. Caldwell had worked in Colombia for thirteen years.

Atypically, Williams entered the mission field at forty-eight years of age, older than most. Like many single female missionaries, she did not begin missionary work until after the death of her parents, for whom she had cared. Also unusual was her lack of prior teaching experience. Episcopalian Iva M. Woodruff, for example, had teacher training in Chicago, Cleveland, and Columbia Teachers College and had taught for six years in public schools. Dorothea Jean McBride, after earning a bachelor's degree at the University of Wisconsin, had directed the Protestant Hooker School in Mexico City.<sup>108</sup> Nurse Ellen T. Hicks had given up the superintendency of Bryn Mawr Hospital to go to Manila. Due to the violence there, the mission board reassigned her to Puerto Rico, where she became the long-term superintendent of St. Luke's Hospital in Ponce, where she trained nursing students.<sup>109</sup> Clara Hazen, who became director of the Presbyterian Marina Neighborhood House in Mayagüez, had a B.A., graduate training at Columbia Teachers' College and the Moody Bible Institute, and eleven-years experience teaching through the Freedmen's Bureau, "among the colored people of our South

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<sup>108</sup> "Off to the Front: Sketches of Recently Appointed Missionaries," *SOM* (Dec 1910): 1021-1022; "Newcomers in the Mission Field Abroad," *SOM* (Jan. 1930): 48.

<sup>109</sup> John Wilson Wood, "Ellen T. Hicks, Lighthouse of Nursing," *SOM* (Sept. 1938): 343.

land.”<sup>110</sup> Presbyterian Rev. James A. McAllister, like many male missionaries, had graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Markedly exceptional among missionaries in Puerto Rico, Williams had as much authority as male missionaries belonging to her denomination, the Christian Church, which also licensed women to preach. That not only granted her an equal say in locally made decisions, but also allowed her to become the only female missionary with “a voting voice in the work of The Theological Seminary and Blanche Kellogg Institute for girls,” two multi-denominational projects on the island.<sup>111</sup>

Williams also shared with most missionaries the desire for Puerto Ricans to become U.S. citizens and thus felt “a special duty” beyond “just giving [Puerto Ricans] the gospel.” She argued that mainlanders should “be vitally interested in the moral up-lift of” Puerto Ricans. Also like most missionaries, she participated in local and insular moral reform organizations. For example, she was the insular treasurer of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the Social Reform Committee.<sup>112</sup>

Understandably, such concern with morality was central to Protestants and expressed in their ideology of “consecrated” living, which pertained to both missionaries and potential converts. Most frequently appearing in missionary discourse was the term “consecrated woman.” Missionaries sought to teach not only through Scripture and the pulpit, but through the example of their daily lives. Consecrated living meant abstaining from intoxicating beverages, gambling, dancing, cursing, and sexual activity outside of legally sanctioned marriage. It called

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<sup>110</sup> “Clara Hazen,” RG H5 PHS; Clara E. Hazen to Rev. Geo. F. McAfee, D.D., June 1904, letter, *ibid*.

<sup>111</sup> The Christian Church was one of the smallest missionary operations on the island. For most of Williams’s tenure, she had only two officially appointed colleagues, Bruce W. Morton and D.P. Barrett, and their wives. Amy Ruse Snyder, “Miss Williams at Work in Porto Rico. As Seen by an American Friend and Neighbor,” handwritten mss, 1925, n.p., IEU-2 SEPR-AH.

<sup>112</sup> Olive Williams, “Report of Miss Williams to Dr. M.T. Merrill, Sec. of Foreign Missions,” 3 Oct. 1916, Folder: Evangélica Unida Reports, 1909-1930, Reports to Board 1909-1930, by Missionaries and P.R. Workers II, SEPR-AH.

for modesty in dress and behavior; discipline; engagement in physical labor, intellectual endeavors, family, and church matters; discrimination in one's companions; and cleanliness of mind and body: in other words, living according to idealized norms of mainland, white, middle-class behavior. These norms assumed the male as head of the household, though it had a more companionate notion of marital relations than Puerto Rican norms. Women's primary responsibility was to their families: married women to their nuclear family and secondarily to the larger community and unmarried women to the expansively defined "home" and family described above.

A "life consecrated to the service of the Master" entailed a sense of service, self-sacrifice, humility, and, most important, a "calling" to "advancing the Kingdom." Jennie Ordway, daughter of a minister and the designer and supervisor of the nursing school at the Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan, provided an example of a consecrated life.<sup>113</sup> Between 1887 and 1929, she worked thirty-six years as a Presbyterian missionary: first in the mainland Southwest and later in Puerto Rico for twenty-nine years. A dutiful daughter, she interrupted her service for six years to take care of her aging parents; while doing so, she took a nursing course to be more useful when she returned to the field. At her funeral in 1931, Ordway was eulogized as a woman who exercised not only power, but understanding, tenderness, and a sense of fellowship with Puerto Ricans, to whom she gave her whole being.<sup>114</sup> In 1927, Ordway herself had stated that even when she faced "obstacles and difficulties" that made her work hard, there had "always been a

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<sup>113</sup> Domingo I. Rosado, "La política del Presbiterio de Puerto Rico en el desarrollo de la obra en la zona rural," B.D. Thesis, SEPR, 1957, 57.

<sup>114</sup> Dr. James Leishman, "'King's daughters were among thy honorable women,'" mimeo of funeral remarks, 12 Feb. 1931, "Jenny Ordway," RG H5, PHS; Rev. Augustas B. Prichard to Miss Edna R. Voss, Division of Schools and Hospitals, Presbyterian Board of National Missions (BNM), 14 Feb. 1931, letter, *ibid*.

satisfaction and joy in knowing that [she] was working for the Church of Jesus Christ.”<sup>115</sup> Patiently faithful, Ordway had attained the expected (and exalted) status as a “consecrated, self-sacrificing, persevering” woman.<sup>116</sup> There had been no taint of scandal, no incident of disobedience, in her life.

## **2.5     CONTESTING THE “CONSECRATED WOMAN”**

Missionaries, however, sometimes had different understandings of the term “consecrated woman.” A conflict over the appointment of Victoria Adams to the Puerto Rican mission field revealed the influences of race, gender, sexuality, and nation in the construction of “consecrated woman.” Like Jennie Ordway, Victoria Adams was a minister’s daughter. Her father, an English missionary in Armenia, had married her Armenian mother there. The family returned to the United States and both parents worked as missionaries in New Britain, Connecticut. Seeking appointment as a missionary for the Christian Church in Puerto Rico, Adams engaged in a several-year correspondence with W.P. Minton, secretary of the mission board headquartered in Dayton, Ohio.<sup>117</sup>

The conflict first arose in 1924 when Minton wrote to his supervisees in Puerto Rico, D.P. Barrett and B.W. Morton, that he planned to send Adams to Puerto Rico.<sup>118</sup> Due to Barrett’s and Morton’s objections, Adams did not go to Puerto Rico until October,

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<sup>115</sup> Jennie Ordway to Board of National Missions, 24 Nov 1927, letter, RG H5, PHS.

<sup>116</sup> Miss Julia Fraser, “Woman’s Board,” 1912, 1, RG 305-1-15, PHS.

<sup>117</sup> The Christian Church had joined with the Disciples of Christ and the United Brethren to form the United Evangelical Church/ Evangélica Unida.

<sup>118</sup> Barrett, the senior missionary, was stationed in Ponce with his wife and children and Canadian Morton and his wife lived nearby.

1927, but the conflict continued through 1928. At first, Barrett objected to Adams on the grounds that “an american [sic] would be more acceptable,” because she was not white. He based this assessment on his “experiences with the native Porto Ricans who were not white and ... were a complete failure.”<sup>119</sup> Barrett was familiar with Adams because she had been a classmate of his daughter and son-in-law at Elon College in North Carolina, a school attended by many missionaries and their family members. Agreeing with Barrett, Morton later wrote Minton that Adams’s color would “always be against her,” because “these people do not like to have anyone in authority to have any colored blood.” Framing his argument in terms of respecting local custom (racial prejudice), he maintained that the mission “had too much to contend with” without trampling “too much upon the customs and desires of the people.” Barrett and Morton also included gender and sexuality components in their argument. Barrett emphatically warned Minton that the mission board should thoroughly investigate Adams’s “attitude toward dancing [and] Theater going,” and Morton insisted that “Porto Ricans do not like a single woman over them.”

Minton appeared torn between the denomination’s customary practice of giving those in the field a voice in selecting their co-workers, the great need for another missionary, and his distress over the nature of the missionaries’ objections. Admitting that Adams was a “trifle dark,” he nonetheless disagreed that “her color would hurt her down there,” for other missionaries had told him “that some of their very best workers

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<sup>119</sup> D.P. Barrett to W.P. Minton, 4 July 1924, letter. All citations of D.P. Barrett and B.W. Morton come from Iglesia Evangélica Unida, Christian Church, Correspondence 1924-1933, SEPR-AH, hereafter referred to as IEU-1, SEPR-AH.

[were] black men.”<sup>120</sup> Minton also questioned the men’s perception of Adams as “colored,” contending that Adams had both taught and attended college without incident “in the south where if any place on earth the question of color would be a serious one.”<sup>121</sup> Additionally, he upbraided Morton’s sense of superiority over Puerto Ricans, saying that he didn’t think that “the national Christians like to have either men or women missionaries ‘over them’” and preferred the idea of missionaries working ‘with them’.” He also dismissed Morton’s argument that Puerto Ricans would not accept working under a woman, saying that other denominations were doing so.<sup>122</sup>

Minton also wrote for advice to Samuel Guy Inman, director of the multi-denominational Committee for Cooperation in Latin America (C.C.L.A.). Inman responded that the missionaries’ argument did not persuade him and further argued that “it would be taking race prejudice entirely too far to have a good worker shut out because of simply the color of her skin.” Inman, demonstrating perhaps more understanding of Puerto Rican racial categories than most missionaries, suggested that, even if sending a “colored person” was problematic, “one who is of dark skin without colored blood should be able to make her way easily enough.” He lamented that “the color question has come into Porto Rico since the American influence arrived.” Ambiguously averring that “we must not acknowledge [the color question] any more than the interests of our work would seem to require,” Inman concluded that “how far we are to yield to local prejudices is always open to question.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> W.P. Minton to B.W. Morton, 9 June 2003, letter, IEU, SEPR-AH 1.

<sup>121</sup> W.P. Minton to B.W. Morton, 15 July 1925, letter, *ibid*.

<sup>122</sup> W.P. Minton to B. W. Morton, 9 June 1925, letter, *ibid*. Olive Williams had just left that mission field.

<sup>123</sup> Samuel Guy Inman to W.P. Minton, 14 June 1926, letter, Correspondencia, William P. Minton and Samuel Guy Inman, 1924-1926, IEU-1, SEPR-AH.

In late 1926, Barrett and Morton changed their minds and urged that Adams be sent immediately. They did so because both were due furloughs and Mrs. Barrett was seriously ill. Vacillating, Morton rationalized that he had judged Adams from others' reports of her color, but nevertheless ungraciously asserted that "when it comes down to the fine points these people are more particular over color than the people in the Southern States." Revealing his perhaps opportunistic ranking system, Morton conceded, "But even then give me someone who is straight-laced even if she is black than the fairest blonde who is free with the men both married and single."<sup>124</sup>

Adams did not go to Puerto Rico until October of the following year, 1927, but her co-workers' problems with her did not end with her arrival. In February 1928, writing from Elon College in North Carolina where he was spending his furlough, Barrett wrote Minton that he had heard "disheartening stories" about Adams, including her inability to get along with others and habitual questionable behavior. Morton too wrote rather provocative letters maligning Adams. He claimed that Puerto Rico was a "Sodom and Gomorra" for sinners, which required that missionaries be "moral and virtuous" and "not contaminate themselves whatsoever." He then accused Adams of bragging about "meeting with men in the Plaza," walking alone at night, and being "fresh with every clerk she met." He reported that "two very 'worldly' men" spent the whole day in the house she shared with two young, female Baptist missionaries. Absent from church twice, he said, "she had been on a picnic" with those men.<sup>125</sup> He later accused Adams of using her home-visiting work to cover clandestine meetings with an un-named gentleman friend.

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<sup>124</sup> B.W. Morton to W.P. Minton, 26 July 1926, letter, *ibid*.

<sup>125</sup> B.W. Morton to Minton, 4 April 1928, letter, *ibid*.



Meanwhile, getting to know her congregants, Adams discovered that, before leaving on furlough, Mrs. Barrett had spread word of her disapproval that Adams was not American. Though Puerto Ricans had no objection to her, Adams wrote Minton, Mrs. Barrett's feelings cut her deeply and caused her to reconsider working with such colleagues. She argued that she was "as much an American as Mrs. Barrett" and wondered whether, if "Christ wasn't an American, therefore we should not accept His teachings."<sup>126</sup>

Matters escalated in May 1928 when Morton impugned Adams's morality. Minton announced major budget cuts that might not allow the Barretts to return to Puerto Rico, and Morton returned to Canada for health reasons. On his steamship on May 24 and using language quite extreme for a missionary, Morton wrote Minton that Puerto Ricans considered Adams and her housemates as "nothing but whores." Somewhat surprisingly, Barrett, still in North Carolina, wrote to Minton that Morton's warning was timely but did not necessarily imply immorality. It only shows, explained Barrett, "the possibility of her actions being entirely misunderstood by the people she has gone to help." With generous understatement, he reminded Minton that Morton may be "somewhat biased in his judgment" of Adams.<sup>127</sup>

Though Minton criticized Morton for his "veiled accusations," he confronted Adams with the charges. Offering her a chance to defend herself, he nonetheless declared how terrible a blow to the church's influence it would be if "one of her

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<sup>126</sup> V. Adams to H.P. Minton, 18 April 1928, letter, IEU-2, SEPR-AH.

<sup>127</sup> D.P. Barrett to H.P. Minton, 5 June 1928, letter, IEU-1, SEPR-AH.

missionaries should be understood to be of the character Mr. Morton says the Porto Ricans are sure to look upon your actions as.”<sup>128</sup>

In her response, Adams appealed to Minton “as a father and brother” and stated that she was bearing her trials only because she was willing to suffer for God’s sake. Denying Morton’s charges, she declared that she had come to Puerto Rico not to fall in love or enjoy a “worldly life” but to do mission work. She implored Minton to speak to the Puerto Rican church-workers about her “actions as a christian girl [sic].” She further claimed that workers from other denominations respected her and had even placed her with “all the lady leaders of Puerto Rico in all the conferences”—which they would not have done had they doubted her honor.<sup>129</sup>

Adams skillfully used the male power structure and her local supporters to counter Morton’s accusations. Confessing how insulted she was by Morton and claiming that she had restrained herself from involving her father, she told Minton that she had gone for advice to Presbyterian Rev. Milton Caldwell, because he was “a man of understanding and a real christian [sic]” and had working with him a female missionary of her own age. She also shrewdly enclosed letters that she regularly received from Puerto Ricans, to give him “an idea of what the Porto Ricans think of me and my work.”<sup>130</sup>

Demonstrating the missionary establishment’s thoroughness in enforcing key requirements for service, Minton undertook his own “careful investigation.”<sup>131</sup> This included corresponding with several missionaries and visiting Elon College. At Elon, he

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<sup>128</sup> W.P. Minton to V. Adams, 20 June 1928, letter, IEU-2, SEPR-AH.

<sup>129</sup> V. Adams to W.P. Minton, 2 July 1928, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> V. Adams to W.P. Minton, 11 July 1928, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> W.P. Minton to D.P. Barrett, 19 July 1928, letter, IEU-1, SEPR-AH.

heard “the highest commendation” concerning her. Caldwell wrote Minton that Adams had made “some mistakes because of not knowing the Porto Rican viewpoint,” but had ceased such behavior and affirmed his “entire confidence” in her “becoming a real, strong missionary.” Minton’s findings persuaded him that Adams was indeed a “consecrated woman.” Arguing that Adams’s attempts to remedy behavior that might be misinterpreted showed that she would be “of real service to the Kingdom.” That October (1928), the mission board formally vindicated Adams.<sup>132</sup>

How do these events help us to understand the missionary project? First, the conflicts over whether Adams’s color should determine whether or not she be appointed showed that the missionary project was not unitary. Second, Minton and the missionaries he had consulted acknowledged darker Puerto Ricans’ capabilities and the appropriateness of their positions as leaders in the work (“some of their very best workers [were] black men.”). Combined with Inman’s regret that “the color question has come into Porto Rico since the American influence arrived,” this suggested that some missionaries did not completely accept the ideology of white racial superiority dominant on the mainland. And certainly they did not seek to impose Jim-Crow practices on islanders. It also suggested that some missionaries assumed that “the color question” had not existed before the U. S. occupation. Third, Inman’s comment that “how far we are to yield to local prejudices is always open to question” implied that even “progressive-on-the-color-question” missionaries would concede to “local prejudices,” if they feared that failing to do so would jeopardize the work—a stance they never took on issues such as

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<sup>132</sup> W.P. Minton to V. Adams, 18 July 1928, letter, IEU-2, SEPR-AH; W.P. Minton to D.P. Barrett, 3 Aug 1928, letter, *ibid*.

gambling, cockfighting, and “illegitimate” marriages, all local customs. That concession also contradicted the missionaries’ universalist claims of equality. Jointly, these three points draw attention to contradictory elements of missionary ideology and practices.

Fourth, the nature of the complaints about Victoria Adams showed how, for some, race, gender, nationality, and sexuality mutually constituted her as questionable, not a consecrated woman. At the same time, however, the semblance of due process that Minton enacted (assuming innocence, gathering evidence, confronting her with the charges against her) assured that gossip, personal prejudice, and sexism would not, without challenge, irretrievably consign Adams to that “not consecrated” category and thus thwart her desire to work as a missionary. His network of contacts gave evidence of the surveillance of which the missionary community was capable and the social control that they could wield. Victoria Adams, however, had her own connections within the insular mission community. She used the missionary rhetoric of suffering and self-sacrifice (she bore her trials because she was willing to suffer for God), of paternalist relations, of a daughter/woman’s honor (the indirect threat to involve her father, an English—read white—missionary with his own church), and of Christianity’s professed universalism (if “Christ wasn’t an American, therefore we should not accept His teachings”). Additionally, with their letters, she astutely demonstrated that she had the support of the very “nationals” who the missionaries were trying to reach. Adams thus demonstrated the many uses of rhetoric and ideology that a resourceful subaltern could exploit by taking advantage of the fault lines formed by contradictions and conflicts within the missionary project. Finally, this complicated, drawn-out incident illustrated the contingent nature of the on-the-ground missionary project. Had different actors been

on the ground in Puerto Rico, in Elon, North Carolina, or in Dayton, Ohio or had that “trifle dark” Anglo-Armenian-American been a man, how differently would the scenario have played out?

### **3.0 CHAPTER THREE: “TEACH, HEAL, PREACH THE GOSPEL”: AN OVERVIEW OF MISSIONARY PROGRAMS**

Protestant missionaries arrived in Puerto Rico with great purpose. Their goals reflected their complex understanding of religious conversion, which entailed not only theology, but a particular way of living: “consecrated” living. To convert, to Protestantize, meant to Americanize; Puerto Ricans were to assume dominant, U.S. Protestant, white, middle-class norms and practices. Effecting such an all-encompassing conversion required a comprehensive approach, as Methodist Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield articulated: “We must work not merely for a change of faith, but for a change of life ... [,] for a reconstructed home life. A formal change of faith may mean little. But a transformation of life in the home, in parental relations, in the care and training of children these are influences that abide.”<sup>133</sup> These goals and the missionaries’ additional intent to reconstruct Puerto Ricans into “Christian citizens” of the United States demonstrate the consonance between the colonial state’s conception of Americanization and the missionary project.

Missionaries understood religious, civic, social, intellectual, technical, and physical training as conceptually inseparable and therefore formulated comprehensive agendas for the

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<sup>133</sup> Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield, “Fore-Word,” *Year Book: Official Minutes and Superintendent’s Annual Report: XIV Session of the Puerto Rico Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1915, 6.

moral, physical, material, educational, and political uplift for Puerto Ricans as individuals and as a collective. At the start, missionaries embraced this grand civilizing project with a palpable sense of optimism, sure that, under God and “the protecting folds of the [U.S.] flag,” they could improve all aspects of Puerto Ricans’ lives.<sup>134</sup> They created diverse programs using multiple methods in their attempts to attain their ambitious goals. Missionary methods varied according to the project, targeted constituency, and the available labor and financial resources; they included one-on-one evangelizing, print media, Sunday schools, Bible classes, fellowship groups, public speaking, and the work of Puerto Rican Protestants, in addition to academic schools, settlement houses, and medical care.

All missionary endeavors contained some type of educational component. An ideal project, in the short term, propagated Protestant ethics through its means or ends or “planted a seed” that would sprout in the longer term.<sup>135</sup> Establishing formal educational institutions was just one element of the larger missionary enterprise. Within the first few years of U.S. occupation, many churches quickly established kindergartens and primary schools; additionally, some denominations founded insular or regional vocational, academic, and religious secondary schools. Chapters Four and Five treat that institutional work.

This chapter focuses on other kinds of training, including fellowship groups and Bible women, to alter fundamental Puerto Rican ideologies and social practices. Assessing such projects, I argue that some missionary methods and achievements may be categorized as

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<sup>134</sup> Chas. W. Drees, “Annual Report of the Superintendent,” *Third Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1904, 18.

<sup>135</sup> One example of the planting metaphor: “So you see the quarter has passed with its clouds and sunshine; many seeds sown for Christ the results of which we will never know until we see Him at last. Let us pray that this seed sowing and plant growing may be mightily prospered.” Grace Williams Atkins, article draft, May 1902, RG 301.8 Box 16 Folder 34, PHS. For other examples, see Olive Williams to Minton, 26 Nov 1924, letter, SEPR; A Puerto Rican pastor used this metaphor to contrast conditions in the U.S. and P.R.: Hipólito Cotto Reyes, “La Iglesia Evangélica y la Juventud,” *PRE*, 10 Feb. 1916, 5-7.

disciplinary and others as emancipatory. For, in addition to their not unexpected disciplinary aspects, missionary programs imparted organizational and critical expressive skills to Puerto Ricans, who could—and did, as Chapters Five and Six will show—employ those skills in pursuit of self-defined goals. Missionaries, for example, taught reading, writing, community organizing, and administration. Importantly, missionary programs and Puerto Ricans’ participation in them expanded the public sphere to include Puerto Ricans, especially non-elite women, largely excluded from access to that sphere under the Spanish regime. These achievements suggest that the missionary project had some success in bringing democratizing practices to some Puerto Ricans. Also important, I argue that some Puerto Ricans responded favorably to missionary reform efforts because those efforts coincided with pre-existing local agendas. Local conditions and actors shaped Americanization.

### 3.1 METHODS

Immediately upon arrival in Puerto Rico, missionaries began holding religious services in private homes, rented rooms, the open air—wherever they could. And they arrived quickly. The first, Baptist Rev. W.H. Sloan, arrived on the island in 1898, “even before the Spanish flag had been taken down from the fortress in San Juan.”<sup>136</sup> In early 1900, *The Spirit of Missions*, an Episcopalian magazine, stated that Puerto Ricans desired “our institutions, national, educational and social, and our commercial facilities,” but that it would be dishonorable to provide those “and withhold [sic] the Faith that alone can make them a blessing.” The “most urgent need in

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<sup>136</sup> Charles Detweiler, *The Waiting Isles: Baptist Missions in the Caribbean* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1930), 22.



Puerto Rico,” therefore, was money for building churches, without which “there [could] be no progress.”<sup>137</sup>

Most denominations rather quickly succeeded in raising mainland funds to build free-standing churches in the cities and larger towns throughout the island, for churches were the focal points of missionary activities, both religious and secular. Baptists, for example, opened their first church in July 1899 in Río Piedras and by 1904 had established nineteen churches and had 1,092 full-fledged (communicant) members.<sup>138</sup> As Michael Saenz notes in his study of the economic policies of the historic Protestant churches, only two organized churches with eighty-five members existed in 1900. By 1905, sixty-one organized churches had enrolled 5,188 members. By 1910, the number of churches had doubled to 112 and membership had nearly doubled to 9,469 members.<sup>139</sup> Though impressive, these figures nonetheless understated Puerto Ricans’ participation in the Protestant churches, for they counted as members only the communicants (those who received the Eucharist), who were fewer in number than baptized members and considerably fewer than those who attended the churches but had not officially joined. This reflected the stringency of membership requirements. Protestants did not baptize Puerto Ricans casually; missionaries insisted that the would-be convert first demonstrate “correct” behavior (abstain from drinking, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, dancing, extra-marital sexual relationships) over a probationary period of six months or so. At a time when approximately half the island’s couples were not legally married, missionaries also required that Puerto Ricans in informal consensual relationships marry before being baptized.

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<sup>137</sup> “The Progress of the Kingdom: The Present Need in Puerto Rico,” *SOM* (Feb 1900): 73.

<sup>138</sup> Angel Luis Gutierrez, “Inicio de la denominación bautista en Puerto Rico,” unpublished thesis, Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, n.d., 18-19, SEPR-AH.

<sup>139</sup> Michael Saenz, “Economic Aspects of Church Development in Puerto Rico: A Study of the Financial Policies and Procedures of the Major Protestant Church Groups in Puerto Rico from 1898 to 1957,” Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1961, 36. These figures include the Seventh Day Adventists in addition to the churches in my study.

Missionary writings in the first decade, alluding to prior experience in Catholic countries, included several discussions about the need for Protestant churches to be grand in size and architecture in order to appeal to Puerto Ricans and demonstrate an enduring institutional presence.<sup>140</sup> Competing with impressive Catholic architecture, Protestant churches in the largest cities were substantial. Smaller rural congregations, in contrast, were less likely to receive mainland funds for church construction, although Mrs. Flora Mead donated \$300.00 for a Presbyterian chapel “in tiny Espinal to be named ‘Mead Memorial’ after her late husband.”<sup>141</sup> Rural churches were quite simple, often small thatched buildings constructed in the traditional Puerto Rican *bohío* style. A visiting missionary administrator described one mountain chapel as “an arbor covered with palm leaves, open at the sides, and containing some cheap benches.”<sup>142</sup>

Each denomination generally followed the same pattern for organizing what they called their “mission field”: focusing their energies on a population center determined by the comity agreement and radiating outward as resources allowed. Missionaries established themselves in a city or town and held religious services in “borrowed rooms and unattractive halls,” in buildings they had constructed, bought, or rented.<sup>143</sup> Next, they would extend into the surrounding areas, establishing “stations” or “preaching points,” which they visited on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly schedule. In large cities such as Ponce, San Juan, and Mayagüez, missionaries also established stations in individual *barrios* within the city, in addition to those in outlying small towns or smaller, more distant rural *pueblos*. This method allowed missionaries to cover a

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<sup>140</sup> For a representative example of this discussion, see Benjamin S. Haywood, “Annual Report of the Superintendent, Puerto Rican Mission,” *Fourth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1905, 23.

<sup>141</sup> Graeme S. Mount, “Presbyterianism in Puerto Rico: Formative Years, 1899-1914,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* (Fall 1977): 245.

<sup>142</sup> Henry L. Morehouse, *Porto Rico and Our Baptist Work in the Island*, photocopy of pamphlet, 1904?, 19, SEPR.

<sup>143</sup> Janie Prichard Duggan, *Home Mission Echoes* (March 1902): 6, quoted in Dorcas Díaz-Shaner, “Janie Pritchard Duggan: The Legacy of Doña Juanita,” *American Baptist Quarterly* (Dec. 1995): 369.

significant amount of territory, despite their small numbers. In 1901, for example, Baptist Missionary Janie Duggan, who worked for more than twenty years in Puerto Rico, lived in Ponce but also served Ponce Playa, the port neighborhood, and the small towns of Adjuntas (pop. 3,500) and Yauco (pop. 7,000), twenty miles away in the coffee-growing mountains.<sup>144</sup> Before long, expansion of the limited rail and road systems to meet the needs of agro-industry facilitated missionaries' access to some areas and increased their productivity. In 1898, for example, there had been only 275 kilometers of roads in Puerto Rico; by 1907, 788 additional kilometers of road were built.<sup>145</sup> These roads, however, still did not reach those living in the interior, where mountains were too steep to accommodate any means of transportation other than mules, horses, or walking and where seasonal rains regularly washed out trails. Such obstacles did not deter missionaries, however; their writings abound with descriptions of hazardous travel to largely inaccessible places in order to proselytize.

Methodist Sarah P. White's tasks, a combination of proselytizing, teaching, and social work, typified missionaries' methods. Representative of many such accounts, her 1901 report gave a sense of the variety and demanding nature of missionary activities. In just one year, White made 1,405 house calls and an additional 229 visits to the sick; spent 317 hours nursing the sick; attended 254 meetings; conducted 16 meetings; taught 636 Sunday school students; and distributed 1,101 religious tracts—all in addition to studying Spanish.<sup>146</sup>

Missionaries' methods for reaching and trying to influence Puerto Ricans included Sunday and Bible schools, the missionary press and literature, fellowship groups, public lectures

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<sup>144</sup> *American Baptist Home Mission Society Annual Report*, 1900, 149; *American Baptist Home Mission Society Annual Report*, 1901, 104.

<sup>145</sup> Victor S. Clark, *Porto Rico and its Problems* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1930), 334, quoted in Rodríguez, *La primera evangelización norteamericana*, 134.

<sup>146</sup> *Official Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, San Juan, 1902, 21, SEPR.

and debates, and dispensing social welfare benefits. Though some of these targeted Puerto Ricans of all social locations, some methods were intended for specific populations. Medical dispensaries, for example, were created to serve the poor who had little or no access to health-care. Also, some articles in the missionary press, such as those criticizing wearing corsets and indulgence in luxury items, targeted the small-but-growing, wealthier, professional class. As Silva Gotay has noted, Protestants targeted young Puerto Ricans, seeing children and youth as “the adult citizen[s] of tomorrow” and thinking that younger Puerto Ricans were not yet completely socialized to Spanish Catholic norms.<sup>147</sup> Missionaries used Sunday and Bible schools, youth fellowship groups, and sports to reach Puerto Rican youth. Bible women were particularly important for reaching those living in poorer areas.

Sunday and Bible schools were among the most effective vehicles for spreading the ideologies of Protestantism and Americanization.<sup>148</sup> Many adults first learned to read in these classes, thus achieving a fundamental goal of Americanization. In 1913, *Puerto Rico Evangélico*, the joint Protestant insular newspaper, neatly linked the U.S. political system and Bible schools by publishing an extract of a message sent by President Woodrow Wilson to the World Conference of Bible Schools in Zurich. Wilson declared Bible schools the most effective means for studying the Bible (the most important subject for children) and formative influences

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<sup>147</sup> Silva, *Protestantismo y política*, 230-234; “Foreword,” Bishop William Burt, *Year Book: Official Minutes and Superintendent’s Annual Report: Twelfth Session of the Porto Rico Mission and of the Puerto Rico Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* 1913, 9. See also “The George O. Robinson Orphanage for Girls,” *Year Book and Official Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1907, 32-33; “Editorial: Interesando á los Niños,” *EDC*, 15 Dec. 1910, 2; Ester Palacios, “Caguas, Porto Rico,” *Tidings* (Dec 1910): 26; *Tidings* (June 1911): 6; Dr. Manuel Guzman Rodríguez, “Higiene y Moral,” *PRE*, 10 Dec. 1912, 5.

<sup>148</sup> Some denominations used “Sunday” and “Bible” interchangeably in referring to these schools in which the main focus of instruction was the Bible; meetings generally occurred at least once a week. Vacation Bible Schools, however, usually met daily for a week or two at a time. I also use these terms interchangeably.

that built character and moral fiber.<sup>149</sup> Two early converts and products themselves of the first generation of Sunday schools on the island, the Reverends J.L. Santiago Cabrera and M.E. Martínez elaborated on those schools' additional contributions. Santiago Cabrera, in a letter to a mainland mission bureaucrat, emphasized those schools' role in making Puerto Ricans "good and loyal citizens of the United States." Martínez, in an article celebrating twenty-five years of Bible schools, noted that "thousands of youths" who attended those schools "occupied important positions in the public schools, in the courts, and in business," thus tying Protestantism to middle-class status, the new colonial state, and the Americanized economy.<sup>150</sup>

Bible schools' effectiveness was partially due to their popularity and function as entryways to church activities and formal church membership. Many more Puerto Ricans attended them than attended Protestant academic schools. A 1908 report on the historical churches, for example, listed 8,890 communicants and 10,326 Bible school pupils. By 1912, those groups reached 12,529 and 16,815 and by 1923, 12,377 and 28,686, respectively.<sup>151</sup>

These schools had a long geographic reach, for they took place in cities, prisons, the leper colony, and *pueblos* so small that they lacked even rudimentary chapels. Missionaries quickly trained Puerto Ricans to teach Sunday school and to become "Bible women," because missionaries alone could not cover all the targeted areas. As historian R. Pierce Beaver notes, each missionary "knew the limitations of her own personal effort and sought to multiply its effect through the Bible women whom she trained and directed."<sup>152</sup> Additionally, Puerto Ricans

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<sup>149</sup> "El Mundo Religioso: El Presidente y la Escuela Bíblica," *PRE*, 25 Nov. 1913, 11.

<sup>150</sup> Rev. J.L. Santiago to Rev. Harold Mac Robinson, 1 June 1920, letter, PHS; M.E. Martínez, "Veinticinco Años de Escuela Bíblica," *PRE*, 10 Nov. 1923, 32-33, quoted in Rodríguez, *La primera evangelización norteamericana*, 220-221.

<sup>151</sup> Thus Sunday school members equaled 231% of church-members. "Cuadro estadístico de las Iglesias Evangélicas en Puerto Rico," *LVE*, 16 May 1908, 389; "Resumen Estadístico de las Misiones Evangélicas en Puerto Rico," *PRE*, 10 April 1913, 7; Rodríguez, *La primera evangelización norteamericana*, 224.

<sup>152</sup> R. Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling*, 119.

had greater access than missionaries, particularly male missionaries excluded from many places by local honor codes. Bible women also offered another benefit to missionaries, especially those missionaries new to the field. They functioned as “cultural, linguistic, and social ‘brokers’ in evangelism,” familiarizing missionaries with local honor and gender codes that affected the process of evangelizing.<sup>153</sup> This way, local actors and conditions shaped the missionary project.

Sunday-school teachers and Bible women also visited their young and adult pupils at home, further extending the missionaries’ reach. A Presbyterian promotional pamphlet praised Sunday schools’ “influence in improving the homes,” describing them as “strong evangelistic agenc[ies] for the whole neighborhood.”<sup>154</sup> This visiting work, which sometimes entailed arduous excursions through isolated hills or crowded urban *barrios*, could sometimes feel like a “wearisome tramp from house to house,” according to missionary Ida Hayes, but was worth the effort, for it allowed missionaries “to give the bread of life to those whose household cares and bread-winning labors, or the sufferings of poverty” prevented them from attending church services.”<sup>155</sup>

For poorer Puerto Ricans, especially in the mountains, such attention contrasted sharply with Catholic practices during the Spanish regime, when priests rarely visited remote areas and, when they did, demanded a fee for performing baptisms, marriages, or burials. This history led missionaries to believe that country people would be more open to conversion than city dwellers, because those *jíbaros* had been the least influenced by the Catholic Church. In 1902, for example, Rev. Judson L. Underwood suggested that the isolation of the country-sides motivated

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<sup>153</sup> Young Lee Hertig, “Without a Face: The Nineteenth-Century Bible Woman and Twentieth-Century Female Jendosa,” in *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Dana L. Robert (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 186.

<sup>154</sup> *Twenty Questions and Answers on our School Work in Porto Rico* (NYC: The Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1911), 7, RG 305-29-52, PHS.

<sup>155</sup> *Tidings* (June 1905): 18.

rural people to seek the fellowship of Protestantism. He blamed their “wicked devices” on their abandonment by the Spanish colonial state and Catholic Church and insisted that, contrary to prevailing belief, “some of the brightest people ... in the island have been of this ‘jibaro’ class. The root of strength is in them, as it is not in the townsfolk.”<sup>156</sup> Missionaries thought that vice was more firmly entrenched in urban Puerto Ricans, because it was so readily available in many forms in the cities and towns.

Nélida Agosto Cintrón, however, argues that isolated and dispersed rural poor responded to that neglect by developing a “popular Catholicism” that incorporated spiritist elements and better served their social realities. She also argues that the Hermanos Cheos movement, a militant variant of popular Catholicism, emerged as a response to the fundamental changes wrought by the U.S. occupation.<sup>157</sup> In other words, many of those rural people had strengthened their ties to a reconstructed Catholicism, which made them less open to Protestant proselytizing—another example of how local conditions and actors shaped the missionary project.

Some elements of Sunday-school programs functioned particularly well in familiarizing Puerto Ricans with U.S. hegemonic cultural icons and practices.<sup>158</sup> Many Puerto Ricans were first introduced to U.S. history and cultural practices through Sunday-school celebrations of holidays such as Washington’s Birthday, Arbor Day, Flag Day, Mother’s Day, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Labor Day. At a Presbyterian church in Toa Alta in 1909, one church member read the U.S. president’s proclamation of the holiday and another recounted the

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<sup>156</sup> *One Hundredth Annual Report of the Board of Home Missions*, May 1902, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1902, 8, PHS.

<sup>157</sup> Agosto Cintrón, *Religión y Cambio Social*, Chapter Two.

<sup>158</sup> For examples of *transculturation* that occurred, see Jovita Caraballo de Silva, “La iglesia protestante como agente de asimilación y preservación cultural en Puerto Rico,” (Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, 1968), 5-9, *passim*.

Puritans' journey for religious freedom, describing Plymouth, Massachusetts as the "cradle of Christianity in virgin America."<sup>159</sup> In the early years, missionaries were particularly preoccupied with trying to make Puerto Ricans attach more importance to Christmas than to Three Kings' Day, the traditional focus for that holiday season, and the Sunday schools were an important venue in which they waged this battle over cultural symbols.<sup>160</sup> Additionally, missionaries taught illiterate Puerto Ricans to read and write, sometimes in both Spanish and English, through Bible studies that conveyed mainstream Protestant values.

Missionaries quickly established a vibrant Spanish-language press that also transmitted Protestant values in addition to documenting missionaries' achievements and struggles and functioning as a counter to the island's Hispanophile press. Methodists published the first Protestant paper, *El Defensor Cristiano*, in 1903. With 1,000 subscribers in 1905, it began publishing an English-language section, pronouncing itself the "only bi-lingual paper in Puerto Rico."<sup>161</sup> The Baptists followed with *El Evangelista*, the Presbyterians with *La Voz Evangélica*, and the United Brethren with *El Testigo Evangélico*; and, in 1917, the Lutherans published *El Testigo*.<sup>162</sup> In 1912, the Presbyterians and United Brethren discontinued their denominational papers and joined the Congregationalists to publish a joint newspaper, the biweekly *Puerto Rico Evangélico*, which printed 3,000 copies in its initial run.<sup>163</sup> In 1915, the Disciples of Christ and

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<sup>159</sup> "Notas de las Iglesias: "Día de Acción de Gracias en Toa Alta," *LVE*, 11 Dec. 1909, 249.

<sup>160</sup> For examples, see "Póngase coto al mal," *LVE*, 12 Dec. 1908, 208; E.L., "Los Reyes," *LVE*, 11 Dec. 1909, 245. To see how missionaries presented the struggle over Three Kings' Day to mainland Sunday Schools, see *When Christmas Comes to Porto Rico* (NYC: Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church USA, 1910), 3-6, PHS.

<sup>161</sup> By 1911, it had 2,000 subscribers. *EDC*, 1 Nov. 1911, 19; *EDC*., 1 Sept. 1905, 5; *EDC*., 15 Aug. 1906, 6. By 1910, *EDC* had 1376 islander out of 1800 subscribers and published twice a month. "Mission Notes and Personals," *EDC* 1 Dec. 1910, 19. The pro-U.S. Republican Party's bilingual daily newspaper *El Tiempo/Times* did not begin publishing until 1907. Antonio S. Pedreira, *El periodismo en Puerto Rico*, (Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial Edil, 1982), 544.

<sup>162</sup> *La Voz Evangélica* went from 700 subscribers in 1907 to 1,000 in 1908, "Nuestro Periódico," *LVE*, 13 July 1907, 29; *LVE*, 18 April 1908, 359.

<sup>163</sup> *PRE*, 10 July 1912, 4.



the Baptists followed suit and joined *Puerto Rico Evangélico*, which became a weekly in 1926 and continued publishing until 1972.

These newspapers acted as agents of Americanization not only by enhancing and publicizing the presence of the Protestant community, but also by communicating U.S. culture and politics to its Puerto Rican readers and making explicit connections between mainland elites and Protestantism.<sup>164</sup> Not restricted to religious topics, these papers published articles about U.S. history, politics, economics, current events, and culture in addition to international news briefs.<sup>165</sup> Writers referred to Puerto Rico as part of the United States and many writers, both continentals and islanders, used the inclusive-though-ambiguous “we” when referring to Puerto Ricans and mainlanders. The missionary press regularly printed stories and aphorisms representative of U.S. culture. Benjamin Franklin, for example, was cited on the virtues of work and Booker T. Washington on the importance of humility and prayer.<sup>166</sup>

When discussing important mainlanders, the press emphasized those mainlanders’ ties to Protestantism. In 1908, for example, *La Voz Evangélica* reported that former president Grover Cleveland’s last words addressed the Bible’s importance in building character and citizenship.<sup>167</sup> Though skeptical of President William Howard Taft’s Unitarianism, *La Voz Evangélica* praised his abstinence from alcohol, his recognition of Protestants’ work in the Philippines, and his characterization of Protestant work in “pagan” countries as “the only hope we have for their

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<sup>164</sup> Missionaries also regularly contributed to the mainland, English-language missionary press. Critical to fund-raising efforts, those writings shaped mainland Protestants’ notions of Puerto Ricans and contributed to the construction of their own imperial identities and those of their mainland supporters.

<sup>165</sup> International briefs presented a mainstream U.S. perspective, with a few important exceptions. Some papers, for example, maintained a pacifist stance towards World War One.

<sup>166</sup> For Franklin examples, see “El trabajo,” *LVE*, 30 Oct. 1909, 188 and “Reglas para fomentar la virtud,” *PRE*, 10 March 1916, 9; 188; for Booker T. Washington, see *EDC*, 1 March 1908, 8 and “Buen ejemplo,” *El Evangelista*, 4 July 1905, 8. I did not come across any references to W.E.B. Dubois.

<sup>167</sup> “Las últimas palabras de Grover Cleveland,” *LVE*, 5 Dec. 1908, 194.

social and religious evolution.”<sup>168</sup> In 1911, *El Testigo Evangélico* noted that three likely candidates for the U.S. presidency were all sons of evangelical ministers.<sup>169</sup> In 1912 a *Puerto Rico Evangélico* article entitled “Magnates of Industry in Evangelical Work” listed a dozen industrialists affiliated to Protestantism. Heinz, “King of pickled vegetables,” was president of the Pennsylvania Association of Sunday School Teachers; the head of Quaker Oats presided over the Moody Bible Institute; and John Wanamaker supervised the largest Sunday school in the world.<sup>170</sup> This press regularly reported donations to Protestant churches by wealthy Protestants like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller.<sup>171</sup> *La Voz Evangélica* informed its readers that Rockefeller, “who possessed more millions of dollars than anyone else,” was a sincere Christian who worshipped with his family every day.<sup>172</sup> The author’s source was Rockefeller’s pastor, which lent the story a sense of intimacy and the Protestant community a sense of connection to power—and perhaps the hint of future prosperity.

Church fellowship groups were crucial means for imparting the Protestant ethic of work, service, and clean living. These groups convened to study the Bible, apply its prescripts to daily life through personal behavior and community service projects, and discuss significant social issues. They were usually organized by age and gender (from infants to adults) and initially supervised by a missionary. Puerto Ricans took over these supervisory positions as soon as the missionaries deemed them ready. Most denominations organized groups modeled after mainland counterparts. These included the Presbyterian *Esfuerzo Cristiano*/Christian Endeavor, the Methodist *Liga Epworth*/Epworth League, the Episcopalian *Liga Juvenil*/Youth League and the

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<sup>168</sup> “La religión de Taft,” *LVE*, 28 Nov. 1908, 185; *LVE*, 30 Jan. 1909, 259; “La opinión de Taft sobre las misiones,” *LVE*, 8 Jan. 1910, 291.

<sup>169</sup> “Del Exterior: Un Hecho Interesante,” *ETE* 16 Jan. 1911, 10.

<sup>170</sup> Los Magnates de la Industria en el Trabajo Evangélico,” *PRE*, 10 Oct. 1912, 6.

<sup>171</sup> For examples, see *PRE* 25 April 1914. Carnegie had originally opposed U.S. intervention in the Spanish-Cuban War.

<sup>172</sup> “Información General: ¿Entrará el rico en el reino de los cielos?,” *LVE*, 7 May 1910, 300.

Girls' Friendly Society; the Christian Church's Christian Endeavor, and the interdenominational Young Men's Christian Association's *Los Doce/The Twelve*.

Missionaries paid special attention to Puerto Rican children, considering them not only objects of Protestant teachings, but a means for spreading those teachings. A pamphlet about the work in Puerto Rico enumerated the ways that "mission school influences flow out to the homes of the pupils" and stated that "the children, having excellent memories, tell over at home all they have heard at school," including what they learn about cleanliness.<sup>173</sup> Describing children as "the hope of the island," *El Defensor Cristiano* recommended that children's fellowship groups take advantage of festivities like Christmas programs to attract children (who, in turn, would attract their parents) and to direct the children's forces for the good of the church and community. It suggested playing games with the youngest children to gain their trust until, little by little, their interest in "that which we want to teach" was awakened. The balance of work and play should shift towards more work as the children grew older: "Little work and much play at the beginning, later more work and less play should be the rule." At a tender age, it continued, children should be entrusted with small tasks in order to boost their confidence and teach them responsibility, for the welfare of "our beloved island" depended on their complete development.<sup>174</sup>

Missionaries were also concerned with young adults, who tended to turn away from church when they reached adolescence. Missionaries designed youth groups to not only teach Protestantism's religious and social tenets, but also to provide "Christian" social activities to displace traditional Puerto Rican ones, such as gambling, cockfighting, drinking, and dancing. Methodists, for example, resolved in 1913 to establish Epworth and Junior Leagues in all their

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<sup>173</sup> *Twenty Questions and Answers*, 7, RG 305-29-52, PHS.

<sup>174</sup> "Editorial: Interesando á los Niños," *EDC*, 15 Dec. 1910, 2.

fields, “with the object of winning, interesting, and retaining the young people in the Church, and to prevent that many of them be lost, yielding to the vices and different sins that the world presents before them.”<sup>175</sup> By 1914, they had organized eleven chapters of Epworth Leagues with 540 members.<sup>176</sup> Presbyterians in Aguadilla formed “The Moonlight Club” as a social organization and, in Juana Díaz, youth of “Los Paladines Cristianos” held an event honoring Shakespeare and Cervantes.<sup>177</sup> In Mayagüez, the Episcopalian Girls Friendly Society played Friday-night basketball and the boys in “En Pos de Luz” organized a baseball team under the direction of a local convert, “a fine example of Christian young manhood.”<sup>178</sup>

Missionaries also established libraries to spread the “Good News,” to encourage Puerto Ricans to expand their conceptual horizons, and to serve those who had learned to read but could not afford to buy books. Not surprisingly, they wanted such literature to be “Christian and Protestant.” In 1909, the chairman of the Methodist Publications Committee stated that “A reading public is in the making, and it is our high joy and privilege to have a large share in cultivating the taste for such reading as shall not only inform the head, but also rectify the heart.”<sup>179</sup> Methodists influenced the reading public in Jayuya by establishing “a circulating library of 100 volumes,” which, they claimed, “effected a transformation in the community almost too wonderful to believe. Mind and heart have seen thereby a new world.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> “Epworth and Junior Leagues,” *Year Book: Official Minutes and Superintendent’s Annual Report: Twelfth Session of the Porto Rico Mission and of the Puerto Rico Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* 1913, 63.

<sup>176</sup> Manuel Andújar, “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1914,” *Year Book: Official Minutes and Superintendent’s Annual Report: XIII Session of the Porto Rico Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 36.

<sup>177</sup> “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 Dec. 1915, 13; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 10 May 1916, 14.

<sup>178</sup> Florence L. Everett, “Among the Poor of Porto Rico: Our Mission Provides Recreation for the Well and Cares for the Sick,” *SOM* (April 1926): 241-242.

<sup>179</sup> T. Stevenson, “Publications,” *Year Book, Superintendent’s Report and Official Minutes of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1909, 71.

<sup>180</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, “Superintendent’s Annual Report-1910: Porto Rico Mission,” *Year Book, Superintendent’s Report and Official Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 7.

Additionally, Rev. A.H. Lambert donated books to the Arecibo municipal library in 1905 and the Presbyterian Marina Neighborhood House established a library.<sup>181</sup> Some missionaries, however, worried about unlimited access to books, as expressed in this notice of the establishment of a church library in Utuado: “These are excellent books but we doubt if putting them in a library for general reading is a wise thing to do. They should be in the hands of every intelligent pastor for use among his people at his discretion.” Eight of these nine volumes of U.S. books translated into Spanish treated what missionaries called “social purity,” i.e., socio-sexual matters. The ninth was a history of the United States.<sup>182</sup> The cautionary regarding the social-purity books stemmed from missionaries’ fear of disorderliness, in this case sexual disorderliness. Frank in their approach to such matters compared to Catholics, Protestants nonetheless feared lest such volatile material fall into the hand of those without the “training” necessary to handle it in a “Christian” manner. The widespread local practice of procreation outside of legally sanctioned marriage intensified this concern. Missionaries called this “concubinage” and regularly discussed it in their press and private correspondence.

Reaching for a broad audience, missionaries regularly presented lectures to which they invited the general public. Individual churches sponsored some of these; denominations sponsored others. In 1911, the United Brethren in Ponce, for example, held biweekly “popular lectures” sponsored by the fellowship La Hermandad Otterbein. Topics included hygiene and morality, the Panama Canal’s influence, the emancipation of the working class, and the economic effects of alcohol consumption.<sup>183</sup> In 1913, themes included indifference,

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<sup>181</sup> “Notas Varias: Donativo,” *EDC*, 15 Jan. 1905, 4; *LVE*, 16 Jan. 1909, 241.

<sup>182</sup> The potentially dangerous eight were “the Purity books of Dr. Stahl: What a Boy, a Young Man, a Young Husband, a Man of 45, Ought to Know-What a Girl, a Young Woman, a Young Wife, a Woman at 45, Ought to Know,” *EDC*, 1 June 1909, 7.

<sup>183</sup> “La Hermandad Otterbein,” *ETE*, 15 Feb. 1911, 7.

intemperance, and the fatal consequences of adultery and concubinage.<sup>184</sup> The general public, some government officials, other denominations, and special mainlander guests were invited to hear talks presented at the annual denominational conferences held in different towns and cities throughout the island.<sup>185</sup> Favorite topics included temperance, public schools, and Protestantism's role in Puerto Rico.<sup>186</sup>

The presence at several Baptist assemblies of representatives of the Federación Libre de Trabajo (F.L.T.)/Free Federation of Workers, the insular labor organization affiliated with the mainland American Federation of Labor and the base of the Socialist Party, suggested that the missionaries engaged in a broad public conversation.<sup>187</sup> In 1913, when the evening's topic was "The supreme need of Puerto Rico," Rafael Alonso, F.L.T. Secretary General and a fraternal delegate to the assembly, expressed his desire that the F.L.T. and the Baptist organizations join arms to work together for the good of "our" country. In 1916, F.L.T. organizer José María Pereira asked the Baptists to cooperate however much possible for the good of the working class; apparently Rev. Rafael Landrón did so, for Puerto Rican Baptist historian Tomás Rosario Ramos described him as a non-Marxist socialist leader experienced in talking to masses of workers, who

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<sup>184</sup> "Labor Evangélica en la Isla," *PRE*, 25 June 1913, 13.

<sup>185</sup> Usually the governor opened the assembly with an address.

<sup>186</sup> A sampling of speeches given at the Baptist assemblies included the following: "Do the Evangelical Churches constitute a significant social force in Puerto Rico?"; "The influential classes and Evangelism"; and "The effect of the cinema on Christians and youth." Abelardo M. Díaz, *La Novena Asamblea, 14-17 septiembre 1911*, 14-16; Rev. E.L. Humphrey, *Acta correspondiente a la Décimotercera Asamblea de la Asociación de las Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico celebrada en Juncos, los días 30 de marzo al 2 de abril de 1916*, 7; Mary O. Lake, *Acta correspondiente a la Décimoquinta Asamblea de la Asociación de las Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico celebrada en Carolina, los días 14 al 17 de marzo de 1918*, 5; "Actas de la Asociación de Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico, 1902-1920," SEPR-AH.

<sup>187</sup> Though the FLT used the strike frequently, its leader Santiago Iglesias Pantín, who by 1915 rid the union of its most radical influences, worked closely with Samuel Gompers, who several times successfully lobbied the U.S. legislature to intervene in island labor matters. The F.L.T. supported statehood for the island.

transferred those oratorical skills to the pulpit.<sup>188</sup> Both the F.L.T. and the Protestants worked for better working conditions and laws prohibiting compulsory work and the sale of alcohol on Sundays.

### 3.2 GOALS

Missionary methods for refashioning Puerto Ricans tended toward the concrete and pragmatic with an ideological bent. The term “practical” or “applied” Christianity” peppered Protestant discourse and succinctly described missionaries’ approach to change. Practical Christianity, with origins in the Social Gospel, functioned as both method and goal. In 1912, Rev. N.H. Huffman of the United Brethren inaugurated in *Puerto Rico Evangélico* a regular column entitled “Applied Christianity,” which treated the methods, challenges, and results of implementing practical Christianity in Puerto Rico, including matters such as the relations between workers and bosses, those between pastors and congregants, and decreased church attendance. Huffman clarified that Christianity was “not just a system of pretty teachings; what distinguished it was its practical character.” The “applied Christianity” movement, he explained, proposed that all human problems could be resolved by applying to them divine Christian principles.<sup>189</sup> Considering all human experience a matter of Christian concern, this approach suited well the all-encompassing missionary project in Puerto Rico.

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<sup>188</sup> Tomás Rosario Ramos, *Historia de los bautistas de Puerto Rico*, 2nd. edition (Santo Domingo, R.D.: Editora Educativa Dominicana, 1979), 85. Rosario Ramos took care to clarify that Landrón’s “great leader was not Santiago Iglesias, but Jesus Christ.”

<sup>189</sup> N.H. Huffman, “El Cristianismo Aplicado: Relación entre Patronos y Obreros,” *PRE*, 10 July 1912, 9.

Practical Christianity neatly dovetailed with the missionary ideal of a “consecrated” life, including the notions of service and productive sacrifice.<sup>190</sup> These were normative principles frequently articulated in both private and public missionary writings. Missionaries routinely contrasted Protestantism’s emphasis on transformation through mutual aid and self-improvement with Catholicism’s corruption, rituals, and emphasis on dependence-inducing charity.<sup>191</sup> In 1902, for example, Dr. Grace Williams Atkins, one of the first medical missionaries in Puerto Rico, prayed that the island would come to “understand that charity consists of more than giving of two cents to each beggar that comes for it at 12 o’clock on Saturday; that her religion may not be one of mere empty forms but of real practical every-day living.”<sup>192</sup> Conveying to Puerto Ricans these fundamental understandings of consecration was crucial. And missionaries preached, formed associations, taught classes, built institutions, provided social welfare, and advocated for social, political, and economic reforms in their attempts to bring into being—through modeling and explicit expectations, through practice and ideology—consecrated living in Puerto Ricans.

Consecrated living connoted purity and missionaries frequently wrote and spoke about literal and figurative cleanliness. With frequent references to “a sound mind in a sound body,” missionaries coupled what they called “social” and “moral hygiene.” Clean living called for orderliness, temperance, attention to personal hygiene, and healthy physical exercise in addition to decency. Missionaries frequently conflated material and spiritual cleanliness, postulating a

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<sup>190</sup> See “Sermones en Zapatos,” *ETE*, 16 Feb. 1912, 3.

<sup>191</sup> Missionaries regularly discussed how freely giving material aid or charging minimal fees might contribute to nurturing an unhealthy dependence. They subscribed to the differences between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor. For an example of such a discussion at the international level, see Ernest W. Gurney Masterman, “Problems of Modern Medical Missions,” *Missionary Review* (Nov. 1900): 831-840.

<sup>192</sup> Grace Williams Atkins, May 1902, draft of an article, RG 301.8 Box 16 Folder 34, PHS.



causal relationship between the two states, which in turn delimited citizenship rights.<sup>193</sup> Material and spiritual progress demanded cleansing the individual body, soul, and psyche and also the collective Puerto Rican body politic, mentalities, practices, and physical environment. In her study on public-health reforms during this period, anthropologist Nicole E. Trujillo-Pagán makes an observation about the colonial state that also applies to the missionaries:

[The colonial state] conflates what they perceive as Puerto Ricans' lack of hygiene with what they view as Puerto Rican ignorance. Both forms of backwardness, [it claims], impede Puerto Rico's modernity. If Puerto Ricans are too ignorant to assimilate basic standards of hygiene, ... how can they govern themselves efficiently? ... If their unhygienic behavior indeed reflects how Puerto Ricans place their own personal interests before the public good, ... how can they develop a healthy democratic society, a body politic, free from disease and internal corruption."<sup>194</sup>

A 1910 study guide used by Protestants to teach mainland youth groups about “their” new mission field used an essentialized representation of this point of view. Written to accompany the book *Star-49?*, which discussed missionary work in Puerto Rico and the island’s political future, the guide suggested that teachers mount a theatrical production called “Uncle Sam’s Review,” in which the following groups would pass before a conventionally represented Uncle Sam, while the U.S. national anthem played in the background:

Soldiers; ... street cleaners, carrying rakes and brooms; ... teachers, carrying school books, globes, maps, laboratory apparatus, blackboards, etc., ... road-makers with shovels, picks, cans labeled ‘dynamite,’ etc., ... doctors carrying bottles, bandages, etc., ... missionaries, ministers, teachers—academic, music, sewing, cooking—and nurses with caps and aprons carrying Bibles, medicine, bandages, sewing material, music rolls, kitchen utensils, dolls, bats and balls, games and playthings.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> For example, during a bubonic plague outbreak in 1912, a Puerto Rican Protestant equated the plague and original sin. See Juan Díaz, “La Limpieza del Alma,” *PRE*, 25 July 1912, 3.

<sup>194</sup> Nicole E. Trujillo-Pagán, “Health Beyond Prescription: A Post-Colonial History of Puerto Rican Medicine at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2003), 9-10.

<sup>195</sup> Katharine R. Crowell, *Map Studies on Porto Rico and Leader’s Supplement to “Star-49?”* (New York City: The Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1910), 7.

This pageant of symbols aptly depicted the joint missionary/imperial venture: soldiers led the parade of reformers and re-builders who would clean, teach, and heal Puerto Ricans, while also introducing them to U.S. notions of work, health, play, music, and sport. The study guide, according to Katherine R. Crowell who wrote both it and *Star-49?*, sought to show how Protestant missionaries were giving “a pure Christianity” to Puerto Ricans in the hope of civilizing them, “whether or not the question mark is ever taken off of ‘Star-49?’”<sup>196</sup> Crowell thus contrasted “pure” Christianity with Puerto Rican “backwardness,” justifying the civilizing mission and leaving the time-frame for—and rights resulting from—the tutelage undefined, just like Puerto Rico’s hazy legal status.

The corruption of Puerto Rican politics persistently appeared in missionary discourse; what missionaries saw as mendacious, sectarian, often seigniorial, political dynamics gave them additional proof that the Puerto Rican body politic required cleansing, disciplining, and lifting to a higher moral plane. In 1907, for example, the Presbyterian newspaper criticized the intrusion of partisan politics into a medical conference convened to compose a sanitary code. Describing corrupt local politicking as an “irascible señora,” the article claimed that such *politiquería* had swayed conference participants to pay more heed to sectarian interests than to the greater good, causing the conference to fail. It insisted on the need to “uproot from the hearts of our compatriots the excessive passion that they feel for this vile señora” in order to secure politicians committed to the entire community rather than to a particular class or political faction.<sup>197</sup> In 1929, Rosa A. González, a high profile Protestant convert, described such politics not as female, but as a “base monster” in her definitive—and startlingly scathing—critique of politics at play in public health, *Los Hechos Desconocidos*. This exposé patently carried the missionary imprint

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>197</sup> “Noticias Generales: La Política en Puerto Rico,” *LVE*, 16 Nov. 1907, 169.

and employed language markedly similar to that of the missionaries. Chapter Five examines her work and impact more closely.<sup>198</sup>

Victoriano M. Fernández, another early convert and member of the editorial board of *La Voz Evangélica*, articulated the interrelatedness of literal and metaphoric cleanliness in this call to arms: “In fighting against the terrible sickness, we need to preach about three things: Hygiene, morality, and temperance!”<sup>199</sup> Though Fernández was referring to “the white plague,” tuberculosis, his approach accurately mirrored that of the missionaries’ towards all disease—and also towards many Puerto Rican customs that contravened Protestant notions of hygiene. These included gambling, alcohol and tobacco consumption, cock-fighting, prostitution, dancing, and extra-marital sex and procreation. Emanating from Puerto Ricans’ attitudes toward manual labor and their notions of time and pleasure, Puerto Ricans’ “bad habits” struck the missionaries as unkempt, disorderly, and degenerate.

To modernize Puerto Rico’s public-health sphere, the colonial state implemented multiple reforms. These included new sanitation and building codes, infrastructure improvements, regulation of drugs and milk production, funding research in “tropical medicine,” and educating Puerto Ricans about disease transmission and prevention.<sup>200</sup> Missionaries fervently supported these programs in practice and the press. *El Defensor Cristiano*, in 1906, claimed that Dr. Bailey K. Ashford, a colonel in the U.S. army was “beloved by all” for

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<sup>198</sup> *Los Hechos Desconocidos*, Rosa A. González (San Juan, P.R.: Impresa Venezuela, 1929).

<sup>199</sup> V.M.F., “Editorial,” *LVE*, 13 March 1909, 310. Fernández became the first Puerto Rican editor of *LVE*, the Presbyterian newspaper. For one example of how this conflation of literal and metaphoric cleanliness/morality shaped public policy, see José Flores Ramos, “Virgins, Whores, and Martyrs: Prostitution in the Colony: 1898-1919,” in *Puerto Rican Women’s History: New Perspectives*, ed. Félix Matos Rodríguez and Linda C. Delgado, (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1998), 83-104.

<sup>200</sup> For an overview of the U.S.-initiated public health reforms, see Mariola Espinosa, “Sanitary and American: Disease Eradication Efforts and the Transformation of Puerto Rico After 1898,” paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association XXII International Congress, Miami, March 2000 and Trujillo-Pagán, “Health Beyond Prescription.”

discovering the cause and designing a treatment for anemia, an endemic disease on the island and Protestant medical personnel were involved with the Institute for Tropical Medicine established by Ashford and the colonial state.<sup>201</sup> In 1916, J. Rodríguez Cepero, a Baptist convert, applauded the insular legislature's allocation of resources to sewer, paving, aqueduct, and hospital projects, and four public laundries in Mayagüez.<sup>202</sup> Rodríguez particularly commended the laundries, which would resolve "a problem important to not only the poor washer-women, but also for the inhabitants of this city who receive from these washer-women clothes as dirty as those we gave them."<sup>203</sup>

The missionary press regularly printed educational articles on health, publicized government initiatives, and urged Puerto Ricans to cooperate with the colonial state's public health programs.<sup>204</sup> In 1910, for example, the missionary press gave substantial coverage to Governor Colton's declaration of April 24 as "Tuberculosis Sunday." Methodists, like other denominations, happily offered to distribute literature and preach on ways to avoid TB on that day. In San Juan, a Methodist minister also invited the prominent Puerto Rican physician, Dr. José Carbonell, to lecture on TB to a large public audience.<sup>205</sup> In 1916, Paul Miller, the U.S.-appointed Commissioner of Education, organized for rural-school students and their parents a series of lectures on hygiene and vice, including the mistreatment of women. *Puerto Rico Evangélico* commended Miller's timing in relation to a concurrent Prohibition initiative on the

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<sup>201</sup> "Something To Be Thankful For," *EDC*, 1 Nov. 1906, 6. For a detailed, post-colonial critique of Ashford's campaign, see Trujillo-Pagán, "Health Beyond Prescription," Ch. 6.

<sup>202</sup> Rodríguez Cepero, an unordained worker for the Baptist mission and former director and editor of *El Evangelista*, was director of *Puerto Rico Evangélico*, Secretary of the U.S.-affiliated Ass. of Sunday Schools, and wrote an article about the unhygienic nature of Holy Water used in Catholic churches. See "Crónica Ligera," *PRE*, 10 April 1916, 9-10.

<sup>203</sup> J. Rodríguez Cepero, "Un Milón Sesenta Mil Dólares," *PRE*, 25 April 1916, 10-11.

<sup>204</sup> See: "Governor Colton and a Year's Administration," *EDC*, 1 Nov 1910, 16-18.

<sup>205</sup> Teddy Roosevelt, president of the U.S. Anti-TB Society, was working with Gov. Colton and the insular Anti-TB Society to extend its benefits to P.R., "Contra la Tuberculosis," *EDC*, 1 April 1910, 5-6; "General Notations," *EDC*, 1 May 1910, 18-19.

mainland, thus linking mainland and island political and public-health movements.<sup>206</sup> Juan I. Otero, a well-known Puerto Rican Protestant and vaccinator for the insular Health Department, participated in this program, lecturing on principles of hygiene and “*the monster of alcoholism* [emphasis original].” As historian Mayra Rosario Urrutía has shown, missionaries played a primary role in the temperance movement in Puerto Rico, establishing local branches of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, holding lectures, speaking from the pulpits, and sponsoring speaking tours of mainland temperance activists.<sup>207</sup> Puerto Ricans passed a referendum mandating Prohibition in 1916, four years before the United States, achieving one of the missionaries’ central goals.

Missionaries also initiated their own public health programs. In their dispensaries, hospitals, schools, industrial workshops, and community centers, they taught modern hygienic practices. Girls at the George O. Robinson Orphanage, for example, were trained “by sci[e]ntific exercises and by observation of the laws of health ... [and] by thoroughg [sic] instruction in all the departments of domestic work” to become “model home keepers” who would clean and cook in modern ways.<sup>208</sup> In Aguadilla, a missionary-hired and Protestant-school trained nurse taught “Care of Babies” to mothers attending the Presbyterian settlement house and, invited by the Commissioner of Public Health, to all grades in the public schools.<sup>209</sup> “Lessons of cleanliness” taught at school were “carried home,” according to a 1911 missionary pamphlet that noted with pleasant surprise that it was “often really astonishing that such clean attractive little children can

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<sup>206</sup> “Obra de Mérito.” *PRE*, 10 March 1916, 17.

<sup>207</sup> Mayra Rosario Urrutia, “Hacia un mundo abstemio.”

<sup>208</sup> “El Asilo Robinson: Robinson Orphanage,” *EDC*, 15 Jan. 1911, 16.

<sup>209</sup> “Porto Rico,” *Forty-Fifth Annual Report, Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1924, 36.

issue from such unlovely homes, as many of the shacks [were].”<sup>210</sup> Protestant churches and community centers invited doctors to publicly lecture on the etiology, treatment, and prevention of various diseases. Missionaries worked in the Anti-Tuberculosis Society, promoted the sale of Red Cross Christmas stamps, the revenues of which were dedicated to fighting T.B., and attended an island medical conference on the disease.<sup>211</sup> They also contributed money to build cottages at the T.B. sanitarium and worked in the leper colony.

Missionaries did not always act in complete agreement with each other or the colonial state. Some charged the insular legislature, in 1912, with not doing enough for public health. That year, the colonial state had reacted quickly and forcefully to an outbreak of bubonic plague and typhus, instituting a variety of measures, including extermination, fumigation, demolishing houses, and mandating cement flooring. Methodist George B. Benedict praised those decisive actions, boasting that “we [are] under American Government which puts first importance on the health of its subjects and is capable of guarding it scientifically.” A *Puerto Rico Evangélico* editorial, however, accused the insular legislature of not paying commensurate heed to the moral aspects of hygiene: “They form progressive leagues, defense leagues, etc., to work for the advance of the people, but they rarely deal with moral matters. Why give so much attention to the material? Is it because true progress consists of [only] our material advancement?” The editorial complained that the legislature spent too much time debating projects for new docks, irrigation systems, road construction, and public schools at the expense of equally important moral issues. It called for enforcing existing laws and passing new ones to deal with widespread moral threats. Condemning alcohol and its “companions,” poverty, venereal diseases, and family

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<sup>210</sup> *Twenty Questions and Answers*, 7.

<sup>211</sup> “Noticias Generales”: “Las conferencias antituberculosas,” *LVE*, 6 March 1909, 299; “Información General: Donativos para la Cruz Roja,” *LVE*, 8 Jan. 1910, 283.

violence, the editorial redefined “true progress” as averting such evils. Treating social vices and biological diseases homologously, it proposed a different extermination campaign: one in which legislators, defense committees, the entire “pueblo” would eradicate immorality, just as mosquitoes and rats were exterminated to prevent disease. Exhorting all those who loved their country to join this undertaking essential to “tomorrow’s vigor, efficiency, and prosperity,” the editorial finished with the battle cry, “Let’s get to work on moral sanitation!” This early, limited critique of Americanization’s emphasis on the material would strengthen in the following decades.<sup>212</sup>

### 3.3 DISCIPLINE

To transform—or “regenerate,” a favorite missionary term—Puerto Ricans into punctual, quiet, attentive, clean, sober, healthy, family- and church-oriented, modestly dressed worker-citizens called for discipline. Missionaries communicated the notion and practice of discipline, again as both mean and end, through all their programs. The disciplinary and modernizing agendas overlapped, for the latter required the former. Puerto Ricans socialized to middle-class Protestant standards in their personal lives would more easily adapt to jobs being constituted by the new economy, especially those in the growing white-collar sector, which had been quite small in the pre-1898 hacienda economy.

Missionary Olive G. Williams told a story that demonstrated how well some Puerto Rican children had grasped the disciplinary message imparted in their Sunday school. Taking a

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<sup>212</sup> “El Saneamiento Moral,” *PRE*, 25 Aug. 1912, 1-2.

short cut through an alley, she heard children singing a hymn. She saw five poor girls, attendees of her Vacation Bible School, who “were playing they were La Americana and her assistants and conducting a Bible School.” After reciting some verses, “the oldest girl who was taking the part of ‘La Americana’—called on them to sit up straight-‘They did not look nice lounging around.’ The poor children were all seated cross-legged on the ground-so it was rather difficult for them to get into correct position—‘Now, tomorrow, I want every one to come with clean hands and faces and hair neatly combed.” Though gratified by the scene she had witnessed, Williams vowed to be more “gentle” with the children in the future, for she feared that “the child got my scholding [sic] better than she did the other lessons,” the Bible studies.<sup>213</sup>

Puerto Ricans’ tendencies to procrastinate particularly irked missionaries, who interpreted it as undisciplined, disrespectful and disorderly. In 1907, missionary Adell Martin, in a representative characterization, described islanders as “a people of to-morrow, and not to-day. Everything with them is ‘mañana,’ and as a usual thing their tomorrow never comes. This ‘mañana’ habit has made them weak.”<sup>214</sup> By the second decade of U.S. rule, the “mañana habit” manifested as decreasing and irregular attendance at church. Discussions of this problem filled missionary literature, reflecting its worrisome importance.<sup>215</sup> Furthermore, many Puerto Ricans who did attend church engaged in behaviors that Rev. Nathan Huffman labeled “ugly habits” in his “Applied Christianity” column: tendencies to spit, arrive late, block the aisles, talk loudly at the door before services began, and read the hymnal or Bible while the pastor preached.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Olive G. Williams to Wilson P. Minton, 9 July 1924, letter, IEU-2, SEPR-AH.

<sup>214</sup> Adell Martin, “Haps and Mishaps in Porto Rico,” *Tidings* (July 1907): 19. For another example, see “Mañana,” *LVE*, 10 April 1909, 340-341.

<sup>215</sup> Some historians have attributed the decreased attendance to the new competition from Puerto Rican Pentecostals, the diminished novelty of the Protestants, and rising anti-Americanism.

<sup>216</sup> “El Cristianismo Aplicado,” *PRE*, 10 May 1913, 9.



The tones of the many articles and sermons stressing church attendance and proper behavior varied in vehemence and severity. Rafael Rodríguez, in *Puerto Rico Evangélico*, straightforwardly presented the matter in terms of church-goers' responsibilities and support for the pastor. Somewhat perfunctorily, he delineated key virtues such as punctuality, reverence, and constancy, and translated them into specific, appropriate behaviors beneficial to individuals and the community.<sup>217</sup> Rev. Howard Jason, an African-American Presbyterian, though disturbed by talking and "inappropriate conversations" during a group baptism, simply mildly rebuked the guilty with "the hope that abuses of whatever kind would not be repeated in this church."<sup>218</sup> In a series of fictional vignettes parodying Puerto Ricans' excuses for not attending church, however, one pastor threatened scofflaws with loss of their soul for such intransigence.<sup>219</sup> Missionaries would not accept Puerto Ricans as full church-members until they had sustained "proper" behavior for a significant probationary period.

Missionaries' valorization of self-discipline, particularly its elements of punctuality, robust health, sobriety, and a sense of duty, corresponded with the broader Americanization agenda for training a reliable work force for the new economy and colonial state.<sup>220</sup> Such profitable advantages to U.S. investors, however, did not motivate the missionaries. They sincerely believed that internalizing and practicing discipline in both sacred and worldly matters would lift Puerto Ricans up out of spiritual and material poverty. Sincerity, however, did not guarantee success. Though some missionary programs discussed in following chapters did, indeed, enable limited upward social mobility, universal material uplift was unrealistic, given

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<sup>217</sup> Rafael Rodríguez, "Como Ayudar a Nuestro Pastor" *PRE*, 25 March 1916, 5-7.

<sup>218</sup> "Labor Evangélica en la Isla: Naranjito," *PRE*, 10 Jan. 1914, 14.

<sup>219</sup> "El Cristianismo Aplicado: Los Problemas del Pastor (Imitación)," *PRE*, 25 May 1913, 9.

<sup>220</sup> For a Foucauldian analysis of disciplinary projects at this time in Puerto Rico, see Santiago-Valles, "*Subject People*" and *Colonial Discourses*.

that the majority of Puerto Ricans—and Protestant converts—were poor and that Americanization was to make them poorer.<sup>221</sup> Perhaps Baptist missionary Janie P. Duggan had realized this by 1911, when she told the following story about a nineteen-year-old Puerto Rican referred to as “P.” P left her work at a coffee warehouse to attend the missionary school in Coamo. Though illiterate, P was “bright and eager to learn, with a real insight into Bible truth,” and soon could write letters and multiply. Duggan thought P had learned “perhaps more than any other girl” and appeared to have accepted (with optimism? resignation? aplomb? disappointment?) that “even if she must go back to the coffee warehouse, to pick over the grains, she will be able to help in the Sunday School, and I hope she will pick over the coffee even more quickly and conscientiously.”<sup>222</sup> Perhaps this story expressed Duggan’s belief in the abiding worth of discipline per se, even when not linked with material uplift. Or perhaps Duggan minimized the adverse implications of P’s inability to find a job commensurate with her newly acquired skills and cast the best light on the situation because her audience was the mainland churchwomen who financially supported the school and wanted to see their contributions returning dividends on at least a personal if not social level.

The fellowship groups described earlier, particularly those for young adults, also contained disciplinary elements. In 1909, for example, a *La Voz Evangélica* editorial congratulated the Christian Endeavor group in San Germán for “spontaneously” composing a set of membership rules. This regimen included thirteen articles that gave a sense of the group’s fundamental nature. The first required loyalty to Christ and the church; the second, a

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<sup>221</sup> A 1941 survey of 208 of the 319 Protestant churches found that fewer than ten percent of members belonged to the middle class. For a breakdown by occupation, see J. Merle Davis, *The Church in Puerto Rico’s Dilemma: A Study of the Economic and Social Basis of the Evangelical Church in Puerto Rico* (N.Y.: International Missionary Council, 1942), 29-31.

<sup>222</sup> Janie P. Duggan, “Girls’ Mission School in Coamo, Porto Rico,” *Tidings* (Aug. 1911): 39.

commitment to living a consecrated life at home, on the street, everywhere. Another pledged abstinence from liquor, tobacco, and any intoxicating substances. Several dealt with meetings, requiring preparation for and participation in discussions and punctual, respectful behavior. In addition to daily reading and meditation on the Bible, members vowed to give monthly reports on their work, which included a social or philanthropic project. Members were asked to speak about and invite to the group all their friends. Before an applicant could be admitted, her behavior was to be investigated by a “Vigilance Committee.” The final stipulation subordinated the group to the church’s Consistory.<sup>223</sup> The disciplinary aspects of this youth group were clear: members committed to clean living, diligent study, and white, middle-class norms of behavior. These rules also exuded the scent of surveillance: applicants’ and members’ habits were observed, catalogued, discussed, and judged; group projects were monitored regularly; and the group subjected to a higher authority.

One incident in Ponce, however, demonstrated that missionaries did not always succeed in controlling fellowship groups. Episcopalian missionary Sarah R. Davidson had organized a women’s guild, “composed of women, white and colored young and old,” which sewed church vestments. She then arranged a weekly “mother’s meeting, for the colored women,” planning to have them sew, while she gave “a little informal instruction.” The women, however, refused to work, because they routinely washed and ironed (most likely as paid washerwomen) and did “not care to sew.” Davidson deferred to the women and the meetings became “social evening[s], with tea and cakes which the ladies take turn supplying.”<sup>224</sup> In this case, the women defined their own needs and prevailed over those defined by the missionary.

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<sup>223</sup> “Notas Editoriales,” *LVE*, 10 April 1909, 343.

<sup>224</sup> Sarah R. Davidson, “Living and Working in Ponce,” *SOM* (Sept 1905): 735. This church had a significant Afro-British Caribbean membership.

A group of seminary students at the Instituto Presbiteriano in Mayagüez manifested an insidious aspect of disciplining: Puerto Ricans' internalization of colonial (Protestant) norms and self-policing. In 1910, perhaps seeking to prove their desire to and capacity for living consecrated lives, these Puerto Rican young men formed a "Student Association" to investigate and classify their own transgressions. They were to hand over the association's findings to the seminary's Teaching Board, which would determine the consequences of said misbehavior. This student group embodied a characteristically missionary blend of democracy and discipline, responsibility and privilege: a body democratically elected by the students but, like the colonial legislature and the youth group above, subject to the veto power of the primarily continental faculty. This faculty prerogative had great impact; in 1911, the board announced that it would neither certify nor recommend for support any students who had engaged in non-Christian conduct. This harsh sanction would deprive seminary students of the customary stipends that covered tuition, living expenses and studies at the new University of Puerto Rico.<sup>225</sup> Ordination as a Protestant minister virtually guaranteed entrance into the budding Puerto Rican middle class. Non-compliance with Protestant norms thus had unequivocal, harsh material consequences.

### **3.4 COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENTS OF AMERICANIZATION**

Given the affinity of their goals, missionaries cooperated with other agents of Americanization. In addition to the colonial state, these included the mainlander agro-industrial managers and

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<sup>225</sup> "Iglesia Presbiteriana, Instituto Presbiteriano, 1907," hand-written journal, cover indecipherable; inside: "Informe del Secretario Octubre del 1907," 12 Oct. 1910, 38-39 and 28 mayo 1911, 59. SEPR-AH. This short-lived seminary was also called the Instituto Teológico de Mayagüez and the Seminario Teológico Portorricense.

technicians, health-care practitioners and policy-makers, and educators and educational policy-makers. The missionary press publicized the many formal and informal links to the colonial state, reinforcing the perception that, despite statutory separation of church and state, the new U.S. regime favored Protestantism and that missionaries had ready access to the colonial state and other agents of Americanization. Given that, for centuries under the Spanish, the church and state had been intimately and officially linked, most Puerto Ricans likely presumed a similar relationship between the new colonial state and the Protestants.

Missionaries and the colonial state had many, varied interactions, both public and private. Insular governors publicly supported the missionary project by giving welcoming speeches at the annual denominational conventions and occasionally intervening in bureaucratic matters or giving advice.<sup>226</sup> Many colonial officials belonged to, and were quite active in, Protestant churches, particularly in San Juan, the bureaucracy's center. The judiciary system was well represented, for example, by Federal Court Judge W.H. Holt, elected an elder in San Juan's First Presbyterian Church and Assistant Attorney Generals Lyons and Fleming H. Crew, members of the First Methodist Church.<sup>227</sup> Commissioner of the Interior W.H. Elliot and Dr. W.N. Berkeley, head of the chemical laboratory at the San Juan Board of Health, also were active members of First Methodist.<sup>228</sup> Commissioner of Education Edwin H. Dexter, son of a Baptist minister, was superintendent of an English-language Sunday school in San Juan, and his wife provided music for religious services. Lieutenant D. Robnett, paymaster of the U.S. Navy, and his wife were "stanch Alabama Baptists" who belonged to the San Juan church, and Baptist U.S. Army

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<sup>226</sup> For one example, see "Discurso de Bienvenida por el Hon. Gobernador Martin Travieso," *PRE*, 10 Dec. 1914, 2.

<sup>227</sup> "El Nuevo Templo Presbiteriano en San Juan," *LVE*, 28 Dec. 1907, 219; "Personal and General Notations," *EDC*, 1 Oct. 1911, 17; "Personal and General Notations," *EDC*, 1 Oct. 1910, 18.

<sup>228</sup> Benjamin Haywood "Mission Field Notes," *EDC*, 1 April 1909, 7; "The Work and the Workers," *EDC*, 15 June 1909, 8.

Surgeon Dr. F. M. Barney, who had earlier worked in Cuba and the Philippines, volunteered to staff missionary dispensaries in Coto de Laurel and Ponce.<sup>229</sup>

Missionaries, colonial bureaucrats, and other Americanizers found common cause in supporting the first Young Men's Christian Association on the island, in San Juan. In 1909, for example, at a banquet for the Y.M.C.A., Governor Colton, missionaries, jurists, bankers, lawyers and businessmen "all assembled in glad fellowship eager to launch an enterprise" so important to the island's future.<sup>230</sup> On the other side of the island, Martin J. Iorns, head of the Mayagüez Experimental Station, founded by the colonial state to support agro-industrial development, was an active Methodist.<sup>231</sup> On the island of Vieques, W.B. Keeling, director of the U.S. Magnetic Terrestrial Station, and his wife had been "of great service" to missionary work.<sup>232</sup>

Family members of colonial officials, especially wives, also actively supported the Protestant churches through singing, Sunday school teaching, fund-raising, and working with missionaries in philanthropic and charitable endeavors such as the Anti-Tuberculosis League and the Social Purity Committee. Attorney General Howard Kern's son worked at the Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan, the hospital of choice for colonial personnel. Female missionaries, members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, family members of colonial-state officials, Puerto Rican female reformers, and Chief of the Insular Police George R. Shanton worked together in the controversial anti-prostitution campaign in 1918.<sup>233</sup> In connection with

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<sup>229</sup> *A Glimpse of Porto Rico Through the Eyes of a Secretary*, (Chicago: Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, n.d. [1912?], 8; "Noticias Religiosas de la Isla: Nuevo Médico," *ETE*, 1, June 1912, 10.

<sup>230</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, "Mission Field Notes," *EDC*, 15 Dec. 1909, 18.

<sup>231</sup> "General Notes," *EDC*, 1 June 1909, 8.

<sup>232</sup> Benjamin Haywood, "Mission Field Notes," *EDC*, 15 Sept. 1908, 6.

<sup>233</sup> "Moral Uplift Given Vigorous Offensive: WCTU Joins Hands With Col. Shanton in Policing Up San Juan," *El Tiempo/The Times*, July 26, 1918, 5; "Police Woman's Reserve Corps," *El Tiempo/The Times*, July 29, 1918, 5; "Campaign of Women Police is Most Successful," *El Tiempo/The Times*, Aug. 14, 1918; Amy Ruse Snyder, "Miss Williams at Work in Porto Rico as Seen by an American Friend and Neighbor, 1925, IEU-2, SEPR-AH. See also Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*, Ch. 2; and Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 180.

this campaign, Protestant churches read from the pulpit on Sept. 29 a circular from its director Attorney General Howard Kern. They also composed and distributed the pamphlet *Five Reasons in favor of Personal Purity*, which included local laws regarding prostitution and adultery.<sup>234</sup>

The colonial state often appointed missionaries to carry out governmental tasks. In 1898, for example, Baptist Rev. H.P. McCormick, who regularly communicated with Governor-Generals Guy V. Henry and George W. Davis, participated in the U.S.-Treasury-Department mandated inspection tour with Gen. Henry K. Carroll. This important task force reported on the island's industrial, social, educational, and commercial conditions and made recommendations for changes. In 1899, McCormick was named director of charity for victims of Hurricane Ciriaco. He also accompanied and translated for Education Commissioner McCune Lindsay and the deans of Columbia's Teachers College and the Pratt Institute on an educational-study tour of the island.<sup>235</sup> Additionally, the insular governor appointed Rev. Howard T. Jason the Superintendent of Elections in 1908, and several missionaries were asked to staff a committee inspecting public schools.<sup>236</sup> In 1924, Rev. Samuel Culpeper reported that Protestants continued to "lend a helping hand to the municipal and school authorities in the administration of the School Lunch Room," a project he had considered dropping, "but the more than 200 needy children" convinced him "to keep on with this branch of practical Christianity."<sup>237</sup>

Proudly accentuating its ties with the colonial state, the missionary press routinely announced the positions taken within it by Puerto Rican converts, called "brothers" and "sisters."

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<sup>234</sup> *Carta del Sub-Comité de Reforma Social de la Unión Evangélica de Puerto Rico* (leaflet), Ponce, Puerto Rico, 18 Sept. 1918; "Programa: Sugestivo para el Domingo de Pureza, Septiembre 29 de 1918," Sub-Comité de Reforma Social de la Unión Evangélica de Puerto Rico; *Cinco Razones en Favor de la Pureza Personal* (Ponce: PRE Press, 1918), Colección Particular: Philo Drury: Unión de Iglesias Evangélicas de Puerto Rico: Comités Reforma Social, Literatura, Prohibicionista, 1916-1918, SEPR-AH.

<sup>235</sup> Angel Luis Gutierrez, "Inicio de la denominación bautista," 10-11.

<sup>236</sup> "Gacetillas," *LVE*, 14 Nov 1908, 175.

<sup>237</sup> Supt. Samuel Culpeper, "Social Work," *Year Book, Official Minutes, XXII Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1924, 41.

In 1908, for example, “our very beloved and precious young man, don Rafael Vallés Santo,” a Presbyterian, became a member of the Insular Police, established by the colonial state as the first island-wide police force and involved in many violent suppressions of strikes in the cane fields; in 1915, United Brethren member, Aniceto Pellicier, was Insular Police Chief in Ponce and later Mayagüez; and Vicente Torres Quintero, a “brother” who subscribed to *Puerto Rico Evangélico*, was chief in Juncos before transfer to Naguabo.<sup>238</sup> Puerto Rican converts also worked in other public agencies, such as the San Juan Department of Health and the Office of Collection of Internal Revenues in Ponce. Several converts were elected to public office, particularly local school boards, and at least one, Juan Cancio Ortiz was elected mayor.<sup>239</sup> Frequent references to teaching jobs suggest that Puerto Rican Protestants and missionary family members were over-represented among public school teachers.<sup>240</sup> One report, for example, states that all Baptist Sunday School teachers were also public school teachers, and, in 1915, *Puerto Rico Evangélico* rejoiced that eight evangelical public-school teachers made “such a beautiful image in the teaching force” in Juana Díaz.<sup>241</sup>

Protestant influence, moreover, reached higher than the local level. Two well-known and active Protestants attained key positions in the educational infrastructure: José J. Osuna as head of the Normal School at the University of Puerto Rico and Juan Huyke, the first Puerto Rican

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<sup>238</sup> “Gacetillas: Notas de las Iglesias: de Naranjito,” *LVE*, 11 July 1908, 31; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 10 Sept. 1915, 15; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 Sept. 1915, 14.

<sup>239</sup> “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 10 Aug. 1913, 14; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 Nov. 1915, 16; “Nombramiento,” *LVE*, 26 Sept. 1908, 119. Sunday school teacher Juan Cancio Ortiz was mayor of Lares, “De Lajas,” *LVE*, 12 June 1909, 418.

<sup>240</sup> For examples of Protestant public-school teachers, see “De Añasco,” *LVE*, 8 May 1909, 378; *LVE* “De las Marías,” 12 June 1909, 14; “De Mayagüez,” *LVE*, 24 August 1907, 79; “De Mayagüez,” *LVE*, 28 Sept. 1907, 119; Supt. Haywood, “Mission Field Notes,” *EDC*, 15 Feb. 1906, 8; “Personal Mention,” *EDC*, 15 May 1906, 8; *EDC*, 1 June 1908, 8; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 Aug. 1913, 13, 16; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 Sept. 1913, 14; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 April 1916, 14.

<sup>241</sup> G.A. Riggs, *Puerto Rico Mission of the American Baptist Home Mission Society 1942 Report*, 2. SEPR-AH: Iglesia Bautista/Informes de misioneros; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 Sept. 1915, 14.



Commissioner of Education. The latter, at a banquet honoring his 1921 appointment, defined Americanism as “patriotism,” and warned that “he that does not want to be a teacher of Americanism would do well not to follow me in my work.”<sup>242</sup> The importance that missionaries attached to having Protestants in such jobs may be inferred from both the consistent coverage and the physical location in the newspapers of this information: in regular columns that reported the progress of “the work,” such as *Puerto Rico Evangélico*’s “Labor Evangélica en la Isla.”

Missionaries also had close relations with private agents of Americanization, such as the professionals working in the industrial-scale sugar mills (centrals) built with U.S. capital. Rev. Benjamin Haywood noted in his 1910 annual report: “Incomplete would be the district representation without personal mention of the Reifkohl brothers and others associated with Columbia and La Providencia Centrals. We owe much to these very prominent and truly generous friends.” One aspect of William Reifkohl’s generosity was regularly housing and feeding traveling missionaries.<sup>243</sup> A vice-president of the American Tobacco Company belonged to the Trinity Methodist Church in San Juan, and the manager of the Tropical Fruit Growers plantations near Arecibo had been a Congregational missionary for eleven years in Turkey.<sup>244</sup> The administrators of Aguirre, one of the largest centrals with 3,000 worker-residents in 1922, provided a parsonage to the Methodists and, in 1923, land for a new church to replace the chapel that its congregation had outgrown. Such generosity prompted the missionary superintendent to say—during a time of drought and high unemployment—that the “Central has

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<sup>242</sup> *Porto Rico Progress*, 21 Oct. 1921, 4, cited in Negrón de Montilla, *Americanization in Puerto Rico*.

<sup>243</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, “Superintendent’s Annual Report—1910. Porto Rico Mission,” *Year Book, Superintendent’s Report and Official Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1910, 43; Benj. S. Haywood, “Mission Field Notes,” *EDC*, 1 Aug. 1908, 7.

<sup>244</sup> Benjamin Haywood, “Mission Field Notes,” *EDC*, 15 Sept. 1908, 6.

always manifested a most excellent spirit toward us and our work.”<sup>245</sup> Missionaries and the white-collar class employed at the centrals frequently interacted. Professionals and their families, for example, joined the Protestant churches, attending English-language services; contributed fixtures such as organs, windows, and Bibles; and a mechanical engineer from Guánica Central spoke about poverty in India at the San Juan Presbyterian church. Sugar centrals provided free railroad cars for revival campaigns and a husband-and-wife doctor team from the Guánica Central staffed a dispensary in the United Brethren church in Yauco, providing. “medical science inspired by Christian love.”<sup>246</sup> The passenger railroad provided discounted tickets to Protestants attending conferences on the island.

Missionaries, the new agro-industrial managerial class, and the colonial state’s developmental program were symbiotically linked. In 1910, for example, one missionary, commented that “recent developments of sugar interests,” including two proposed new centrals, had increased the importance of the Camuy and Hatillo districts, which, he continued, “means more work, more people, more sin, more gospel need and greater opportunity.”<sup>247</sup> The mills provided large, concentrated audiences (the many laborers) for missionaries, while the missionaries promulgated an ideology of disciplined, clean living conducive to increased mill productivity. This also applied to the manufacturing sector of the tobacco industry. Several denominations worked in Puerta de Tierra, one of the poorest urban neighborhoods and the center of tobacco manufacturing (with one factory employing 4,000 workers). With two people

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<sup>245</sup> Edward Errett Wilson, “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” *Year Book, Official Minutes, XXI Session, Puerto Rico Mission, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* 1922, 49; Edward Errett Wilson, “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” *Year Book, Official Minutes, XXII Session, Puerto Rico Mission, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* 1923, 42.

<sup>246</sup> “Gacetillas: Notas de las Iglesias,” *LVE*, 18 Jan. 1908, 255; “Gacetillas: Notas de las Iglesias: De San Germán,” *LVE*, 23 May 1908, 399; “Labor Evangélica en la Isla: Yauco” *PRE*, 10 Oct. 1914, 14-15.

<sup>247</sup> “Mission Notes and Personals,” *EDC*, 15 Nov. 1910, 22. He also noted the increased population of Camuy and its “dozen new and better class dwelling houses.” This reflects two byproducts of Americanization: dislocation of country people who moved to cities and increased class stratification.

to a chair, the Methodist church there expanded rapidly in 1909. This did not surprise the mission superintendent, who recalled that “from the beginning the Methodist Church has had the heart of the industrial classes of the world,— we have ever been in close touch with the masses.”<sup>248</sup> The Protestant churches also provided day-care, at minimal or no cost, for the children of tobacco workers and medical care for all.

The economic and social importance of the sugar mills and tobacco factories, both simultaneously products *and* agents of Americanization, benefited the missionaries—who further promoted Americanization. Transportation infrastructure built to facilitate the movement of goods, for example, made life easier for missionaries and extended the reach of both the missionaries and the colonial state. In the words of one missionary, “The roads, impassable at times over which former pastors went on foot or on horseback, now are *carreteras* due to business.”<sup>249</sup> Additionally, ambitious, educated Puerto Ricans, observing the social and church-related activities of their mainland superiors in the factories, banks, and lawyers’ offices could see the professional network that the Protestant community offered.

Though disciplinary training predominantly benefited U.S. investors, an editorial in *El Testigo Evangélico* confirmed that the relatively small Puerto Rican capitalist class also profited. According to the author, two Protestant pastors had asked an owner for permission to preach on his large sugar plantation. Though a rich Catholic (and member of the legislature), this well-known businessman happily complied, explaining that he had noticed, in a certain town, so many people who had been ruined by sin converted into model citizens by attending the churches’

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<sup>248</sup> Puerta de Tierra was just outside Old San Juan and later incorporated into the city and the majority population relocated. Benj. S. Haywood, “Superintendent’s Annual Report—1910: Porto Rico Mission,” *Year Book, Superintendent’s Report and Official Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 32.

<sup>249</sup> “Mission Notes and Personals,” *EDC*, 15 Nov. 1910, 22.

services and reading the Bible.<sup>250</sup> Model citizens, reasoned el dueño, made model workers. In this situation, neither national nor religious but class identity influenced support for the civilizing mission. Thus, as “King Sugar” expanded, gaining access to more island territory and people, so did “His Kingdom.”

Missionaries’ close relationship with the sugar industry, however, also had disadvantages. When the sugar industry declined precipitously in the 1920s and 1930s, many Puerto Ricans became under- and unemployed in the new Americanized monocultural economy. Two studies in the late 1930s found that sugar-workers earned an average of \$254 per family per year; other agricultural workers earned sixty cents per day, which allowed “from eight to twelve cents per person per day for food and all the necessities of life.”<sup>251</sup> Such hunger and desperation fed anti-Americanism and increased emigration—both of which affected the missionary project. In 1922, the Methodist church in Patillas faced financial crisis, because it no longer received the generous contributions of William Reifkohl, who had sold the nearby central, Hacienda Providencia.<sup>252</sup> In 1928, missionary B.R. Campbell, noting that sugar centrals in Vieques were closing one by one, complained that 1,000 people had moved to St. Croix, which “naturally affects our work.”<sup>253</sup> Emigration in search of work was not limited to the sugar-growing areas. In 1928 in Aibonito, which, with Americanization, had changed from mixed minor crops to mono-cultivation of coffee, many Puerto Ricans relocated to New York in search of permanent work. Though he described such emigration as “a marked characteristic all over the island,” Methodist Rev. Manuel Andújar appeared more sanguine than Campbell. Acknowledging the

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<sup>250</sup> “Notas Editoriales: El Poder del Evangelio,” *ETE*, May 1909, 2.

<sup>251</sup> Davis, *The Church in Puerto Rico’s Dilemma*, 59.

<sup>252</sup> “Ponce District,” Edward Errett Wilson, *Year Book, Official Minutes, XXI Session, Puerto Rico Mission, Conference Of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1922, 52.

<sup>253</sup> B.R. Campbell “Annual Report: Southern District,” *Year Book, 1928: Official Minutes, XXVII Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 42.

significant loss of many members, “especially young people” who had been trained to “become useful servants,” Andújar was “glad to know, however, that these same people who go North are wide awake and zealous workers in the Spanish Churches in New York and Brooklyn, where people from Porto Rico usually attend, and become leaders in those congregations.”<sup>254</sup> This demonstrated that Americanization was not a uni-directional, from-the-metropolis-to-the-colony process.

### 3.5 OUTCOMES

The missionaries achieved many of their goals, though some produced unintended consequences. Both the churches’ affiliations with other Americanizing agents and the skills developed within missionary organizations (especially English-language skills) facilitated social mobility for some Puerto Ricans. The many announcements in the missionary press, for example, suggest that conversion facilitated access to public jobs. Whether or not some Puerto Ricans converted mainly to improve their economic status, a fear often expressed by missionaries about unordained, male Puerto Rican church-workers, or simply availed themselves of the Protestants’ many social or pastoral services, those Puerto Ricans were exposed to U.S. middle-class norms, a minimal missionary goal.

As noted earlier, missionaries formed many kinds of groups in order to acculturate Puerto Ricans to Protestant norms and to educate them in various subjects. These fellowship groups benefited Puerto Ricans in several ways. Serving as group presidents, secretaries, treasurers,

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<sup>254</sup> Manuel Andújar, “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” *Year Book, 1927: Official Minutes, XXVI Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 31.

fund-raisers, and publicists, Puerto Ricans acquired organizational and administrative skills—opportunities otherwise strictly limited for many Puerto Ricans, especially young women and rural people.<sup>255</sup> Whether or not they remained faithful Protestants or embraced Americanization, Puerto Ricans who developed such skills could later employ them in endeavors of their own choosing. Additionally, fellowship groups sometimes functioned as mutual aid societies. In 1900, for example, a Woman's Aid Society made small loans to its members, often to pay for rent. Members repaid these weekly in small installments and no loan was left unpaid.<sup>256</sup> In La Plata, the Christian Endeavor group assumed responsibility for all the expenses of attending the Presbyterian Instituto Politécnico for one of its young members. In Lares, the Christian Endeavor formed a subgroup, the "Religious Cooperative Society," to help financially and in other ways members who were incapacitated.<sup>257</sup>

Another type of fellowship group, the various associations of Puerto Rican church-workers, enabled those workers to meet peers from other parts of the island. Individual churches held weekly, monthly, and quarterly meetings of local and mainland workers to assess needs and assign tasks; denominations held quarterly and annual meetings of church-workers; workers attended other denominations' conferences; and Puerto Rican laity and clerics from throughout the island held summer conferences at the Polytechnic Institute. Such activities contributed to building an insular identity. In 1922, for example, Methodists discussed forming an island-wide organization of Epworth Leagues to be called the "Insular League of Puerto Rico Mission Conference of Methodist Episcopal Church." They successfully did this and elected Puerto

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<sup>255</sup> Though male outnumber female names on lists of officers, female names regularly appear. For example, see "Labor Evangélica en la Isla," *PRE*, 10 Dec. 1912, 14. The first issue of the Politécnico's student review advertised for a female editor. *Juventud Escolar*, (1 March 1917): 3, Caja 26, Gobierno Institucional, Presidente, Harris, J.W., Diarios, UI-MH.

<sup>256</sup> "Bishop Whipple in Puerto Rico," *SOM* (April 1900): 208-209.

<sup>257</sup> "Labor Evangélica en la Isla" *PRE*, 25 Nov. 1915, 13-14.

Rican officers.<sup>258</sup> These meetings, Puerto Rican participation at the pivotal international conference of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America in Panama in 1916, and conflicts between mainland and Puerto Rican pastors evolved beyond strengthening insular identity to generating strong anti-Americanism in the 1920s and 1930s—another unintended consequence of the missionary project.<sup>259</sup>

A particularly interesting, sometimes contradictory outcome of Protestant efforts was a public sphere that expanded in terms of inclusion, content, and method: increased numbers of voices, discussions of new topics, and new mechanisms for expression. Many Puerto Ricans, young and old, participated in a plethora of novel organizations and media that constituted new means for expression: churches and chapels, fellowship groups, denominational conferences, public lectures, debates, and the missionary press. Some were thus able—for the first time—to incorporate their voices and concerns into the public sphere. Other Puerto Ricans, professional-class reformers who had enjoyed access to the more limited public sphere under Spain, found that their modernization agenda coincided with that of the Americanizers. Furthermore, the colonial state and missionaries created systems to implement their modernizing policies and many of these liberal professionals worked in those systems; they thus gained both a larger audience and the power and cachet of association with the new social order. These Puerto

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<sup>258</sup> “The Epworth League,” *Year Book 1923: Official Minutes, XXI Session, Puerto Rico Mission, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 53; *Year Book, 1927: Official Minutes, XXVI Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 44; *Anuario Especial de las BODAS DE PLATA [1913-1938] de la Conferencia Misionera de la Iglesia Metodista Episcopal de Puerto Rico*, SJ, 16-20 Feb. 1938.

<sup>259</sup> See B.W. Morton, letter to W.P. Minton, 28 Feb. 1927, IEU-1, SEPR-AH. In some conflicts, missionaries, particularly women, sided with the Puerto Rican pastors; see D.F. Barrett, letter to W.P. Minton, 5 Feb. 1930, *ibid.* For Puerto Rican pastors’ views of the conflicts, see Dr. Benjamin Santana Jiménez and Dr. Gildo Sánchez Figueroa, *¡92 Años de metodismo en Puerto Rico! (1900-1992)* (Impreso en Jay-Ce Printing, 1992). For Panama Congress, see *Regional Conferences in Latin America: The Reports of a Series of Seven Conferences following the Panama Congress in 1916, which were held at Lima, Santiago, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Baranquilla, Havana, and San Juan* (NY: Missionary Education Movement, 1917); Donald Moore, *Puerto Rico para Cristo*, ch. 3, section 3.1; and *PRE*, 10 April 1916, *passim*.

Ricans used the enlarged public sphere not only to endorse shared reform efforts, but also to call attention to the indigenous, Puerto Rican provenance of those efforts. They thus asserted a national identity that did not fit precisely the Americanizers' understanding of *puertorriqueñidad*.

Fellowship groups played an important role in expanding the public sphere. The Epworth League in Jayuya, for example, functioned as the "Town Debating Society."<sup>260</sup> The activities of the Baptist "Fieles Amigos" and "Fieles Amigas" of Caguas suggested that its members developed strong critical expressive skills. This group had a conspicuous public presence, drawing large audiences to their series of public debates. In 1915, missionary Adell Martin and Baptist convert Jacinto Morales argued in favor of women's suffrage in a debate described as particularly animated.<sup>261</sup> Three months later, the group's debate on the death penalty, advertised in the secular press, was not only well attended, but also covered by three secular newspapers with distinct readerships, *El Tiempo*, *El Heraldo Español*, and *Justicia*. The insular, pro-U.S. statehood Republican Party published *El Tiempo*; the pro-Catholic creole elite published *El Heraldo Español*; and *Justicia* was the official organ of the F.L.T., the island's trade union federation, which opposed the death penalty for its class bias.<sup>262</sup> The abolitionists won the debate, described as cordial.<sup>263</sup> The following February, "Fieles Amigos" debated "Who has done and continues to do more for Evangelism? Men or Women?" This debate "of highest importance" pitted the sexes against each other regarding the topic and as teams: "señoritas" Adell Martin and Inocencia Quiñones vied with "the young men" Pablo Rodríguez

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<sup>260</sup> Benjamin S. Haywood, "Superintendent's Annual Report," *Year Book Nineteen-Eleven: Year Book: Superintendent's Annual Report and Official Minutes: Tenth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 44.

<sup>261</sup> M. Durán, "La Labor Evangélica en la Isla: Los Debates de los 'Fieles Amigos,'" *PRE*, 25 May 1915, 10.

<sup>262</sup> The FLT, like the missionaries, supported Prohibition and refused to accept liquor advertisements in their paper.

<sup>263</sup> "Caguas. Un Debate," *PRE*, 10 Aug. 1915, 14-15.



and Anibal Díaz. Though a jury composed of three “brothers” and three “sisters” rendered a verdict in favor of the men, *Puerto Rico Evangélico* congratulated the women for “the elevation and propagation of such meritorious work, that of evangelizing and saving the world.”<sup>264</sup>

Encouraging Puerto Ricans to learn more about local, U.S., and international affairs, missionaries shaped that expanding public sphere. Though Protestant newspapers routinely published articles covering those areas, in 1910, the bilingual *El Defensor Cristiano* explicitly committed to doing so by inaugurating a new column, “Sucesos Que Interesan Al Público/Topics of Public Interest,” to broaden readers’ interests.<sup>265</sup> The “World Events” section from a 1911 issue of *El Testigo* gave a sense of such columns: topics included a voting bill in Italy, an earthquake in Turkey, Panama Canal construction, plague and hunger in China, Portugal’s new education system, strikes, military unrest, and U.S. President Taft’s refusal to grant a pardon to a rich capitalist found guilty of “peonage.”<sup>266</sup> “A Social Cancer,” an article treating sexual trafficking in Puerto Rican girls sent to Santo Domingo and Cuba, received favorable public comment and was republished as a leaflet and distributed in San Juan.<sup>267</sup>

Bible women’s work also enlarged the public sphere, but in a less visible way. As missiologist Ruth A. Tucker notes, “The names of the vast majority of women nationals who gave their lives for the sake of the Gospel have been buried in obscurity,” though they “played a crucial role in world evangelism.”<sup>268</sup> Missionaries always complained of insufficient, trained mainlander labor and, from the start, had planned to train “native” or “national” ministers and lay

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<sup>264</sup> “Importante Debate,” *PRE*, 25 Feb. 1916, 15.

<sup>265</sup> “Personal and General Notations,” *EDC*, 1 Oct. 1910, 18.

<sup>266</sup> “Sucesos Mundiales,” *ETE*, 1 Feb. 1911, 2.

<sup>267</sup> “Un Cáncer Social,” *ETE*, 1 June 1911, 3-4; “Noticias Religiosas de la Isla: Reproducido,” *ETE*, 16 June 1911, 10.

<sup>268</sup> Ruth A. Tucker, “The Role of Bible Women in World Evangelism,” *Missiology: An International Review* XIII.2 (April 1985): 135.

people to assume their work.<sup>269</sup> At the time, no denominations allowed women to become ordained ministers or pastors and men were less likely to work without pay, thus training Puerto Rican women to evangelize made sense. Bible women, less frequently called Bible readers, were converts trained by missionaries, usually female, to read the Bible and initiate discussions on the Bible and social concerns in both rural and urban locations.<sup>270</sup> The Bible women regularly visited, daily or weekly, in assigned areas, forging new connections between Puerto Ricans.

For many Puerto Ricans, especially those in small towns outside of which they evangelized in more secluded areas, the job of Bible woman offered opportunities that had not existed previously. Though “the lowliest employee of the hierarchical ladder of the mission churches,” the usually unpaid Bible woman enjoyed a freedom of movement more customary to poor urban women. Puerto Rican gender norms deemed unacceptable that a male missionary not accompanied by a woman approach a home in which only females were present—a frequent situation in the mountains during the day. Ironically, that restrictive gender norm played a part in benefiting some women who gained the freedom to travel, initiate discussions with strangers, and hold limited religious services. Though Bible women were trained to proselytize in a particular way, they did most of their work unaccompanied by missionaries, so had the freedom to speak with their own voices. As with the youth groups, missionaries established a structure and agenda, but could not completely control what Puerto Ricans did within that structure or with that agenda. Like the missionaries, Bible women often provided, or functioned as the conduit for, social or pastoral services such as nursing the sick, arranging funerals, or teaching

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<sup>269</sup> Missionaries judged their success by not only the number of church-members, but the number of trained workers, and a congregation’s degree of self-support.

<sup>270</sup> Early on, the training was quite rudimentary; later it became more stringent and standardized.

hygiene lessons. They thus established a new set of social relations with other Puerto Ricans and modeled for some of the most isolated Puerto Rican women a new way of being in the world, a new social role in a new social space. This also allowed those to whom the Bible women ministered a place to voice their own needs and thoughts.

Working as a Bible woman could lead to other work that earned higher recognition. Marcolina Reyes, a widow living in the mountain town of Lares, was a Bible woman who, with two others, made twice weekly visits to the countrysides and held private worship sessions. She later opened a co-educational school to teach literacy and the Bible to thirty-plus children who had been expelled from the public schools or wandered in the streets. A committed woman, she held school from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. and “visited” in the afternoon.<sup>271</sup>

Sarah González Lopez, research coordinator of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico’s Center for the Aid of Women in Ministry, confirms that Puerto Rican women’s participation in Protestant assemblies, organizations, and social work enabled them to found various non-profit organizations dedicated to improving social conditions and provided models of female leadership both within and outside the church. Some first-generation, and more second-generation, converts formed gender- and location-based organizations to assist their work, gain a more powerful institutional voice within their denominations, and have direct connections with mainland church organizations. A member of the Disciples of Christ in Bayamón and pastor’s wife, Secundina Cruz Rosado de Torres, for example, organized its first local women’s society, la Sociedad de Damas de la Iglesia Cristiana (Women’s Society of the Christian Church). She then encouraged others to establish branches throughout the island and, in 1935, co-founded and became vice-president of the new island-wide Asociación de Damas

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<sup>271</sup> “La Labor Evangélica en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 April 1915, 15; *PRE*, 25 June 1915, 14; *PRE*, 10 Aug. 1915, 13.

Evangélicas Discípulos de Cristo de Puerto Rico (Association of Evangelical Women, Disciples of Christ of Puerto Rico). In most cases, González argues, if they had not belonged to Protestant churches, these women would not have been exposed to such experiences and opportunities, for their lives would have been “exclusively circumscribed to the private sphere of the home.”<sup>272</sup>

Anthropologist Nérida Agosto Cintrón argues that missionaries had greater effect on the emergent urban middle class than on *campesinos*—a topic that following chapters treat. Rural people were more likely, she argues, to join the popular Catholic Hermanos Cheos movement in response to the major changes wrought by the U.S. occupation. In contrast, the Bible women—most not from the middle class—responded to those changes by choosing to integrate themselves in the new social order through affiliation with the Protestant churches. In any case, as Agosto Cintrón argues in reference to other situations, despite the Protestants’ roles as ideological supporters of the new political-economy, they did provide new spaces for participation and social expression for groups that never before had articulated their perceptions, desires, and yearnings, because they had not found the social frameworks or institutions in which to do so—an analysis that markedly applies to the Bible women.<sup>273</sup>

The subaltern status of both mainland and island women within Protestant churches, Puerto Rican women’s subaltern status within their culture, and missionary women’s privileged position in relation to Puerto Rican men demonstrate the complex, contradictory nature of the Americanizing project. At the same time, missionaries’ provision of such opportunities demonstrated that Protestantism generated activities with emancipatory aspects for women; and

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<sup>272</sup> Sarah González Lopez, “Mujeres que hicieron el bien: Cien años de vida y ministerio femenino en Puerto Rico” (San Juan: Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, 2000), 100.

<sup>273</sup> Agosto Cintrón, *Religión y Cambio Social*, 124. For the popular-Catholic millenarian movement, the Hermanos Cheos, see 70-81.

Bible women's initiative and moves to take advantage of that newly created public space demonstrated another way that local actors shaped the missionary project.

The missionary project had a complex, somewhat contradictory relationship with another group of Puerto Ricans, those who also wanted to modernize Puerto Rico and its people. Mainly members of the small, professional middle-class, these Puerto Ricans had been promoting liberal reform since the late nineteenth century. Dr. Manuel Guzmán Rodríguez, a Puerto Rican medical doctor, for example, was an early, enthusiastic, and high-profile convert to Protestantism. Like the missionaries, he persistently linked physical, social, and moral hygiene in a series of essays entitled "La Higiene y la Moral en el Hogar," published in the Presbyterian newspaper, *La Voz Evangélica* and later reprinted in book form.<sup>274</sup> Dr. Guzmán gave practical medical advice on a broad array of subjects ranging from venereal disease to corsets to diet, always linking physiology to morality and emphasizing the importance of a "Christian" family life. Significantly, Guzmán Rodríguez regularly cited not only the Bible, but also Eugenio María de Hostos, a noted Puerto Rican sociologist, educator, philosopher, and foe of Spanish colonialism.<sup>275</sup> A dedicated disciple of Hostos, in a 1911 public speech before the Protestant Otterbein Brotherhood in Ponce, Guzmán Rodríguez criticized Puerto Ricans for immoral civic and private behavior.<sup>276</sup> Quoting directly from Hostos's *Moral Social*, he articulated a critique of Puerto Rican culture that strikingly resounded with the ideology of Americanization. He

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<sup>274</sup> *LVE*, Sept 1907, 95. These essays were later published in *PRE*.

<sup>275</sup> Manuel Guzmán Rodríguez, "Eugenio María de Hostos," *LVE*, 10 Aug. 1907, 61. Hostos returned from exile to Puerto Rico after the U.S. invasion and was appointed member of a three-person committee chosen by the Carroll Commission to represent, in Washington, D.C., the "rights and interests" of those advocating the end of military rule" in Puerto Rico. These men objected to the U.S. government's "two standards of weight and measures, one to be used with the Filipinos and another with the Puerto Ricans," referring to the grant of future independence of the Philippines. "The Case of Puerto Rico," (Washington, D.C., 1899), 7, quoted in Negrón de Montilla, *Americanization in Puerto Rico*, 16-17.

<sup>276</sup> Graeme S. Mount, "Presbyterianism in Puerto Rico: Formative Years, 1899-1914," *Journal of Presbyterian History* (Fall, 1977): 243-244.

declared that if Puerto Ricans read Hostos's book, they would understand the essential link between morality and all of life's activities. Puerto Ricans would, he continued, abandon the foolish custom of public employees and the preference for the liberal professions and instead seek the industrial professions, which, as Hostos said, "awake in the youth of our people the fruitful vocation that has formed the ... Franklins and the Fultons, the Watts and the Stephensons, the Morses, the Edisons, the Bells, the thousand, the legion of benefactors who, multiplying by a hundred the forces of industry, have multiplied the pleasures of the civilized world."<sup>277</sup>

Hostos's liberal thinking, which promoted vocational, coeducational, and secular education, had much in common with the social Darwinism and manifest destiny of the missionaries and the U.S. government. Hostos theorized that humankind evolved from a state of savagery to "complete civilization" and that the highest (though not yet complete) form of civilization had been reached in the United States, where the "most basic features of civilization were combined": "industrialism, moralism and intellectualism." As Guy S. Métraux notes, "Hostos hoped that the influence of the United States would open for Puerto Rico the road to the last stage of evolution." Particularly striking is the similarity between Americanizers' and Hostos's vision of Puerto Rico as a bridge. Hostos envisioned the Western hemisphere "divided into three large blocks: a North American federation, dominated by the United States ... ; a South American federation ...; and an Antillean confederation, comprising Cuba, Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico, which would be culturally and commercially the natural bridge between the other two federations."<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Dr. Manuel Guzman Rodríguez, "Higiene y Moral," *PRE*, 10 Dec. 1912, 5-6.

<sup>278</sup> Guy S. Métraux, "American Civilization Abroad: Fifty Years in Puerto Rico," *Americas* 8.1 (July 1951), 60-61.

Like Hostos, the missionaries, and the colonial state, Guzmán Rodríguez considered Puerto Rico's political, technological, and moral "backwardness" a legacy of Spanish colonialism, which had nurtured lawyers and poets in a country needing engineers and inventors. Again quoting Hostos, this time from *La Moral y la Iglesia Católica*, Guzmán Rodríguez declared, "'The Protestant peoples undoubtedly are superior in public and private morality, in political dignity and in civilizing power to those peoples who eluded the Reformation.'"<sup>279</sup> Like the Americanizers, Guzmán Rodríguez believed that Protestant moral, political, and technological superiority justified missionary intervention in all aspects of Puerto Ricans' lives.

A devout Protestant who worked for decades with the missionaries and sent at least one daughter to a Protestant nursing school, Guzmán Rodríguez appeared determined not only to draw attention to, but also to celebrate the indigenous, Puerto Rican provenance of this modernizing perspective and the implications thereof. In a seemingly contradictory manner, Guzmán Rodríguez embraced both Americanization and Puerto Rican initiative. The contradiction was illusory, however, for Guzmán Rodríguez embraced those elements of Americanization that intersected with his (and others') pre-existing hopes and plans for transforming Puerto Rico.<sup>280</sup>

Guzmán Rodríguez had embraced the teachings of Hostos *before* he became a Protestant in 1906. Later he became a church elder and worked at the Marina Neighborhood House in Mayagüez.<sup>281</sup> Hostos had fertilized Puerto Rico's soil, conditioning Puerto Ricans like Guzmán Rodríguez to be receptive to Americanization's liberal, modernizing ideology and goals—a potent example of how local conditions and actors shaped the Americanizing project.

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<sup>279</sup> Graeme Mount, "Presbyterianism in Puerto Rico."

<sup>280</sup> Interestingly, some Puerto Ricans more noticeably contested (and continue to do so) the origins of the Protestant-founded Instituto Politécnico discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>281</sup> Graeme S. Mount, "Presbyterianism in Puerto Rico."

Missionaries, the colonial state, and modernizing Puerto Ricans believed that formal education was the most effective and comprehensive means for spreading Americanization's ideas and practices and missionary activity in the educational arena is the subject of the following chapter.



#### 4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: THE GOSPEL OF WORK: THE MISSIONARY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

As Chapter Three shows, most elements of the overall missionary project included educational components whether or not formally defined as such. Missionaries, however, understood universal, public, formal education as the linchpin of Americanization. Secular public education, they believed, could encompass in a single institution the means to educate in the intellectual, physical, civic, and moral realms.<sup>282</sup>

The goals of the colonial state and the missionaries most precisely aligned in public education, because both groups understood its key role in constructing and normalizing the new colonial social order. Dr. Victor S. Clark, appointed by the military government to chair a committee that included three Puerto Rican teachers, concisely summarized schools' important function: "If the schools are made American and the teachers and pupils are inspired with the American spirit, ... the island will become in its sympathies, views and attitude toward life and government essentially American. The great mass of Puerto Ricans are as yet passive and plastic ... Their ideals are in our hands to create and mold."<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Regarding schools, Protestants carefully differentiated between the "moral" and "religious." They did not believe that public schools should promote the Protestant religion; rather, public schools should promote the Protestant notion of morality, detached from specifically Protestant theological or liturgical practices—a slippery slope.

<sup>283</sup> Victor S. Clark, quoted in Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 64.

Elaborating missionaries' relationship to the colonial state, this chapter opens with an overview of missionary formal educational programs, describes their methods, content, and goals, and argues that, in their first decade, missionaries functioned as a proxy for the new colonial state. In his definitive study of the colonial state from 1898-1932, Pedro Cabán synthesized five key objectives articulated by Puerto Rico's U.S.-President-appointed commissioners of public education: teaching English-language skills; "instilling civic values and patriotism for the United States"; training "for managerial, supervisory, and technical positions" in the public and private sectors; training women in home economics in support of a "male-centered family unit"; and gender-based vocational training in building and industrial trades for boys and needlework and domestic service for girls.<sup>284</sup> Protestant missionaries wholeheartedly endorsed these objectives and often achieved them earlier than did the colonial state.

The chapter additionally presents a case study of the Polytechnic Institute/Instituto Politécnico in San Germán to demonstrate goals shared by the missionaries and the colonial state and to argue, as do other chapters, that the missionary project was innately contradictory. The trajectory of the Polytechnic Institute and many of its graduates demonstrated that, despite promoting the dignity of manual labor, missionaries measured success in terms of students' access to the middle class—in other words, in the ability to escape manual labor. In so doing they both produced and reproduced class and racial stratification. Additionally, though missionaries endorsed female education and coeducational classrooms, their practices and goals reproduced and reinscribed gender differences. In the process, however, another set of contradictions became apparent: missionary women regularly transgressed Protestant and Puerto

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<sup>284</sup> Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 130.

Rican gender norms based on the primacy of male authority, inadvertently providing Puerto Ricans with a different model of gender relations.

#### **4.1 THE FIRST MISSIONARY SCHOOLS: PROXIES FOR THE NEW COLONIAL STATE**

Both missionaries and the colonial state assiduously promoted universal public education for transforming Puerto Ricans into Americanized workers and citizens. In 1899, the Insular Commission recommended to the United States Department of War compulsory mass public education as the most effective means for “Americanizing the island.”<sup>285</sup> Missionaries agreed, for literacy was central to their project; an individual’s ability to read and interpret the Bible was fundamental to Protestant theology and practice. A successful church required educated members, for, according to missionary Benjamin Haywood, “there can be no true faith where there is no knowledge and intelligent faith is the consummate flower of knowledge.”<sup>286</sup> Missionaries tended to associate illiteracy with immorality. In 1904, for example, a missionary described the moral standards of the Jayuya community as “on a correspondingly low plane” with its literacy rate, for fewer than a dozen people out of a thousand could read or write in this isolated rural area lacking both schools and “religious ministrations of any kind.”<sup>287</sup> Indeed, according to several missionary accounts, even the island’s built environment reflected Spanish

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<sup>285</sup> *Report of the United States Insular Commission Upon Investigations made into the Civil Affairs of the Island of Porto Rico*, United States Department of War (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), 8, cited in Cabán, 54.

<sup>286</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, “Annual Report of the Superintendent,” *Year Book, Superintendent’s Annual Report and Official Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1908, 13.

<sup>287</sup> “Wanted: Two Clergymen for Porto Rico” *SOM* (June 1904): 390.

neglect of education. A Congregationalist reconnoitering the new mission field observed, “In every town the Spaniards had substantial buildings for the military, which kept the people down, but no schoolhouses.” A Columbia University report confirmed that “there were no publicly owned school buildings in Porto Rico until 1900.”<sup>288</sup>

Missionaries and colonial officials blamed the endemic lack of formal education on the Spanish regime, regularly contrasting its failures with democracy’s accomplishments. The Catholic Church had been responsible for education, which was limited and largely inaccessible to poor, rural, and female Puerto Ricans. According to the 1899 census, seventy-nine percent of Puerto Ricans over ten years of age (524,878) could not read and write.<sup>289</sup> In June 1898, the island possessed only “380 public schools for boys, 148 for girls, 1 for adults, and 26 private schools,” with a total of 27,480 students. In contrast, three years later in 1901, Commissioner of Education Martin Brumbaugh reported that almost 50,000 students had enrolled in public schools alone.<sup>290</sup> Regarding education, missionaries proudly differentiated themselves from the Catholic Church. At an interdenominational conference in 1908, they discussed establishing an interdenominational high school and one missionary asserted that “we Protestants are most interested in the education of the people and wherever we raise a church, beside it we place a school.”<sup>291</sup> Like the colonial state, missionaries embraced the socializing function of education.

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<sup>288</sup> A.F. Beard, *Porto Rico Our Next Field*, (NYC: American Missionary Ass., n.d.), n.p; *A Survey of the Public Educational System of Porto Rico* (NY: International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926), 23.

<sup>289</sup> George M. Fowles, *Down in Porto Rico*, revised ed., (New York: Gordon Press, 1979 [1906]), 114.

<sup>290</sup> Juan José Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1949), 98; 184-185.

<sup>291</sup> Paul Penzotti, quoted in “Editorial: La Tercera Conferencia Evangélica. Exito Completo,” *LVE*, 21 Nov. 1908, 181.

Staunch liberals, missionaries repeatedly expressed their preference for public over private schools, excepting those specializing in training church-workers.<sup>292</sup> Lacking revenue and trained teachers, however, the new colonial state could not immediately provide schools for all children between eight and fourteen years old, the legally mandated, compulsory school age.<sup>293</sup> In 1900, 426 barrios had no schools and the estimated number of eligible children not attending schools was 268, 630; the 50,000 newly enrolled students reported by Brumbaugh represented approximately 15 percent of the eligible student population.<sup>294</sup>

Military Governor-General George W. Davis had recommended that school-building efforts first focus on towns and cities, where social, industrial, and economic conditions justified “the confident belief, not only that the effort [would] be supported by public opinion, but that standards and models would be established and copied throughout the island in the rural districts.”<sup>295</sup> Extreme urban-rural disparities in school access continued for decades. In 1906, half the rural districts still didn’t have a single public school.<sup>296</sup> By 1910 an ambitious public school-building program managed to serve “only 1 of every 3 persons of school age in Porto Rico” and many “interior valleys and highlands ha[d] no school house, no school, no educational chance.”<sup>297</sup> By 1918, only one half of urban and one quarter of rural eligible children attended

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<sup>292</sup> For representative examples of missionary support for public education, see: “Más Escuelas para Puerto Rico,” *LVE*, 17 Aug. 1907, 65; *Neighborhood Ministering in Porto Rico* (N.Y.C.: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1915); “Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, Minutes (10 Jan 1919), 3, RG 305 Series 2 Box 2 Folder 91, PHS; Elizabeth Osborn Thompson, *Woman’s Board of Home Missions: A Short History* (N.Y.C.: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, n.d.), 14, PHS.

<sup>293</sup> For a detailed discussion of the teacher shortage, see Negrón de Montilla, *Americanization in Puerto Rico*. Legal school age was defined as between five and eighteen years old; compulsory school age was between eight and fourteen years. Commissioner of Education Paul Miller stated that it would be impossible to enroll all Puerto Ricans of compulsory school age, because some of them married and had families before reaching fourteen years of age, Paul Miller, *Education in the Territories and Dependencies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), 4-6.

<sup>294</sup> Victor Clark, *Education in Porto Rico* S-Doc 363 (56-1) Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1900, 6; Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, 185.

<sup>295</sup> Clark, *Education in Porto Rico*, 5.

<sup>296</sup> “Public Schools in Puerto Rico,” *EDC*, 1 May 1906), 6.

<sup>297</sup> “Some Encouraging Figures,” *EDC*, 15 Dec. 1910, 16.

schools. By 1925, rural students made up only forty-seven percent of total school enrollment, though rural population was two and one half times larger than the urban.<sup>298</sup> As urbanization generated by Americanization increased, over-enrolled city schools turned away many children or reduced classes to half-day sessions.

Early on, missionaries decided to open schools where the colonial state had not or where existed long waiting lists for admission to public schools. Those places with the greatest need, the poorest urban neighborhoods and isolated countrysides, housed most of the missionaries' congregants. Missionary newspapers and mainland reports frequently carried notices like this 1899 announcement of a school opening in Aguadilla "for those children who cannot gain entrance into the public school": "Our government is doing what it can for free education in Porto Rico. At present, however, the funds are sufficient for but one-eighth of the children of the island. The others must go untaught unless the churches will come to their aid."<sup>299</sup>

The churches answered that call. Functioning as an advance guard for the colonial state, missionaries established schools on their own initiative, at the request of parents, and sometimes at the informal behest of the colonial state. They frequently reported that Puerto Ricans, especially the poor, asked them to open schools: "Everywhere they said, 'Come.' 'Come, and come now,' said one, 'and we will give you 100 pupils the first day.'"<sup>300</sup> *El Defensor Cristiano*, in 1906, commenting on the deficiency of rural public schools, stated, "The Church is ahead of the rural school. She is gathering the boys and girls into groups and teaching them the rudiments of a business education and preparing them for an advanced course when the government

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<sup>298</sup> *Survey of the Public Educational System*, 25.

<sup>299</sup> Mrs. Charles L. Thompson, *Porto Rico and Our Work There*, (N.Y.C.: Literature Department of the Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1902), 7-8.

<sup>300</sup> A.F. Beard, *Porto Rico Our Next Field* (N.Y.C.: American Missionary Ass., n.d.), n.p.

institutions can reach them.”<sup>301</sup> The missionaries thus attenuated the colonial state’s inadequacy, though ascertaining the exact number of missionary day schools and students is difficult, for schools sprang up where there was both need and people to teach, and some schools operated for just a few years. Not only mainland missionaries taught at these schools, but also literate Puerto Rican converts, both male and female.

Missionaries at first concentrated on kindergartens and primary schools, adding grades as those students advanced. Some Protestant orphanages also had in-house schools open to non-residents. Missionaries later founded vocational, professional (nursing and teaching), and religious-training schools. Though the majority of missionary schools catered to younger Puerto Ricans, many churches also opened schools for adults. In 1905, for example, the United Brethren resolved to establish night schools in all their churches, so that adult church members could be taught to read the Bible.<sup>302</sup> In 1907, in the month of April alone, the United Brethren opened such schools in Tallaboa, Sabanetas, and Juana Diaz.<sup>303</sup> Additionally, missionaries offered literacy and English classes in Bible study groups, settlement houses, and industrial workshops. Paternalistically describing adult education classes, a missionary pamphlet described “forty men in working clothes and bare feet, struggling with the intellectual problems of children.”<sup>304</sup> Like much missionary literature, this pamphlet sought to assure mainland sources that their projects warranted continued funding.

When contrasting Protestant and public to Catholic education, missionaries used rhetoric that conflated Protestantism, public education, modernization, and citizenship. For example,

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<sup>301</sup> “Protestantism and Education,” *EDC*, 15 June 1906, 8.

<sup>302</sup> “Acuerdos Principales,” *ETE*, Feb. 1905, 3; “Notas y Noticias,” *ETE*, April 1907, 4.

<sup>303</sup> “Notas y Noticias,” *ETE*, April 1907, 4.

<sup>304</sup> “The Opportunity Unprecedented,” *Porto Rico: Adopted in 1898, Give Our Fellow Americans Your Thought* (Des Moines, IA: Homestead Printing Co., n.d. 1915?), 3.

Rev. Robert McLean, in a 1907 paean to public education, argued that schools functioned to create good citizens, which required broad education and freedom of thought. Catholic orthodoxy prohibited such training and intellectual freedom, he argued, and thus precluded popular sovereignty.<sup>305</sup> Additionally, missionary and public schools proclaimed the virtues of and employed modern pedagogical methods patently different from Catholic practices of repetition and rote learning. In 1907, José Osuna, an early convert writing in the missionary press, advised Puerto Rican parents to look towards the future—the modern, American future—and urged them to send their children to public or Protestant schools where they would not mindlessly recite “Hail Marys,” but exercise their mental faculties.”<sup>306</sup> One public-school supervisor disparaged rote learning as “the old fashioned method of training in memory at the expense of the mind,” and the colonial state supplied teachers with books on modern pedagogy.<sup>307</sup>

Missionary-school curriculum generally matched the public schools’, excepting its Bible studies.<sup>308</sup> This facilitated the transfer of students into public schools. Missionary schools had a reputation for rigorous academics. For example, graduates of the Episcopalian St. Andrew’s School in Mayagüez, which focused on “industrial work” (sewing and lacework for girls, carpentry for boys), were allowed to enter the public high school without taking the customary entrance exam and, for five years, Poly graduates won the highest honors at the University of

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<sup>305</sup> Rev. Robert McLean, “Artículos Colaborados: ¿PORQUE?,” *LVE*, 4 Aug. 1907, 50.

<sup>306</sup> J.O., “Editorial: MIRAD HACIA EL PORVENIR,” *LVE*, 7 Dec. 1907, 196.

<sup>307</sup> Clark, *Education in Porto Rico*, 95.

<sup>308</sup> “El Asilo Robinson: Robinson Orphanage,” *EDC*, 15 Jan. 1911, 15.



Puerto Rico's Summer Normals courses—until the insular Department of Education banned them from competition for having “unusual advantages over other High Schools”.<sup>309</sup>

As the colonial state built more schools and trained more teachers, the missionaries either closed down or turned over their schools, as described by Methodist Benjamin Haywood in a 1908 report:

We have been enabled to place about twenty schools in remote rural sections where a public school was never known, our plan being to cooperate [emphasis original] and never displace the latter. Oftimes our humble beginning was the entering wedge for the public school work, and then turning over our school to them, we moved on to other barrios and begun our work anew.<sup>310</sup>

The speed of this process varied; the most isolated rural and densely populated urban areas were the last to have sufficient schools. In 1911, for example, Haywood reported that, despite having transferred five rural schools to the Department of Education, the mission still had ten day and six night schools with almost 600 children.<sup>311</sup> Missionaries' limited resources also shaped this process. Mainland-based women's agencies usually held responsibility for financially sustaining missionary schools and their policies strictly limited support for secular education.<sup>312</sup> Even after turning over their schools, missionaries remained fully committed to public education. The interdenominational Committee on Cooperation in Latin America

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<sup>309</sup> Florence L. Everett, “A Church Beehive in a Land of Flowers: The Myriad Activities of a Mission School Among Our Adopted Children in Porto Rico,” *SOM* (Dec. 1924): 768; Harris, *Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico: A Concise Historical Statement*, (hereafter *PIPR: A Concise Historical Statement*) 7; Eunice White Harris, *Steps* 73, unpublished mss, UI-MH.

<sup>310</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, “Annual Report of the Superintendent: Porto Rico Mission,” *Year Book, Superintendent's Annual Report and Official Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1908, 13.

<sup>311</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, “Annual Report of the Superintendent: Porto Rico Mission,” *Year Book: Superintendent's Annual Report and Official Minutes: Tenth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1911, 33.

<sup>312</sup> For an example of this policy, see Elizabeth Osborn Thompson, *Woman's Board of Home Missions: A Short History*, (N.Y.C.: The Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, n.d.), 14; RG 305-30-16, PHS.

resolved, in 1919, that “the Protestant forces in Porto Rico should recognize their peculiar responsibility for the whole-hearted support and sympathetic cooperation in defining the entire program of public education from the elementary school up through the University.”<sup>313</sup>

Providing secular education benefited missionaries in ways beyond strengthening its association with the colonial state. In 1899, for example, after the devastating San Ciriaco hurricane, the municipality of Bayamón donated a town building to the Disciples of Christ with the condition that the missionaries repair it for a girls’ orphanage. In a few years, the orphanage’s reputation was such that local parents, able and willing to pay, requested admission for their daughters. C. Manly Morton, head of the Disciples of Christ mission, later wrote that, with this development, the “missionaries recognized their opportunity, not only for extending educational work, but for placing the Protestant church in a position of high influence.”<sup>314</sup> This pleased the missionaries, who remained particularly interested in attracting Puerto Ricans who were not poor, like the majority of their congregants. Additionally, acting as the colonial state’s proxy bestowed the entire missionary project with the state’s cachet, which helped increase church rolls. Simultaneously, providing much desired schools—especially to those denied education under the Spanish—won over many Puerto Ricans to Americanization and thus legitimized the colonial state. For example, opening the McKinley Day school in San Juan, designed to serve the Methodist church’s poor congregants unable to get into public schools, had “greatly steadied the attendance upon the Sunday School.” McKinley’s Teacher Training School, established in 1907, trained many of the first Puerto Rican kindergarten teachers, who

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<sup>313</sup> Committee on Cooperation in Latin America Minutes, 10 Jan 1919, RG 305 SERIES 2 Folder 91, PHS; Decades later, Puerto Rican Protestants later fought efforts by the Catholic Church to obtain public funding for parochial schools.

<sup>314</sup> C. Manly Morton, *Kingdom Building in Puerto Rico: A Story of Fifty Years of Christian Service* (Indianapolis, IN: United Christian Missionary Society, 1949), 21; 26.

later worked in schools throughout the island. This extended the reach of both missionaries and the colonial state, advancing their shared Americanization agenda.

## **4.2 MAINLAND AND ISLAND CONTEXTS AND APPROACHES**

The trajectories, goals, and results of the missionary educational project can be understood only within the larger political economic context, for the Protestant vocational, professional, and orphanage schools embodied the inter-relatedness of the ideological and developmental elements of Americanization. Missionaries sought to contribute to the island's modernization by training Puerto Ricans to perform jobs emerging from the shift to industrial agriculture and the construction of the new colonial state. Additionally, this transformative shift greatly influenced Puerto Ricans' responses to the missionaries and their projects.

In the late nineteenth century, more than three-quarters of Puerto Ricans lived in rural agricultural areas where social relations ranged from feudal-like to small-scale capitalist. Funded by a flood of large-scale U.S. investment capital and supported by new trade regulations, however, capitalist modes of production in sugar (and, secondarily, tobacco) quickly predominated after 1898, replacing coffee as the island's most important export. The island's economy became almost exclusively oriented toward production for export as acreage planted in sugar tripled, tobacco acreage increased sixfold, and the percentage planted in coffee reduced by half.<sup>315</sup> At the same time, manufacturing (mainly tobacco products and the needle trades) grew

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<sup>315</sup> Santiago-Valles, "*Subject People*" and *Colonial Discourses*, 28-29.

and women's participation in waged labor increased.<sup>316</sup> Additionally, the insular and municipal governments began large infrastructure projects, building new roads, railroad lines, dock facilities, and water and sewage systems. These developments increased demand for certain existing occupations and created demand for new ones requiring technical or administrative training. Furthermore, the colonial state, the primary employer of educated Puerto Ricans, needed to staff its growing bureaucracy, particularly the Department of Education, which employed more people than any other.<sup>317</sup>

The colonial state planned programs to educate Puerto Ricans for the new economic order, but, as a large bureaucracy subordinate to the U.S. executive and legislature, it did not move quickly. Missionaries again filled the breach and provided specialized training in five venues: orphanages, professional schools, vocational schools, religious training schools, and industrial workshops. Though fields of study differed in these venues, Protestantism imbued the content, methodology, and social practices in all these schools, which instituted mandatory Bible studies and attendance at Protestant religious services.

These schools complied with the colonial state's prescription for gender-specific education: vocational schools trained males in trades such as plumbing, carpentry, shoe-making, and tailoring or in modern agricultural practices; whereas females learned sewing, dressmaking, and hat-making. Professional schools trained females for nursing, public health, teaching, social work, and home economics and males for teaching or ordination.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> For a detailed description, see James L. Dietz, *Economic History of Puerto Rico: Institutional Change and Capitalist Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). Also see an important essay that refutes long accepted arguments that concentration of landownership increased between 1898 and 1915: Cesar J. Ayala and Laird W. Bergad, "Rural Puerto Rico in the Early Twentieth Century Reconsidered: Land and Society, 1899-1915," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2. (2002), pp. 65-97.

<sup>317</sup> Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 126.

<sup>318</sup> Chapter Six treats the industrial workshops and Chapter Five the nursing schools.

The religious training schools had several additional goals. From the start, missionaries had planned to train Puerto Ricans to eventually staff the Protestant institutions. Both financial pressure and the belief that Puerto Ricans had access denied to the “foreigner,” had convinced missionaries to adopt this approach.<sup>319</sup> Missionaries aimed to develop a class of Puerto Ricans, largely women, who would function as leaders in their wider communities—leaders who would Americanize their fellows through propagating what they had learned at the Protestant schools. A missionary working at St. Catherine’s School, for example, argued that a “native missionary, a native teacher, or a native woman married and rearing a family in the Light of Christian truth and education, is the greatest asset to her community. The Porto Rican knows her people as no one else can, and they know her and trust her. ... We must teach the Porto Ricans to carry on the work.”<sup>320</sup>

This strategy of “nationalizing” Protestantism paralleled the colonial state’s strategy of tutelage, which deemed Puerto Ricans’ political development an evolutionary process requiring U.S. training. Shortly before the U.S. government bestowed collective U.S. citizenship on Puerto Ricans in 1917, the Episcopalian Bishop Charles Colmore explicitly articulated this correlation, asserting that children who came under Protestant influence would “become better citizens of Porto Rico and the United States, because of the knowledge of their duties and responsibilities as citizens of the Kingdom of God.”<sup>321</sup>

The colonial state and missionaries racialized, classed, and gendered their educational programs in similar ways. Forged by dominant mainland conceptions of race and practices of racial categorization, missionaries and the colonial state both perceived Puerto Ricans as “not

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<sup>319</sup> Rev. Harvey P. Walter, “Tentative Plan for the Church’s Work in the Missionary District of Porto Rico,” n.d., RG 77 Box 35, Folder: Rev. Harvey P. Walter, 1918, July-Dec, ETSS.

<sup>320</sup> Beatrice Shelton Haden, “Porto Rican Girls Studying Church Work,” *SOM* (Dec. 1928): 788.

<sup>321</sup> Rt. Rev Chas. B. Colmore, “Training for Citizenship in Porto Rico,” *SOM* (Feb 1917): 105.

white.” In the first official report on education in Puerto Rico, Victor Clark recommended prioritizing vocational schools, arguing that conditions of the Puerto Rican “peasantry” resembled those of mainland “negroes of the South” in ways important to educational policy. According to Clark, mainland public education was giving to the southern black “a smattering of book knowledge that tends to educate him out of his environment rather than to aid him in making an honest living, and becoming a good and profitable servant of the State.” This produced dissatisfaction and often resulted in blacks moving to the cities and becoming vagabonds or criminals, something to avoid in Puerto Rico.<sup>322</sup> Clark further suggested that the mainland system of Indian schools also offered useful lessons and proposed three goals for Puerto Rican education: “the elements of a common school education, practical training in the manual arts and agriculture, and the creation of habits of order and system and thrift.”<sup>323</sup> Secondary education such as agricultural colleges, he advised, could follow later, after a strong primary system had been established. Missionaries, whose notion of “consecrated living” resonated with “habits of order and system and thrift,” readily achieved Clark’s three goals in their training schools.

Like the colonial state, missionaries drew on their experiences with former slaves and Indians to shape their work in Puerto Rico. Both missionaries and the colonial state favored Booker T. Washington’s approach to socio-racial uplift, including his antipathy to alcohol. Historian José Manuel Navarro examined textbooks introduced by the colonial state and demonstrated that educational plans used in the African-American Tuskegee and Hampton

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<sup>322</sup> Superintendent Southall, quoted in Victor Clark, *Education in Porto*, 52.

<sup>323</sup> Clark, *Education in Porto Rico*, 52-53.

Institutes and the Carlisle Indian School were implemented in Puerto Rico.<sup>324</sup> In 1904 and 1906, the Methodist mission lobbied for the Freedman's Aid and Southern Education Society to extend its work to Puerto Rico. In December 1906, the Methodists rejoiced that the Society finally had voted to extend into Puerto Rico and planned to open a training school for "native workers" to whom the entire educational work would devolve.<sup>325</sup>

Especially in the early years, both the missionaries and the colonial state sent students to Tuskegee.<sup>326</sup> In 1906, the colonial state gave scholarships to attend Tuskegee to seventeen Puerto Ricans and, within four years, at least two United Brethren members from Juana Díaz went there: Asunción Rivera, in 1905 and Luis Lafaye ("to prepare himself for the advance of our Borinquen") in 1909. Lafaye stayed at Tuskegee for three years, earned "excellent grades," returned to teach in Bayamón, and married the daughter of a "well respected" church member.<sup>327</sup> He thus embodied success as defined by the missionary project. Even as late as 1922, (Protestant) Commissioner of Education Juan B. Huyke, referring to 427 islander public-school students enrolled in mainland schools, argued that, "Most of these students will return to Porto Rico at the completion of their courses and will, to a certain extent, aid in the further Americanization of the island by introducing many of the customs from the States."<sup>328</sup>

Missionaries also subsidized advanced studies on the mainland for less poor, less dark students, especially nurses, teachers, and ordained ministers, who attended institutions other than

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<sup>324</sup> Navarro, *Creating Tropical Yankees*. He also notes that the island's first commissioner of education, Gen. Eaton, had worked in the Freedman's Bureau.

<sup>325</sup> *Third Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1904, 13; Benj. S. Haywood, "Annual Report of the Superintendent," *Year Book and Official Minutes of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1906, 43; "Freedman's Aid Society Enters Porto Rico," *EDC*, 15 Dec. 1906, 7.

<sup>326</sup> For details of this program and Puerto Rican response to it see Ch. 4, Aida Negrón de Montilla, *Americanization in Puerto Rico*.

<sup>327</sup> "Notas y Noticias," *ETE*, 12 Dec. 1905, 3-4; "Noticias de las Iglesias: Juana Diaz," "El Instituto Tuskegee," *EDC*, 15 Oct. 1906, 5; *ETE*, Oct. 1909, 6.

<sup>328</sup> Juan B. Huyke, quoted in Negrón de Montilla, *Americanization in Puerto*, 190.

Tuskegee and Carlisle. Amelia Rentas, for example, after working two years in a rural district in Puerto Rico, where she had demonstrated “her exceptional ability for fine Christian leadership,” studied social service at Teachers College, Columbia University. Upon finishing, she returned to Puerto Rico and taught at St. Catherine’s religious training school for women, her alma mater.<sup>329</sup> In 1911, after studying in Washington D.C., a former Robinson Orphanage student returned to the orphanage as its “Domestic Science Instructor”—inducing one missionary to rejoice that the “visible fruitage of a long cherished hope [had been] realized.”<sup>330</sup>

As with race, missionaries’ understanding of gender difference informed curricula, goals, and methods. As described above, missionaries trained young women in domestic skills or for work in fields perceived as extensions of the home, such as schools, hospitals, and settlement houses, reflecting their belief in the power of female moral authority. The emphasis on model home-keeping and reform signaled the missionaries’ (and colonial state’s) goal of reconfiguring poorer Puerto Ricans’ gender relations, which they perceived as violent, degrading for women, promiscuous, and bad models for children. Missionaries sought to make those relations resemble those of white, middle-class, American Protestants.

The notion of “practical Christianity” was normative here, with understandings of practical and useful distinctly defined by gender. The Presbyterian Woman’s Board of Home Missions, for example, insisted on the need for “training schools-applied motherhood and home.”<sup>331</sup> Religious training schools and orphanages for females emphasized not only academics and Bible studies, but subjects such as “domestic science” and hygiene. Missionary

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<sup>329</sup> Ethel Robinson, “Native Leadership in Latin America,” *SOM* (Dec. 1931): 814-815; “Native Leadership in Porto Rico Growing,” *SOM* (Aug. 1932): 508.

<sup>330</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, “MISSION FIELD NOTES,” *EDC*, 15 Sept. 1911, 19-20.

<sup>331</sup> Emeline G. Pierson, *The Technique of Home Missions for Presbyterian Women*, (NYC: Woman’s Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, n.d.), 2, RG 305-30-14, PHS.



discourse on these institutions frequently used the rhetoric of “usefulness,” “self-sacrifice,” “consecrated women,” and the powerful influence of Christian example. The Robinson Orphanage for Girls promised that “[n]othing will be left undone to train” these girls “for usefulness. They will be educated in the full sense of the term, mentally, physically, scientifically, and morally.”<sup>332</sup> St. Catherine’s curriculum included “all phases of domestic science from menu making to budget making, from marketing and sewing to dusting and sweeping, altar work and the care of vestments, music, physical exercise.”<sup>333</sup> In contrast, seminaries for men (not under the purview of women’s mission boards) concentrated on academics, theology, liturgy, Greek and Latin, and pastoral work.

Similarly, gender norms shaped missionary education for males: men would develop certain skills that allowed them to support their families, exercise authority at home, and participate in civic life; additionally, a select number would train as ministers. Seeking “to make prominent the dignity of labor and the honor of toil,” the George O. Robinson boys orphanage exemplified missionary education for young, poor males. Speaking at its opening, Benjamin Haywood bemoaned that “industrial schools [were] at a premium in Porto Rico, and in consequence the poorer boys who would learn trades [were] deprived of the opportunity.” The school, built on ten acres donated by the municipality of Hatillo, offered training in agriculture, domestic economy, mathematics, physical and natural science, and various trades, “with special reference to their application in the industries of life.” Congruent with the colonial state’s Americanization agenda, Robinson boys also received tutelage in U.S. political and civic ideals. Robinson established “The Bryan School of Citizenship” in honor of William Jennings Bryan,

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<sup>332</sup> “El Asilo Robinson: Robinson Orphanage,” *EDC*, 15 Jan. 1911, 16.

<sup>333</sup> *The Church in San Juan, Porto Rico*, (N.Y.: The National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 1928), n.p. RG 77, Box 4, Printed Materials, Folder 10, ETSS.

who had laid the cornerstone for the new building—an event that received widespread, positive press coverage throughout the island. Taught “civic righteousness,” the boys trained to become “competent to act a part in the great right and duty of self-government,” an arena constructed as male.<sup>334</sup>

The missionary education project both created and reproduced class hierarchies, despite providing many Puerto Ricans heretofore unavailable opportunities for upward social mobility. Broadly speaking, the professional and religious schools facilitated maintenance within or upward mobility into the middle class; the vocational schools provided the means to maintain or attain secure working-class or lower middle-class status; and the industrial workshops to be discussed in the last chapter, with less lofty but more critical aims, facilitated survival. Access to particular forms of training significantly shaped one’s life chances. For example, Puerto Rican men who graduated from the all-male seminaries were practically guaranteed middle-class status, because they would be assigned to churches and, if the churches could not support them, the mainland denominational board would.<sup>335</sup> Most of these men came from the artisan or small merchant class; some had humbler origins, such as the Villafane brothers, cigar-makers in Puerta de Tierra.<sup>336</sup> Missionaries were more likely to enroll poorer Puerto Ricans in the vocational than the religious training schools. Young women who attended the religious training schools gained

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<sup>334</sup> Benjamin S. Haywood, “Annual Report of the Superintendent: Porto Rico Mission,” *Year Book, Superintendent’s Annual Report and Official Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1911, 30-31. Bryan’s trip to the orphanage received extensive coverage in the island press, both secular and religious. Echoing the notion of Puerto Rico as a hub, Bryan state that he hoped the school would benefit not only Puerto Ricans, but also other islands. See “Informe Anual del Superintendente, Misión de Puerto Rico,” *EDC Suplemento al numero 153* (15 mayo 1910), 8.

<sup>335</sup> Not all Puerto Rican pastors were ordained; the majority did not attend seminary. This created significant conflict between some missionaries and Puerto Rican pastors who argued that they deserved the same level of training as their mainland counterparts. The differences in training produced a hierarchy among ordained and non-ordained Puerto Rican pastors. Women were not allowed ordination until the 1960s.

<sup>336</sup> The first Puerto Rican ministers tended to be cobblers, carpenters, masons, with some from the coffee and sugar areas, Dr. Benjamin Santana Jiménez and Dr. Gildo Sánchez Figueroa, *92 Años de metodismo en Puerto Rico! (1900-1992)* (PR: Impreso en Jay-Ce Printing, 1992), 41; William Hoster, “Our Mission Work in Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands,” *SOM* (Jan. 1926): 20.

entry to the middle class as social workers, teachers, and wives of ministers. The upward social mobility gained by graduates of the orphanages reflected their extreme poverty upon entering the orphanages. Also at the bottom of the socio-economic scale stood the predominantly female attendees of the industrial workshops.

### **4.3 MISSIONARY SCHOOLS: GOALS AND METHODS**

Missionaries' primary educational goals included training workers and citizens for the new economy and colonial state, instilling in students the Protestant work ethic and white, middle-class gender norms, and training an indigenous force capable of taking over the local missionary project and exporting it throughout Latin America.

The missionary educational enterprise's flagship, the Instituto Politécnico/Polytechnic Institute attempted to reach all these goals with its holistic approach to education. Missionaries, islanders, and mainlanders portrayed Poly (as it was called) as the embodiment of Protestant values, goals, and pedagogical methods.<sup>337</sup> In 1912, the charismatic Presbyterian minister J. Will Harris and his wife Eunice White Harris opened the Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico as an independent, non-sectarian school offering "training for the technical, vocational activities of immediate practical character so greatly needed in Puerto Rico,"<sup>338</sup> which dovetailed with the colonial state's emphasis on vocational education. Harris sought "to establish a school within

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<sup>337</sup> The Institute continues as the Universidad Interamericana, a private, non-religiously affiliated liberal arts institution with campuses throughout the island.

<sup>338</sup> Osuna, "A Study of the Polytechnic University," 3.

the reach of the common people, free from all class or caste feeling, where the sons and daughters of the poor and rich alike would find study inviting and profitable.”<sup>339</sup>

Poly aggressively cultivated the “dignity of labor” (the term missionaries used for the Protestant work ethic), which was integral to the school’s goals, practices, and organization. The curriculum combined traditional academic subjects with technical/vocational training and practical physical labor. Harris sought to persuade students that “one of the most stupendous bunkum ideas in the world is the idea that work is degrading or is only to be done by those who haven’t money or wit enough to escape it” and formulated a pedagogy based on a three-fold education, “represented by the Head, mental; by the Hand, manual labor; by the Heart, religion.”<sup>340</sup> He required all students—regardless of ability to pay—to perform manual labor (“industrial training”) for three hours a day; those who could not pay tuition worked an additional hour and a half each day. This practice bucked Puerto Ricans’ belief that manual labor was debasing, as noted in this comment by a visiting church-worker: “Only the peon class (laborers) work in Porto Rico. Those who wear shoes and have some schooling are as a rule ‘above’ working.”<sup>341</sup> Richer Puerto Ricans’ beliefs about manual labor reflected Spanish norms, while poorer Puerto Ricans’ beliefs stemmed from the relatively recent experience of slavery.

Harris maintained that industrial training was “necessary for the youth of wealthy parents because” the child should know how to conduct and improve the father’s business and, in the case of possible financial reversals, “he will not be left hopeless for he knows how things are

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<sup>339</sup> Harris, *PIPR: A Concise Historical Statement*, 5; Poly’s first class did not have quite the diversity Harris had imagined: eight males and four females averaging twenty years old and all poor. None could afford the \$5.00 matriculation fee and only one could partially pay his room and board. J. Will Harris, *Riding and Roping: The Memoirs of J. Will Harris*, ed. C. Virginia Matters (San Juan: Inter American University Press, 1977), 49. These students worked four and a half hours a day to pay their tuition and room and board and full-time for a month in the summer to pay the matriculation fee.

<sup>340</sup> Dr. Frank Crane, quoted in Harris, *PIPR: A Concise Historical Statement*, 9; Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 19.

<sup>341</sup> Amy Ruse Snyder, “Miss Williams at Work in Porto Rico. As Seen by An American Friend and Neighbor,” IEU-2, SEPR-AH.

acquired.” The poor needed industrial training because it provided the only way to earn an honest living, improve one’s conditions, and learn how to manage honorably others’ businesses. For both rich and poor youth, Harris continued, work, “under proper methods develops muscles, stimulates the brain and prevents to a great extent physical and moral disease germs,” thus preventing youth from becoming “parasites on an industrious world.”<sup>342</sup> Samuel Guy Inman, executive secretary of the interdenominational Protestant Committee on Cooperation in Latin-America, noted that “rich men [would] often offer any amount as tuition if their sons and daughters ... [would] be excused from the labor part of the program but the rule ... [was] rigidly adhered to.”<sup>343</sup> Student labor constructed and furnished most of the school’s buildings, including fabricating bricks from concrete and furniture from mahogany growing on the school grounds, maintained the buildings and grounds, and grew and prepared much of its food. This not only saved money, but also appealed to donors who valorized thrift, efficiency, and hard physical work.

Poly’s emphasis on the dignity of labor reflected missionary philosophy that deemed “honest” labor as essential to a well-ordered, equitable, democratic society. Concerned with maintaining a workforce sufficiently skilled and disciplined to meet the new economy’s demands and a stable, inviting investment climate, the colonial state shared this goal. A recurring theme in their discourses, both the colonial state and the missionaries emphasized the need to change Puerto Ricans’ attitude toward manual labor, for which they offered a variety of explanations, including climatic, cultural, racial, and medical.<sup>344</sup> One of Poly’s more astute supporters

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<sup>342</sup> “Industrial Department,” *Bulletin*, Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico, 1915-1916, 12, UI-MH.

<sup>343</sup> Samuel Guy Inman, *Twenty-five Years of Mission Work in Porto Rico* (Reprint from *The Christian Work*, 1924), 7.

<sup>344</sup> See “Editorial: Laboremos,” *PRE*, 10 Sept. 1913, 1; *Twenty Questions and Answers*, 7. RG 305-29-52, PHS; “Una Institución Digna de Llor,” *LVE*, 4 Aug. 1907, 53; Dr. Manuel Guzmán Rodríguez, “El Hogar y la Niñez: “La Higiene y la Moral en el Hogar,” *LVE*, 26 Oct 1907, 149.

commented that Puerto Ricans' characterization of work as "slavish and degrading" stemmed not from laziness; but from "the fact that labor under existing conditions affords no chance for one to better his conditions in life, however faithfully it may be pursued."<sup>345</sup> To counter this, Poly aimed to show students that hard work could bring not only individual but also collective uplift—a claim that became harder to sustain as economic conditions deteriorated through the early twentieth century.

Missionaries persistently promoted the dignity of labor. *El Defensor Cristiano*, in 1906, championed the importance of strong minds and bodies and the indispensable role of the working classes in the agricultural industry.<sup>346</sup> Additionally, missionaries celebrated the U.S. Labor Day holiday in schools, churches, and special assemblies. In 1907, Elpidio de Mier, editor of the Baptist *El Evangelista*, joined Santiago Iglesias, head of the island-wide labor confederation (Federación Libre de Trabajadores/Free Federation of Workers/F.L.T.), in addressing a Labor Day gathering that had been greeted earlier by then Governor Post.<sup>347</sup> For Labor Day in 1913, a *Puerto Rico Evangélico* editorial deftly linked class, gender, nationalism, and honor through the dignity of labor. Declaring that "We ought not be ashamed of working," it complained that many young women disdained honorable workers, preferring instead to marry or become the concubine of a richer man. It also reminded readers that Abraham Lincoln, "president of that grand nation," had been the son of a woodcutter and warned that the shiftless impugned the Biblical precept that one earns bread by the sweat of his brow—a warning that must have struck many Puerto Ricans who labored in the sugar fields and tobacco houses as quite unnecessary.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> "Porto Ricans Not Lazy," *Porto Rico: Adopted in 1898*, 7.

<sup>346</sup> "Porque?," *EDC*, 1 Nov. 1906, 1.

<sup>347</sup> "Noticias," *EE*, 15 Sept. 1907, 8.

<sup>348</sup> "Editorial: Laboremos," *PRE*, 10 Sept. 1913, 1.

Missionaries did not promote the dignity of labor simply as a disciplinary mechanism. Rather, disturbed by the exploitation of workers, missionaries saw humane working conditions and a living wage—not just respect for and willingness to perform manual labor—as crucial to dignified labor. Transforming seigniorial and degrading labor relations thus became part of the missionary project—a goal additionally compelling since most missionary followers came from the laboring classes.<sup>349</sup> Missionaries thus censured both servility and exploitation and believed that good working conditions entailed reciprocal obligations by capitalists and workers.<sup>350</sup> Poly's methods, argued Harris, provided the advantage that "capital and labor [would] understand each other better if when as children they worked side by side."<sup>351</sup> This reflected missionaries' interest, shared by the colonial state, in stable labor relations and avoidance of class conflict.

Like mainland Progressives, many Protestants feared that excessive corporate power undermined basic moral and democratic principles, particularly in labor relations. In 1912, a Methodist bishop accused organized capital of "sins against humanity" and voiced support for peaceful labor organizations.<sup>352</sup> By this time, Puerto Ricans were experiencing the harmful consequences of Americanization's exceptionally accelerated capitalist development, which provoked cyclical strikes. Long, bitter strikes by cane workers occurred in 1905 and 1906; tobacco workers participated in twenty-one strikes between 1906 and 1913, culminating, in 1914, in a four-month strike against the Porto Rico American Tobacco Company by more than

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<sup>349</sup> Missionary discourse is filled with references to the poverty of their Puerto Rican congregants. Exceptions to this were the generally mainland elites associated with the colonial state or U.S. corporations; considerable attention was paid to middling class Puerto Ricans who became Protestants, with frequent references to the relative rarity of this phenomenon and optimism that it portended an important inroad into that class.

<sup>350</sup> For sample citations, see "Notas Editoriales: La Iglesia Presbiteriana y los artesanos," *LVE*, 17 July 1909, 36; Juan B. Soto, "La Fraternidad Universal y el Cristianismo," *PRE*, 10 July 1912, 2; N.H. Huffman, "El Cristianismo Aplicado: Relación entre Patronos y Obreros," *PRE*, 9.

<sup>351</sup> "Industrial Department," *Bulletin*, Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico, 1915-1916, 12, UI-MH.

<sup>352</sup> "The Episcopal Address," *EDC*, 15 July 1912, 17-18.

half of all tobacco-manufacturing workers. In 1915, 17,625 sugar cane workers went on strike in twenty-four of the thirty-nine most important sugar centrals.<sup>353</sup> These strikers experienced such egregious “sins against humanity”—violent, state-sponsored repression—that a U.S. federal commission convened to investigate the matter.<sup>354</sup> The steady strengthening of corporate power and its effects on most Puerto Ricans would bring some missionaries to question Americanization.

Missionary interests in the working classes intersected with those of organized labor. One of the contradictions of Americanization, U.S. sovereignty brought to Puerto Ricans the right to collective labor organization; in other words, Americanization legalized one method for negotiating and contesting its own effects. Samuel Gompers warmly welcomed the insular trade federation, the F.L.T., into the American Federation of Labor and often pressured the U.S. Congress to intervene in island labor affairs. The missionary press regularly reported large labor disputes, both on and beyond the island, and relations between capital and labor remained a recurring editorial theme.<sup>355</sup> Additionally, missionary discourse frequently referred to church-members’ hardships due to strikes.<sup>356</sup> Some denominations had amicable relations with the F.L.T. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Baptists invited F.L.T. officials to their annual conferences. At their 1909 annual conference, the United Brethren resolved that their sympathy resided with the working class, whose rights they would defend through their press and other

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<sup>353</sup> Gervasio L. García and A.G. Quintero Rivera, *Desafío y solidaridad: breve historia del movimiento obrero puertorriqueño* 3rd Ed. (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1997) 46-47; 60.

<sup>354</sup> Santiago Valles, “*Subject People*,” 114.

<sup>355</sup> For sample citations, see: “Noticias Generales”: “Las Huelgas,” *LVE*, 14 Sept 1907, 97; “Noticias Generales: Cinco mil obreros paralizados,” *LVE*, 7 Dec. 1907, 193; “De Actualidad”: “La Huelga en San Juan,” *PRE*, 10 March 1914, 10; “De Actualidad”: “Inquietud en la Isla,” *PRE*, 25 Feb. 1915, 11; “Opportunity in Porto Rico,” *SOM* (July 1918): 484.

<sup>356</sup> Strikes also significantly affected churches’ coffers, for members’ contributions generally ceased.



methods.<sup>357</sup> That same year, Presbyterians in Mayagüez invited the F.L.T. to a special service for laborers. Union members and their families, present in great numbers, heard Rev. Jason Underwood claim that, based on the Bible's esteem for manual labor, the Protestant church had always been and continued to be workers' "best friend."<sup>358</sup> In 1914, Socialists won the municipal elections in Arecibo, the island's fourth largest city and the largest center of Methodism on the island.<sup>359</sup>

Missionaries' valorization of manual labor and those who performed it, however, did not provoke the greatest response from critics of the missionary project. Coeducation, according to Harris, probably "created more misgivings, even from ... well-wishers, than any other aspect of ... [his] pioneering work."<sup>360</sup> Male and female students not only shared classes, but also studied, ate meals, published a newspaper, attended sporting events, debated, and prayed together. So much intermingling of young men and women transgressed traditional Puerto Rican norms, though presumably this concerned middling and wealthier Puerto Ricans more accustomed to and capable of controlling their daughters' public activities than poorer parents. Some parents, perchance, felt torn between adherence to the traditional norm and the opportunity for giving their daughters an education more consonant with an emergent, modern Puerto Rico that needed modern women. By 1923, according to a Carnegie Foundation report, wealthy parents increasingly recognized Poly's value and sent their children there to work and study along with those from quite different circumstances, including the one-third from rural districts.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> *Sexta Conferencia de los Hermanos Unidos en Cristo*, 1909, p. 62. SEPR-AH.

<sup>358</sup> "Culto en interés de los obreros," *LVE*, 11 Sept. 1909, 120.

<sup>359</sup> Manuel Andújar, "Superintendent's Annual Report," *Year Book: Official Minutes and Superintendent's Annual Report: XIV Session of the Puerto Rico Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1915, 44.

Missionaries and the F.L.T. shared two additional goals important in the early twentieth century: temperance and the six-day work week.

<sup>360</sup> Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 59.

<sup>361</sup> Dr. W.S. Learned, cited in Eunice White Harris, *Steps*, 99.

Harris believed that encouraging girls and boys to eat and take classes together provided the only way that “the young men of Latin America w[ould] learn how to treat young women.”<sup>362</sup> He recounted an incident in which a boy had made “a slighting remark” to a girl who was waiting tables in the dining room. She slapped the boy, who complained to Harris. At the next meal, Harris “publicly commended” the girl for her action and claimed that no such act by a male student was ever repeated. Expressing missionaries’ faith in the power of female moral authority, Harris stated that co-education at Poly never “produced a moral failure,” as many had feared and the Catholic Church had predicted. Instead, the “girls lifted the boys to higher standards by showing in and out of the classroom and work their equality and capacity for self-government in personal life and action.”<sup>363</sup> Other missionary schools also championed co-education. The Disciples of Christ justified merging their boys’ and girls’ orphanages by arguing that coeducation could obtain results in social development unachievable in single-sex schools.<sup>364</sup> Baptists agreed, even declaring that “separation of the sexes in school [was] a crime against nature ... and had engendered serious social evils.”<sup>365</sup> In contrast, Spain had made illegal coeducation and male teachers for girls.<sup>366</sup>

The “evil” and “moral failure” that most disturbed missionaries were local traditions of sexual and familial relations outside of state-sanctioned marriages, practices that missionaries included in the umbrella term “concubinage.” One described concubinage as more dangerous than the bubonic plague or attacks by wild animals, referring to a recent escape of circus

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<sup>362</sup> Inman, *Twenty-five Years of Mission Work in Porto Rico*, 6.

<sup>363</sup> J. Will Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 60.

<sup>364</sup> “Asilo de Bayamón,” *EDC*, 1 May 1910, 5.

<sup>365</sup> *Acta correspondiente a la Undécima Asamblea de la Asociación de las Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico celebrada en San Juan, los días 11-14 de septiembre de 1913*, 11, “Actas de la Asociación de Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico, 1902-1920,” SEPR-AH.

<sup>366</sup> Clark, *Education in Porto Rico*, 7.

animals.<sup>367</sup> An island secular newspaper described Poly's work in this area as "making true men and women with self-control, aware and confident of their power, slaves to reason and haters of vice."<sup>368</sup> Coeducation, reasoned missionaries, would effectively "build character," socialize Puerto Rican youth to white, mainland, middle-class sexual norms.<sup>369</sup> Largely blaming the Catholic Church and men, Protestants frequently railed against these practices, citing their dire moral, physical, and economic consequences. Many Catholic priests refused to perform marriages without payment, which excluded the poor majority. Concubinage thus became a widely recognized marker of class. In contrast, Protestant ministers performed marriages free of charge and publicly rejoiced when long-term partners officially married, a requirement for full membership in Protestant churches; the colonial state frequently waived fees in attempts to rationalize familial and sexual relations.<sup>370</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the Catholic Church and elite Puerto Ricans offered the most vocal resistance to coeducation. *El Heraldito Español*, described by a missionary as "the oldest and most rabid of the Catholic organs," frequently ran stories decrying the immorality of coeducation in particular and Protestantism in general.<sup>371</sup> The Catholic Church viewed education as a good venue in which to fight Americanization—and contesting coeducation as particularly promising. At the beginning of the 1907 school year, for example, referring to the colonial state's introduction of civil marriage, which the Catholic hierarchy viewed as abominably Godless, immoral, and invalid, *El Ideal Católico* (described by Protestants as "the only daily on the island

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<sup>367</sup> "Fieras temibles," *LVE*, 30 May 1908, 405.

<sup>368</sup> "El Instituto Politécnico," *Mefistofeles* (Sept 1916): 49, UI-MH.

<sup>369</sup> Missionaries frequently described orphanages and schools as "character factories." For example, see Benjamin S. Haywood, "Our Industrial Institute and Training School," *EDC*, 1 Dec. 1911, 20.

<sup>370</sup> During World War One, the colonial state promoted a drive for formal marriages, using soldiers' family benefits as an incentive. By this time the U.S. branch of the Catholic Church had taken control of Puerto Rican affairs and it stopped compulsory fees for pastoral care such as performing marriages.

<sup>371</sup> Rev. A.B. Rudd, "A Bitter Cry: A Romanist's View of Protestant Progress in Porto Rico," *Tidings* (April 1910): 12.

that undertakes to represent systematically the interests of the Catholic Church”) stated that “with the Civil Registry we have to comply ... but not so with the public schools, which we can avoid by founding [sex-segregated] parochial schools.”<sup>372</sup> Elites sent their daughters to expensive, single-sex Catholic schools like the Colegio del Sagrado Corazón in San Juan. According to prominent Puerto Rican Protestant Abelardo M. Díaz, Catholic priests and nuns there tried to indirectly rule the island through “educating or making fanatics of the daughters of the aristocracy,” who would marry ruling-class men. Sharply rebuking the Catholic hierarchy for neglecting the poor, especially those in the countrysides, he charged that money functioned as the magic key that opened the door to Catholic schools.<sup>373</sup> These exchanges exemplified the classed and gendered nature of debates over education and contestations of power.

Other Puerto Ricans supported the missionary project for re-shaping gender relations. Julio D. Ramu, in *El Testigo Evangélico* in 1909, attacked the prevailing belief that one had to drink, smoke, gamble, and have many women to be a “real man.” He lamented that even women held that “erroneous opinion” and argued that alcohol was the root of most social problems, claiming that gamblers often lost a week’s pay on their day off, which harmed their families who depended on that income. And, decrying the 80,000 people who lived in “concubinage” with their 200,000 “illegitimate children,” he warned that they could neither have a happy home nor provide healthy models for their children.<sup>374</sup> Despite joint efforts of the colonial state, missionaries, and some Puerto Ricans, significant change in this pattern did not occur, showing Puerto Ricans’ resistance to some reforms.

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<sup>372</sup> Ibid.; *El Ideal Católico*, Aug. 17, 1907, cited in “Again Against the Public Schools,” *EDC*, 1 Sept. 1907, 6.

<sup>373</sup> Abelardo M. Díaz, “La Escuela Parroquial frente a la Escuela Pública,” *PRE*, 25 Feb. 1916, 9. Díaz also fervently opposed Catholic fiestas patronales. A classic liberal, he considered clericalism the greatest danger to progress, insisting “Matemos clericalismo, si no él nos matará a nosotros.” Abelardo M. Díaz: “Peligro del Clericalismo en P.R.,” *Acta correspondiente a la Duodécima Asamblea de la Asociación de las Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico*, 1915, p. 24, SEPR-AH.

<sup>374</sup> Julio D. Ramu, “Una Opinión Errónea,” *ETE*, Sept. 1909, 3-4.

Like the missionaries, sympathetic Puerto Ricans viewed the family as the fundamental base of moral, religious, and national development. Most Puerto Ricans' customary practices gravely worried Abelardo Díaz, who claimed that Latin and Saxon races differed most in their notions of home: Latins preferred drinking, billiards, etc. as recreation in contrast to Saxons, who preferred the home. He argued that the "future of our people depends on the purity of the home."<sup>375</sup> Missionaries introduced organized sports as an alternative to dancing, cock-fighting, gambling, and drinking. For example, The "New World School," an industrial school with a pineapple plantation in El Coto de Manati, developed sports to teach Puerto Ricans "how to live cleanly in body and mind." A visiting bishop expressed his delight "to see so many balls and bats sent in the mission boxes," declaring his strong belief "in the democratic teaching and influence of base-ball" and noted that Puerto Ricans went "wild over" baseball, "one of the most popular institutions we have given them."<sup>376</sup> Additionally, Poly had sex-segregated basketball, baseball, and volleyball teams, which eventually played in local leagues, cheered on by the school's co-ed band. M.E. Martínez, a Puerto Rican Protestant whose wife taught at Poly when it first opened, described the family as "the smallest republic" upon which rested the nation's moral and material progress.<sup>377</sup> A *Puerto Rico Evangélico* editorial argued that if the home, school, or church failed, an individual could not fulfill his functions as citizen, father, and moral being.<sup>378</sup> Harris organized Poly based on those three elemental factors, home, school, and

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<sup>375</sup> *Acta correspondiente a la Undécima Asamblea de la Asociación de las Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico* 1913, 10, SEPR-AH.

<sup>376</sup> Bishop Charles Colmore, "Opportunity in Porto Rico," *SOM* (July 1918): 484. "New World" allowed only boys to play baseball. Mr. and Mrs. Droste, the founders of New World, were European and affiliated with the Episcopal church.

<sup>377</sup> M.E. Martínez, "La República más Pequeña," *PRE* 10 May 1913, 1-2; Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 49.

<sup>378</sup> The editorial linked the possibility of Puerto Rico's "glorious liberty" to the successful development and interaction of these factors. The "glorious liberty" and the metaphorical "republic" referred to the issues of status, self-government, and citizenship, recurring themes of Americanization and constants in Puerto Rican debates; "Editorial: Tres Factores Importantes," *PRE*, 25 July 1913, 1-2.

church. He thought that practices such as eating together in the dining room, sleeping in (sex-segregated) dormitories, students' on-campus labor, team sports, and compulsory, collective, daily Bible discussion would deepen "the atmosphere of a Christian home" and create "a sense of real value" that would provide (re)formative Protestantizing experiences for students.<sup>379</sup>

Poly goals also included training church-workers, though the religious and professional schools more narrowly focused on this. Presbyterians established a seminary in Mayagüez for men; Baptists, the Villa Robles for women; Congregationalists, the Blanche Kellogg Institute for women; Episcopalians, the St. Catherine's Training School for Native Women and St. Michael's Seminary for men; and in 1917, the Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Methodists, United Brethren, and Presbyterians jointly established the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico. Additionally, some settlement houses established programs to train church-workers. Most of that infrastructure long outlasted the early missionary primary schools and some continue in the present.

Missionaries often identified promising future church-workers in their home congregations or orphanages, which functioned as informal feeders for the training schools.<sup>380</sup> Amparo Martínez, for example, first attended primary school at the Episcopalian St. Andrew's School in Mayagüez, went on to St. Catherine's Training School for Native Women in San Juan, and finally to St. Luke's Hospital Nursing School in Ponce.<sup>381</sup> In 1910, six girls from the Robinson orphanage trained as kindergarten teachers in a Protestant day school, and the Robinson orphanage for boys supported two of its charges, Juan Rivera and Edelmiro Rodríguez, at the Polytechnic Institute in 1927. Juan, described by the orphanage's principal Agustín Alvira

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<sup>379</sup> Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 61; 64.

<sup>380</sup> C. Manly Morton described the Disciples of Christ boys' orphanage in Hato Tejas as "an excellent source of recruitment for the ministry." Manly, *Kingdom Building*, 29.

<sup>381</sup> "Native Leadership in Latin America," *SOM* (Dec. 1931): 813-814.

as “very handy ... with tools” and a “bright boy” who deserved “a complete education,” planned “to secure a place at Henry Ford’s factory in order to be a mechanic.”<sup>382</sup>

Missionaries understood supporting such students as investing, figuratively and literally, in both Puerto Ricans and the overall missionary project. Many graduates from these schools did pursue social service, public health, or educational jobs that both gave them influence in their communities and helped ensure continuity of the missionary project. Some worked in Protestant institutions throughout the island, further disseminating and consolidating the missionary project. Graduates of the Marina Neighborhood House, for example, worked as teachers for the M.N.H., pastor’s assistants, and public-school teachers. M.N.H. graduate Felicidad Vasquez de Angulo taught in Cucuto, Colombia, where her husband ministered to a congregation.<sup>383</sup> Through these Puerto Ricans, the missionaries had disproportionate effects on educational and social service systems.

#### **4.4 CONTRADICTIONS IN THE MISSIONARY EDUCATIONAL PROJECT**

The missionary educational project comprised many contradictions. Some originated in the inherently contradictory nature of the project and others from pragmatic choices, such as the employment of more female than male missionaries. Contradictions associated with the

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<sup>382</sup> “W.H.M.S. Re-Adjustments,” *EDC*, 15 Sept. 1910, 18; Agustín Alvira, “Report of the G.O. Robinson Institute, Hatillo,” *Year Book, 1927: Official Minutes, XXVI Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 52.

<sup>383</sup> Clara Hazen to Edna Voss, 22 March 1929, letter, RG 301.8 SERIES V SUBSERIES 19 Box 15 Folder 24, PHS; *A Training School for Porto Rican Social-Religious Workers: The Marina Mission, Mayaguez, Porto Rico*, (New York: Board of National Missions, n.d.), n.p., *ibid*.

missionaries' project to reconstruct Puerto Rican gender relations provide an example of contradictions stemming from both sources.

The entire Protestantization/Americanization project (including the colonial state's tutelage) corresponded in many ways with nineteenth-century mainland reform movements, largely led by middle-class women. These women reconfigured traditionally gendered conceptions of private/public that limited women to their personal domestic sphere; emphasizing their "calling" to exercise moral authority beyond their homes, these women expanded the definition of both private and domestic to include larger communities. Reformers legitimized this expansion by casting their subjects for reform ("fallen women," poor children, immigrants) as people needing maternal care—a type of infantilization consonant with the colonial state's tutelage and the missionaries' perception of Puerto Rican Catholics. Reforming women cloaked their new, increasing public activism in the garments of the non-threatening, traditional construction of womanhood. This alteration produced tensions and contradictions for the women themselves, between male and female missionaries, and between missionary ideology and practices.

Examining missionaries' gendered ideology of power and place in relation to their goal of reordering Puerto Rican gender roles provides an example of how such tensions and contradictions played out in Puerto Rico. Missionary literature constructed the husband/father as the head of the paradigmatic household and the wife/mother as subordinate to him. *La Voz Evangélica*, for example, editorialized that Christianity, by nature, was a "religion of virility, of power," that Christ constituted "nothing weak, nothing effeminate," and compared Christ and his disciples to powerful, virile soldiers. Though the editorial admitted the necessity of women's tender, Christian touch at home and church, it insisted that Christ and his disciples nonetheless



never had in mind “the idea of renouncing in favor of woman the position of responsibility that the Christian man occupied.” Perhaps concerned that more women than men attended Protestant churches (a frequently expressed concern), it announced a two-year religious revival among mainland men to which it invited Puerto Rican men, in hope “that men would know that religion [was] not a matter solely for women and children.”<sup>384</sup>

Reflecting gender anxiety, this article represented many attempts to counter Puerto Rican men’s perception of religion as a woman’s matter—a perception counter to the Protestants’ masculinist one. In 1910, for example, referring to William Jennings Bryan’s visit to the island to lay the cornerstone of the Robinson Orphanage, a young Puerto Rican remarked on the strangeness of such a highly regarded intellectual speaking on religion. According to a writer for *El Defensor Cristiano*, this expressed Puerto Ricans’ sense that being “religious [was] a sign of weakness, of lack of manly independence”—a sense that missionaries’ constant attacks on extra-marital sex and male leisure practices such as gambling, cock-fighting, and drinking affirmed.<sup>385</sup>

This perception presented a problem for the missionaries, because they wanted to attract both male and female members; they particularly needed male converts, because only men could be ordained as ministers and most denominations allowed only men to preach at formal religious services. Though missionary discourse consistently and persistently emphasized male authority, the activities of many female missionaries contradicted the idealized paradigm of a male-dominated household, which functioned metonymically to represent the larger, patriarchal social order. Such activities also transgressed Puerto Rican gender norms, making Protestantism

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<sup>384</sup> “Editorial: Los Hombres Para Cristo,” *LVE*, 15 Feb. 1908, 284. Within the next two weeks a special meeting restricted to men was held; more than 150 Puerto Ricans attended and heard the following lectures: “Christ and Men,” “Things that Destroy Man’s Virility,” and “Christ as a Model for Man”; “Gacetillas: Notas de las Iglesias: De Mayagüez,” *LVE*, 22 Feb. 1908, 295. For another example of gender anxiety, see M.E. Martínez, “Temperancia: Las Mujeres y la Temperancia,” *PRE*, 10 March 1916, 17.

<sup>385</sup> “Bryan, Hatillo,” *EDC*, 15 April 1910, 15.

unappealing to some Puerto Ricans, both male and female, and exacerbating hesitations that others already harbored.

That behavior also transgressed idealized Protestant gender norms and brought to the fore differences between actual practices and ideology, undermining “the power of Christian example” (daily “living” one’s beliefs which Protestants opposed to what they considered Roman Catholicism’s sporadic “performances” of superficial rites and rituals). Unmarried and widowed female missionaries routinely modeled “masculine,” independent, activist behavior in both the (expanded) private and public spheres. They organized meetings, gave speeches to mixed audiences, lived in homes with little if any male supervision, traveled alone or without male companions, initiated conversations with strangers, formed temperance societies, and organized, supervised, and participated in religious, pastoral, educational, and industrial projects.<sup>386</sup> Further, many missionaries, particularly females and their continental colleagues, strongly asserted a gender egalitarianism in which churchwomen’s work had value equal to the male work from which they were formally excluded, ordained ministry. Even at a time of great financial duress in 1928, for example, a mainland churchwoman argued that “nothing should be allowed to interrupt its [St. Catherine’s religious training school for women] work for even a single day. ... This is as important a task as the development of a native ministry of men.”<sup>387</sup> Additionally, due to increased interest from and education of mainland middle-class women, female missionaries usually outnumbered males at any given moment after 1899. Not only did this result in many missionary women living beyond the reach of frequent scrutiny by their

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<sup>386</sup> Missionary women in isolated rural areas generally met with supervisory ministers once or twice a month and on special occasions. Wives of ministers, too, often had nearly complete responsibility for not only their home and household, but also their church, for their husbands frequently spent considerable periods of time away from home, ministering to distant church-members, proselytizing, or fundraising.

<sup>387</sup> *The Church in San Juan, Porto Rico*, (N.Y.: The National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 1928), n.p., RG 77, Box 4, Printed Materials, Folder 10, ETSS.

official male supervisors, but it also gave a heightened visibility to women's work, especially in an environment unused to seeing particular behaviors in women. All these practices and attitudes of many female missionaries thus modeled an audacious self-reliance that contravened the purported, essentialized primacy of male authority—providing a perhaps unintended, alternative option for gender relations.<sup>388</sup>

Another contradiction lay in Protestantism's (somewhat vague) ideology of universal equality and missionary ideologies and practices that reinforced gender difference and inequalities. Missionaries likely did not see these contradictions, because they did not appear to substantially question the problematic "separate but equal" approach underpinning their (theoretical) notion of gendered public/private spheres—although many women missionaries cleverly found ways around that approach's limits. Equality under missionary terms did not mean males and females had equal access to or choice in opportunities for education or work, but rather gender-prescribed options, a distinction that, at least in the ideological realm, may have not been clear to all Puerto Ricans.<sup>389</sup> Education, including coeducation, entailed gender-specific curricula and practices. Poly's gendered division of labor, for example, assigned boys to "quarry rock, run it through the crusher, mix cement, and fill the forms ... [and] do all the carpentry work and cultivate the farms," developing skills that facilitated entrance into occupations such as engineering, construction management, and agriculture.<sup>390</sup> Girls, however, cooked and served "all the meals for themselves and the boys" in addition to ironing, washing, and sewing. Poly encouraged them to become "home makers able to prepare wholesome food,

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<sup>388</sup> Additionally, the missionary press regularly carried announcements heralding accomplishments of mainland women in the masculine public sphere of formal politics—a sphere that mainland women were then fighting to enter. It publicized, for example, the 1909 campaign for U.S. Congress of William Jennings Bryan's daughter Ruth Bryan Leavitt, who lived in Colorado, where women had the right to vote. "Información General: Una mujer electa como diputado," *LVE*, 27 Nov. 1909, 223.

<sup>389</sup> Chapter Five deals with racial limits on Protestants' ideology of equality.

<sup>390</sup> Harris, *The Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico: The Only School of its Kind*, n.d., n.p.

practice economy and to maintain cleanliness in all things,” developing skills for the domestic sphere, skills they would have learned at home, though not the modern American variants.<sup>391</sup> Additionally, school regulations more closely controlled female than male behavior, such as not permitting girls to go out unless accompanied by “some responsible person.”<sup>392</sup> Yet males and females shared the same academic curriculum, both groups were encouraged to partake in sports and music, and the school initiated and followed a “tradition [that] each class [was] represented on the [student] Council by its president and one other class officer of the opposite sex.”<sup>393</sup> In the aggregate, these varied practices functioned as contradictory signifiers. This combination of quasi-egalitarianism and gender-prescribed behaviors produced contradictions even for missionaries. In her diary, for example, Eunice White Harris wrote in 1907 that it took her “an hour to buy groceries,” because the store and entryway were “jammed” with those curious that “a woman ... buys her own groceries.” Years later, she rejoiced that gender norms had changed in a different arena, writing, “Progress! Girls all wearing common sense shoes—teachers also!” Yet she also expressed anger that “Americans [were] spoiling Porto Rican girls by teaching them they are as good as men.”<sup>394</sup>

The missionary educational project also harbored contradictions regarding class. Despite their focus on the dignity of labor, missionaries appeared to define success as obtaining white-collar jobs and middle-class status; consummate success meant professional jobs with the power to shape public policy.

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<sup>391</sup> Harris, *PIPR: A concise historical statement*, 20.

<sup>392</sup> “Rules for admission,” *Bulletin*, Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico, 1915-1916, 13, UI-MH.

<sup>393</sup> “Student Advisory Council,” *Polygraph* I.1 (30 Oct 1937): 4, UI-MH.

<sup>394</sup> Eunice White Harris, unpublished diaries, 29 Aug. 1907; 18 April 1922; 3 April 1923, Caja 24, Gobierno Institucional, Presidente Harris, J.W., Diarios, UI-MH.

Poly again provides a lens through which to examine missionaries' valorization of professional jobs in the public policy realm. This valorization was expressed through the high profile in missionary literature, especially Puerto Rican newspapers and fundraising material, of Poly's links to influential policy-makers, especially those in education, and other colonial-state officials. Those policy-makers often used their positions to further Americanization, another sign of success to the missionaries. Additionally, many Poly grads who became professionals remained tied to and active in Protestant affairs—yet another aspect of success as defined by the missionaries.

The large percentage of Poly graduates and affiliates who had the power to shape public policy distinguished the school—about which Harris and other boosters regularly and publicly boasted. For example, Poly supporters and graduates became the first Puerto Rican commissioners of education. From this commanding position in the centralized educational system, the commissioner designed all curricula, had veto power over teaching appointments, controlled the largest patronage system, and administered the largest budget of any public agency in Puerto Rico.<sup>395</sup> Juan B. Huyke, the first Puerto Rican Commissioner of Education did not graduate from Poly, but actively supported it and participated in many Poly activities. An especially active Presbyterian, this occasional preacher, former teacher, insular legislator, and public intellectual regularly participated in Protestant activities. The Methodist mission supervisor described Huyke and Poly trustee Judge Emilio del Toro as “great friends of evangelical Christianity” when Huyke spoke at the dedication of the Trinity Church in San Juan,

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<sup>395</sup> Cabán, *Constructing a Colonial People*, 128. Additionally, the commissioner was a member of the Executive Committee, which had veto power over Puerto Rican legislation. J.J. Osuna demonstrated that objectives central to commissioners before 1930 included “Americanization, Extension of the school system, and the Teaching of English.” Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, 282.

home congregation of many colonial-state officials and mainland investors.<sup>396</sup> He had a close relationship with Poly and adopted it as a model for the public “Second Unit” (vocational) rural schools, in which many Poly graduates taught.<sup>397</sup> Like the missionaries, he promoted Puerto Rican teachers’ participation in mainland classes to strengthen their English-language skills and grasp of U.S. culture. An active intervener in the ongoing debates about language usage in the public schools, Huyke unequivocally favored English as the medium of instruction, as did many missionary schools, including Poly.<sup>398</sup> While commissioner, Huyke also served as the temporary Governor of the island and the Chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico. At a time of rising anti-Americanism, hard-liner Huyke threatened to expel students involved in anti-American activities, warning those who did not agree with his views to go into fields other than education.<sup>399</sup>

The next Puerto Rican commissioner, José Padín was also closely affiliated with the Protestants; at an annual conference for Puerto Rican church-workers he lectured and led discussion on how the church could use “the Scientific Method” to help solve problems.<sup>400</sup> Like Huyke, he further expanded the Second Unit schools, which continued to employ many Poly graduates. He even expressed interest in teaching at Poly after his tenure as commissioner.

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<sup>396</sup> Manuel Andújar, “Annual Report,” *Year Book: Official Minutes, XXI Session, Puerto Rico Mission, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1923, 24; *Year Book: Official Minutes, XXVIII Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference Of The Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1929, 7.

<sup>397</sup> Eunice White Harris, *Steps*, 134; Héctor R. Feliciano Ramos, *Historia de la Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico*, Part One (San Germán, P.R.: Centro de Publicaciones de la Universidad Interamericana, 1993), 115.

<sup>398</sup> Under Huyke, in grades one through four all subjects, except English, were taught in Spanish; grade five was transitional; and in grades six through eight, all subjects, except Spanish, were taught in English. During his term (1921-1930) the language debate, which contained both political and pedagogical elements, became increasingly acrimonious.

<sup>399</sup> *Puerto Rico School Review* (December 1921): 9, cited in Negrón, *Americanization in Puerto Rico*, 181.

<sup>400</sup> *Duodécima Conferencia Veraniega que se celebrará en el Instituto Politécnico, San Germán, Puerto Rico, Programa, Junio 27 a Julio 2 de 1932* (Ponce: PRE), 1932, “UE Conferencias Veraniegas: Registro: 1920-1932,” UI-MH.

In 1937, Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Dr. José M. Gallardo commissioner. One of six in Poly's first graduating class (1916), Gallardo had attended Harris's alma mater, Park College in Missouri, and later taught Bible Studies at Poly.<sup>401</sup> Once in office, Gallardo intensified English-language instruction and established a program of summer "English Institutes" for teachers. In the first summer, one of only two sessions took place at Poly, taught by Poly faculty. Addressing the teacher-students, Gallardo avowed that "the mastery of English [was] one of our greatest economic tools" and that "a teacher must be an upright citizen"—warning them that the Education Department would be "weeding out" those who did not comply. His staunchness regarding English mirrored that of Harris, who frequently forbade Poly students to speak any Spanish, even in private conversations.<sup>402</sup>

To oversee his system-wide English-language program, Gallardo appointed as General Supervisor of English a fellow Poly graduate, Oscar B. Irizarry. Irizarry's trajectory exemplified the opportunities conferred by a missionary-supported education. After graduating from Poly in 1917, he, too, earned a B.A. at Park College. He taught at Poly from 1922 to 1923 and 1926 to 1927, before returning to the mainland for graduate work at the Universities of Kansas and Chicago. He had been supervising foreign-language education for the Tulsa, Oklahoma public schools when appointed by Gallardo.<sup>403</sup> Ironically, given his work experience, Irizarry thanked Poly for teaching him "the dignity of manual labor" when it granted him an honorary doctorate

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<sup>401</sup> Eunice White Harris, *Steps*, 38. Five graduates of the 1918 class became public-school teachers, one joined the army, three enrolled in seminary, two became stenographers, and four enrolled in mainland colleges. Photocopy, "Cuestionario Sobre el Instituto Politécnico de San Germán," *PRE*, G1 Caja 25 Publicaciones Variadas, Folder: Relaciones Públicas, 1910-1919, UI-MH.

<sup>402</sup> Soon, however, it became clear that Puerto Rican students, especially in the earlier grades, struggled with the English-language instruction and Gallardo modified the policy, showing that even an assimilationist recognized that concrete local needs superseded metropolitan policies. This change angered officials in Washington, who called Gallardo before a U.S. Senate Sub-Committee in 1943 where Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes chastised him. Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*, Ch. XVIII.

<sup>403</sup> *Polygraph* (30 Oct 1937): 1; *Polygraph*, (1 Aug. 1938): 1-3, UI-MH.

in 1938. Cautioning that Puerto Rico's insularity and "too much inbreeding" could impede its progress, he encouraged his audience to recognize that "civilization must, of necessity, come from abroad," and to "absorb and appropriate the best in American life." He also, however, counseled Puerto Ricans to "evaluate the good things we have in our racial heritage and preserve them" and gave notice that "not everything American [was] worth copying." Though tempered with judicious criticism, Irizarry thus affirmed the missionaries' and colonial state's ideology of tutelage and asserted that, not until the "Puerto Rico of tomorrow," would islanders be "in a position to plan [their] political status."<sup>404</sup> Educated by Protestants and employed by the colonial state, Irizarry represented those many Poly grads in the liminal position of mediators at the intersections of two different world-views—in his case, a mediator with some power to institute his syncretic world-view.

Another Poly advocate, Juan José Osuna, shaped insular educational policy as the Dean of the School of Education at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) for almost twenty-five years. In addition to functioning as the primary normal school on the island, the School of Education helped formulate policies determining requirements for teaching credentials, high school diplomas, and bachelor's degrees. Like Irizarry's, Osuna's trajectory was quintessentially Americanized. He attended the Carlisle School for Indians in Pennsylvania as one of the first twenty students sent by the colonial state. He later earned a Ph.D. at Columbia University and his revised dissertation, published as *The History of Education in Puerto Rico*, became the seminal work on that subject.<sup>405</sup> Actively involved in Protestant affairs and married to a mainlander, Osuna joined the same Presbyterian congregation as his close friends the Harrises,

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<sup>404</sup> "Education for Citizenship," *Polygraph* (15 Dec. 1938): 3, UI-MH

<sup>405</sup> Osuna, *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*.



whom he had known since 1900, and became a minister.<sup>406</sup> When Harris prepared to retire, Osuna first accepted and later declined the offer to become president of Poly.<sup>407</sup>

The trajectories of Poly's graduates demonstrate the school's contribution to the making of that middle class so eagerly sought by missionaries. In 1916, for example, the first high-school graduating class included, in addition to José Gallardo, the following: Francisco Medina, who became a businessman; Antonio Alers, who became an electrical engineer; Alberto Martínez, who became a Presbyterian minister; Eugenio Quiñones, who worked in the offices of Guánica Central; and the sole girl, Maria Quintana, who became a public-school teacher.<sup>408</sup> Five graduates of the 1918 class became public-school teachers, one joined the army, three enrolled in seminary, two became stenographers, and four enrolled in mainland colleges.<sup>409</sup>

The missionary press also lauded the success of Poly graduates from the middling and lower ranks of the island's public infrastructure. The majority of Poly's graduates became teachers in the public schools. Like Rafael Bonilla, many taught in the rural schools, where need was greatest. Others, like Juan Pérez, taught manual arts.<sup>410</sup> Some attained positions in post-secondary education; at the UPR, for example, Antonio Rivera worked in the Extension Service and Gracia Milinelli taught at the Colegio del Sagrado Corazón.<sup>411</sup> Others, like Laura Luiggi,

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<sup>406</sup> Feliciano Ramos, *Historia de la Universidad Interamericana*, 129.

<sup>407</sup> The other candidate was former insular governor James Beverley. Osuna later reneged on his acceptance when, according to Harris, he realized that he would be responsible for major fund-raising. *Riding and Roping*, 139. For another interpretation of Osuna's refusal of the presidency, see Ramos Feliciano, *Historia de la Universidad Interamericana*, 126-129.

<sup>408</sup> Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 72.

<sup>409</sup> Photocopy of "Cuestionario Sobre el Instituto Politécnico de San Germán," *PRE*, G1 Caja 25 Publicaciones Variadas, Folder: Relaciones Públicas, 1910-1919, UI-MH.

<sup>410</sup> "Personales," *Polygraph* (30 Nov 1937): 3, UI-MH. Other Poly grads working in the Department of Education included Oscar E. Porrata, General Superintendent of Rural Schools; Frank Campos, General Superintendent of Athletic Activities; Carmelina Capó, in the Division of Domestic Science; Felix Casiano, director for the Cabo Rojo High School; and Israel Planell, assistant director of the Ponce High School. "Departamento de Instrucción" *Polygraph* (30 Oct 1937): 3, UI-MH.

<sup>411</sup> "Personales," *Polygraph* (June 1938): 3, UI-MH.

and Juan Bravo, became social workers in the public schools.<sup>412</sup> Several graduates returned to Poly to teach, including professor of Spanish Laura G. Irizarry and professor of Botany and Bacteriology, Ismael Vélez.<sup>413</sup> Though not in academia, many Poly students influenced or implemented public policies as social workers, public-health workers, doctors, and nurses.

Many of these Puerto Ricans continued their affiliation with Protestantism after graduation; though they undoubtedly put their own mark on the second- and third-generation iterations of Puerto Rican Protestantism, these people helped secure continuity of the missionary project—a critical success by missionary standards. This sampling shows that, despite Poly’s innovative combination of manual labor and academics and emphasis on the dignity of manual labor, most of its graduates became a part of the emergent, professional middle class constituted in response to the needs of the growing colonial state.

Ironically, the colonial state’s ability to achieve some of Americanization’s goals created problems for Poly over time. For example, after the colonial state finally opened more local high and Second Unit (vocational) schools, many Puerto Ricans, especially the poorer and rural, attended those schools instead of Poly. The school responded by adapting in ways that significantly contravened its original mission. In 1926, Poly began concentrating on college-level liberal arts courses, maintaining its high school to help defray expenses only until 1933. In late 1930, it abandoned its commitment to integrated academic and vocational education and discontinued the requirement that all students, rich and poor, perform manual labor. “Laboratory-type courses” in “Industrial Arts” replaced that requirement. In other words, instead of gaining manual skills by doing practical work that contributed to Poly’s physical infrastructure, sense of community, and ethos of egalitarianism and service, students now would

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<sup>412</sup> “Personales,” *Polygraph* (Dec 1937): 3, UI-MH.

<sup>413</sup> “Politécnico,” *Polygraph* (Oct 1937): 3, UI-MH.

move into the more abstract, individualistic, clean class-room laboratory, where they would not soil or blister their hands.

The faculty defended this radical departure from Poly's mission, asserting that "The idea of the Dignity of Labor is now well established in Porto Rico and the numerous Second Unit Schools, which devote a part (half-now) of each school day to manual labor and the learning of trades, are furthering the idea of the dignity of labor." Under the new policy, wealthier, cash-paying students would pay a small additional fee for exemption from the formerly universal work requirement. This would be advantageous, the faculty argued, because Poly could then "hire labor at less than half of what students" had been paid. This increased revenue plus that gained from reducing wages of the replacement labor would largely pay for the new teachers needed for the Industrial Arts courses. In order to continue enabling "the worthy poor to defray expenses," Poly established an Employment Bureau to "be operated on a purely commercial basis" under which "each worthy and needy student [would] work at a certain stipulated wage, depending on the student and the work to be done." This arrangement could be "terminated if work became poor, or for other reasons."<sup>414</sup>

Protestant understandings of the dignity of labor, of the non-material benefits gained by collective hard work in service to a greater good, disappeared in this shift to a two-tier hierarchy of students, a stratified wage structure, and the hiring of non-student workers at low wages. Harris's vision of a school "free from all class or caste feeling" faded from view, leaving behind a system that more accurately represented the U.S. mainstream social order. Before this categorical reconstruction, events occurred that reflected major shifts on the island, particularly the growth of anti-Americanism, with which the last chapter deals.

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<sup>414</sup> *Faculty Minutes* (Vol. 1):31-36, UI-MH.

The missionaries' endeavors in medical care and the health professions had effects as significant as Poly's, though in different arenas. Missionary hospitals changed the island's medical-care landscape and missionary nursing schools successfully introduced that emergent profession to the island. Replete with contradictions like Poly, this project was also marked by race, class, and gender, as the next chapter shows.

## **5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: “A FINER WOMANHOOD, A STRONGER MANHOOD AND A HEALTHIER NATION”: MISSIONARY MEDICAL WORK**

Americanization’s ideology of progress particularly suited public health matters, thus the goals of Protestant missionaries and the colonial state intersected in the key area of healthcare. Promoting cheap labor as one of Puerto Rico’s greatest assets, the colonial state sought reliable, productive, healthy workers to attract U.S. corporate investment. It also wanted to protect from infectious diseases its personnel, especially those at newly established naval bases.<sup>415</sup> Tuberculosis, hookworm anemia, typhoid, dysentery, malaria, venereal disease, and smallpox were endemic and exacerbated by malnutrition. Missionaries, too, sought healthy Puerto Ricans, though productivity was neither their primary nor sole motivation. Missionaries had learned from prior experience that medical care functioned as one of the most productive methods of introducing Protestantism to non-believers. Methodist superintendent Benjamin S. Haywood, for example, claimed that “there was no greater opportunity” than medical work and described a missionary medical team as “a trinity ... blessing hundreds of lives ... the very essence of

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<sup>415</sup> U.S. occupation troops, in the first six months on the island, had a “venereal ineffective rate” of 467.80 per thousand at a time when that rate for the continental United States was 84 per thousand. See Herman Goodman, “The Porto Rican Experiment,” *Social Hygiene* V, 1919, 185-186. For a description of insular health conditions in 1898 and U.S. concerns, see Espinosa, “Sanitary and American.”

practical Christianity.”<sup>416</sup> In their writings, missionaries of all denominations frequently referred to the efficacy of this method—and those without doctors or nurses did so somewhat jealously. Finally, missionaries and their families, routinely suffering from the new climate, diet, and diseases in addition to the rigors of their responsibilities, needed medical care.<sup>417</sup> Missionaries balked at using the existing hospitals, largely staffed by Catholic doctors and Catholic Sisters of Charity, whom the missionaries considered unscientific, unhygienic, and antagonistic to Protestants.<sup>418</sup>

The medical project evolved in three stages: dispensaries, hospitals, and nursing education. Though these ventures overlapped, each corresponded to a distinct phase of the missionary presence on the island and availability of resources. Dispensaries, in ways similar to the early missionary day schools, functioned as stop-gap measures initially intended to provide services only until the colonial state could. Hospital construction followed when dispensaries proved woefully inadequate for meeting local needs. The four existing hospitals in San Juan included one military, two small, expensive, private hospitals, and the lone, seventy-bed public hospital that consisted of “a group of shacks” where “not even the ordinary principles of cleanliness [were] observed, let alone surgical cleanliness.”<sup>419</sup> Nursing-education work grew from needs to staff the hospitals and the initial failures of the colonial state’s program for nursing education. Hospitals and nursing schools represented an important institutionalization of the

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<sup>416</sup> Benjamin S. Haywood, “The Medical Work at Ponce,” *Year Book: Superintendent’s Annual Report and Official Minutes: Tenth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1911, 56.

<sup>417</sup> Ill health of missionaries or their family members forced a high percentage of missionaries to return to the mainland before completing their three-year commitment and several died from those ailments.

<sup>418</sup> An extended and acrimonious political battle occurred between Protestants and the Catholic Church over the municipal hospital in Ponce.

<sup>419</sup> Dr. Grace Williams Atkins to Mrs. Pierson, 24 June 1904, letter, RG 301.8, Series V, Subseries 24 (Presbyterian Hospital, San Juan, PR), Box 16, PHS.

missionary project. In all these stages, this chapter argues, Puerto Ricans' needs, demands, actions, and beliefs shaped missionary medical efforts.

Pointing out how the medical project intersected with that of the colonial state, this chapter provides concrete examples of how Americanizing unfolded on the ground. It examines the missionary medical venture's goals, practices, accomplishments, and failures, and Puerto Ricans' responses to them. Drawing on three case studies, it argues that local actors, ideologies, practices, and material conditions significantly influenced those dynamics and outcomes and, in some instances, exposed inconsistencies within the missionary project. These cases reflected the ambiguities and contradictions innate to a venture as complex as "civilizing" and relations as dynamic as "imperial." In the aggregate, these cases elucidate particularly well the contradictions between missionaries' professed universalism and inclusiveness and the (racial, national, gendered, class) exclusions and hierarchies intrinsic to Americanization. These cases also provide examples of unintended consequences produced by the missionary project, such as Puerto Ricans' claims-making.

All three cases involved conflict. In the first, conflict arose between a missionary doctor and the local Board of Health, showing how the missionary project and modernization threatened existing Puerto Rican political and professional practices. The second entailed conflict between a missionary-identified Puerto Rican nurse and the local political and medical elite over the constitution of nursing as a profession within which nurses could wield power. Like the first case, this represented a challenge to established professional privileges, but also contained a significant gendered component. The third case involved conflict between Puerto Ricans and missionaries over a Protestant hospital's racist admission policy. In the second and third cases, I

argue that Puerto Ricans appropriated liberal Americanization ideology to make claims against the local political machine and the missionary establishment, respectively.

These cases also demonstrate the need for carefully historicizing Americanization, for not only mainland goals and approaches but also local actors and conditions shaped missionary policies. And those local actors and conditions were undergoing radical, precipitous changes.

## 5.1 PHASE ONE: DISPENSARIES

Arguing the primacy of meeting a person's "fundamental necessities" before mastering "the soul for a pure Christian life," Rev. Dr. Milton Greene, appealed, in 1901, to the Presbyterian Woman's Board of Home Missions (W.B.H.M.) to send a medical missionary to alleviate the suffering of the poor.<sup>420</sup> Almost immediately the mainland board sent Dr. Grace W. Atkins. This prompt response reflected not only the missionaries' intense enthusiasm in the earliest period of their intervention in Puerto Rico, but also their belief that "the highest development whether of man or nation" depended on the "health of body and of spirit."<sup>421</sup>

In the first phase of missionary medical work, most denominations opened dispensaries to provide the most rudimentary healthcare. Some Puerto Ricans, including Dr. Manuel Guzmán Rodríguez, columnist for *Puerto Rico Evangélico*, joined missionary doctors holding clinics in churches, missionaries' houses, rented rooms, or at sugar centrals.<sup>422</sup> Missionaries generally

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<sup>420</sup> Celia Guzmán, "Sección de Historia: "Escuela de Enfermeras del Hospital Presbiteriano," *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* 24.2 (June 1950): 1.

<sup>421</sup> *The Presbyterian Hospital, San Juan, Porto Rico* (NYC: WBHM-PCUSA., 1919), n.p., RG 305, Box 29, Folder 51, PHS.

<sup>422</sup> Dr. Manuel Guzman Rodríguez, author of the columns "El Hogar y la Niñez" and "La Higiene y la Moral en el Hogar" in Protestant newspapers, opened a medical dispensary in Mayagüez. Typical of missionaries' formal and



offered medical services for free, but—out of necessity, they explained—asked Puerto Ricans to cover the cost of medicines. Missionaries accepted payment in many forms, including fruits, chickens, eggs, etc., but treated all seeking care—regardless of ability to pay, religion, or race. Due to the scarcity of doctors, dispensaries generally operated on a part-time basis, with the few doctors traveling a regional circuit.<sup>423</sup>

Established as early as 1899 and soon extending throughout the island, missionary dispensaries were quickly inundated by poorer Puerto Ricans. In 1909, Dr. C.E. Ruth treated approximately 650 patients a month in dispensaries in the Ponce region. In 1915, a Congregationalist dispensary treated 4,893 people between January and May. Such numbers demonstrated the tremendous demand for healthcare and corroborated missionaries' belief that medical work was a superb tool for reaching people. Speaking in 1915, Congregationalist Rev. C.J. Ryder noted that, of the approximately "10,000 visits to the clinics in our churches, more than half ... have never before been in contact with the mission."<sup>424</sup> Missionaries provided clinic attendees not only medical care, but also sermons, prayers, and religious pamphlets. In the San Juan dispensary, Dr. Grace Atkins gave "each new patient ... a card with [her] name and office hours on one side and an invitation to the church services and a Scripture verse." Atkins remarked that she "quite often [had] the pleasure of seeing [her] patients among the congregation."<sup>425</sup>

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informal links with U.S. businesses on the island as described in Chapter Three, some U.S.-owned sugar centrals allowed missionaries to hold clinics on the centrals or allowed the central's doctor to work at Protestant dispensaries in other locations.

423 For example, Disciples of Christ missionaries Dr. Alton and his wife provided medical services in the western part of the island for five years before settling in an orphanage in Bayamón; Vargas, *Los Discípulos de Cristo*, 47.

<sup>424</sup> Supt. Benj. S. Haywood, "Mission Field Notes," *EDC*, 15 Dec. 1909, 18; Rev. Ryder, quoted in Dr. John A. Smith and F.E. Murdock, *Fifty Years of Medical Missions by Ryder Memorial Hospital* (1967), 5; *ibid.*

<sup>425</sup> Dr. Grace Williams Atkins to Y.P.S.C.E., St. Paul & Minneapolis Presbyteries, 1 May 1901, letter, RG 301.8 Series V Subseries 24 Box 16 Folder 34, PHS.

The Catholic Church's defensive response to dispensaries also attested to the medical project's appeal. A 1910 article in the United Brethren newspaper, for example, discussed recent changes in the outskirts of Juana Díaz. Noting that "the Roman church" had previously limited its activities to towns and showed little concern for *campesinos*, the author remarked that, in the barrio of Coto Laurel, the church had recently hung a sign advertising the "Catholic Social Action-Dispensary," newly established in reaction to the opening of a nearby Protestant dispensary eight months earlier.<sup>426</sup>

Missionary dispensaries, however, proved inadequate for several reasons. Generally operating only one or two days a week, they could not substantively meet Puerto Ricans' health-care needs. In 1901, Dr. Grace Atkins remarked that the "work increases day by day as the news of the American doctor, who treats people and gives medicines for little or nothing, spread."<sup>427</sup> She treated 6,000 people at the San Juan dispensary that year, in addition to making 850 home visits to those too ill to travel.<sup>428</sup> Moreover, the small, ill-equipped missionary dispensaries were unsuitable for surgery and post-surgical recovery. These limitations pushed the larger, more financially secure denominations into the second phase of the medical work: establishing hospitals.

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<sup>426</sup> "Como las Cosas se Cambian," *ETE*, 1 July 1910, 2.

<sup>427</sup> Dr. Grace Williams Atkins to Y.P.S.C.E., St. Paul & Minneapolis Presbyteries, 1 May 1901, letter, RG 301.8 Series V Subseries 24 Box 16 Folder 34, PHS.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*

## 5.2 PHASE TWO: HOSPITALS

As early as 1904, Presbyterians founded Puerto Rico's first Protestant hospital, the Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan. Other missionary hospitals soon followed, including the small Presbyterian Rye Hospital in Mayagüez in 1904; the Episcopalian St. Luke's Hospital in Ponce in 1907; and the Congregationalist Ryder Memorial Hospital in Humacao in 1914.<sup>429</sup> Missionary doctors and nurses and a few Puerto Rican doctors initially staffed these hospitals. Except in the cities where they were built, these hospitals did not replace missionary dispensaries; instead, they complemented dispensaries, from which serious cases were referred to the hospitals.

Dr. Grace Atkins was largely responsible for opening the Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan. Examining this undertaking reveals ways that the missionary medical project converged with and diverged from the larger Americanization project and provides an example of a clash between some Puerto Ricans and the hospital project.

Appalled by local conditions, Atkins had proposed building a hospital and nursing school in early 1902. Such a hospital in San Juan, she argued, “would be constantly before the public—which will aid its self support and also call attention to the very practical side of our work—we do what we preach.”<sup>430</sup> A dispute soon arose that instead put Atkins herself “before the public.” In March 1902, the San Juan Board of Health notified Atkins that she was breaking the law by dispensing her own medicines at her dispensary. Enacted in 1868, the law required that doctors use pharmacists to dispense medications. Atkins refused to comply with such “blackmailing,”

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<sup>429</sup> Named after the New York church that supported it, the Rye Hospital closed after the 1918 earthquake.

<sup>430</sup> Dr. Grace Williams Atkins to Dr. George F. McAfee, 9 March 1902, letter, RG 301.8 Series V Subseries 24 “Presbyterian Hospital, San Juan, PR,” Box 16, PHS.

arguing that many of her patients could not afford to pay anything for medications, never mind a higher price due to the pharmacists' unnecessary, additional fee. She appealed to the colonial state and met with Governor Hunt, to whom she argued that U.S. laws allowed physicians to dispense their own medicines.<sup>431</sup>

Atkins's challenge reflected fundamental elements of missionary ideology: the ethic of service, the dynamic of change, and a particular critique of politics. The ethic of service called for a distribution of health care with the greater good for the majority, not individual profit, as a goal. The additional cost resulting from the druggists' gratuitous intervention created an undue burden for those who could least afford it, the poorest Puerto Ricans who attended Atkins's dispensary or, had Atkins deferred, for the already strained missionary budget. Missionaries did not object to profit per se, as evident in Atkins's plan for funding the hospital's operating costs, described below.<sup>432</sup> They did, however, object to what they saw as venal practices, particularly those they deemed characteristic of a Spanish Catholic *mentalité*, namely clientelist arrangements that favored the few over the many.

Responding to Governor Hunt's intervention, the Board of Health offered a compromise by which Atkins would be charged a fee to store her drugs at a San Juan pharmacy, from which she could freely take, on a daily basis, those she needed. Designed to assuage both parties, this arrangement would allow Atkins to continue dispensing independently and the druggist to

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<sup>431</sup> Ibid.

<sup>432</sup> Ellen T. Hicks, director of St. Luke's Hospital and Nursing School, also developed ways to use profits to benefit missionary projects. She used the profits from the sale of ether to fund a nurses' dormitory and provide them recreation and raffled a car to fund building a maternity ward (the latter created conflict with the mainland board). "Personality—Plus in Hospital Work: Six Years' Service in the Philippines and Seven Years in Porto Rico Have Won the Respect and Friendship of All Classes for Ellen T. Hicks," *SOM* (April 1925): 231; Ellen T. Hicks to John W. Wood, 21 Aug. 1922, letter; Ellen T. Hicks to Dr. Grey, 21 Aug. 1922, letter; John W. Wood to Ellen T. Hicks, 21 Aug. 1922, letter; John W. Wood to Ellen T. Hicks, 22 Sept. 1922, letter; John W. Wood to Ellen T. Hicks, 26 Sept. 1922, letter; Ellen T. Hicks to John W. Wood, 18 Oct. 1922, letter, RG 77 Box 17 Folder: "Miss Ellen T. Hicks, 1922 (July-Dec.), ETSS.

receive his customary fee. This suggestion enraged Atkins, who objected that the drug store “was the largest one in town, owned by a member of the Health Board,” the druggist would likely “help himself to what he wished,” and she would “have the privilege of paying the druggist a big fat fee for storing [the drugs],” while still, technically, breaking the law. She further objected that Puerto Rican druggists charged “exorbitant prices” and impugned their professional skills, accusing them of using “all manner of funny capsules.”<sup>433</sup>

Like their mainland Progressive counterparts, missionaries abhorred the kind of politics that produced regulations like the one under discussion and compromises of the sort offered by the Board of Health. Missionary newspapers regularly printed stories reporting mainland Progressive accomplishments and promoted similar reforms on the island. In 1909, for example, *La Voz Evangélica* noted that, despite the election of a Tammany candidate in New York City, the majority of newly elected officials were reformers who would control New York City’s purse-strings and “correct the many abuses that had existed for many years.”<sup>434</sup> Atkins clearly considered the dispensing law an abuse of the Tammany sort, i.e., corrupt and inefficient. Inspired by the “good government” Progressive spirit, she refused to accept the compromise and appealed to the (continental, U.S.-appointed) attorney-general for a formal ruling.

Atkins’s appeal embodied the missionary reform project: unlike others who had submitted to this reliquary of the Spanish past, this “modern” citizen-missionary protested its unfairness, finally seeking redress in the new colonial state’s legal system. It also reflected—as did the governor’s intervention—the missionaries’ ready access to the colonial state, particularly

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<sup>433</sup> Grace Williams Atkins, Article, May 1902, RG 301.8, Series V Subseries 24 Box 16, Folder 34, PHS; Grace Williams Atkins to Dr. George F. McAfee, 9 March 1902, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>434</sup> “Información General: Triunfó el partido reformista en New York,” *LVE*, 4 Dec. 1909, 233. Another example: in 1913, when a pro-United States Puerto Rican was mayor of San Juan, a Methodist minister referred to the city government as “honest and intelligent” and lacking “Tammany Hall cliques.” Manuel Andújar, “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” *Year Book: Official Minutes and Superintendent’s Annual Report: Twelfth Session of the Porto Rico Mission and of the Puerto Rico Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1913, 31.

in the earlier years. The attorney general finally ruled in favor of Atkins—further confirmation that Americanization entailed sweeping aside practices connected with the “backward” Spanish colonial regime. This victory did, indeed, contribute to a greater good, for the ruling benefited all non-profit institutions doing medical work on the island, including programs in prisons and schools.

Though the outcome favored Atkins, we should not infer from it that the colonial state and the missionaries moved in perfect harmony here. Atkins adamantly refused to accept—even temporarily, while awaiting the legal decision—the governor-brokered compromise. This meant that she could not practice. Fearing a larger fracas or lawsuit, the W.B.H.M. ordered Atkins to return to the mainland until the court handed down the decision. This suggested that Atkins’s choices created tensions within the missionary bureaucracy and between the missionaries and the colonial state—demonstrating the sometimes conflictual relations between the Americanizing projects of the missionaries and the colonial state.<sup>435</sup> It also showed that local actors, such as Puerto Rican medical professionals, could influence the functioning of missionary projects; for example, the Board of Health’s objection to Atkins’s autonomous dispensing of medicines led to the temporary suspension of her practice.

Atkins’s originally unplanned sojourn on the mainland also illustrates differences between the colonial-state and missionary projects, setting into relief contrasts between methods for raising funds and access to funding resources. Protestant women on both the island and the mainland financed the hospital through a predominantly grass-roots effort. This radically differed from Americanizing ventures initiated by the colonial state and U.S. investors. Interestingly, missionaries wanted Puerto Ricans to recognize this difference. Missionary

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<sup>435</sup> Grace Williams Atkins, Article, May 1902, RG 301.8, Series V Subseries 24 Box 16, Folder 34, PHS.

Elizabeth Reed, writing from the mainland where she had attended the annual meeting of the United Brethren and addressed local congregations to solicit funds for work in Coto Laurel and Juana Díaz, advised Puerto Ricans that they should not believe that “the women who contribute to support the work in Puerto Rico ... are rich people; on the contrary, most of them have only what they earn in their daily work, but are guided by the principle that it is ‘more blessed to give than to receive.’”<sup>436</sup> In other words, Reed wanted Puerto Ricans to know that mainlanders had sacrificed to contribute to the project.

Atkins undertook an arduous, labor-intensive, and geographically extensive speaking tour, addressing local and national Presbyterian women’s organizations to raise the remaining funds needed to build a hospital. For those whom she could not personally address, Atkins composed written appeals. In a pamphlet targeted to mainland church youth, for example, Atkins described in graphic detail the problems of using chloroform in the dreadfully small dispensary and her shame at sending a patient home to recover “in the worst old shack” of the many bad ones she had seen. Illustrating the far-reaching nature of missionary fundraising, Atkins suggested that individual youth groups pledge to raise five to ten dollars each to meet a joint goal of eight-thousand dollars—which required a minimum of eight-hundred groups.<sup>437</sup> In the process, the missionary project shaped not only Puerto Ricans, but also mainland Protestants by giving them a role in the civilizing project. Missionaries not only Americanized Puerto Ricans, but also Americanized Americans, imbuing “American” with a particular meaning and constructing imperial identities.

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<sup>436</sup> Elizabeth Reed, “Una carta interesante,” *ETE*, Oct. 1908, 8.

<sup>437</sup> “Young Peoples’ Special! Hospital for San Juan, Porto Rico,” n.d., RG 301.8, Series V Subseries 24 Box 16, Folder 34, PHS. Atkins appeared to be preoccupied with the democratic nature of fundraising. In a letter to a missionary bureaucrat she complained of some donors’ demands for stencils on linens and plaques on furniture that denoted the contributors. She also lobbied the treasurer of the W.B.H.M. on behalf of nurses and hospital teachers, requesting that they be paid same salary as doctors; Grace Williams Atkins to Miss Lincoln, 21 Nov. 1903, letter, *ibid.*

Quite successful in her tour, Atkins raised the remaining funds needed to build the first U.S.-style, modern hospital on the island, which opened its doors in 1904. She had devised a way to fund most of its operational costs, presenting the W.B.H.M with a detailed plan for a seventy-bed hospital, which would subsidize its free care to the poor by attracting a smaller, paying clientele, “the high class Porto Ricans that we do not reach in other ways.” She estimated that the hospital needed to charge between \$14.00 and \$25.00 per week for three of the seventy beds in order to be self-supporting. This ratio quite markedly defined the hospital as one primarily dedicated to the poorer, not the richer. The hospital would be additionally “profitable from a spiritual standpoint,” Atkins argued, if it could “win back to Christ and His work some of our own fellow country men and women,” who could also afford to pay. Atkins thought that some fellow mainlanders also needed regeneration and planned to bring “Christ directly before each patient by prayers twice a day.”<sup>438</sup>

As at the dispensaries, prayer and Bible readings accompanied medical treatment at all the missionary hospitals, and missionaries distributed religious tracts to departing patients. This allowed Protestants to extend their reach into areas with neither chapels nor churches; missionary M. Louise Beaty reported, in 1910, that the Presbyterian Hospital’s “influence reache[d] far into the country districts through the medium of returning patients with their Spanish Testaments.”<sup>439</sup> Hospitals thus efficiently spread the missionary message.

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<sup>438</sup> Dr. Grace Williams Atkins to Mrs. Pierson, 24 June 1904, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>439</sup> Annual Meeting Report Transcript: Executive Session of Annual Meeting of W.B.H.M., May 20, 1910, RG 305-15-6, PHS.



### 5.3 STAGE THREE: NURSING SCHOOLS

Missionary hospitals sought to propagate more than faith. Missionaries envisioned hospitals as sites for both spiritual and material modernizing where science and religion worked hand-in-hand to bring (their particular notion of) progress—another example of their “practical Christianity.” According to missionary Dr. E. Raymond Hildreth, a “Christian hospital had two ends [...] ... to transform man, body and soul, using medical science to cure the body and guiding men towards Christ, the only one able to save the soul.”<sup>440</sup> Materializing this connection between science and religion required staff trained in both areas; establishing nursing schools to provide such staff became the third phase of missionary medical work.

Just emerging as a professional field in the late nineteenth century, nursing’s very birth was a modern phenomenon. Contrasting sharply with conditions prior to 1898, in which formally untrained and uncompensated Spanish-born Catholic Sisters of Charity staffed hospitals, nursing’s development in Puerto Rico was intimately linked with Americanization and the missionary project.<sup>441</sup> The colonial state, in 1902, established the island’s first nursing school (directed by a U.S. nurse) at the Hospital de Mujeres y Niños in San Juan. It failed in just four years, graduating only a few nurses. Insisting that a successful medical mission required nurses, Dr. Atkins pressed the Presbyterian mission board to open its own school. She complained that there was “just one trained nurse on the Island—a young negro woman who graduated from a hospital in Augusta, ... principally employed as a midwife.”<sup>442</sup> All three

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<sup>440</sup> Dr. E. Raymond Hildreth, “La Misión del Hospital Cristiano,” *LVE*, 10 Sept. 1914, 4.

<sup>441</sup> Spanish Sisters of Charity first arrived in Puerto Rico to aid the sick in 1868. Yamila Azize Vargas and Luis Alberto Aviles, “La mujer en las profesiones de salud: Los Hechos Desconocidos: Participación de la mujer en las profesiones de salud en Puerto Rico (1898-1930),” *Puerto Rico Health Sciences Journal* 91 (April 1990): 10.

<sup>442</sup> Dr. Grace Williams Atkins to Mrs. Pierson, 24 June 1904, letter, RG 301.8 Series V Subseries 24 (“Presbyterian Hospital, San Juan, PR”), Box 16, Folder 34, PHS. There were persistent, sharp tensions between midwives and

Protestant hospitals opened nursing schools: the Presbyterian in 1904; St. Luke's in 1916; Ryder's in 1922. In the first twenty-five years of U.S. occupation, eleven nursing schools opened: five public, three Protestant, two private, and one Catholic. By 1936, six had closed, but all three Protestant schools remained open.<sup>443</sup> The most successful, in terms of longevity, general reputation, professional accreditation, and number of graduates who passed certification examinations, were those of the Presbyterian and Episcopalian Hospitals in San Juan and Ponce, respectively.

Though staunch proponents of public education, Protestants established their own nursing schools for three reasons. First, the public school founded by the colonial state quickly failed and, as with other schools, missionaries were willing to function as a proxy in this area.<sup>444</sup> Second, missionaries had committed to training Puerto Ricans to replace mainlanders in most jobs, to “nationalize” the Protestant work force. Referring to the Ryder school, for example, missionary Dr. Ray Sheppard Wycoff reminisced that “it was a real privilege to be able to get a nurses training school started at that time, because it always seemed to me that if we were to be real missionaries, people must be trained to help themselves and not expect to have help constantly brought to them.”<sup>445</sup> This reflected missionaries’ aversion to engendering dependency and pragmatism about their limited resources. Finally—and most importantly for the missionaries—missionaries believed that “many souls [would]...be won for the Master

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nurses and between midwives and doctors, all relating to issues of professionalism, which often masked issues of exclusions of other sorts, such as class, race, and gender.

<sup>443</sup> Lydia Pérez González, *Enfermería en Puerto Rico desde los precolombinos hasta el siglo XX* (Mayagüez: UPR/RUM, 1997), 325-327.

<sup>444</sup> Several private nursing schools, including missionary ones, closed down after the public University of Puerto Rico established a nursing program.

<sup>445</sup> Quoted in Dr. John A. Smith and F.E. Murdock, *Fifty Years of Medical Missions by Ryder Memorial Hospital* (1967), 12.

through the healing that comes from hospital work.”<sup>446</sup> Nurses, therefore, needed not just scientific, but Protestant religious education.<sup>447</sup>

The strategy missionaries employed in training nurses reflected their overall approach to Puerto Ricans and paralleled the colonial state’s approach to Puerto Rico: wholesale transformation. Episcopalian Bishop Colmore’s comments on the students at Saint Luke’s Hospital School of Nursing also applied to students at the other Protestant schools. After three years’ of training, he observed, the “native girls” underwent a “veritable transformation in their entire bearing and appearance, and their outlook on life ... altogether changed.”<sup>448</sup> This transformation was wrought through a rigorous program of academic, clinical, religious, and physical training—and spreading the “Good News” to patients. Significantly, missionaries conducted classes in English. Co-curricular daily activities included morning religious services, Bible study, and physical exercise (for Presbyterian students, often a 5:00 a.m. swim in the nearby ocean). Missionaries provided students room, board, uniforms, bed linens, books, and a small stipend. Students’ lived strictly regimented and constantly supervised schedules, with prescribed times for rest, social activities, and (limited) time away from the hospital and students’ quarters.

Missionaries’ holistic approach to training and resolute scrutiny of nursing students’ activities reflected missionary concerns over “hygiene,” broadly defined. For Protestants, cleanliness and Godliness were both literally and figuratively connected, a relationship cleverly conveyed in Dr. Hildreth’s description of the Presbyterian nursing school as “a prophylactic

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<sup>446</sup> *Our Medical Missionary Work in San Juan Porto Rico*, (NYC: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1902), 11, RG 305, Box 29, Folder 48, PHS.

<sup>447</sup> Health education was a key component of nurses’ training. Some nurses went to the mainland for graduate studies; many on the island joined the mainland-based American Nurses Association—practices that fostered assimilation to U.S. culture.

<sup>448</sup> Bishop Colmore, “The Nurses’ Home at Saint Luke’s Hospital, Ponce, Porto Rico,” *SOM* (Jan. 1922): 35.

agency” from which “should go many women whose training fits them to preach the gospel of preventive medicine.”<sup>449</sup> To missionaries, cleanliness signified both sanitary practices and consecrated living. Routinized daily practices, according to missionaries, taught students modern sanitary practices and physical-culture concepts. Additionally, students’ strict adherence to middle-class Protestant views of morality and proper social behavior would inoculate students against “dishonorable” practices.<sup>450</sup> Historian Teresita Martínez-Vergne argues that, in nineteenth-century San Juan, Puerto Rican elite and middling liberals employed similar ideologies linking literal and figurative cleanliness to control Puerto Rican subalterns—another example of how some Protestant goals and ideology converged with pre-existing Puerto Rican ones.

Missionaries asked prospective students for references attesting to their moral character from “persons of influence,” preferably their ministers.<sup>451</sup> In the first fifteen years, many students at the Presbyterian nursing school had graduated from missionary primary schools—another example of the informal feeder-system of missionary schools discussed in Chapter Four. As with the religious training schools, local churches throughout the island recommended and often supported, wholly or partially, these young women. Protestants deemed only honorable, “consecrated women” (Protestant daughters of formally married parents) fit to work in a hospital, which shared with all other Protestant institutions the goal to “sanitize and moralize.”<sup>452</sup> The woman who, “with a cigarette over one ear,” asked Eunice White Harris, cofounder of

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<sup>449</sup> *Home Mission Monthly*, (n.d.), 166. RG H5: “Hildreth, E. Raymond,” PHS.

<sup>450</sup> Teresita Martínez-Vergne, *Shaping the Discourse on Space: Charity and its Wards in Nineteenth-Century San Juan, Puerto Rico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

<sup>451</sup> A representative example of an advertisement for the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing asked interested applicants to “bring a recommendation from a trustworthy person, preferably a minister who has known you for some time and is able to attest to your good conduct, speech and capacity for work” and stated that “Knowledgeable and educated young women are preferred.” “Escuela de Enfermeras del Hospital Presbiteriano,” *EDC*, 15 July 1912, 4.

<sup>452</sup> Dr. Manuel Guzmán Rodríguez, “Higiene y Moral,” *PRE*, 10 Dec. 1912, 8.

Polytechnic Institute, for a recommendation to Presbyterian's school undoubtedly left disappointed.<sup>453</sup>

With its comprehensive approach and emphasis on female self-sacrifice, purity, and civic duty, missionary nursing education differed in significant ways from other occupational training. Most obviously, missionaries constituted nursing as a woman's field. Professional nursing had been gendered as female since its inception, with Florence Nightingale as an icon for female self-sacrifice and duty to nation. Missionaries endorsed that notion of nurses, further expanding it to encompass a specifically Protestant aspect. Missionary literature is rife with the rhetoric of female "usefulness," "self-sacrifice," and the powerful influence of "Christian example." The nursing schools' regimens were designed to both model and bring into being that particular understanding of nursing—and women's work in general.

Nursing education's emphasis on female self-sacrifice, however, should not be misconstrued as endorsing female passivity.<sup>454</sup> Articles in *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* (a nursing journal founded by graduates of the Protestant nursing schools) frequently reminded nurses of their duty to contribute to Puerto Rico's "progress," meaning, among several things, to educate Puerto Ricans out of "backward" beliefs and practices concerning health and to build the connections between sound minds, sound bodies, and a sound nation. Capturing the gendered and activist nature of missionaries' understanding of the links between Protestantism, health, and society, a Congregationalist bureaucrat proposed that "the conversion of the Porto Rican to a Christian type of manhood and womanhood is fundamentally necessary for the success of the

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<sup>453</sup> Eunice White Harris, 23 Sept. 1907, unpublished diary, UI-MH.

<sup>454</sup> This particular constitution of nursing as a women's field, its concomitant ideology, and the implications thereof contrast sharply with the constitution of the needle-trades in Puerto Rico as a women's field as described in Baerga-Santini's "Exclusion and Resistance."

public health measures of the government, however scientific and however efficiently applied.”<sup>455</sup>

Nursing was constructed as a central—and quintessentially female—means to modernize not just scientifically, but civically. Citizenship, communitarianism, and public service commonly appeared as themes in literature on nursing and that produced by nurses. A catalog for the Presbyterian school, for example, stated that the school proposed, “through democratic methods,” to guide its students to function efficiently “as professional nurses, good citizens, and well integrated individuals” able to “provide Christian service that aids the improvement of Christian ideals and life in whatever institution or community” that their young women worked.<sup>456</sup>

The guest speakers at the first formal graduation ceremony of the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing in 1909, insular Governor Regis H. Post and Dr. Bailey K. Ashford of the U.S. Military Hospital in San Juan, embodied the coincidence of the goals of the missionaries with those of the new colonial state. Ashford, the self-proclaimed “Soldier of Science,” had identified the cause of and designed a treatment for uncinariasis, a type of pernicious anemia caused by hookworm infestation that affected the majority population too poor to afford shoes. He was also instrumental in establishing the Puerto Rican School of Tropical Medicine, in which Protestant nurses and doctors participated. Contrasting the new colonial regime with the preceding Spanish one, Ashford extolled the nurse-graduates for extirpating superstitions with their knowledge. He reminded the graduates that they were “educated women” with

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<sup>455</sup> Harlan Paul Douglass, *Congregational Missionary Work in Porto Rico* (NY: American Missionary Ass, 1910?).

<sup>456</sup> *Escuela de Enfermeras, Hospital Presbiteriano: Catálogo General* (Santurce, P.R., n.d.) Biblioteca, Recinto Ciencias Médicas, Colección Puertorriqueña, UPR-RP.

responsibility for accepting modern medical ideas “quite different from those antiquated ideas of twenty years ago.” They would represent, he hoped, the progress of modern medicine.<sup>457</sup>

#### **5.4 ROSA A. GONZÁLEZ AND THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF NURSING**

Two changes rooted in the missionary project reveal nurses’ important function as modernizers and their commitment to engaged citizenship: the consolidation of nursing as a profession and the expansion of the public health field. With these developments, women exerted a new kind of public power in formal politics and civil society. The case of Rosa Angélica González, the most influential activist nurse in this period, illustrates these trends. Though Gonzalez’s leadership role was clearly exceptional, her story shows how some Puerto Ricans embraced and benefited from Americanization and used opportunities it provided to gain access to the public sphere and influence colonial state policies.

The daughter of a small merchant, Rosa González was born in Lares, Congregational territory at the time and the site of a revolt for independence from Spain in 1868. She attended the Congregational day school when it opened in 1900 and, at nine years of age, converted to Protestantism. Her father died unexpectedly, with little provision for his family, leaving her family vulnerable to sliding into the lower classes. While in public secondary school, she heard that the Presbyterian Hospital needed nurses. Overcoming the resistance of her uncle, who was

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<sup>457</sup> “Literatura: La primera clase de enfermeras,” *LVE*, 23 Oct. 1909, 175. Presbyterian Hospital was later renamed the Ashford-Presbyterian Community Hospital in Bailey Ashford’s honor. Rosa González, discussed below, was in the audience as a graduating nurse.

“much opposed” to her plans because, at that time, “nursing was considered the lowest thing a woman could do,” she entered the nursing school in 1907, with assistance from local Masons.<sup>458</sup>

González graduated in 1909 and continued working at Presbyterian Hospital. The following year she became the head nurse, whose influence extended “all the way from persuading the other nurses to eat unaccustomed vegetables (for they were Puerto Rican before they were nurses, and childhood dependence on rice and beans continues) ...[to getting] their patients to do so.”<sup>459</sup> She later became the first Puerto Rican superintendent of nurses, a position previously held only by continental women. For a while González was on the payroll of the W.B.H.M., which sponsored, in 1914, her first trip abroad to study at New York City’s Presbyterian Hospital. From this time on, González regularly promoted study in the mainland and formal and informal affiliations with mainland nursing organizations. Returning to Puerto Rico a year later, she taught at the Presbyterian nursing school. In 1916, she co-founded the Association of Registered Nurses of Porto Rico (A.R.N.P.R.), the first all-women professional organization in Puerto Rico, which lobbied the insular legislature on nursing matters. The Association’s English-language name demonstrates how closely linked nursing was to Americanization.<sup>460</sup> In 1926, González was instrumental in founding the A.R.N.P.R.’s journal, *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera*, for which she regularly wrote and served as an officer and editor. In addition to strengthening nursing as a profession and developing a nurses’ code of ethics, the journal sought to “orient mothers to the care of their children, thereby contributing to the

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<sup>458</sup> Rosa A. González, *Called to Nurse*, (N.Y.C.: Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1926), n.p., H5: González, Rosa, PHS.

<sup>459</sup> Constance Hallock, *Forty-Eight Plus!* (NYC: Friendship Press, 1948), 58.

<sup>460</sup> The Association changed its name to the Asociación de Enfermeras Graduadas de Puerto Rico (A.E.G.P.R.) in 1932, in response to rising nationalism. In 1920, the A.R.N.P.R. joined the mainland American Nurses Association and González attended its 1924 conference in Detroit and the association sent representatives to a women’s temperance conference in Washington DC. The A.R.N.P.R. also affiliated with international organizations, such as the Pan American Women’s Union and the International Council of Nurses.



formation of future healthy and happy citizens.”<sup>461</sup> The Presbyterian Church materially aided these two ventures and took pride in the high percentage of its nursing school graduates among the active membership.<sup>462</sup>

González’s work history demonstrates her embrace of the missionary project and Americanization. After leaving Presbyterian, she became director of nursing at another missionary hospital, St. Luke’s in Ponce, where she re-organized their nursing program and published *Diccionario Médico para Enfermeras*. In a biographical pamphlet published by the W.B.H.M., she wrote that, realizing “that Christian influence cannot be disassociated from the profession of nursing, ... my one ambition is to train girls that, like the apostles, may go out and preach the gospel of service to humanity as taught by the Presbyterian Hospital of San Juan, Porto Rico.”<sup>463</sup> In 1925, after the American Red Cross turned over its services to the insular Department of Sanitation, she became director of a new dispensary in the poor barrio of Puerta de Tierra, where she supervised visiting nurses.<sup>464</sup> This followed a collaboration between the A.R.N.P.R. and the Red Cross on a visiting-nurse project four years earlier and a visit by González to Chicago to observe public health programs.<sup>465</sup>

The job that González accepted in 1927 brought her great notoriety, had important consequences for nursing in Puerto Rico, and exemplified increased activity in the public sphere of women who had embraced Americanization and the missionary project. She had been asked

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<sup>461</sup> Celia Guzmán, “Sección de Historia: “Escuela de Enfermeras del Hospital Presbiteriano,” *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* (June 1950): 6-7.

<sup>462</sup> The San Juan Presbyterian church provided office space, furniture, and helped with publication. “Porto Rico,” *Forty-Fifth Annual Report, Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1924, 35.

<sup>463</sup> Rosa A. González, *Called to Nurse*, n.p., H5: González, Rosa, PHS. González remained active in the Presbyterian Church and an active advocate for professional nurses for her entire life.

<sup>464</sup> During World War II, González directed the American Red Cross Nurses on the island.

<sup>465</sup> Marianita Ortiz, “Conozca nuestras educadoras,” *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* (March 1962): 4-5; 10; Celia Guzmán, “Sección de Historia: “Escuela de Enfermeras del Hospital Presbiteriano,” *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* (June 1950): 3-14, 23-24; Edith W. Hildreth, *The Magic Touch of a Nurse*, H5: Rosa González, PHS.

by the municipality of San Juan to reorganize the nursing school at its public hospital in Santurce. She took the job and, just ten months later, was fired after refusing to resign. The mayor proceeded with formal administrative charges against González, charging her with having signed diplomas for students who had not completed their clinical training requirement. The dispute continued in the newspapers and the court, where González had appealed her firing. She lost that appeal on the technicality that, as a municipal employee, she did not have the right to sue the city.

In response to her dismissal, and with the support of the A.R.N.P.R., González wrote and published *Los hechos desconocidos*, a daring, stinging critique of the corruption, abuses, and decidedly unhealthy practices rampant in the municipal hospital. *Los hechos desconocidos*, in authentic muck-raking style, detailed petty larcenies, inefficiencies, wastefulness, favoritism, poor food, inadequate training, and various dangers integral to the hospital's operations. She also exposed the political patronage that nurtured such a system. It appears that the charges against González were, indeed, specious, a pretext for dismissing her because she refused to go along with the local patronage system that entitled the political party in power (*Republicano Puro*) to a specific number of positions in the hospital, including nursing jobs. She had also refused to "volunteer" the expected contribution to that party. It did not help that González was an *aliancista* and *republicanos puros* controlled the mayor's office.<sup>466</sup> In *Los hechos desconocidos*, González's arguments, language of morality, and social scientific approach resonated with missionary critiques of traditional Puerto Rican politics.

Though González lost her job and, unlike Dr. Atkins, found no redress in the court system, her reputation (and that of the A.R.N.P.R.) was strengthened by *Los hechos*

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<sup>466</sup> The first formal accusations against González were made by a local committee of the Republican Party. Rosa A. González, *Los hechos desconocidos* (San Juan, P.R.: Impresa Venezuela, 1929), 66-68.

*desconocidos*. More importantly, González's exposé resulted in a significant gain for the nursing profession: it convinced Interim Governor James R. Beverly to sign *Ley 77* in May 1930.<sup>467</sup> This law, which several times the local Medical Board had successfully pressured the governor not to sign, established a Nurses Examining Board responsible for setting and enforcing standards of nursing education and practice.<sup>468</sup> It not only formally recognized nursing's importance to public health and its professionalism, but also stipulated that the board include nurses as active members—a proposal promoted by the A.R.N.P.R. for several years. The board was to be composed of the president of the Board of Medical Examiners (a doctor) and two nurses chosen by the governor from a list submitted by the nurses' association—quite an accomplishment for the first women's professional organization. Previously, an exclusively male board of doctors had regulated nursing matters.

The nurses' association, under González's leadership, had been fighting for such legislation since 1917.<sup>469</sup> González had concluded *Los hechos desconocidos* with a detailed critique of the existing regulations and an equally detailed proposal for a new nursing board like that provided by *Ley 77*. In an impassioned plea to adopt this reform, she contrasted regulations treating plumbers, accountants, and engineers with those for nurses, whose "profession [was] intimately related with human beings' health." Similarly to Atkins's approach that assumed the

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<sup>467</sup> Rosa A. González, "Sección de historia: Nuestros socios de honor," *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* (Sept. 1949): 19-20.

<sup>468</sup> Olive Shale, "Nursing and Legislation in Porto Rico," Oct 1930, RG 301.8 Series V Subseries 24 (Presbyterian Hospital, San Juan, PR) Box 17, PHS.

<sup>469</sup> The A.R.N.P.R. had managed to get both houses of the insular legislature to approve a similar bill in 1929, but Gov. Horace Towner vetoed, succumbing to pressure from the very Board of Medical Examiners whose President became head of the new Nurses Examining Board; Pérez González, *Enfermería en Puerto Rico*, 121; 242; Appendix E; Celia Guzmán, "Sección de Historia: "Escuela de Enfermeras del Hospital Presbiteriano," *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* (June 1950): 5; Comisión de Historia, Colegio Profesionales Enfermería de Puerto Rico, *Historia de la Enfermería en Puerto Rico: Sociedad Indígena hasta 1930*. Vol. 1 (San Juan, PR: Borikén Libros, Inc., 2002).

power of U.S. example, she argued that all forty-eight states of the United States—and even Hawaii and the Philippines—included nurses on regulatory boards.<sup>470</sup>

González opened *Los hechos desconocidos* in a way that likewise displayed her astute political sense—she had, after all, been fighting for this particular reform for thirteen years. Employing a keen rhetorical strategy, she dedicated the book to the governor, legislature, the Medical Association of Puerto Rico, the A.R.N.P.R., the Puerto Rican Association of Women Suffragists, the press, and all organizations concerned with social welfare and civic progress. She implored all such people to work together to create a system of government that “would impede the implacable, cruel, vile *monster* of *vulgar politics*” [emphasis original] from destroying the beneficent Municipal Office of Public Welfare.<sup>471</sup> In *Los hechos desconocidos*, González thus skillfully re-presented the assumptions, goals, methods, arguments, and language of the missionary project. And she achieved her immediate goal: *Ley 77*, which consolidated nursing as a respectable profession and institutionalized organized nursing’s political power. Nurses’ victory in achieving passage of *Ley 77* showed that “modern” women could effectively operate in the formal public sphere while also working in a female field.<sup>472</sup>

Public health was also a key element of missionary nursing education. The Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing incorporated visiting-nurse training into its core nursing program,

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<sup>470</sup> *Los hechos desconocidos*, 101-102.

<sup>471</sup> *Los hechos desconocidos*, 5. Missionaries must have been especially pleased by the language González used in the last lines of her dedication, where she said that her only motivation in writing was to invite the “pueblo puertorriqueño” to join her “in this work of extermination [of the *monster*] which necessarily would require *conversion in a work of redemption*” [emphasis mine]. *Los hechos desconocidos*, 5. González supported suffrage for literate women.

<sup>472</sup> In an article arguing that *Los hechos desconocidos* represented the culmination of a decade of women’s increased importance in health professions and the importance of women’s access to structures of power, Yamila Azize Vargas and Luis Alberto Aviles note that *Los hechos desconocidos* was published the year that literate women won the right to vote. “La mujer en las profesiones de salud: Los Hechos Desconocidos: Participación de la mujer en las profesiones de salud en Puerto Rico (1898-1930),” *Puerto Rico Health Sciences Journal* 91 (April 1990): 10.

turning out the first visiting nurses on the island in 1913.<sup>473</sup> Like the missionaries, these women moved beyond institutions, seeing and seeking patients in their homes, including those in isolated rural areas and urban barrios. Visiting nurses especially focused on pre-natal, post-partum, and early childhood health matters.

Missionary nursing schools trained their students to teach others how to improve and maintain their (and their families') health, which in turn, would increase workers' productivity, one of the colonial state's goals. Missionary Jennie Ordway, director of the Presbyterian nursing school, characterized hospital work as "not only ... life-saving in many cases," but also as giving "new hope for efficiency in daily life to individuals, and both directly and indirectly to whole families."<sup>474</sup> Nurses' roles in effecting this efficiency included teaching about personal and social hygiene, modern methods of child-rearing, proper diet, modern medicines, and the evils of alcohol and prostitution. Nurses worked in hospitals, public clinics, sugar centrals, patients' homes, and schools.

Graduates of Protestant nursing schools consistently played an important role in public health. This reflected not only the importance of public health as a nursing specialty, but the relatively large number of nurses trained in missionary institutions. For example, of the sixty-eight surviving nurses still living in Puerto Rico who had graduated from Presbyterian Hospital as of 1922, forty-two were employed: thirteen held positions in hospitals; nineteen in the public health sector; ten in private practice; the remaining twenty-six were married, "at home."<sup>475</sup> The colonial state, in 1923, institutionalized Presbyterian's visiting nurse program, placing it within

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<sup>473</sup> Pérez González, *Enfermería en Puerto Rico*, 72.

<sup>474</sup> Thirty-Fourth Annual Report, WBHM of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1913, 50, RG 305-15-9, PHS.

<sup>475</sup> Jennie Ordway to Mabel M. Sheibley, 24 Nov. 1922. letter, RG 301.8, Series V, Subseries 24, Box 17, Folder 4, PHS.

the Bureau of Social Welfare.<sup>476</sup> Missionary settlement houses frequently held public-health classes and sponsored clinics. Some, like the Marina Neighborhood House, had a nurse on staff (usually a Presbyterian graduate), who worked on-site and in the neighborhood.

Public health education became even more important in the 1920s through the 1940s, when social conditions were dire and the U.S. government and the Rockefeller Foundation, after mounting surveys, implemented new programs emphasizing the importance of public-health nurses. The nurses' association, which in 1932 had formally changed its English-language name to the Asociación de Enfermeras Graduadas de Puerto Rico (A.E.G.P.R.), became instrumental in obtaining scholarships from the Rockefeller Foundation for nurses specializing in public health. Thus one institution that had emerged from a particular tool of Americanization, the A.E.G.P.R., drew on the resources of another tool of Americanization, the Rockefeller Foundation, to help spread the new gospel of public health among a constituency debilitated by other tools of Americanization, such as the industrialization of agriculture.<sup>477</sup>

Missionaries considered Protestant nursing schools among their greatest accomplishments. The schools educated Puerto Rican women in both religion and science, the sacred and the corporal, by means of "medical science inspired by Christian love."<sup>478</sup> Missionary nursing schools played a central role in developing an embryonic field that engendered new jobs and political voice for women; they thus fulfilled the promise of modernization. Nursing schools advanced oral and written English-language skills and scientific training; they thus fulfilled a promise of Americanization. Such skills provided entrance into (or security within, as with Rosa González) Puerto Rico's small, growing middle class; nursing thus

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<sup>476</sup> Azize Vargas and Aviles, "La mujer en las profesiones de salud," 11.

<sup>477</sup> "Notas Editoriales," Rosa González, *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* (March 1935): 3.

<sup>478</sup> "Labor Evangélica en la Isla," *PRE*, 10 Oct. 1914, 14.

fulfilled the promise of social uplift. Missionary nursing schools and hospitals provided essential health-care services to poorer Puerto Ricans who sought such care. Such attention to all Puerto Ricans' physical needs, the universalization of access to healthcare, fulfilled Americanization's promise of change.

## **5.5 THE LIMITS OF UNIVERSAL UPLIFT:**

### **“WE MUST HAVE THE WHITE GIRL.”**

Despite its practice of providing healthcare to all and its rhetoric of universal equality, Protestant nursing education did not offer equal opportunity to all. On the simplest level, Puerto Ricans who had converted to Protestantism and actively participated in their churches enjoyed greater access to nursing education. A situation that arose in 1922, however, revealed more significant limits on such access and contradictions and ambiguities of the overall missionary project. It also revealed the resourcefulness and initiative of Puerto Ricans seeking to take advantage of Americanization.

In 1922, J.L. Santiago Cabrera, Clerk of the Puerto Rican Presbytery in Mayagüez, sent a letter to Edna Voss, Superintendent of Field Work and Secretary of the Division of Schools and Hospitals of the W.B.H.M. in New York City. He informed Voss that the local Presbytery was disturbed that “colored girls” were not being admitted to the Presbyterian Hospital Nursing School in San Juan. At the initiative of a Rev. Rivera, it had resolved to change that. Proclaiming that “great racial differences” didn’t exist on the island and that “the Gospel and Evangelical Institutions ... [were] meant for all races and all peoples,” the resolution expressed concern that the school’s “racial distinction” was negatively affecting the church’s work. The

Presbytery asked the hospital's local board to nullify the policy and the metropolitan W.B.H.M. to grant the right of admittance to "colored girls who feel called to the profession of nursing." Santiago Cabrera also apprised Voss "that some of the members of the Presbytery [were] not of Mr. Rivera's opinion."<sup>479</sup>

This resolution set off a series of exchanges between Voss and missionary Jennie Ordway, long-time superintendent of the nursing school and subordinate to the W.B.H.M. Ordway informed Voss that she had discussed the matter with her staff, who all agreed that allowing "colored nurses" was "absolutely impossible to the best interests of the hospital." She further stated that Santiago Cabrera had told her that it was "the colored element of the ministers who ... [were] so persistent with this matter." Ordway and Rosa González, working at Presbyterian at the time, met with three ministers and as "tactfully as possible" explained why the policy should not be changed. Apparently satisfied, the ministers nonetheless requested that Ordway and González attend the Presbytery meeting in Mayagüez to explain their reasoning to all the ministers, which they did.<sup>480</sup>

Later describing the meeting to Voss, Ordway justified the racially exclusive policy on three grounds. First, the hospital then had "the confidence of not only the poorest but the best people. But the best people of the island will not send their girls to a training school where they woul[d] be compelled to mingle with and associate with negro girls." Ordway complained that it was "very hard to get the right type of girls now, [and] should colored girls be admitted, it would be impossible."

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<sup>479</sup> J.L. Santiago Cabrera to Edna Voss, 14 March 1920, letter, RG 301.8, Series V, Subseries 24, Box 17, Folder 4, PHS.

<sup>480</sup> Jennie Ordway to Edna Voss, 29 March 1922, letter, *ibid.*



Second, she argued, “much as we may deplore this,” admitting the colored girls would be unfair to them, for society had “branded them as an inferior or backward race” and those few “who could qualify would be treated as an inferior and servant.” Ordway questioned the fairness of accepting such a student’s three years of service, “only to send her out in the end to a world that will not recognize her ability.” She used the example of the school’s first graduate to make her case. Ordway described her as a “[c]olored girl, bright and well trained in nursing,” who had private cases, but was “never thought of in cases of emergency or as a skilled nurse”; instead, she was “treated more as a mid-wife”—an occupation considered socially and professionally inferior to nursing.

Ordway also based her final argument on existing racism: the Red Cross and Public Health Department did not employ colored girls, which meant that those women would be excluded from “offices requiring executive ability.” Ordway questioned whether the hospital should jeopardize its existing power (exercised through the Association of Registered Nurses of Porto Rico) over the nursing profession by training women who, upon graduation, would “have no say in [its] affairs.”

Fearful that Afro-Puerto Ricans’ visible presence in the profession would weaken nurses’ political power, Ordway declared that if the hospital wanted “to do the greatest service it must train girls for the BEST [emphasis original] and greatest positions. Places where their influence and ability ... [would] bring about the greatest good. Places where their executive ability ... [would] be recognized and complied with, not ignored. And in order to fill such places, in Porto Rico, at least, we must have the white girl.”

These arguments, according to Ordway, “when thoroughly explained to the ministers by Miss Gonzalez, were gladly accepted as most just.”<sup>481</sup> Voss, in turn, officially notified Santiago Cabrera of the ministers’ acquiescence and their further agreement with “the necessity of making first year high school work the minimum requirement.” Asked whether he still wanted the matter presented to the Woman’s Board, Santiago Cabrera replied yes.<sup>482</sup> The W.B.H.M. met a month later and voted to uphold the racially exclusive policy, softening its refusal by acknowledging “the need which colored girls have for some form of nurses training” and making a vague promise to provide such training in the future.<sup>483</sup>

The Woman’s Board reneged on that promise and, less than a decade later in 1930, another minister challenged the admission policy. Rev. Florencio Sáenz informed the W.B.H.M. that “your famous hospital..., which I consider to be one of the many blessings we have received from the North,” was advertising that it would admit only white girls into the nursing program. Imploring the board to change that policy, he emphasized that his request was not a criticism, but “a suggestion from one who is interested in the spread of the Gospel in Porto Rico, and whose desire is that our institutions be considered as promoters of brotherhood and goodwill and where no discrimination of race or class be made.”<sup>484</sup>

Edna Voss asked Dr. W.R. Galbreath, the (male, continental) director of the hospital, for a copy of the announcement to which Sáenz referred and “all the arguments and refutations” Galbreath could “muster” to justify the policy.<sup>485</sup> Galbreath replied that the “pretty delicate” question of color came up “every so often,” but the hospital had avoided difficulties in the last

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<sup>481</sup> Jennie Ordway to Edna Voss, 25 April 1922, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>482</sup> Edna Voss to Santiago Cabrera, 25 April 1922 letter, *ibid.*; Edna Voss, letter to Jennie Ordway, 2 May 1922, *ibid.*

<sup>483</sup> Edna Voss to J.L. Santiago Cabrera, 16 June 1922, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>484</sup> Florencio Sáenz, to Anna M. Scott, 4 Aug 1930, letter, *ibid.* Sáenz taught at the Seminario Evangélico, founded by Protestant missionaries to train Puerto Rican ministers. He also studied at Columbia University that summer.

<sup>485</sup> Edna Voss to Dr. W.R. Galbreath, 9 Sept. 1920, letter, *ibid.*

few years by “being careful and tactful.” He reminded Voss of their joint decision to allow graduate nurses to decide “whether or not the applicants were too dark”—a policy which had been working well until Sáenz’s complaint. Sáenz had objected to the school’s application form, which explicitly stated that applicants must be white. Many students, Galbreath claimed, were “not pure white, but it [was] impossible to mix colors too deeply.” Echoing Ordway’s earlier argument, he declared that the school “must be all black or all white” and suggested eliminating the whites-only language from the application and continuing to “go ahead much as before.”<sup>486</sup>

Voss consented to Galbreath’s plan, telling him to print a new set of applications that lacked any reference to race. She advised Galbreath to then “do as you always have done—find other excuses to eliminate those applicants who seem too dark.”<sup>487</sup> These pretexts included insufficient education, moral character, and physical health.<sup>488</sup> Finding reasons other than color to eliminate darker students gave the school administration significant discretionary power. For example, six of twenty-three students in the entering class of 1930 had not earned high school diplomas and others had health problems. Instead of denying those candidates admittance, the school administration provided tonsillectomies and other medical treatments to those with health problems, granting them admittance along with those lacking the “required” diploma. This shows that the administration could and did selectively apply its entrance requirements.

Voss directed that Sáenz be informed that, indeed, there were “students in training with quite a little colored blood and that eliminations of applicants [were] made usually on other grounds”; that “we agree absolutely with him that to print such a statement on the application

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<sup>486</sup> W.R. Galbreath to E. Voss, 18 Sept. 1930, letter, *ibid.* The form stated: “La solicitante debe ser de raza blanca.”

<sup>487</sup> E. Voss to W.R. Galbreath, 24 Sept. 1930, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>488</sup> Advertisements for the nursing school requested that the candidate be recommended by a trustworthy person, preferably a minister, be of good moral conduct, intelligent, and, preferably, have some secondary school education. For a representative example, see *EDC*, 15 July 1912, 4.

blank is unwise”; that “we are removing this reference to color from our new blanks”; and that missionaries did “not want to make any statements which will create race antagonism in Porto Rico.”<sup>489</sup> With this maneuver, Voss professed allegiance to Protestantism’s racial egalitarianism, while (re)authorizing racist practices.

The racially exclusive admission policy prevailed in both instances, showing the power of both the missionaries and the ideology of white racial superiority. The racist policy reflected inconsistencies between missionary rhetoric and practices—but, more tellingly, it represented fundamental ambiguities and contradictions within the civilizing project itself. As discussed in Chapter Two, missionaries conflated Americanization with conversion to Protestantism and viewed Catholicism as the antithesis of Protestantism, i.e., backward-looking, feudal, and exclusive as opposed to modern, democratic, and inclusive. Regarding the nursing-school admission policy, however, the missionaries chose to not implement a democratic, inclusive hiring practice. Examining more closely the on-the-ground dynamics and larger context reveals the metropolitan and local elements at play that led to the board’s decisions.

These elements included both contradictions and congruencies. For example, in 1914, Rev. Philo Drury, one of the foremost disseminators of an inclusive, emancipatory variant of liberalism, argued in *Puerto Rico Evangélico* that a people could never be prosperous and happy while only a few enjoyed opportunities for development.<sup>490</sup> Characterizing Catholic countries as those that limited education and relegated the majority to living as mere instruments of the rich, he argued that such inequalities caused social disorders. Citing an adage (prescient of John F. Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress) that “revolution is delayed evolution,” Drury harshly criticized

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<sup>489</sup>E. Voss to A.M. Scott, 24 Sept. 1930, memo, *ibid.*; A.M. Scott to F. Sáenz, 16 Oct 1930, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>490</sup>Drury, United Brethren minister, actively promoted the consolidation of island Protestant denominations into the Unión Evangelica, represented Puerto Rico on the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, and administered *PRE*.

inequities in education, laws, and labor relations. He proclaimed that “equality of opportunity is an inalienable right belonging to all human beings” and warned that when the “lack of equality of opportunities and privileges is so evident, that a sovereign people will rise up and demand radical change, a new era will be inaugurated in which everyone will enjoy the same opportunities for knowing, working, and enjoying.” Challenging his fellow-travelers, Drury urged, “Here in Puerto Rico, those of us who are interested in the general welfare have to work to extend life’s opportunities and privileges to all the people. We will never attain happiness or fulfill our mission any other way.”<sup>491</sup>

The missionaries’ actions regarding the racist admission policy, however, contradicted this rhetoric of equality of opportunity. It is too tidy, however, to characterize the contestations over the policy as exclusively “black/white” racial dynamics or to frame the matter as a simple conflict between the “colonizer” and the “colonized.” Instead, the relations of power within which the missionaries and Puerto Ricans acted were complicated by hierarchies among Puerto Ricans in addition to those between Puerto Ricans and missionaries. Material conditions accorded certain actors greater leverage at particular times—and Americanization was modifying those conditions.

Undoubtedly, Americanization—and missionaries’ conceptions of their project—carried racist beliefs and practices that belied its proclaimed equality. Despite their subordinate positions relative to the missionaries, however, the excluded Afro-Puerto Rican women and dissident ministers made claims upon the Protestants, appropriating Protestant liberal ideology to do so. The dissident ministers used the liberal rhetoric of equality and referred to their institutions as “promoters of brotherhood and goodwill” to argue their case. They also employed

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<sup>491</sup> Philo W. Drury, “Generalizando el Bienestar,” *PRE*, 10 Jan. 1914, 2.

a local Puerto Rican ideology of racial equality (“great racial differences” didn’t exist on the island) to buttress their argument, implying that the racist policy was regressive, thus counter to Americanization’s promise of progress. The challengers thus astutely called the missionaries to task: missionaries should practice what they preach. The dissidents also exploited missionary fears that racist practices would impede evangelical work in a place populated by numerous Afro-Puerto Ricans, many of whom attended Protestant churches, schools, and social welfare institutions. This suggests that the dissidents were aware of a fundamental contradiction of the missionary project: the tension between the need to “advance the Kingdom” by appealing to the many while engaging in racist practices that benefited the few.

The protesters also employed Protestant religious ideology. The Mayagüez Presbytery’s resolution referred to “colored girls who feel *called* [emphasis mine] to the profession of nursing.” Missionaries customarily used “called” to explain their vocation to serve. For example, the W.B.H.M. titled a promotional pamphlet describing Rosa González’s conversion to Protestantism and decision to become a nurse *Called to Nurse*.<sup>492</sup> With this term, the protesters reminded missionaries that the Protestants had “a higher obligation ... than commercial”—one to the “great Medical Teacher,” “the grand Physician,” and that a call to service originated in the Kingdom of God and should not be denied in the kingdom of this world.<sup>493</sup>

The Puerto Rican ideology of racial equality proved as mythical as the missionaries’. Santiago Cabrera’s comment that “the colored element of the ministers” had initiated the complaint signaled that the Mayagüez Presbytery’s opinions divided along racial lines. His comment that “some of the members of the Presbytery [were] not of Mr. Rivera’s opinion”

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<sup>492</sup> Rosa González, *Called to Nurse*.

<sup>493</sup> Benj. S. Haywood, “Annual Report of the Superintendent,” *Year Book and Official Minutes of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Porto Rico Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1906, 26.

intimated that a whiter constituency in the Presbytery was willing to accommodate the racist policy. In this instance, imperialist ideologies of white racial superiority converged with Puerto Rican ones to Afro-Puerto Ricans' disadvantage. Instructively, a 1915 article in *Puerto Rico Evangélico* described Santiago Cabrera as an enthusiastic young man "intimately related by marriage to local distinguished families," indicating that he belonged to the local white elite.<sup>494</sup> Rosa González, chosen by Ordway to mediate, came from Lares, the mountainous homeland of the mythologized, white, Hispano-identified *jíbaro*—a place quite different from the coastal city of Mayagüez, home of many Afro-Puerto Ricans and the complaining Presbytery.<sup>495</sup>

The convergence of imperialist and local ideologies of white racial superiority in the above instance ought not obscure the critical differences between them. Galbreath's and Voss's arrangement to let Puerto Rican nurses judge whether applicants were sufficiently "white" to be admitted into the nursing school indicated the uncertainty that Puerto Rican racial categories aroused in the missionaries. Appreciating that Puerto Ricans better understood the complexity of local notions of race and the implications thereof, missionaries had ceded to the nurses a substantial discretionary power, for those nurses could more accurately discern which candidates could "pass" for "white" within the hospital. This demonstrates not only the missionaries' pragmatism, but also the power of Puerto Rican actors to shape the missionary project.

The race of Puerto Ricans and Puerto Rican notions of race had confounded missionaries from the start, due to the prickly encounter between the incongruous U.S. and Puerto Rican systems of racial classification. Missionaries generally thought in terms of the U.S. binary system of white/black and the "one-drop rule" of hypodescent—an organizing principle far too

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<sup>494</sup> "La Labor Evangélica en la Isla," *PRE*, 25 June 1915, 15.

<sup>495</sup> Interestingly, in *Los hechos desconocidos* González states that one of the (informal) verbal charges made against her by a worker at the San Juan municipal hospital was that she was racist.

crude to encompass Puerto Ricans “of all shades.” The Puerto Rican system was harder to define. In its least nuanced configuration, it comprised three categories: white, colored (mixed race), and black. This was a hierarchical grouping, based on an ideology of white racial superiority and black racial inferiority. According to sociologist Jorge Duany, “The main difference between the Puerto Rican and American models of racial stratification was not the treatment of blacks—who were accorded a subordinate status in both societies—but rather the mixed group.”<sup>496</sup> Members of this mixed group likely most confused missionaries; also likely is missionaries’ recognition of the subordinate status of those that both Puerto Ricans and mainlanders considered black.

Puerto Ricans’ attitudes towards and “performances” of race epitomized the social construction of race. The tripartite system discriminated at the broadest level; more precisely, racial identification occurred along a fluid—but hierarchical—spectrum of distinctions. Hair, bone, and skin shaped assignment to racial categories. Especially regarding the intermediate category, Puerto Ricans used many different words to distinguish between gradations of skin color, types of hair, and facial features. These functioned as markers on a pigmentocracy scale. Features identified as African consigned Puerto Ricans to a lower, darker position on the spectrum. For example, Congregationalist A.F. Beard, referring to a recent census, reported a population of 890,000 Puerto Ricans, of whom 500,000 were white, 300,000 colored, and 90,000 black. Whites, he continued, were subdivided into the 100,000 ruling-class members and 400,000 *jibaros*, and those *jibaros* combined with coloreds “of all shades, chiefly burnt sienna, and mostly straight-haired” and blacks, “Negroes, pure and simple,” to constitute the unskilled

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<sup>496</sup> For an historical overview of Puerto Ricans’ patterns of racial identification, see Jorge Duany, “Neither White nor Black: The Politics of Race and Ethnicity among Puerto Ricans on the Island and in the U.S. Mainland,” Revised version of a paper presented at the Conference on “The Meaning of Race and Blackness in the Americas: Contemporary Perspectives,” Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, February 10-12, 2000.



laboring classes.”<sup>497</sup> Another observer proposed that, over four-hundred years of Spanish domination, Puerto Ricans had reached “a nearly fixed type”: the working people were “one color, a light brown, with regular features, nose not flattened and with hair black and perfectly straight or slightly wavy. They seem to be more Indian than Negro, and with as much white blood as of the Indian and Negro combined.”<sup>498</sup>

In addition to being more numerous and refined than their dominant, mainland counterparts, Puerto Rican racial categories were more permeable. In contrast to the U.S. system, phenotype and physical traits could be superseded by class location. Money “whitened”: a richer, educated Puerto Rican with darker, more African features could be seen as and function as colored or white, whereas a similar looking but poorer Puerto Rican could be considered black or colored. In other words, race was classed. This sophisticated and unfamiliar calculus of race confused missionaries.

The early twentieth-century racial discourse of climate additionally shaped missionary understandings of race in Puerto Rico. Discussions of differences between the Anglo-Saxon and Latin or Puerto Rican races frequently appeared in missionary writings. For example, the above-cited A.F. Beard, concerned that Puerto Rico’s climate deprived islanders of the stamina built by having “to blast rocks and shovel snow,” warned that, “We shall not make Anglo-Saxons of these people. It would not be well to try. ... I believe that Maine will raise greater men, and more ‘possessive’ and energetic women, than we may expect from Porto Rico. There could scarcely be greater contrasts in the environments of climate and country, and the customs which

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<sup>497</sup> I use this citation keeping in mind that census categories themselves present a whole set of problems; for a discussion of those problems particular to Puerto Rico, see Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), Chapter 10. A.F. Beard, *Porto Rico Our Next Field* (NYC: American Missionary Ass., n.d.), PHS.

<sup>498</sup> Dr. William Hayes Ward, *The Independent*; quoted in “The Character of the Porto Ricans,” *SOM* (Aug. 1899): 417.

these evolve.”<sup>499</sup> Beard gendered this discourse by using Christian womanhood as the standard for measuring distinctions between Anglo-Saxons and Puerto Ricans and other subalterns: “The difference between a Porto Rico shack and the Indian’s tepee, or the Negro’s desolate cabin and a Christian woman’s parlor, fathoms the secret of life, which is the secret of Christianity and measures a distance of centuries. The one is Christian civilization; the other is barbarism.”<sup>500</sup> Beard thus constructed whiteness (and civilization) to entail the accoutrements, metaphorical and material, of a middle-class Protestant woman, the guardian of hearth and home.

Among missionaries, even the proponents of the most virulent Anglo-Saxon racial superiority professed belief that Puerto Ricans had the potential to change, to achieve the “civilized” status of that Christian woman in her parlor. For, if Puerto Ricans were ineducable, missionaries would be hard pressed to justify their civilizing project. In 1902, for example, Episcopalian missionary Rev. E. Sterling Gunn, reported to his mainland superiors that “the need of the people of Porto Rico is as great as that of any people from the idolatrous Mongolian to the superstitious fetish worshipper of the dark Continent.” Gunn’s positing equivalence between Puerto Rico and Mongolia and “the dark Continent” operated on several levels. It “Orientalized” Puerto Ricans, rendering them as “other,” as Africans, as black people.<sup>501</sup> It alluded to connotations of “darkness” found in the Scripture so frequently cited by missionaries: ignorance, heathenism, superstition, depraved practices. It proclaimed the “white man’s burden,” which Protestant missionaries had carried to several continents and were now bringing to “the waiting isle,” Puerto Rico. Notwithstanding his objectification of Puerto Ricans, Gunn continued, “Of course I do not mean that the Porto Ricans are all uncivilized or barbarous, ... crude or

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<sup>499</sup> A.F. Beard, *Porto Rico Our Next Field*.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid.

<sup>501</sup> For a detailed elaboration of this process of “othering” Puerto Ricans, see Santiago-Valles, “*Subject People*.”

unpolished in their manners & mode of living, but I do mean that their spiritual condition is deplorable in the extreme.”<sup>502</sup> This prevarication was essential to the missionary project, the success of which depended on Puerto Ricans’ capacity for transformation—more accurately, on Puerto Ricans’ capacity to be transformed by U.S. Protestant missionaries. For, despite fleeting dark moments when ravaged by “tropical sprue,” burdened by never-ending responsibilities, and lacking sufficient funding, missionaries did not question their collective capacity for transforming Puerto Ricans.

Attitudes such as Gunn’s (though exceptional in the documentary record), combined with the racialized, imperialist tutelage policy and regular interactions with missionaries, may explain why the white ministers of the Mayagüez Presbytery proceeded with the complaints about the admission policy. Though advantageously positioned according to Puerto Rican racial ideology, those whiter ministers were nonetheless “inferior” according to mainland racial ideology. Despite internal differences, the Puerto Rican ministers found common grounds for challenging the missionary policy that relegated all Puerto Ricans to subaltern status. Not only the missionary project, but local beliefs and actors thus generated tensions and contradictions in the colonizing process.

Historian Laura Briggs provides a compelling example of the implications of different conceptualizations of Puerto Ricans’ race in her impressive study of imperialism through the lens of women’s bodies. Examining the problematic of overpopulation, she argued that the “question of whether the island population was characterized as mostly white or black—and, one suspects, as therefore *essentially* black or white—was closely imbricated with questions of [political] status. Writers who described the island as mostly white favored independence; those who saw it

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<sup>502</sup> Rev. E. Sterling Gunn to J.W. Wood, 22 March 1902, letter, “Puerto Rico Papers,” RG 77 BOX 15 Folder: Rev. E. Sterling Gunn, 1901-1902, ETTS.

as black argued for continued U.S. rule.” The former saw Puerto Ricans as Spanish and competent; the latter saw Puerto Ricans as Africans and in need of continued U.S. tutelage.<sup>503</sup> Racial discourses were not confined to the ideological realm, but had material manifestations, in both the racially exclusive admission policy for Presbyterian Hospital’s nursing school, and, as Briggs shows, on public policies concerning women’s sexuality and reproduction. In other words, though race was socially constructed, racism expressed itself materially through particular practices. Two other occurrences suggested that racial lines were hardening in multiple venues on both the mainland and the island in the 1920s. In May 1923, Eunice White Harris commented in her diary that they “could fill [Polytechnic Inst[itute] with High Class girls if we wd [sic] not admit negro girls.” Additionally, J. Will Harris published a fund-raising pamphlet directed to mainlanders that declared “Porto Ricans aren’t Negroes.”<sup>504</sup> Puerto Rican racial categories appeared to be becoming less permeable.

The earlier series of exchanges dealing with the racist admission policy did not explicitly mention “class.” Given the classed nature of racial classification, it nonetheless shaped that policy and responses to it. All the actors in the historical record appear to have been born into or achieved middle-class status—some of the ministers quite possibly through Protestant training. The dissident ministers most likely were acting *for* middle-class women, for had they not been middle-class, the missionaries could have easily, without being challenged, excluded them on the basis of inadequate education. Rev. Sáenz, unlike the earlier challengers, implored the Protestant

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<sup>503</sup> Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*, 87-88. Missionaries were not unanimous on the issue of Puerto Rico’s political status (nor on their racial classification), though most supported U.S. citizenship and closely followed political developments related to the status issue. Briggs makes a compelling argument about the emergence from this problematic of three kinds of nationalism (*independentista*; U.S., exclusivist/eugenicist; and modernizing) ; Protestant-trained nurses & public health workers (including Rosa González and the Marina Neighborhood House) constituted an important element of the third group.

<sup>504</sup> Eunice White Harris, unpublished diary, 25 May 1923, UI-MH; Rev. J.W. Harris, “Porto Ricans Are Not Negroes,” *A Word About Porto Rico*, Caja 25 “Publicaciones Variadas,” Cartapacio “Relaciones Públicas 1920-1929,” UI-MH.

institutions to end discrimination based on race *and* class. Class here was racialized, just as race was classed. If darker Afro-Puerto Rican women had been admitted to and graduated from the nursing school, they would have earned middle-class credentials, thereby perhaps gaining the power to advocate for themselves as a group—as did other nurses through their Association of Registered Nurses in Porto Rico.

## **5.6 THE PROBLEMS OF RECRUITING “CONSECRATED WOMEN”**

The school’s very capacity for excluding Afro-Puerto Rican candidates was historically produced; it had not been possible sixteen years before the ministers first challenged the policy. When the school opened in 1904, finding girls or women interested in nursing was more difficult than the missionaries had anticipated. Shaped by their mainland sensibilities, missionaries sought educated, “consecrated women” from Christian families. The missionaries had not understood that Puerto Rico, at that time, had only a small middle class. The disappointed missionaries erroneously concluded that “Porto Rican girls were not accustomed to menial tasks. If a girl had sufficient education to be a nurse she would not do the servile work necessary, or if she were willing to do the work she was not able to learn the lesson.”<sup>505</sup> Working-class girls most certainly were “accustomed to menial tasks”: they washed their own family’s laundry and that of wealthier families, including the missionaries’. What missionaries meant was that girls and women *not* from the working classes were not interested in nursing. Because public education had been extremely limited before 1898, most educated women at that time were elite

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<sup>505</sup> Dr. Grace Holmes Atkins, quoted in *The Presbyterian Hospital, San Juan, Porto Rico* (N.Y.C.: Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1919), n.p., RG 305, Box 29, Folder 51, PHS.

Catholics who would never consider working outside the home, never mind in a Protestant hospital. Puerto Ricans perceived the Sisters of Charity who worked in hospitals during the Spanish regime as servants, for they performed similar tasks, though they received not even the low wages of servants.

Conversely, many young, working-class women were children of neither state- nor church-sanctioned consensual relationships—which, for the missionaries, excluded them from the category “consecrated women” and rendered them ineligible for admission to the nursing school.<sup>506</sup> In his history of Presbyterian work in the Caribbean, missionary Edward A. Odell neatly summed up the conundrum that this new kind of women’s work presented: “We had to overcome ignorance and superstition in our patients and misunderstandings on the part of our nurses. It was an entirely new kind of work for them, for as they knew it, a woman was either a lady or a servant, and *nurses have to be both* [emphasis original].”<sup>507</sup>

Local conditions thus forced the missionaries to modify requirements for admission and provide more remedial education than they had planned initially. The school’s first graduate was Maria Francisca Rodríguez de Doval, an Afro-Puerto Rican.<sup>508</sup> As discussed above, Ordway, in 1922, had alluded to (without naming) this student to rationalize the “fairness” of the racist admission policy. She had argued that race and racism had limited Rodríguez’s career, thus it would be unfair to subject other women of color to such treatment. Yet in a pamphlet published just three years earlier, in 1919, Dr. Grace Atkins, presented a picture strikingly different from Ordway’s. While ministering to the poor in the San Juan barrios, Atkins had met Rodríguez

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<sup>506</sup> The application form to which Sáenz objected also stated that a young woman needed to be a “legitimate daughter”—something to which he did not object.

<sup>507</sup> Edward A. Odell, *It Came to Pass* (NYC: Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1952), 21.

<sup>508</sup> An undated pamphlet published sometime after 1964 identified this woman as Señora Francisca Rodríguez de Doval. Photocopy provided by Sra. Luisa Rosado, Office of Nursing, Ashford-Presbyterian Hospital, Aug. 3, 2003.

helping her neighbors. Atkins described her as one of the hospital's first patients, a widow with four children, who "was black, could read and write and had a real gift for nursing." Atkins "promised her a place in the training school," to which she arrived "barefooted and ragged, with a few possessions tied in a bundle which she carried on her head." This "example of raw material," said Atkins, continued nursing after she graduated and had never been without a case. Rodríguez became a home-owner, educated her children (one became a carpenter; another, a school teacher), worked "for all the best physicians," and traveled to Europe with a patient—strong evidence that nursing credentials could generate upward social mobility.<sup>509</sup>

As conditions changed, however, the Presbyterian school became more selective in choosing students. A 1913 report stated that "better educational facilities, combined with a different attitude toward the dignity of work" were making it easier to attract "qualified candidates."<sup>510</sup> Writing fourteen years after the school had opened, missionary Arthur James rather optimistically asserted that the Presbyterian Hospital had "completely changed the social status of the nursing profession. ... Girls from the best families have taken their training as nurses" at the school.<sup>511</sup> By 1932, almost thirty years after the school opened, ninety-nine applicants competed for twenty-nine spots and, for the first time, all those accepted had graduated from high school.<sup>512</sup> This reflected both the increasing numbers of public schools and the growing professionalization of the field. Structural forces, however, were also at play. The school's ability to exclude Afro-Puerto Ricans in 1920, when the dissident ministers' grievance surfaced, was a time of high unemployment and high living costs. The resulting stiff labor

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<sup>509</sup> Dr. Grace Holmes Atkins, quoted in *The Presbyterian Hospital, San Juan, Porto Rico*, PHS.

<sup>510</sup> *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report, WBHM of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1913, 50.

<sup>511</sup> Arthur James, *Twenty Years in Porto Rico: A Record of Presbyterian Missionary Work since the American Occupation* (N.Y.: B.H.M., Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., n.d.), 41.

<sup>512</sup> Rev. Angel L. Seda, "Escuela de Enfermeras Hospital Presbiteriano, 1904-1954," *Puerto Rico y su Enfermera* (Dec. 1953): 20.

competition was exacerbated by the steadily increasing number of women entering the paid work force. This allowed missionaries to more selectively choose students than in 1904, when traditional Puerto Rican gender and class norms held greater power to deter women from seeking work as nurses. And darker, poorer Puerto Rican women bore the cost of that selectivity.

The different portrayals of Rodríguez show that missionary representations of Puerto Ricans varied according to audience and the author's perceptions of the missionary project's best interests. On the one hand, to solicit metropolitan material support, Atkins wanted to show that the school had successfully provided social uplift; showing how the nursing school had radically changed the life of a poor, Afro-Puerto Rican widow offered a most compelling example of upward social mobility made possible through the missionary project. In this case, the ideology of equal opportunity was consonant with material interests (raising funds for the hospital) and practice reflected ideology. On the other hand, Ordway saw the hospital's financial security as dependent on local support from those who could afford to pay for their medical care. The audience had changed: it was not Atkins's audience of Protestant women concerned with social uplift, a successful mission, and their identities as civilizers. Ordway's audience, in contrast, sought to provide their daughters professional training that would grant them middle-class credentials in a rapidly changing Puerto Rico. Class security, not social uplift, concerned that audience. Ordway understood that this class would not condone admission of darker, poorer Puerto Ricans; she thus believed that acting on Protestantism's ideology of racial and social equality would antagonize this group and threaten the hospital's financial (and political) security. In this case, ideology was at odds with material interest, and practice contradicted ideology.

María Francisca Rodríguez de Doval did not have the power to represent herself; much discussed and differently utilized, her voice was silent. Like the Afro-Puerto Rican women who



had the misfortune to be seeking admission to the nursing school at a later, critically different, historical moment, her presence is ghost-like. Such an absence in the historical record—like the absence of objections to class discrimination and the exclusion of “illegitimate” daughters—tells us much about power relations (and the production of history) at that time.

The several structures of power at play in the evolution of and challenges to the Presbyterian Nursing School’s racist admission policy demonstrate that no single dynamic of power determined practices, ideologies, or outcomes. This does not argue that all powers were equal, but rather that missionary and Puerto Rican actors and actions were shaped by both metropolitan and local forces, ideological and material. And these forces were dynamic. When missionary beliefs about what constituted a proper nurse left them with insufficient students, these practical Christians chose to modify their methods to build up the nursing school; this produced a more inclusive admission policy. As U.S. investors increasingly transformed the island’s political economic landscape and public education expanded, the power of local, pre-1898 notions of nursing diminished; this produced a racially exclusive admission policy. Missionaries’ unease with this policy that explicitly contradicted their ideology of equality was reflected in the covert methods they used to exclude darker Puerto Ricans. Neither racially neutral application forms nor pledges to dissident ministers, but rather private agreements established the racially exclusive standards for entrance. Furthermore, Puerto Rican notions of white racial superiority made the new policy less susceptible to being successfully challenged.

The shift towards a racially exclusive admission policy played out in the material—not the representational—world. It reflected major changes in that material world: increasing numbers of educated young women; increased participation of women in the paid labor force; increased competition for jobs in a time of rising unemployment and decreasing opportunities for

subsistence survival strategies; and increasing migration to the major cities, where the nursing schools were located. All these patterns produced an historical moment radically distinct from that moment when Dr. Atkins recruited Sra. Rodríguez to the nursing school. Yet, in contrast, the missionary ideology of equality remained strikingly constant. Though it failed to sufficiently inspire the missionaries to concretely fulfill its promise by granting Afro-Puerto Ricans admission to the nursing school, that ideology was powerful enough that missionaries felt both the need to change the policy covertly and the need to justify their choices within that ideological framework. This demonstrates not only the power, but also the plasticity of ideology.

From a different perspective, the dissident ministers also took advantage of ideology's plasticity. They skillfully appropriated missionary ideology to devise a popular liberalism suitable to their needs, one that they used to make claims upon the very people and institutions that had so consistently and robustly disseminated that ideology. They also took advantage of Protestantism's practices, successfully exploiting the Presbyterian Church's open, from-the-ground-up decision-making and its formal grievance procedure. The Afro-Puerto Rican ministers used the democratic ("of the people, by the people, and for the people") organizational structure of the Presbytery to push forward their case, thus forcing more tractable ministers to deal, however unwillingly, with the blatant contradictions between professed ideology and actual practices. Noteworthy is the local Presbytery's persistence in formally submitting the grievance to the Woman's Board—despite Ordway's claim that González had convinced the ministers of the need for the racist policy. This suggests that a majority of the Presbytery's board wanted to pursue the matter, bringing into question Santiago Cabrera's intimation that the "the colored element" voiced a minority opinion. Or it may suggest that the Presbytery's board members sufficiently identified along national lines (in opposition to the Protestant mainlanders) to

cooperate—to a limited extent—in challenging the missionaries. The Presbyterian Church, the very institution that denied some Puerto Ricans the opportunity of becoming nurses, provided others a formalized system for contesting that denial.

One could argue that the nursing school's racially exclusive admission policy was, indeed, authentically American: it transmitted U.S. mainstream, white, middle-class values to Puerto Rico at a time when Jim Crow was entrenched on the mainland. It could thus be read as emblematic of the limitations of what Americanization could offer to all Puerto Ricans, a people whose multi-hued colors regularly confounded missionaries' understandings of race. The evolution of and challenges to that policy, however, illustrate the tangled, dynamic, sometimes contradictory relationships of race, class, nation, gender, and power at play in Americanizing Puerto Rico.

These contradictions came to the fore as the economy and living conditions for the majority continued to deteriorate in the 1920s and hit new lows with the Great Depression. In those dark times many, both Puerto Ricans and missionaries, began to protest Americanization. Insular nationalism grew and nationalists targeted missionaries and their projects as symbols of United States imperialism. Early in the fourth decade of U.S. occupation, Puerto Rican nationalism became evident in local responses to two events: Charles Lindbergh's 1928 visit to the island and a student uprising at Poly two years later. The next chapter deals with these subjects and missionaries' changed views of Americanization.

## 6.0 CHAPTER FIVE: NATIONALISM, CLAIMS, AND CRITIQUES OF AMERICANIZATION

On May 19, 1930, two weeks after rampaging on campus, a crowd of students moved down the steep, green Santa Marta hills of the Polytechnic Institute and marched a mile to the center of San Germán. Carrying black flags, setting off fireworks, and making music, they clamored for the resignation of Poly's Dean of Students, Charles Leker. They paraded to City Hall and past the house of an insular legislator, shouting "Down with Dean Leker." A manifesto they distributed to townspeople accused the "despotic" Leker of "trampling on the sacrosanct rights of all students" and proclaimed the righteousness of their "search for justice." The manifesto hearkened back to Puerto Rican patriots and dramatically declared:

I will not fall, but if I do  
I will fall, blessing the cause  
On which I have based my whole life.  
Our protest is just,  
Forward, always forward!<sup>513</sup>

What had happened to bring about such transgressive behavior by students of the flagship missionary school that took such pride in its program of discipline, respect, moderation, and

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<sup>513</sup> J. Barea, "Los estudiantes del Instituto Politecnico se sublevan nuevamente," *La Correspondencia*, 20 Mayo 1930: n.p.; "'Nuestra protesta es justa'—dicen los estudiantes del Politécnico," *La Democracia*, 20 May 1930: n.p., All newspaper citations on this revolt came from photocopies in the Vertical File: "Huelgas," UI- Sala de Puerto Rico.

Americanization? Many things had changed for Puerto Ricans between the school's founding in 1912 and the student revolt in 1930. For the majority, material conditions continued to deteriorate through the 1920s and 1930s, decades marked by the Great War, two devastating hurricanes, and the Great Depression. After the 1929 stock-market crash, most Puerto Ricans could not meet minimum daily caloric requirements due to falling wages, rising unemployment, and increased reliance on imported foodstuffs due to conversion of most cultivable land to sugar and tobacco. Angered by the crisis that, according to economic historian James L. Dietz, was "exposing to scrutiny the full extent of U.S. domination of the island's economy, politics, and people," many islanders turned to nationalism.<sup>514</sup> Though the official Nationalist Party had little success in electoral politics, expressions of anti-Americanism—and violent state repression of them—grew in this period.<sup>515</sup> These culminated in the murders of three nationalist students and one police officer at the University of Puerto Rico in 1935; the retaliatory murder of the Insular Police Chief in 1936; and, in the 1937 Ponce Massacre, the murder of twenty-one non-violent marchers protesting the controversial trial of nationalist leaders for that murder and seditious insurrection. Americanization was under siege.

In this chapter I argue that, though missionaries had benefited significantly from their identification with the colonial state and agents of mainland investors, they suffered from such affiliations in the 1920s and 1930s. In this volatile period, two incidents articulated tensions underlying Americanization. Each involved Poly, demonstrating that both mainlanders and islanders viewed the institute as a symbol of Americanization. The first incident stemmed from

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<sup>514</sup> Dietz, *Economic History*, 137-141.

<sup>515</sup> Founded in 1922 by dissidents from the *hacendado* Unionist Party, the Nationalist Party under Pedro Albizu Campos (a mixed-race veteran of a segregated U.S. Army battalion during World War One and Harvard graduate) became most influential in the 1930s and notorious in the 1950s for armed attacks on the U.S. Capitol and Blair House.

the Puerto Rican political class's response to Charles Lindbergh's visit in 1928; the second, the 1930 student uprising that turned violent. These events became venues through which mainlanders and islanders contested Americanization. Nationalists expressed their opposition to it, many Puerto Ricans defended it, and a powerful mainlander threatened to withdraw financial support to punish "ungrateful" Puerto Ricans.

This chapter also examines a third case that demonstrated a different response to the exigent conditions of this period and thus the contingency of Puerto Ricans' responses to the missionary project. In this case, Puerto Ricans did not attack the missionary project, but instead made claims upon it, calling for fulfillment of its promises. This response, I argue, represented an unintended consequence of the missionary educational project: the appropriation of Americanization's ideology and utilization of skills developed with missionary training for self-defined ends by graduates of the Presbyterian Marina Neighborhood House (M.N.H.) training program. Allied with a missionary and Puerto Rican minister, these graduates pressured the mainland missionary establishment to provide them jobs during that time of great un- and under-employment. This case also showed that, at times, missionaries aligned with Puerto Ricans, not their mainland counterparts. This, I argue, showed that the processes involved with Americanization were not unidirectional: Puerto Ricans also shaped missionaries.

Finally, I examine settlement-house industrial workshops to make two arguments. First, these workshops increasingly operated not—as originally intended—as places of training from which Puerto Ricans would graduate to jobs in the expanding private sector; rather, they became a means for ameliorating, for the poorest sectors, the deteriorating living conditions brought about by Americanization. This marked a shift in the missionary project's relationship with Americanization and the colonial state. Second, building on that shift, I argue that, in response

to the appalling living and working conditions of their church-members, the degraded environment, and their growing realization of the limitations on redressing those matters, many missionaries changed their minds about Americanization and developed a stinging critique of the that project so integral to their own. This, too, supports my argument that Americanization also shaped missionaries.

The unfolding and reverberations of these developments showed the complexity of responses to the missionary project and how local actors and conditions shaped it. They also revealed innate contradictions of the missionary project: rapid capitalist development in a colonial context provided neither the material nor civic uplift professed by Americanization. Disappointing even its sympathizers, the developmental aspects of Americanization instead brought material advancement to only a few. Furthermore, after three decades of tutelage, Puerto Ricans had not gained substantive citizenship rights. Finally, the worldwide crisis made clear the limitations of political rights in the face of economic collapse.

## **6.1 POLYTECHNIC: ICON OF AMERICANIZATION**

Rev. J. Will Harris's involvement with the Lindbergh controversy was not surprising, for Poly had long functioned as a high-profile symbol of Americanization. That the challenge to Poly came from a mainland supporter, however, was unexpected and showed the complications of Poly's financial dependence—a dependence similar in some ways to that of the colony on the metropolis. Even before Poly had opened its doors to its first twelve students, the project frequently appeared in the public eye, largely due to its charismatic founder's relentless fundraising. While fundraising, Harris met people powerful in politics, education, industry, and

philanthropy. An article in 1924, for example, humorously recounted how Harris, tardy because of his demanding schedule, once kept President Calvin Coolidge waiting.<sup>516</sup> Harris also met with Theodore Roosevelt, the founder of Firestone Tires, and Cyrus McCormick.<sup>517</sup> Andrew Carnegie's only daughter visited Poly several times and helped raise funds. Even Eleanor Roosevelt visited. Harris also visited local churches across the mainland, speaking and showing stereopticon slides of the school. Such networking built Poly's (and Harris's) status and sometimes afforded students jobs or additional training. Henry Ford, for example, "chose to train a group of boys in his factory" in lieu of a direct financial contribution.<sup>518</sup>

Appealing to donors, Harris portrayed Puerto Rico as "the laboratory for working out the problems leading to a right understanding and hearty cooperation of the Latin and Saxon civilizations of the Americas."<sup>519</sup> Mixing metaphors, he also envisioned Puerto Rico as a bridge—the image on the school's stationery and a popular metaphor in missionary and colonial state literature. The following passage from a publicity pamphlet illustrated well two vital forces at play in colonizing Puerto Rico: the idea of Puerto Rico as a cultural and commercial intermediary between the U.S. and Latin America—a notion shared by the colonial state and U.S. investors—and the ideological blending of manifest destiny, Americanization, and Protestantizing. The pamphlet asked the reader to

place yourself for a moment in Porto Rico. To the North lies North America with her men of vision and action, a nation of Christian homes and churches. To the South lies South America, rich in idle resources, with 71 millions of Latin Americans, 40 millions of whom are semi-pagans. Only a few of the remaining 30 millions are educated. North America speaks English. South America speaks Spanish. While midway between them lies the Pearl of the Antilles, Porto Rico, destined by God

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<sup>516</sup> "When President Coolidge had to Wait for Harris," UI-MH, Caja 4 Relaciones Públicas, Recortes de Periódicos: 1923-1954.

<sup>517</sup> Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 143-144.

<sup>518</sup> Eunice White Harris, *Steps*, 116.

<sup>519</sup> Harris, *PIPR: A Concise Historical Statement*, 44.



to become the common ground of mutual understanding of the two races. Here is where the Latin and Saxon are meeting as they are in no other place. Both English and Spanish are official languages.

Take Porto Rico as the centre. Draw a circle of 1,000 miles radius. It will touch or include 16 different nations with a population of 21,000,000 sitting in the shade of walls built one hundred years before the pilgrims landed in America. All these are within the field of influence of the Polytechnic Institute. To all these a Christian institution of learning like the Polytechnic Institute should be not only a place to educate their children, but also a model of the highest type after which all these countries may pattern, an honor to the Christian people of North America.<sup>520</sup>

And, indeed, Poly did become a bridge between “Latin and Saxon,” training students from throughout Latin America, including the Dominican Republic, Virgin Islands, Lesser Antilles, Colombia, and Venezuela. Between 1912 and 1923, six percent of its students, on average, came from outside Puerto Rico to study at the school the *New York Herald* referred to as the “University of the Antilles” and a “tropical version of Williamstown, Massachusetts.”<sup>521</sup>

The evolution and scope of the project also captured public interest. Presbyterian Harris and his wife Eunice White Harris had arrived in Puerto Rico in 1906, assigned to San Germán, a municipality of 22,000 in the southwest of the island and soon to be dominated by the South Porto Rico Sugar Company.<sup>522</sup> In 1914, he resigned from other missionary duties to concentrate on Poly. Harris’s sweeping vision particularly appealed to mainlanders. Poly had considerable acreage and infrastructure, which gave the school an impressive gravitas. Harris originally bought 100 acres in the hills of San Germán; by 1934, “seventeen modern buildings nestled

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<sup>520</sup> J.W. Harris, *The Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico: The Only School of its Kind in Latin America* (NY: Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., n.d.), n.p., PHS.

<sup>521</sup> “Publicaciones Variadas,” Caja 25, Cartapacio: Relaciones Públicas 1910-1919, UI-MH; Harris, *The PIPR: A Concise Historical Statement*, 9.

<sup>522</sup> Harris’s district included Sabana Grande, Cabo Rojo, Lajas, and Ensenada, a population of approximately 64,300 people at the time. Feliciano Ramos, *Historia de la Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico*, Part One, 3; 54-55. Between 1906 and 1912 and before narrowing his focus to educational work, Harris had established six churches and nineteen preaching stations, including one in English at the Guánica Central. “Gacetillas: Notas de las Iglesias,” *LVE*, 18 Jan. 1908, 255.

down on the seven hills on 200 acres of land covered with 100,000 *capá* trees, 15,000 mahogany trees, thousands of mango trees,” and a “model athletic field.”<sup>523</sup> Harris’s ambitious long-term plan called for ninety buildings. All this had been unimproved land before the Harrises managed to build a dam, water and sewer system, pave roads, etc, largely with student labor.

The composition of Poly’s first Board of Trustees attested to broad support for the school. It included the colonial state, U.S. investors, Puerto Ricans, and mainland and island Protestants: the insular governor, George R. Colton; a mainland representative of the Young Men’s Christian Association; a representative of the mainland Presbyterian mission board; representatives of the Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, United Brethren, and Baptist missions on the island; Guánica Central’s manager A.J. Grief (the central pledged \$1,000 per year for five years); J.J. Seibert, deputy U.S. Marshall in Mayagüez; and five Puerto Rican Protestants, including Presbyterian elders, a druggist, Dr. Manuel Guzmán Rodríguez (the disciple of Hostos), and Juan Cancio Ortiz, a wealthy farmer and merchant who, inspired by Tuskegee Institute had earlier opened a similar school that had failed (the Instituto de Agricultura, Artes y Oficios) in nearby Palmarejo.<sup>524</sup>

Poly also obtained considerable local support. In early 1915, for example, San Germán’s mayor invited Harris to city hall for a conference on the school with a local lawyer and a “man of affairs known as the wealthiest in San Germán.” They proposed inviting representatives from all

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<sup>523</sup> J. Will Harris, “A Perennial Word to Trustees and Faculties,” *Riding and Roping*, 136.

<sup>524</sup> Due to several problems, primarily financial, Polytechnic’s corporate organization changed. From 1912 to 1914, it was under an independent, non-sectarian Board of Trustees. Between 1914 and 1920, it was controlled by the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church. In 1920 it reincorporated under control of an independent, non-sectarian Board of Trustees, the majority of whom lived in New York City and were associated with missions and/or philanthropists (including the daughter of Andrew Carnegie) and four local members. Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 47; J.J. Osuna, unpublished report, “A Study of the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico,” 31 Oct. 1936, 2, Asuntos Académicos, Historia de la Universidad, Cartapacio 20 (152), “Relaciones Públicas,” UI-MH.

sixty-six municipalities to form a group supporting Poly.<sup>525</sup> In 1918, six men from San Germán donated \$1000.00 each for new buildings.<sup>526</sup> In late 1927, Harris sought funding from an icon of another sort, the Carnegie Foundation, arguing that Puerto Ricans had not “had a full opportunity to break away from the customs and habits formed by four hundred years of Spanish rule” and needed additional help “to raise themselves to a status to which they, as American citizens, [were] entitled.”<sup>527</sup> After sending an inspection team, the foundation granted Poly \$250,000, conditioned on matching funds. Additionally, missionaries from throughout the island added to Poly’s cachet by regularly visiting, bringing their most important visitors to see it, paying for church-members to attend, and enrolling their own children. Gradually, these affiliations made Poly a venue through which Puerto Ricans expressed accommodation and resistance to Americanization.

## **6.2 SHOOTING THE MESSENGER: CHARLES A. LINDBERGH’S STOP-OVER IN PUERTO RICO**

In 1928, after completing his celebrated solo flight across the Atlantic, Charles A. Lindbergh made a goodwill tour of Latin America. When he arrived in Puerto Rico, Antonio R. Barceló, president of the insular senate and José Tous Soto, speaker of the house, in a special legislative session convened to honor the “Lone Eagle,” presented him a letter from “The People of Porto

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<sup>525</sup> “On the Line of Progress: The Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico,” *The Assembly Herald*, May 1915, 260. Harris had good relations with *sangermaño* officialdom.

<sup>526</sup> Eunice White Harris, *Steps*, 59.

<sup>527</sup> J. Will Harris and Roswell Miller, letter to Carnegie Corporation, N.Y.C., 1 Dec 1927: 1-2. Caja 22 (64): Gobierno Institucional, Presidente J.W. Harris, Cartapachio 8: Carnegie Corporation, UI-MH.

Rico.”<sup>528</sup> The letter welcomed Lindbergh and, contrasting him to Juan Ponce de León, Puerto Rico’s first colonial governor, who had conquered their “fair island by the force of arms,” asserted that Lindbergh had conquered the island instead “by the force of [his] prestige.” It then asked him to convey to the people of the United States the following message “not far different from the cry of Patrick Henry: ‘Liberty or Death’: “Grant us the freedom that you enjoy, for which you have struggled, which you worship, which we deserve, and you have promised us. We ask the right to a place in the sun—this land of ours, brightened by the stars of your glorious flag.”<sup>529</sup>

The local newspapers immediately published the entire letter, as did the mainland Associated Press. Influential New York attorney Fifield Workum, a member of Poly’s Board of Trustees and chair of its finance committee, became incensed by what he perceived as Puerto Ricans’ disrespect, impertinence, and untoward resentment of “American influence.” His subsequent action made clear that Poly functioned as a symbol of Americanization, of United States-Puerto Rican cooperation, on both the mainland and island. Fifield immediately cabled Harris his resignation from his positions at Poly and announced that he would use his “best efforts [to] withdraw American financial assistance” from the school, assistance on which Poly depended.<sup>530</sup>

This set off passionate public and private exchanges on the matter, including letters, newspaper articles, and a meeting of Harris, Andrew Carnegie’s only daughter Margaret Carnegie Miller, and Emilio del Toro, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico (and

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<sup>528</sup> Barceló and Tous Soto were members of the (*hacendado*) Unionist and (pro-statehood) Republican Parties, respectively. The parties had joined together to form the *Alianza* to counter the growing power of the Socialist Party, associated with the insular trade-union federation, the F.L.T.

<sup>529</sup> José Tous Soto and Antonio R. Barceló, *Resolution of House of Representatives and Senate of Porto Rico*, quoted in Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 121.

<sup>530</sup> “Didn’t Mean Separation,” *Porto Rico Progress*, 9 Feb. 1928, quoted in Harris, *Riding and Roping*, 122.

Poly trustee) with insular Governor Howard M. Towner. Harris notified Barceló and Tous Soto of Workum's telegram and suggested that other donors and trustees might soon follow suit. Warning that their message might jeopardize Poly's pending request for a million dollars from the Carnegie Foundation, Harris implored, "Unless this impression of resentment by Porto Rico can be cleared up it will bring fatal results to our school and possibly to the whole Island." He asked the legislators to "state clearly in terms which cannot be misinterpreted just what [they had] meant by 'Liberty and Freedom.'"<sup>531</sup>

Barceló's and Tous Soto's reply employed a sophisticated rhetorical strategy, alternating between conciliation and challenge. On the one hand, the legislators asserted they sought neither "international or absolute independence" nor did they want "to sever the ties of a common flag and common citizenship." Rather, they desired "a perfect friendship and close brotherhood with [their] fellow citizens of the States." On the other hand, they firmly stated their aspiration, "above all, to the government of our people, by our people and for our people," which they defined as "American freedom." Appropriating Patrick Henry's cry was meant to "[appeal] to your national pride, not in a hostile attitude, not in an angry mood, but as a friendly notice to ... the American People, that we are neglected from the standpoint of our political aspirations and of our economic needs." Questioning U.S. commitment to granting statehood, recounting Pres. Calvin Coolidge's offer, at the recent Pan American Conference, of "plain home rule," and declaring their right to complete self-government, they assured Harris there was "no reason for alarm or uneasiness," for they simply voiced "a truly American sentiment ... imbued in the minds and hearts of all our school children by the study of your history."<sup>532</sup> They closed with a

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid., 122-123.

<sup>532</sup> Ironically, unlike the Puerto Rican public schools at that time, Poly did teach Puerto Rican and Latin American history.

sardonic comment on the Carnegie Foundation grant: “Had we had in mind the asking of independence for Porto Rico, the loss of one million dollars or of untold millions of dollars to all the institutions of Porto Rico, [would] not deter us in the least.”<sup>533</sup>

The politicians thus cleverly employed Americanization’s rhetoric of participatory democracy to censure the U.S. government and did so by comparing Puerto Rico to the British North American colonies and adapting Patrick Henry’s legendary exclamation. With finesse, they reminded Harris that local schools’ teaching of U.S. history had disseminated such ideology. They thus appropriated its own rhetoric and ideology to hold the metropolis to its professed values and standards. The legislators’ final comment that Puerto Rican independence was not for sale shrewdly pointed to mainland economic control of the island.

Responses to this incident represented a broad spectrum of attitudes towards Americanization. The legislators’ clarification, or perhaps Harris’s interpretation of it, apparently mollified Workum. It did not, however, satisfy J.B. Montalvo, a textile contractor in San Germán. Montalvo wrote Harris that Puerto Rico needed economic, not political, liberty. Asserting pride in his U.S. citizenship, he blamed the “disorientation” of Puerto Rican politics for disturbing relations between the mainland and island, thus setting a bad example for youth. He also lauded Poly for preparing Puerto Rican youth mentally and spiritually for a future happiness unavailable to older Puerto Ricans.<sup>534</sup> An editorial in *Porto Rico Progress*, an island newspaper sympathetic to Americanization, took a more even-handed approach. It blamed both “typical” Puerto Rican *politiquería* and Washington’s failure “to grasp the idea that theirs was

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<sup>533</sup> Antonio R. Barceló and José Tous Soto, letter to J.W. Harris, 6 Feb. 1928, “Presidente Harris,” Caja 32 Cartapachio 8, UI-MH. For full, published replications of these exchanges, see Harris, *Riding and Roping*, Ch. 16. The legislators made clear that they indeed preferred statehood, but would defer to the U.S. on that. The letter also delineated the economic rights they sought, particularly over tariffs and other regulations on imported goods.

<sup>534</sup> Juan B. Montalvo to J.W. Harris, 8 Feb. 1928, letter, “Presidente Harris,” Caja 32, Cartapachio 6; UI-MH.

the greatest single task and opportunity under the American flag—to instill in a million and half new American citizens, detached from the mainland contact with other citizens, basic ideals of the privileges and obligations of citizenship.” It also asserted “that Latin as well as Saxon can contribute to the further glories of the Nation.”<sup>535</sup>

The Lindbergh incident exemplified what historian Francisco Scarano has described as a “politics of disillusionment” that evolved after 1898.<sup>536</sup> Puerto Rican political elites (representing the coffee *hacendados*), to whom Spain had recently ceded more autonomy, had expected that the U.S. would honor that arrangement and grant them political control of the island in 1898. When that did not happen, local parties adopted platforms calling for more autonomy, statehood, and/ or independence.<sup>537</sup> Some Puerto Ricans accepted the need for short-term tutelage. These included the creole elite historian Salvador Brau, who, as historian Gervasio Luis García has shown, shared the colonial state’s view that most Puerto Ricans needed to be civilized and saw Americanization as a method for “encouraging the popular masses not to confuse the practices of liberty with unbridled licentiousness.”<sup>538</sup>

The “politics of disillusionment” fully bloomed in 1917, when the Jones Act imposed collective U.S. citizenship on Puerto Ricans yet failed to guarantee either statehood or self-governance. The Puerto Rican political class had instigated the Lindbergh altercation to pressure and publicly shame the U.S. into granting the island more autonomy. The maneuver did not work. The letter incensed President Coolidge, who, after recounting all that the U.S. government

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<sup>535</sup> “Didn’t Mean Separation,” *Porto Rico Progress*, 9 Feb. 1928, 10. This pro-statehood paper also perceptively commented on one effect of the extended period of tutelage: “Such a thing could happen only in Porto Rico. That this is true is evidenced by the simple truth that no public visitor escapes without being compelled to listen to the retelling of supposed wrongs. The more distinguished the guest the more certain the display of our insular dependency complex.” “Editorials,” *Porto Rico Progress*, 9 Feb 1928, 9.

<sup>536</sup> Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglas*, 625.

<sup>537</sup> The *hacendado*-based Unionist Party supported all three positions at one point.

<sup>538</sup> Salvador Brau, quoted in Gervasio Luis García, “I am the Other: Puerto Ricans in the Eyes of Americans, 1898,” *Journal of American History* 87, no. 1 (June 2000): 41.

had done for the island, advised the ungrateful politicians “to limit ‘their petitions to those which may be granted without a denial of such hope’”—a public spanking that, according to historian Arturo Morales Carrión, signaled metropolitan intransigence on the status issue.<sup>539</sup>

The differences between Lindbergh’s reception and that of William Jennings Bryan in 1910 were telling. Bryan had come to the island to plant the cornerstone of the Methodist G.O. Robinson Orphanage for Boys. The Puerto Rican press strongly praised Bryan, who attracted large, welcoming crowds, and closely covered his island-wide tour and public speeches. *La Correspondencia* even printed his famous speech, “The Prince of Peace.”<sup>540</sup> The ungenerous, artful welcome of Lindbergh showed how much relations between the metropolis and the colony had deteriorated. By 1928, even the assimilationists had joined the displaced elite in chafing at colonial restraints.

### 6.3 POLYTECHNIC: VENUE OF CONTESTATION

More explosive than the Lindbergh affair, the 1930 incident materialized not with harsh words in the formal political arena, but from below, with militant, direct action in the streets of San Germán and violence on Poly’s acclaimed campus. Though it did not attract much attention in the U.S. outside missionary circles, it created a larger and more broadly based furor in Puerto Rico. Poly students engaged in what has been described variously as a strike, revolt, and insurrection. Widely publicized on the island, the uprising provoked heated responses from Puerto Ricans for and against Americanization.

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<sup>539</sup> Arturo Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History* (NY: W.W. Norton, 1983), 210.

<sup>540</sup> “Bryan, Hatillo,” *EDC*, 15 April 1910, 15.



Though reports varied in details, they concurred on the students' precipitating actions. On a spring evening, Sunday, May 4, the room in which a regularly scheduled religious service was taking place suddenly plunged into darkness. Students had cut electricity to the building. The following evening, students began vandalizing the new boys' dormitory, Phraner Hall, breaking lights and windows, tearing out transoms, and battering doors. Teacher Clarence Harris, J. Will's brother, and Dean Charles Leker raced to the building. Leker entered the boys' rooms to take the names of those he thought had not participated in the destruction, after which he and Clarence returned to their quarters. Just an hour later, Clarence returned, with pistol in hand and stationed himself outside the kitchen, at the request of the frightened supervisors of the kitchen and girls' dormitory. When he saw students throwing rocks at the old dormitory for boys, he ordered them to stop and fired two warning shots into the air. The students ran away. Later, students marched on the girls' dormitory and Clarence fired another warning shot. Once more the students ran away and did not venture out again that evening.

The following morning students boycotted classes and Clarence asked the San Germán police to preempt a rumored plan to disrupt breakfast. Intending to dismiss all boys involved in the previous night's destruction, Clarence returned to Phraner Hall, where he was met with an act of solidarity. "All of the boys" refused to reveal participants' names, proclaiming that "all had done it," and requested a meeting with Clarence, Dean Leker, and the Puerto Rican faculty.

At this meeting, the students accused Leker of various abuses, including unjustly imposing excessive punishments for alleged breeches of discipline. Leker refused to answer students' charges and angrily left, whereupon the students demanded his immediate resignation. When later informed of this, Leker petulantly declared that he was "responsible to Dr. Harris," not a "committee of boys," and refused to resign. Students held meetings throughout the

afternoon, despite Clarence's pronouncement that they must leave the school and return to their families. Considering this unfair, two Puerto Rican faculty members, Spanish-language professor Pedro Casablanca and Carlos Irizarry, requested a meeting of the entire faculty. Over Leker's and Clarence's objections, the faculty majority appointed an interim dean, Professor Boyd Palmer, and chose to postpone dealing with the larger issue until the return of J. Will Harris, who was on the mainland.

A tense truce held between then and May 19, the day of J. Will Harris's anticipated return. While Clarence and Leker continued to receive threats to harm the latter and set afire the carpentry shop and other wooden buildings, the students returned to classes.<sup>541</sup> Students had formed a "Revolutionary Committee of Poly" and circulated in San Germán a manifesto that the secular island-wide newspapers published. In this, students called their struggle noble and asserted that they should not be portrayed as "savages"; rather they reflected the "nobility" of the Puerto Rican "race" and the valor of their "glorious forbears." In addition to claiming their *puertorriqueñidad*, the students reiterated their faith that, due to the justness of their complaints, J. Will Harris would force Leker to resign.<sup>542</sup>

On the morning of May 19, fewer than a dozen students attended classes. Carrying black flags, forty students, including a few girls, marched into San Germán. Accompanied by music, they proceeded noisily but peacefully past the mayor's office and the home of a legislator, calling for Leker's dismissal. Upon his return in the afternoon, students immediately approached J. Will Harris. He offered to assume Leker's responsibilities and grant amnesty to all involved in

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<sup>541</sup> Dean Leker to "Dear Friends and Relatives," 28 May 1930, letter, Colección Particular: Boyd Palmer, 1930-1951, UI-MH; "Amplios detalles sobre la huelga de estudiantes del Instituto Politécnico de San Germán," Folder: 1930-1931, UI-MH; *La Correspondencia*, 3 June 1930, 1; 4; 8 (?). Many of these newspapers have the dates written in pencil; they all come from Vertical File: "Huelgas" Sala de Puerto Rico-UI.

<sup>542</sup> "'Nuestra protesta es justa'—dicen los estudiantes del Politécnico," *La Democracia*, 20 May 1930, 1; n.p.

the protest—on the condition that they pay for all the damages. Students turned down his offer and Harris countered that he would not turn over to the student body his powers as school president.

Harris ordered students to leave the school and return to their families for a cooling-off period. Students stood their ground, vowing that they would not abandon Poly, because *they* constituted Poly. Following meetings with different groups, Harris rebuked the students, staunchly maintaining that only “the President” hired and dismissed teachers and all other employees. Students, he continued, possessed “no right to strike, stay out of classes, and keep others out.” He decreed that only those students who accepted this principle could continue in school and that others were to “drop out.” The following day, Harris called armed police to the school, and many parents, summoned earlier by Harris with whom they agreed, took their children home.

After Harris refused their request to speak formally to the press and forbade them from meeting on campus, some students continued protesting. At a demonstration on the town plaza, several students, including girls, denounced Harris.<sup>543</sup> An anonymous Poly student, interviewed after Harris had given his ultimatum and called the police, issued a public statement. Speaking in terms radically different from those that earlier had expressed students’ faith in Harris, he reminded his audience that, initially, the protest had targeted only Dean Leker. According to students, Leker had prohibited group gatherings, forbade students from socializing on school grounds, interfered with Student Council meetings, and been consistently, gratuitously authoritarian and excessively punitive. He, for example, had imposed a twenty-five-cent fine on

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<sup>543</sup> J. Barea, “El Director del Instituto Politécnico de San Germán se niega aceptar las condiciones de los estudiantes y les ordena que se retiren de los terrenos del Colegio,” *La Correspondencia*, 23 May 1930, n.p.; *La Democracia*, 22 May 1930, 7.

students who dropped bread crumbs on the floor. After the Harrises defended Leker against the fifteen charges brought against him by the “Revolutionary Committee,” however, the protest qualitatively changed. The student no longer considered J. Will Harris the guardian of Poly’s welfare and, instead, accused Harris of having “changed his religious discourse into one of war against the students” by authorizing the police to occupy the campus. He also turned on the faculty, accusing them of being “accomplices in abuse” for supporting Harris’s decisions.<sup>544</sup>

On May 22, Harris expelled 70 of approximately 250 students. Students then took matters into their own hands. When many police left to eat lunch, students began vandalizing school buildings. They torched the carpentry shop and smashed furniture in the hall built with donations from Puerto Ricans. Harris later publicly invited interested parties to visit the school to witness the extensive property damage, appealed to the governor for the protection of the insular police, and initiated a criminal investigation.<sup>545</sup>

Island-wide newspapers not only covered these events, but played a role in them. During the strike, for example, *El Mundo* claimed that North American teachers would replace six Puerto Rican professors the following June.<sup>546</sup> Students objected to this, claiming that the replacements would be less qualified. On May 30, Professor Pedro Casablanca, one of the teachers said to be targeted for replacement, told *El Tiempo* that he had been fired because Harris

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<sup>544</sup> “Los últimos acontecimientos del conflicto del Instituto Politécnico de San Germán,” *El Tiempo*, 24 May 1930, 1-2; Edgardo Biaggi, “Un graduado del Instituto Politécnico de San Germán juzga imparcialmente los sucesos ocurridos en la institución,” *La Democracia*, 9 June 1930, 1.

<sup>545</sup> J. Barea, “Los estudiantes del Instituto Politécnico le pegaron fuego al taller de carpintería,” *La Correspondencia* 24 May 1930, n.p.

<sup>546</sup> “Regresaron a clases los alumnos del ‘Instituto Politécnico’,” *El Mundo*, 7(?) May 1930, n.p.

believed that he and other Puerto Rican teachers had incited the rebellion. Casablanca insistently denied that and maintained he would seek legal representation to contest his firing.<sup>547</sup>

The newspapers also became venues for expressing feelings about Americanization and the missionary project. In *La Democracia*, newspaper of the *hacendados*, Clemente Soto Vélez, poet and Nationalist Party activist, called for all Puerto Rican students to warmly congratulate their Poly peers for “the valor with which they had confronted the wild and imperialist command” that Leker, a representative of U.S. imperialism, had wanted to impose on them.<sup>548</sup> The students’ “manly protest,” he continued, projected civic pride, despite the “degenerating politics” that schools inculcated in students. It declared that the hour had come for “all possible resistance” to prevent “our nationality from being slyly undermined.” The island had been so victimized by assaults and abuses, he claimed, that today “our youth en masse rebelled against the cursed regime, ... the product of lethal colonialism.” The island’s schools prepared men to be slaves, disparaged “our homeland” while aggrandizing the “invader,” taught Puerto Ricans to turn against one another, and undermined children’s intellectual potential. This “marvelous” school system implanted in Puerto Rico, he concluded, was fit for only “a degenerate and subjected people.”<sup>549</sup>

The following day, Puerto Rican pastor S.M. Alfaro wrote an article for *El Tiempo*, the pro-statehood paper, supporting Harris and Poly. He excoriated the students, their supporters, and those who failed to rally to the school’s defense. He denounced press coverage as biased

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<sup>547</sup> “Se acusa a los profesores puertorriqueños del Instituto Politécnico de haber incitado a los estudiantes a la rebeldía,” *El Tiempo*, 30 May 1930, 1; “Alrededor de los últimos acontecimientos del Colegio Politécnico,” *El Tiempo*, 31 May 1930, n.p.

<sup>548</sup> Later, Soto Vélez was tried and convicted, with Pedro Albizu Campos and Juan Antonio Corretjier, for seditious conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. in relation to the murder of the Insular Police chief. The conviction was highly controversial, for the first jury, composed largely of Puerto Ricans, found them innocent; a second jury composed predominantly of mainlanders found them guilty.

<sup>549</sup> C. Soto Vélez, “La protesta de los estudiantes del Colegio Politécnico de San Germán es una demostración de valor cívico,” *La Democracia*, 26 Mayo 1930, n.p.

and unilateral. Irresponsible and disrespectful students had caused more than \$5000 worth of damage to Poly, the “huge project” and “most deserving work” of Harris, who had secured so many scholarships for Puerto Ricans to study at Henry Ford’s factories and educated so many poor Puerto Ricans. He reminded readers that the Dominican Republic had sought Harris’s help and offered financing to establish such an institution there. Would educated people, he entreated, disregard all the efforts of this “noble Texan” who had found jobs for so many? Would they encourage youthful rebellion against discipline, authority—and “worst of all”—their “adoptive father”? Alfaro claimed that unnamed “partisan” people with goals “less than altruistic” had willfully misinformed the press and chided those who supported the students’ “bolshevist” actions. He suggested that an “astute and demonic” hand operated in the shadows, “weaving the plot, stoking the fire, and taking steps towards African passions and hatreds.” Concluding his condemnation of the “scandalous” events and responses to them, he cited the bitter adage “‘Those who raise crows have their eyes plucked out.’”<sup>550</sup>

Other Puerto Ricans also demonstrated their support for Poly, focusing on the wanton property damage and personal disrespect shown toward Harris. “Luz de las Lomas,” a Masonic Lodge in San Germán, for example published an article in *El Aguila*. Reporting that Poly would reopen for classes on June 2, it suggested that the students, carried away by the “romanticism” of youth, had transformed into a “wanton mob” that now had to bear the consequences of their actions. Harris, Leker, and the other faculty needed “native collaborators,” it continued, encouraging teachers, students, and all those desiring the development and happiness of the *pueblo* of Puerto Rico to offer that support.<sup>551</sup> Alumni organized a well-attended meeting at

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<sup>550</sup> “Alrededor de los escándolos del Colegio Politécnico de San Germán,” *El Tiempo*, 27 May 1930, 1-2.

<sup>551</sup> “El Instituto Politécnico de San Germán se abrirá de nuevo el 2 de junio,” *El Aguila*, 29 May 1930, n.p.

Poly for alumni who supported Harris.<sup>552</sup> Sixty-one Puerto Rican men, including a mayor, several legislators, businessmen, engineers, *hacendados*, lawyers, and teachers, some of them Poly graduates, signed an article that strongly defended Harris. These included J.B. Montalvo, the textile contractor who had criticized the Puerto Rican legislature's message to Lindbergh.<sup>553</sup> The middle class so eagerly sought by missionaries had grown and a large sector of it did, indeed, support the missionary project and Poly in particular. Some of Harris's Puerto Rican supporters blamed anti-American nationalists for duping and manipulating the excitable youth. Leker blamed one of the ousted Puerto Rican faculty members, claiming that person had previously schemed to occupy the deanship and later Harris's position. Leker alleged that this teacher "[f]or more than a year ... [had] been working against [Leker], and by watching his chances, and by using anti-American argument, also misrepresentations, he finally got the revolt under way."<sup>554</sup>

Later, some Poly faculty and administrators privately admitted that some charges against Dean Leker were well-founded. Héctor R. Feliciano Ramos, in his official *Historia de la Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico*, did not fully analyze the incident; he discreetly supported Leker's claim and attributed the conflict with students to the dean's imposition of high-school regulations on students in the college-level courses.<sup>555</sup> Additionally, an unpublished analysis of the school by Juan José Osuna for the Board of Trustees suggested that problems arose at that time from "lack of discipline on the part of the student body, ... too much meddling

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<sup>552</sup> Adolfo Cordero et al., "A LOS GRADUADOS, Estudiantes y Amigos del Instituto Politécnico de San German" "Asuntos Estudiantiles," Caja 1 Cartapachio "Disturbios," UI-MH.

<sup>553</sup> "Una exposición para esclarecer, en su más estricta verdad, Los hechos ocurridos en el Instituto Politécnico de San Germán," Clipping with *La Correspondencia* (n.d.): 1; 3 in pencil, "Huelgas," UI Centro de Recursos Educativos.

<sup>554</sup> Dean Leker to "Dear Friends and Relatives."

<sup>555</sup> Feliciano Ramos, *Historia de la Universidad Interamericana*, 195, fn 2.

with politics, and almost a constant misunderstanding between the administration and the faculty.”<sup>556</sup>

Though nationalism influenced the Poly disturbances, the abrupt, rancorous turn against Harris suggested additional factors. At the beginning of the strike, students publicly expressed their faith in Harris’s capacity for seeing the justness of their cause, while simultaneously alluding to the “valor, chivalry, and nobility” of their “race.” This suggested that they saw themselves as aligned with—though different from—Harris. After his failure to discern their righteousness and his demand that they leave campus, the rebellious students became increasingly antagonistic. And the more they challenged Harris, the further they differentiated themselves from him. Their declaration that they would not “abandon” Poly, because *they* constituted Poly was an audacious challenge of the school’s “father” by the young students. In their initial manifesto, students had held Harris responsible for the welfare of the school; with the later declaration, however, *they* assumed that mantle of authority—signaling the end of a prescribed period of tutelage.

Additionally, the incident’s explosive nature and the strong language used by participants suggested underlying tensions, and several factors shaped how those tensions were expressed. Nationalists and students appeared to have framed some conflicts as generational. The nationalists praised the initiative of young students who resisted a shameful system too long accepted by older Puerto Ricans.<sup>557</sup> Students forcefully rejected Leker’s attempt to dominate them *in loco parentis* and objected to Harris’s attempt to infantilize them by summoning their

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<sup>556</sup> Osuna, “A Study of the Polytechnic University.”

<sup>557</sup> C. Soto Vélez, “La protesta de los estudiantes del Colegio Politecnico.”



parents. Had students been more comfortable with Harris's "attitude of patronal benevolence"<sup>558</sup> than Leker's naked "despotism"? Did their inability to countenance Harris's metamorphosis from the good-but-strict father to the unyielding superior intensify their rancor? Did this change in student behavior represent a generational shift in responses to Americanization, from an initial trusting optimism, as the politicians claimed in the Lindbergh matter, to a frustrated, suspicious distrust in the colonial state and its representatives? Perhaps the students' rebellion articulated their own "politics of disenchantment."

The Americanized Puerto Rican educational system figured prominently in both the Lindbergh and Poly incidents. In the former, the local legislators built their claims on the foundational U.S. ideology of representative, participatory democracy, emphasizing its propagation in the schools. Though they subverted that ideology to make claims, the politicians nevertheless legitimated it and the colonial educational system by employing those to legitimize their claims. Conversely, in the Poly disturbance, nationalists attacked the educational system, de-legitimizing it as the product of "lethal colonialism." According to nationalists, those schools did not prepare children to think and act like patriotic Patrick Henry; rather, those colonized schools, worthy only of a "degenerate and subordinated people," aggrandized the "invader," disparaged the "*patria*," and stunted intellectual development. Poly's Puerto Rican supporters, in contrast, employed Poly's norms of respect for individuals and private property, moderation, productivity, and obedience to criticize the students' actions.

All parties thus acknowledged the power of education—which made Poly such a fitting vehicle for resisting and accommodating Americanization. Poly's power as both school and symbol had been affirmed as early as 1923 in the Carnegie Foundation report, which asserted

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<sup>558</sup> This term comes from Puerto Rican author René Marqués, in his important essay, "The Docile Puerto Rican," in Robert Santiago, *Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writing: An Anthology* (NY: Random House, 1995), 156.

that Poly had a disproportionate influence on Puerto Rico and filled “a much more important place in the educational economy of the island than its limited resources and modest procedure would appear to indicate.”<sup>559</sup> Given that the public viewed Poly and J. Will Harris as a single entity, that disproportion also applied to Harris and responses to him. His renown, his connections with the mainland captains of industry, philanthropists, and powerful politicians, made him not only an effective fundraiser, but the embodiment of Americanization and thus an attractive target for nationalists and an attractive icon for pro-U.S. Puerto Ricans.

Despite the expulsion of students, nationalism soon resurfaced at Poly, pushed this time by more moderate students. Just six months after the insurrection, students proposed naming their Literary Society paper “Alma Boricua” (“Puerto Rican Soul”). This related to nationalism in three ways. First, language dominated nationalist debates, not only in the Department of Education and insular legislature, but also more broadly; the choice of a name in Spanish rather than English was thus political. Second, the term “Boricua,” derived from “Borinquen” (“Land of the Brave Lord”), the pre-Columbian Arawak name for the island, had nationalist connotations.<sup>560</sup> Third, Harris’s preference for English names for groups and publications affiliated with Poly and his insistence on speaking and teaching in English at the school were so well known that all involved would have understood consciously that this suggestion challenged his personal authority. The society’s faculty sponsor, Miss Rodríguez, did not consider the name “proper.” The entire faculty sustained her judgment on the grounds that “the name which the paper bears should be such as to make the Poly Institute known wherever the paper is received.”<sup>561</sup> In other words, Poly’s Americanizing agenda, of which English-language

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<sup>559</sup> Dr. W.S. Learned, cited in White Harris, *Steps*, 99.

<sup>560</sup> Roberto Santiago, ed. *Boricuas*, xviii.

<sup>561</sup> *Faculty Minutes* Vol. 1 (20 Nov. 1930): 47, UI-MH.

instruction remained a crucial component, required that the paper have an English name. This decision does not seem to have cowed students, however; a year later, seventeen students wrote—in Spanish—a letter requesting that classes be suspended on Columbus Day in order to stage a commemorative program. Their use of Spanish and valorization of Columbus were congruent with nationalists' consistent and persistent promotion of Hispanic aspects of Puerto Rican culture. The faculty conceded to this proposal, although they reduced the commemoration to an afternoon and directed students to plan it with Harris.<sup>562</sup>

Beyond Poly, other Puerto Rican Protestants also pushed for changes that suggested a shift away from or modification of Americanization. In 1930, for example, the Methodists published their annual report for the first time in Spanish and continued thereafter in Spanish. In 1932, the assimilationist Association of Registered Nurses of Puerto Rico, a group largely founded and maintained by missionary nursing school graduates who strongly identified with Protestantism, officially changed its name to the Asociación de Enfermeras Graduadas de Puerto Rico. The power to name, to define, was highly significant and these changes demonstrated that Puerto Ricans could—and did—tailor the missionary project, altering it in ways that did not precisely fit the original pattern drawn by the missionaries. These acts reflected a deeper, broader, and more consequential development among Puerto Rican Protestants that would lead to conflicts between Puerto Ricans and mainlanders and between missionaries on the island and those on the mainland. The following case study treats one such instance.

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<sup>562</sup> *Faculty Minutes* Vol. 1 (22 Oct 1931): 79, UI-MH.

## 6.4 POPULAR CLAIMS-MAKING

As part of their modernizing agenda and to indigenize its workforce, missionaries contributed to the growth of jobs through training programs that introduced new occupational categories such as nursing and social work. The foremost settlement house on the island, the Marina Neighborhood House (M.N.H.) in Mayagüez, played an important role in this development. Its Leadership Training School, opened in 1922, combined academic (including English, psychology and pedagogy) and religious studies with social work to prepare young women to provide pastoral care in communities and the church. A publicity pamphlet described it as a “home school where young Christian girls may secure a three-year course in theory and organized practical experience in Christian service connected with church or neighborhood house.” To be admitted, young girls had to “have completed at least the first year of high school and have given evidence of upright Christian character.” Their practicum consisted of kindergarten, primary, vacation-Bible or Sunday-school teaching, organizing boys’ and girls’ clubs, home nursing, and “many other activities connected with a wide-awake up-to-date neighborhood house.” Students provided these services in exchange for tuition and room and board; they were also paid small stipends for occasional services to churches and communities outside the Marina congregation.<sup>563</sup>

Competition for admission and post-graduation jobs increased as both access to public education and under- and unemployment increased throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Extended interactions between island and mainland actors over funding for training and job placements provide an example of claims-making that differed significantly in methods, dynamics, and goals

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<sup>563</sup> *A Training School for Porto Rican Social-Religious Workers: The Marina Mission, Mayaguez, Porto Rico*, BNM, n.d., n.p., RG 301.8 Series V Subseries 19 (Marina Neighborhood House) Box 15, PHS.

from that of the rebellious Poly students. In this case, female graduates of the M.N.H. Leadership Training School demanded that the missionaries fulfill their promises of upward social mobility by providing jobs that befit their training as lay community workers. Participants in this process included, on the island, influential missionary Clara E. Hazen, the director of the M.N.H.; Rev. Ángel Archilla Cabrera, a graduate of the M.N.H., the contemporary pastor of the Mayagüez Central Presbyterian Church, and later the first Puerto Rican superintendent of any Protestant denomination; and graduates of the training school, represented by Julia Irizarry, Virginia González, and Eduarda Deyláns, acting for the Alumnae Association. Participating from the mainland was Edna Voss, Secretary of the Presbyterian Division of Schools and Hospitals of the Board of National Missions, under whose jurisdiction the M.N.H. fell.<sup>564</sup>

In 1927, Rev. Archilla and Clara Hazen proposed extending the M.N.H. work to Mayagüez center and requested from Edna Voss funds to employ M.N.H. Training School graduates as primary school teachers in the Mayagüez Central Presbyterian Church.<sup>565</sup> Voss initially replied that the budget had already been made up and suggested they try again the next year.<sup>566</sup> Two weeks later, Voss wrote Hazen that the project would not be funded on the grounds that it was independent of the M.N.H. and thus not eligible for support.<sup>567</sup> Rev. Archilla quickly responded, arguing that the project was an extension—not independent—of the M.N.H. Emphasizing his good relations with Hazen, Archilla stated that he and Hazen had been working together for over four years without friction. He also assured Voss that “the girls will be a great

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<sup>564</sup> By this time, the Woman’s Home Missions Board had been subsumed under the Board of National Missions, a change that greatly reduced women’s power within the institutional church. Voss was also the mainland correspondent in the Presbyterian Nursing School admission-policy matter discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>565</sup> Edward Odell to Edna Voss, 23 August 1927, Board of National Missions Inter-Office Memo, *ibid.*

<sup>566</sup> Edna Voss to Ángel Archilla, 24 August 1927, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>567</sup> Edna Voss to Clara Hazen, 8 September 1927, letter, *ibid.*

help for the developing of the church.”<sup>568</sup> A month later, Voss wrote Archilla that the project had been approved, with funding to begin April 1, 1928.<sup>569</sup> An island-based missionary and Puerto Rican Protestant together had successfully lobbied to secure employment for graduates of the Training School.

Two years later, in 1929, Voss informed Hazen of impending, drastic budget cuts and suggested that the M.N.H. close the Leadership Training School.<sup>570</sup> Hazen responded that “to drop this line of work would be the most sorrowfully losing step that could be taken,” given “that it is one of the neediest lines of work—that which deals with the development of character.” She asked Voss whether funds might be provided by the mainland Education Department, the local Puerto Rican Presbytery, or from money raised for relief from Hurricane San Felipe. Arguing that eliminating the students would not make fiscal sense, because others would have to be paid for the services the students were providing, Hazen adamantly argued that cutting “out the training of young women for leaders would be a crippling of the Presbyterian work on the Island.” Reminding Voss of the church’s publicly professed mission, she warned that dropping any programs “would speak loudly against our great Presbyterian Church who came to P.R. with promise for such a time and such a need as has existed and still exists and will for some time yet.”<sup>571</sup> Hazen had cleverly appealed to a favorite Protestant trope, character development, and, as the “participant-observer,” her warning carried weight—a successful approach, for they reached a compromise. No students were to be admitted in 1930, when the prerequisite would be

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<sup>568</sup> Ángel Archilla Cabrera to Edna Voss, 10 September 1927, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>569</sup> Edna Voss to Ángel Archilla, 13 October 1927, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>570</sup> Edna Voss to Clara Hazen, 11 March 1929, letter; Clara Hazen, letter to Edna Voss, 22 March 1929, *ibid.*

<sup>571</sup> Clara Hazen to Edna Voss, 19 March 1929, letter, *ibid.*

raised from one to two years of high school and no more than two admitted in the following year. In comparison, the 1929 entering class had four students.<sup>572</sup>

Six months later, Hazen importuned again, insisting on the need to maintain contact with high school students completing the new prerequisite. Playing on denominational rivalry, she told Voss that Baptists, in addition to providing high school education, gave two years' aid for university study to their students, proof that Hazen was "not alone in pleading for added help to make available the opportunities already offered, - for the education of our P.R. girls preparing to devote their lives to christian [sic] work – a needy cause and one that does not hold out the hopes for financial gain that many other lines do yet." Again, Hazen appealed to a central Protestant value, that of self-sacrifice. Again, Hazen inquired about other funding sources. Deftly utilizing the Protestant notion of Puerto Rico as a bridge to all Latin America, Hazen told Voss that a graduate of the Training School and her minister-husband, while recently visiting from Colombia, had expressed their wish for funding for one of the graduates to work with them in South America. Hazen further emphasized the importance of training women, declaring that every day she saw "stronger evidences that prepared young women are needed and will find a place in the development of the religious life of Porto Rico among the Latin-American-Americans [sic] and in all Latin America."<sup>573</sup> Again, Hazen appealed to an issue frequently articulated in missionary discourse: the importance of women, which reflected Protestants' desire to indigenize their mission work and the gendered nature of that work. An article in *The Spirit of Missions* about St. Catherine's Training School, the Episcopal equivalent of the M.N.H. Leadership Training School, succinctly captured the themes of indigenization and gender: "Christianity and its handmaidens, education, personal hygiene and orderly living, can not get far

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<sup>572</sup> Clara Hazen to Edna Voss, 22 March 1929, letter, *ibid.*

<sup>573</sup> Clara Hazen to Edna Voss, 1 October 1929, letter, *ibid.*

unless those to whom it ministers become ministers themselves, able to spread the efforts of foreign missionaries further and further into the new territory.”<sup>574</sup> This time, Voss refused Hazen’s request.<sup>575</sup>

In 1932, pressured by the economic crisis, the Training School graduates spoke for themselves. Julia Irizarry, Virginia González, and Eduarda Deyláns sent the following petition to the mainland board:

In the meeting of our Alumni Society of the Marina Training School, the following resolution was passed:

Whereas, the Marina Training School is an institution of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. for the training of religious leaders;

Whereas, many of the girls graduated in this institution have not been able to find work in the churches of the island;

Whereas, they are anxious to work wherever the Lord in His Providence might send them;

Therefore, we ask our Executive Committee to try to interest the Board authorities to do their best to help these girls get a job.<sup>576</sup>

Unfortunately, the only record found of response to this plea are a recommendation from the Division of Schools and Hospitals’ Advisory Committee that the petition “be referred back to the Secretary of the Division for sympathetic acknowledgement and for consultation with Mr. Odell of the Department of the West Indies and with Mr. Archilla of Porto Rico” and a letter from Voss to Irizarry that “in spite of the desperate financial situation,” the board would make every effort to provide them jobs.<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> Beatrice Shelton Haden, “Porto Rican Girls Studying Church Work,” *SOM* (Dec. 1928): 787-788.

<sup>575</sup> Edna Voss to Clara Hazen, 3 Oct 1929, letter, RG 301.8 Series V Subseries 19 (Marina Neighborhood House) Box 15, PHS.

<sup>576</sup> Julia Irizarry, Virginia González, Eduarda Deyláns to Mrs. F.J. Bennett, 25 May 1932, letter, *ibid*.

<sup>577</sup> Division of Schools and Hospitals, “FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE,” 14 June 1932; Edna R. Voss, Secy. to Miss Irizarry, 14 June 1932, letter, *ibid*.



Though we don't know whether the Puerto Rican women succeeded in obtaining job funding, we can infer from the very act of petitioning several points. First, the women felt entitled to help from the Mission Board. This implied that they held the Board responsible for providing for their welfare, perhaps because it did so while they were students. This could reflect a pattern of clientelism continuous with pre-1898 Spanish paternalist traditions; or it could reflect a new dynamic in which educated women organized to seek compensation for skills beneficial to their communities. Certainly these women had familiarity with the frequent strikes for better wages by proletarians such as female tobacco workers and male cane workers, for most likely they were related to those strikers and ministered to their families. Perhaps the missionary ideology of the dignity of labor, including harmonious labor relations, influenced these actors who collectively, formally, and most courteously made their request. This decorum certainly differentiated these petitioners from the more boisterous, in-the-streets, striking tobacco workers, a difference the missionary board would appreciate. Second, the claim's literate nature reflected an M.N.H. accomplishment: these women could read, write formally, support an argument, and employ a persuasive rhetorical strategy. They reminded the Board of its authority over the school, thus asserting that the Board held responsibility for the welfare of its graduates. These women did not define success as completion of their academic and practical training, but as gainful employment using that training—in other words, the practical Christianity so extolled by the missionaries. They expressed their willingness to work “wherever the Lord in His Providence might send them,” adroitly evoking the Protestants' ideology of vocation, service, and female self-sacrifice to make their case. Finally, these women engaged in politics. Not politics within the sphere of the colonial state, but politics within the sphere of the missionary bureaucracy, the sphere which, in their experience, had acted so often as a proxy for the state.

And a rather fitting sphere within which to expend their efforts, since literate women did not win the right to vote until the fall of 1932.<sup>578</sup> Additionally, relative to the colonial state, missions practiced decentralized decision-making which, combined with their “practical Christianity,” gave them greater flexibility to more immediately respond to local needs. Meeting those needs fit with the missionaries’ understanding of their civilizing role and also benefited them by legitimizing their project to poorer Puerto Ricans and those also committed to civilizing. These factors made the graduates’ choice to make claims on the missionary bureaucracy rather than the colonial state appear quite savvy. This perhaps reflected the Leadership Training School’s success with these women, though it produced for the mainland board an unintended consequence.

The contrasts between this form of claims-making, that of the Puerto Rican legislature, and that of the rebellious Poly students demonstrates the variety of responses to Americanization and the contingency of colonizer-colonizing relations. Methods, goals, and dynamics varied as did the actors and local conditions. In the Leadership Training School and Poly cases, affinities did not align according to national identity. Women publicly participated except in the Lindbergh case, reflecting the masculinist character of formal politics at the time. Complaints in all three instances emerged from dynamics particular to third-decade Americanization, which suggests that the effects of earlier stages of Americanization shaped consequent aspects of Americanization and responses to it. It also demonstrates the dynamic, uneven, sometimes unanticipated, sometimes contradictory nature of Americanization. The following study of industrial workshops in the settlement house context presents additional evidence of Americanization’s contradictory nature.

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<sup>578</sup> In 1935 universal suffrage was enacted.

## **6.5 CHANGES IN FUNCTION: THE SETTLEMENT HOUSES**

The more well-funded Protestant denominations established settlement houses, which, like all missionary projects, had educational components. These institutions, however, primarily functioned as social-service agencies for poorer Puerto Ricans. Influenced by the mainland Progressive settlement-house movement that sought to Americanize immigrants, missionaries at these institutions taught literacy, personal hygiene, modern child-rearing, cooking, English, job skills, and—of course—Protestantism. Some settlement-house industrial work programs, like the vocational schools, provided skills training intended to increase Puerto Ricans' access to jobs elsewhere; others operated as businesses, usually cooperatives that produced, marketed, and sold members' sewn work. A few offered specialized training for female religious workers.

Two motives largely impelled missionaries to establish settlement houses: reaching Puerto Ricans who did not attend Protestant schools or churches and providing some immediate assistance to poorer Puerto Ricans. Missionaries initially assumed they would provide such relief only in the short term and in a supplementary manner; Americanization's developmental programs, they believed, would generate jobs that substantially reduced or eliminated such need and public health programs would take over those elements of their programs. Those assumptions proved incorrect.

Many missionaries, particularly those who had been on the island for more than a few years, painfully comprehended the progression of Americanization's effects. In the second decade of occupation, missionary reports became more subdued, lacking the exuberant sense of promise of the earlier years. The number of articles in the missionary press that focused on social problems generated by Americanization noticeably increased. As early as 1911, for example, a Methodist missionary observed that prosperity had advanced in "leaps & bounds"

since U.S. occupation, but that its benefits fell “in the laps of the few and not of the many.” High food prices hurt the poor because “people take to work in sugar mills or tobacco factories and pay no attention to garden or truck farming. Milk that ten years ago sold here in San Juan at six cents per cuartillo ... costs twelve now.”<sup>579</sup> This reduction in subsistence farming, according to Dietz, stemmed from the new “lopsided organization of the economy, which favored cash crops for export and reduced the possibilities for growing food locally as land values increased, squeezing out low-profit crops and low-income landholders, whose land was turned over to cane production.” Before 1898, low wages and seasonal employment compelled many Puerto Ricans to plant subsistence gardens to feed their families and sell any surplus regionally. Some owned the small plots on which they gardened and others, reflecting the semi-feudal relations of late nineteenth-century Puerto Rico, were permitted to garden on land owned by the *hacendados* for whom they worked when wage work was available. Shortly after U.S. intervention, however, access to land sharply diminished. In 1899, almost ninety percent of all farms had fewer than twenty *cuerdas* and accounted for one-third of all cultivated land; farms with at least one hundred *cuerdas* accounted for another third of cultivated land, though they represented only 2.2% of all farms. By 1910, however, those larger farms constituted 6.4% of all farms and comprised 62.7% of all farmland. By 1930, farms with more than 500 *cuerdas* made up only 0.7% of all farms, but controlled 33.7% of all farmland. These changes had serious consequences for production of staple foods. In 1899, forty-two percent of cultivated land produced crops for domestic consumption; by 1929, that figure dropped to twenty-eight percent—despite a doubling of land under cultivation. Additionally, Puerto Rico’s population

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<sup>579</sup> “Puerto Rico’s Material Prosperity,” *EDC*, 15 Dec. 1911, 15.

grew by sixty percent between 1898 and 1930, contributing to the decreased amount of land per capita devoted to food production.<sup>580</sup>

Missionaries appreciated these changes because they faced their effects every day in the lives of the majority of their followers, poorer laborers, and the challenges that poverty created for their congregations.<sup>581</sup> In 1914, *Puerto Rico Evangélico* published a Baptist *Catecismo de Servicio Social/Catechism of Social Service*, which championed social service as “the rescue of human society from diseases, poverty, crime, and misery; the development and perfection of social institutions and the construction of a social order that is the city of God on earth.” Calling for justice and fraternity, it proposed that social service programs provide the conditions necessary for clean, healthy, moral, and spiritual lives.<sup>582</sup> This emphasis on the need for social services reflected growing concern that existing Protestant and colonial state institutions might not produce Americanization’s promised social and material uplift.<sup>583</sup>

This increasing need for social services impelled missionaries to found settlement houses. The intersections of missionaries’ goals with the demands of local actors shaped the trajectories of these institutions. Opened in 1915 in Mayagüez, the Marina Neighborhood House became the best known and longest operating settlement house on the island.<sup>584</sup> It had evolved

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<sup>580</sup> Dietz, *Economic History of Puerto Rico*, 106-107; 122-123. The colonial state, and later some missionaries, often blamed poverty on this “surplus” or “excess” population. For a stinging critique of this, see Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*, Ch. 3.

<sup>581</sup> Additionally, missionaries were preoccupied with the issue of “self-support,” the ability of local churches to financially sustain themselves. The mainland missionary establishment came to use that as a barometer of success and missionaries on the island frequently attributed their lack of success in this area to their congregants’ poverty. They oscillated between defensiveness and pride that, relatively speaking, Puerto Ricans sacrificed much more than their mainland counterparts. In contrast, Puerto Rican Pentecostalist Protestants, independent of any mainland missionary institutions and evangelizing at the same time, managed self-support from the beginning.

<sup>582</sup> “La Iglesia Evangélica y los Problemas Sociales,” *PRE*, 10 March 1914, 2.

<sup>583</sup> Also see *Neighborhood Ministering in Porto Rico* (New York City: The Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1915), 1.

<sup>584</sup> Edward A. Odell, *Where the Americas Meet West Indies* (NY: Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1941), 35.

from a Protestant day school, the Playa School, opened in 1901.<sup>585</sup> By 1924, the M.N.H. had “added to the regular work of [medical] dispensary, clubs, day nursery, kindergarten, primary and industrial schools, special lectures and circulating library, the additional activities of visiting nursing by a newly appointed graduate nurse, supervision of the uptown church’s kindergarten of fifty children, and a boarding department of seven girls in training for Christian social service work with kindergarten training as a basis.”<sup>586</sup> According to Clara E. Hazen, founder of (and instrumental in expanding) the M.N.H. at which she worked for twenty-five years, “When we went to Mayaguez [sic], ... we had no established plans or preconceived notions. Beginning with the church as the natural center, we built our activities around it. Community needs led from one thing to another. A day nursery was needed. We were the first on the island. Finding the people doing exquisite embroidery on the wrong kind of cloth, we bent our energies toward industrial training. Out of the need for social and religious leaders grew the Training School for lay workers.”<sup>587</sup> At the fiftieth anniversary of the M.N.H., a speaker remarked that Hazen had “started the Day Nursery to care for children who had been left locked in the homes while the mothers went to work.”<sup>588</sup> These mothers represented the increasing number of women entering the paid workforce in the Americanized economy. M.N.H. had evolved into a multi-service community center.

Hazen initiated an industrial work program “to give honorable labor to the women.”<sup>589</sup>

Like most such programs for females, it produced needlework. The type of needlework varied in

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<sup>585</sup> Elizabeth Osborn Thompson, *Woman’s Board of Home Missions: A Short History* (NY: The Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, n.d.), 24, PHS.

<sup>586</sup> *Forty-Fifth Annual Report, Woman’s Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1924, 36, PHS. Graduates of this program went on to staff other settlement houses, including the Aguadilla Neighborhood House.

<sup>587</sup> “Press release: Dept. of Education and Publicity,” Presbyterian Board of National Missions, March 5, 1931, File H5: Hazen, Clara E., PHS.

<sup>588</sup> *First Class Mail*, 1952, “Newsletters, Reports Correspondence, 1940-1966, RG 301.8-15-27, PHS.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

terms of material (cotton, silk, linen), technique (simple or complicated handwork, sewing-machine work, embroidery), and product (handkerchiefs, linens, nightgowns, children's clothes, collars and cuffs, shirts, etc.). Particularly complicated to produce, and sought by richer mainlanders reacting against mass-produced clothing, were *calado* (also called drawnwork) and *mundillo* lace. Both were Spanish legacies. *Calado* consisted of making a design not by simple applique, but by drawing threads in both the warp and woof of the cloth. According to Assistant Trade Commissioner J.R. McKey, "lace making had fallen into decadence by the time of the American occupation" and "a Mrs. Casey, connected with a Protestant school at Aguadilla ... had much to do with reviving this industry." According to sociologist María del Carmen Baerga-Santini's nuanced analysis of the Puerto Rican needlework industry between 1914 and 1940, before 1898 this type of needlework had been practiced mainly by elite women, as part of their education. Post 1898, however, poorer women began producing it for sale in response to the requests of tourists and North American teachers.<sup>590</sup> Aguadilla soon became "the principal point" of lace production. Around Mayagüez, the island's center for hand-worked textiles, women produced needle-work mainly at home or in small workshops or sweatshops (*talleres*). This nascent industry soon expanded in both size and locations and involved mainland manufacturers, local contractors, and both factory and home production under a putting-out system.<sup>591</sup>

Particularly disturbed by the proletarianization of women forced to leave their homes and (often unattended) children to earn money, several denominations established industrial

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<sup>590</sup> Excerpt from *Porto Rico Progress*, 12 April 1928, 5-6, cited in Baerga-Santini, "Exclusion and Resistance: Household, Gender and Work in the Needlework Industry," 406; 57-58.

<sup>591</sup> For a discussion of the exceptional place of the needlework industry within orthodox definitions of "pre-capitalist" or "transitional" modes of production, see Baerga-Santini, "Exclusion and Resistance," Chapter One. She also provides an insightful critique of the production/reproduction dichotomy and the construction of women wage workers as "problematic," and a close examination of this industry in Puerto Rico,

programs that ranged in size and organization. The Episcopalian St. Andrew's Craft Shop, also in Mayagüez, provided an "honest return in money" for girls' and women's needlework and opened a day nursery where mothers working at the shop could learn "the most sanitary methods of caring for babies" and workers took turns reading aloud to one another. Established in 1917 with five girls and five dollars, by 1937 it employed 300 girls and women, most of whom were "in part, or in most cases entirely dependent upon it for their living." It also opened branches in urban Ponce and rural Quebrada Limón and Manati, where workers came from the "almost inaccessible hill country where drought and soil erosion ma[de] it difficult for the heads of families to get more than a bare existence from the mountain sides. In many cases the only cash that [found] its way into the home [was] that earned by the women by needle work."<sup>592</sup> In Coamo, for half a day everyday except Sunday, Baptist missionary Henrietta Stassen taught her one-hundred students to make dresses. The older girls produced drawn work, for which the mission paid them, and used their earnings to "buy their dresses and shoes, to make it possible for them to attend school."<sup>593</sup> In Ponce Playa, Episcopalian Sarah R. Davidson gave orders for drawn work to "some very needy" older women.<sup>594</sup>

These workshops responded not only to the failures of the colonial state, but those of the private sector. Americanization had promised material uplift. Instead, concentration of land ownership, "sugarification" of the island, and rapid proletarianization led not to jobs that provided a living wage, but to stiff competition for underpaid piece-, seasonal, and factory work. As more Puerto Rican men earned less money, more women entered the paid work force,

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<sup>592</sup> Florence L. Everett, "A Church Beehive in a Land of Flowers: The Myriad Activities of a Mission School Among Our Adopted Children in Porto Rico," *SOM* (Dec. 1924): 768; Mildred B. Hayes, "Mission Craft Shop is Twenty Years Old," *SOM* (Sept. 1937): 441. Another source cites 1919 as its opening date.

<sup>593</sup> Henrietta Stassen, "A School Mother in Porto Rico," *Tidings* (July 1908): 18;

<sup>594</sup> Sarah R. Davidson, "Living and Working in Ponce," *SOM* (Sept 1905): 736.



attempting to compensate for those losses to family sustenance. Yet structural forces limited the ameliorative effects of these workshops. Even expansion of the needlework industry, though it provided more jobs, did not help much, for those jobs often paid below subsistence wages. Mildred B. Hayes, a missionary at St. Andrew's Craft Shop wrote in 1937 that "competition and lack of coöperation on the part of manufacturers and contractors have lowered prices to unbelievable levels. The effect upon both work and worker has been far from beneficial. 'How can you expect good work for such prices,' says the worker. 'Work of such quality is worth nothing,' says the contractor. And so the vicious circle continues."<sup>595</sup> Hayes contrasted the typical "poorly paid and poorly made work" with conditions at St Andrew's Craft Shop, where work and childcare was steadily available throughout the Depression, wages were good, and workers stayed for years. By 1941, some of the women working at St. Andrew's had "so improved their condition by means of this industry" that they were "among the middle-class group of the church," according to J. Merle Davis, research director for the International Missionary Council.<sup>596</sup>

Missionaries could provide good working conditions and pay living wages because of an impressive trans-Atlantic fair-trade system they had set up: selling the handwork at a good price to mainland customers, using established networks of the mission boards and local church supporters—metropolitan female circuits of distribution for goods produced exclusively by Puerto Rican women. This approach, though resourceful and well intentioned, could not be replicated on a scale large enough to benefit the many Puerto Ricans hurt by Americanization. And it depended on subsidization by unpaid mainland women and under- or unpaid missionaries—a problematic form of transfer payments.

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<sup>595</sup> Hayes, "Mission Craft Shop is Twenty Years Old," 442.

<sup>596</sup> Davis, *The Church in Puerto Rico's Dilemma*, 49.

In one way, the workshops' very existence—more precisely, the need for their existence—inherently critiqued Americanization. In another way, workshops were at odds with Americanization. They presented a solution that radically diverged from that of modernization's industrial-capitalist work relations. These workshops offered artisanal production and niche markets at a time when structural forces had propelled the island economy into capitalist modes of mass production and placed Puerto Rican needlework in competition with that of the mainland. They modeled alternative work relations and workplaces more “congenial” than the tobacco sheds and cigarette factories, where tuberculosis bacteria wafted through the air, or the coffee-sorting sheds, where young girls and women kneeled all day, or the isolation of sewing at home—all for subsistence wages.<sup>597</sup> And they provided incomes for some of the most marginalized Puerto Ricans, the rural poor. In that way, they resembled the missionary orphanages; the degree of benefit was conditioned by the extent of subalternity. Most obviously, industrial workshops consolidated in response to Americanization's deleterious effects on many Puerto Ricans, effects that transformed not only material and social conditions, but also responses to Americanization. Since they had not initially envisioned those effects, harsh reality forced many missionaries to reconsider the entire project, a process treated in the next section.

## 6.6 CHANGES IN CONSCIOUSNESS

The diminished optimism apparent by the second decade of Americanization deepened into disillusionment and pessimism by the third decade. Descriptions of Americanization's

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<sup>597</sup> Anne P. Saylor, “Helping the Helpless in Porto Rico: St. Andrew's Craft Shop, Mayaguez, Gives Work to Those Who Need Bread,” *SOM* (Dec. 1937): 735-736.

cumulative damage filled missionary writings. In 1923, the Methodist Rev. Edward Errett Wilson commented on environmental damage caused by the shift to industrial production of sugar. The “laboring classes” in the Methodist district, he reported, had experienced a year of “financial distress and curtailment [of work]” due to “lack of moisture to grow the fruit and vegetable crops in such parts where irrigation was not accessible,” an area extending from Aibonito south to the Caribbean and west to Ponce. This dry period occurred between the coffee and cane harvests—exacerbating an already difficult situation. Explaining that this phenomenon had been frequent in the previous decade, Wilson surmised that “the cutting down of trees in meadow and pasture land in order to extend the planting of cane” had caused the drought.<sup>598</sup> In 1926, minister Manuel Andújar remarked that “every year there [were] fewer landholders in Porto Rico than the year before,” which meant that “the small landowners [were] selling ... and that the large plantation owners [were] getting hold of the land.” He feared that, eventually, there would “be scarcely anything but large capitalists and the workingman without a place of his own on which to live.”<sup>599</sup> In 1927, the price of imported cabbage upset another missionary. Referring to Aibonito, mentioned in Wilson’s complaint four years earlier and a vegetable-growing area prior to 1898, the missionary exclaimed: “Just think! The City of San Juan sending cabbage up to the highest place on the island for consumption. The time may come when the people will have to breakfast on tabacco [sic], lunch on tobacco an [sic] dine on tobacco for practically nothing else is grown there.”<sup>600</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> Supt. Edward Errett Wilson, “Ponce District,” 1923, *Year Book, Official Minutes, XXI Session, Puerto Rico Mission, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 41.

<sup>599</sup> Manuel Andújar, “Superintendent’s Annual Report, *Year Book, 1926: Official Minutes, XXV Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 38.

<sup>600</sup> *Year Book, 1927: Official Minutes, XXVI Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 31. Also See *Year Book, 1928: Official Minutes, XXVII Session. Puerto Rico Mission. Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 30-31.

These comments on Americanization differed significantly from those made in the first decade. Wilson's observation that extensive sugar planting produced distress for workers and affliction for the environment concluded that the government ought to look into this matter. Though mildly, it nonetheless rebuked the colonial state—a qualitative divergence from missionaries' attitude towards the colonial state's earlier inability to provide public education. Twenty years earlier, missionaries had seen themselves as the state's enthusiastic partners and quickly came to its aid. Wilson's comment in 1923, strikingly devoid of enthusiasm, instead ominously positioned him at odds with—not a partner of—the colonial state. Similarly, the complaint about tobacco displacing smallholder production, though humorous, clearly articulated the serious problems of extreme dependence on imported foodstuffs. Andújar's comment on smallholders' proletarianization made clear that “the large capitalists” and “the workingman” had conflicting interests. Gone was the missionary rhetoric of transformation and progress through a harmonious partnership with the colonial state and between workers and U.S. business interests.

Critiques of Americanization increased further in the bleak decade of the 1930s. Most missionaries returned to the U.S. as mainland churches slashed their budgets, leaving only forty-one mainlanders by 1941.<sup>601</sup> One who remained, Anne P. Saylor, bemoaned in 1937 the distress entailed in figuring out how to best help those “whose crying need and persistent appeal is for just bread,” when resources were limited and saying yes to one meant that others would go hungry.<sup>602</sup> Resentment against the colonizing U.S. increased along with unemployment, hunger, and disease rates, contributing to the growth of anti-Americanism. Americanization had reneged on its promises of widespread social uplift, meaningful citizenship, and self-government.

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<sup>601</sup> Davis, *The Church in Puerto Rico's Dilemma*, 13.

<sup>602</sup> Anne P. Saylor, “Helping the Helpless in Porto Rico,” 735-736.

Like many Puerto Ricans, many missionaries also experienced a change of consciousness—a shift towards anti-Americanization. A 1930 survey by the multi-denominational Committee for Cooperation in Latin America illustrated how the pessimism of the 1920s had ripened into a bitter maturing of missionary consciousness. In it, Rev. Charles Detweiler lamented that Puerto Rico “has produced little of its own food; it has devoted itself too exclusively to coffee, tobacco and sugar. It neither spins nor weaves.” Recommending that more attention be paid to the social and economic needs of all people in the Caribbean, he lambasted Americanization’s effects on Puerto Rico. He decried the disappearance of small landowners, the underemployment of former farmers who were now “peons,” and the nearly total dependence on expensive imported foods. He mourned the “self-contained community [that] has passed away to be merged into a larger world economy, in the midst of which the people are helpless.” Warning that in “Porto Rico this process has reached its consummation; in Cuba it has spread over half of the island; in Haiti and the Dominican Republic it is at its beginning,” he despondently asked, “Must our industrial system with its increasing use of machinery, its concern for mass production and its disregard of the individual worker spread over all of these islands until it crushes the life of the people as the cane is crushed in its huge sugar mills?”<sup>603</sup>

Detweiler’s critique showed that some missionaries learned while trying to teach Puerto Ricans. Though he still promoted Puerto Rico as a “spiritual bridge between the two Americas,” he came to fear the industrial system that also crossed that bridge. For the horrendous material

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<sup>603</sup> Charles S. Detweiler, Chairman of West Indian Committee of CCLA, “Tentative Draft: A Survey of Mission Fields in the Caribbean,” 23 June 1930, Colección Particular, Philo Drury, Folder: Comité de Cooperación en América Latina/Correspondencia 1928-1933, SEPR-AH.

conditions and escalating social problems of the 1920s and 1930s embodied the antithesis of Americanization's promise—and were largely caused by it.

## **6.7 AMERICANIZATION'S CHANGES**

Though shaped by the overarching ideology of manifest destiny, the multi-faceted missionary project in Puerto Rico did not operate according to a monolithic, rigid “Grand Design.” Missionary methods, goals, and achievements, while initially closely aligned with the colonial state, evolved in response to local conditions during a period of sweeping, rapid change. As Americanization's radical reconfiguration of the island's political economy wreaked havoc on most Puerto Ricans, missionaries refashioned their project. The M.N.H. and its counterparts responded not only to the failures of the colonial state, but to those of the much vaunted, modernizing private sector. This shift in function reflected an inherent critique of the colonial state and U.S. corporate investors and employers. In some ways, the missionaries continued to act as a proxy for the colonial state, as they had when they opened schools before the state could. In the Lindbergh and student-uprising cases, Poly became the proxy-target for the colonial state. Those M.N.H. graduates seeking jobs from the missionary establishment chose to appeal not to the colonial state, but the private, mainland mission establishment. Given the circumstances, that appeared to be a good decision; however limited their power within that missionary establishment, it was greater than their power to sway the colonial state.

Americanization had not brought its promised widespread social and material uplift—vital underpinnings of a meaningful, egalitarian citizenship in “Christian America.” Some missionaries, moved by the dire circumstances of their church members and the degraded

environment, began to explicitly criticize Americanization. Americanization thus shaped not only the colonized, but the colonizers, leading many to question the basic tenets of the original imperial project.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

In 1898, missionaries and many Puerto Ricans, from the elite political class to the most humble, had great—though distinct—expectations for Americanization. Those expectations began diminishing after a brief decade and a half. Though most missionaries left the island by the 1930s, judging on their own terms, they had successfully Americanized in several arenas. They had introduced many Puerto Ricans to U.S. culture, established island-mainland networks, founded Americanized institutions (some still extant), and trained local Puerto Ricans to carry on the work. In early 1938, for example, an Episcopalian priest noted that the bishop who had worked in Puerto Rico for more than twenty-five years had, on his arrival, found eighteen mainlander missionaries and only two Puerto Rican lay workers. In 1938, however, the situation was reversed: only two mainlander priests remained along with eighteen workers born in Spain, Puerto Rico, or other Spanish-speaking countries.<sup>604</sup>

Not surprisingly, missionaries' Americanizing methods and their effects changed over those decades. Though fluidity, contradiction, and contingency marked the civilizing project, several patterns can be discerned. First, the missionaries' relationship with the colonial state (and thus with the larger colonizing project) shifted from one of shared common purpose to a more tenuous, at times sharply critical, stance. More flexible and quicker than the slow-moving

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<sup>604</sup> Rev. G. Warfield Hobbs, "Church's Opportunity in Puerto Rico: Problems quite as difficult as in any foreign center are faced by a gallant Bishop in America's own island," *SOM* 103 (April 1938):174.



colonial state, the missionaries initially functioned as an entering wedge for the entire Americanization project by opening schools, churches, dispensaries, and training local teachers. They acculturated the new colonial subjects to metropolitan ideology, mores, aesthetics, and practices through church socials, literacy classes, Sunday and Bible schools, celebrating U.S. holidays, and establishing several Spanish-language newspapers. Missionaries publicized their formal and informal connections with the colonial state and commercial agents of Americanization, such as the managers of the U.S. sugar centrals and the comprador class. This public identification benefited all parties and gave the missionaries the authority linked to the new colonial power and the cachet of its optimistic promise of widespread social uplift. As expectations for Americanization diminished and general living conditions deteriorated, however, disappointed missionaries (particularly those who had worked for a decade or more on the island) joined the increasing number of Puerto Ricans who questioned the entire modernizing project. Missionaries' connections with that project then frequently worked to their disadvantage. Remarking on the wide-spread perception of mainlanders' arrogance, for example, that same Episcopalian priest observed that "throughout the Southern Republics, among all the causes which spread suspicion of the Colossus of the North, none is more unfortunate than our application of this phrase, 'American' to ourselves, careless of the claims of our brethren in a score of great republics."<sup>605</sup> Missionaries' shift in perspective, derived from routine interactions with Puerto Ricans of all classes and observations of corroding material conditions, showed that Americanization and Puerto Ricans also shaped missionaries. Influences between colonizers and their subjects were not uni-but multi-directional. This shift also reflected the fundamentally contradictory nature of the missionary project, which attempted to promote an

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<sup>605</sup> Ibid., 175.

ethos of communitarianism and service for the greater good while also promoting a capitalist system which placed profit above that humanitarian impulse.

Second, racial, class, gender, and national ideologies shaped Americanization and responses to it. At each phase of the project, Puerto Rican actors, ideologies, and material conditions shaped missionaries' methods, goals, and achievements. For example, Americanization's intent to remake Puerto Ricans into mainstream white, middle-class, Protestant citizen-producers necessarily involved national, race, class, and gender norms, for those norms organized public and private, local and metropolitan social relations. The case of the Presbyterian nursing school's racist admission policy reflects not only the power and plasticity of ideology, but also the contradictory, fluid, and contingent nature of colonizing. Originally planning to tap young, literate, "legitimate," middle-class Puerto Rican women to train as nurses, for example, missionaries were compelled to adapt their approach when orthodox Puerto Rican norms of race, class, and gender precluded successful recruitment among that small, whiter, richer, Catholic targeted constituency. As one missionary aptly summarized the problem, nursing did not attract those women for whom "a woman was either a lady or a servant, ... [for] nurses have to be both."<sup>606</sup> Darker, poorer Puerto Ricans such as Maria Francisca Rodríguez de Doval benefited from this disjuncture—for a brief period. Little more than a decade later, however, ideological and material conditions changed so that whiter Puerto Ricans then found nursing a more appealing gateway to upward social mobility and Afro Puerto Ricans fought their consequent exclusion from such opportunity.

Third, Puerto Ricans enthusiastically embraced some missionary programs, because they served a need (as they defined it) and/or matched the agenda of Puerto Rican modernizers. From

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<sup>606</sup> Edward A. Odell, *It Came to Pass* (NYC: Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1952?), 21.

below, we see this in poorer Puerto Ricans' prodigious use of missionary clinics, dispensaries, and hospitals, waiting lists for orphanages and day schools, and the high participation rate in industrial workshops, such as the St. Andrew's Craft Shop in Mayagüez. From the middle and above, we see it in Puerto Rican professionals' active support for missionaries' health reforms, Rosa González's embrace and professionalization of nursing, Puerto Rican health professionals' voluntary work in missionary dispensaries and clinics, richer Puerto Ricans' patronage of the Presbyterian Hospital, and Puerto Rican education commissioners' enthusiastic advocacy of Americanized curriculum and English-language policies.

Fourth, Puerto Ricans exploited contradictions inherent to the civilizing project to make claims based on Americanization's professed values. The dissident Afro Puerto Rican ministers and the women they represented, for example, called on Protestantism's principles of equality to push for eliminating the Presbyterian nursing school's racially exclusive admission policy and used the Presbyterians' relatively open grievance procedure to do so. Graduates of the Marina Neighborhood House petitioned for jobs in which they could use their new skills to contribute to the larger community and with which they could support themselves. Additionally, both Puerto Rican politicians and the rebellious Poly students based their objections to the restraints imposed by the protracted colonial tutelage on U.S. principles of democratic governance, principles propounded by that colonial state in the local public schools.

Fifth, differences among the missionaries, among Puerto Ricans, and between missionaries and Puerto Ricans demonstrated that neither missionaries nor Puerto Ricans constituted unitary, impermeable groups. The dispute over the nursing school's racist admission policy showed divisiveness among the Puerto Rican Protestant community, and the varied responses to J. Will Harris's treatment of the rebellious Poly students showed divisions within

the larger Puerto Rican and metropolitan communities. Missionaries' objections to Victoria Adams, based on racialized perceptions, and the institutional bureaucracy's response to those objections reflected differences among missionaries. Alliances such as those in the nursing school and the M.N.H. claims-making cases show that national identities did not always determine affinities.

Finally, the missionary project carried the seeds of failure in addition to those of achievement. For Americanizing, Protestantizing, was essentially a modernizing project. Twentieth-century modernization *produced* many of the conditions and problems that missionaries sought to improve or solve, including greater inequalities of wealth, more conflictual class relations, and materialism. Again, missionaries saw these changes in their daily interactions and in the very physical environment, as those disaffected missionaries in the previous chapter noted. Such changes permeated the culture. In 1921, for example, the effects of the emergent mass media drove a Methodist missionary to complain that children were "being schooled in the tricks and cheats and all evils of society through the moving picture craze without scarcely any censure and ... left to the greed of mammon with no regard for Sunday."<sup>607</sup> Modernization brought secularization, not greater commitment to "advancing the Kingdom," worldliness, not consecration. Some of Americanization's failures stem from its conception, from the decision to go to war and acquire colonies. This decision was wrought with contradictions, as the anti-imperialists argued. These contradictions played out in many ways, including the missionaries' failures—outcomes produced by the disingenuous attempt for the republic to have "an empire without colonies."

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<sup>607</sup> Manuel Andújar, "Superintendent's Annual Report (For the Mission and San Juan District)," *Year Book, Official Minutes, XX Session, Puerto Rico Mission, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* 1921, 34, SEPR-AH.

These patterns dovetail with the findings of the historiography that examines Americanization with conscious attention to not only its imperialist nature, but also to pre-existing internal divisions that shaped Puerto Ricans before and after U.S. occupation. Like work that recognizes the complex, contradictory nature of Americanization (such as José Flores Ramos's argument that missionaries' approach to prostitution, though repressive at times, promoted a single standard for sexual behavior and insisted that underlying issues of poverty and female employment be addressed), my research shows that missionary activities benefited some Puerto Ricans. These beneficial outcomes included democratizing elements (broadening the public sphere) and generating new social actors (Bible women, lay workers) and occupational categories (nurses and social workers).

Missionary practices expanded the public sphere in terms of participation, content, and form. Protestant youth groups and ancillary activities, for example, provided many Puerto Ricans the chance to develop organizational and expressive skills that led to their increased participation in the public sphere. Those Puerto Ricans engaged in the social, economic, and political (in addition to religious) discussions occurring at the many local, regional, insular, and Pan-American denominational and multi-denominational meetings. They also took part in public debates, such as that on women's suffrage. Additionally, Puerto Rican men and a few exceptional women wrote for the missionary press, which itself amplified that insular medium largely dominated by political parties and the workers' movements. Those writers treated many topics, including public health, the death penalty, Prohibition, statehood, clothing, labor disputes, gender relations, international affairs, and literature.

Bible women constituted a distinctly novel part of this enlarged public sphere. With both public and private characteristics, this new venue paralleled that of the nineteenth-century

mainland missionary women who had blurred the boundaries between public and private by redefining the private to include any place in which women and children existed—even when gaining access to that sphere entailed a public presence. Bible women acted free of direct supervision and mediated between different worlds (rural/urban, adapted Catholicism/Protestantism, island/mainland, and illiterate/literate). Reshaping local gender norms, these new social actors modeled for all Puerto Ricans new roles for women in new spaces. The overall expansion of the public sphere most benefited poorer, rural Puerto Ricans, particularly women, who, unless involved with the vibrant workers’ movement and its education circles, had few such opportunities.<sup>608</sup>

Missionaries also shaped the nascent Americanized occupational structure. The majority of jobs resulting from Americanization arose in the agricultural sectors (sugar, tobacco, coffee) and employed many Puerto Rican members of Protestant churches. Though Americanization did bring them the legal right to organize, those workers almost continually faced un- and under-employment, low wages, and poor working conditions. Missionaries had the greatest impact, however, on white-collar jobs, particularly educational and health-related, including social work. By establishing the first successful nursing school (followed by two others) and providing crucial material and ideological support for the Association of Registered Nurses of Porto Rico, Protestants (both islanders and mainlanders) gained tremendous influence in that emergent profession. Limiting access to nursing education, missionaries and Puerto Rican allies constructed nursing as white through the racist admission policy. This racist element of Americanization meshed with and reinscribed insular racial and class stratification. As historian

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608 Even within the workers’ movement however, male trade-unionists tended to discriminate against women in several arenas, including representation within the unions and wages in the factories. See Baerga-Santini, “Exclusion and Resistance” and Arturo Bird Carmona, “Between the Insular Road and San Juan Bay: the Cigar World of Puerta de Tierra,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1998.

Gervasio Luis García has astutely noted, however, even though some Puerto Ricans aligned with the colonizers, such “complicity within the domination does not deny the colonial subjects’ capacity to resist. In other words, the superior adversary contaminates them with the terms of the debate or combat but simultaneously impels them to overcome what it has imposed on them.”<sup>609</sup> Afro Puerto Ricans’ resistance to that policy represented one such response. Ironically, Americanization’s successes in popular education and its harmful effects on the economy allowed missionaries to discriminate on racial grounds by providing them a whiter pool of interested candidates. Americanization thus gave with one hand and took away with the other.

Missionaries also shaped the island’s educational infrastructure. Through their leadership role in training teachers, teaching, and formal and informal connections and a shared agenda with the colonial state, Protestants (both insular and metropolitan) exerted an influence on public education disproportionate to their numbers. Missionary achievements in these two venues crucial to modernizing Puerto Rico demonstrated the inherently contradictory nature of Americanization: it lifted up not all Puerto Ricans, as promised, but the middling classes—even though most church-members, especially in rural areas, were from the working classes. Indeed Americanization brought into being these significantly larger middling classes and concomitant social relations that reflected metropolitan racial, class, and gender inequalities.

Bringing into view elements of Americanization that have not yet received attention commensurate with their rich potential for offering new understandings of Americanization in particular and colonizing in general, my work has raised questions that I could not answer in the context of this dissertation and suggested directions for future work. The most intriguing for me

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<sup>609</sup> García, “I am the Other,” 43.

concerns nationalism and identity formation. Traditional histories document well the rise and spread of insular nationalism from the 1920s forward and emphasize its valorization—and idealization—of Puerto Rico’s Spanish and Catholic characteristics. Yet missionary documents also contain many references to increased nationalism among their most solid church-members, particularly the Puerto Rican clergy. Some missionaries attributed this to an anti-Americanism rooted in rather venal desires to negotiate better wages and working conditions; others, to the various autonomous local, regional, and insular meetings comprised of and convened by Puerto Rican church-workers and held without direct missionary supervision, including the summer conferences first held at Poly.<sup>610</sup> Additionally, after the 1916 Pan-American conference of missionaries in Panama, Puerto Rican clergy and lay workers appear to have taken more initiative in church work and more closely identified themselves with their Latin American counterparts.<sup>611</sup> Historian Daniel Rodríguez notes the marked increase, in the late 1920s through the 1930s, of *Puerto Rico Evangélico* articles written by young Puerto Rican Protestants who sharply criticized the socio-economic effects of Americanization.<sup>612</sup> Seminarians at the time, many of these writers later became leaders of the Protestant churches. Rodríguez argues that, in the face of this opposition, missionaries continued to legitimate Americanization and cites a series entitled “La ética cristiana” by Charles S. Detweiler that counseled non-violence. My findings complicate his assessment, which inadvertently supports my argument that the missionary project expanded the public sphere, which, in turn, allowed criticism of Americanization. Eunice White Harris also angrily noted that, among the Puerto Rican

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<sup>610</sup> See Morton to Minton, 28 Feb 1927, letter, IEU-1, SEPR-AH.

<sup>611</sup> I thank historian Helen Santiago for sharing her insights into this development.

<sup>612</sup> Rodríguez, *La primera evangelización*, 254-256. Among the examples are the following: Tomás Rico Soltero, “¿Qué Diría Amós?”, *PRE*, 12 Oct. 1929, 9 and “La Iglesia y la Redención Social,” *PRE*, 22 Feb. 1929, 10; Abelardo M. Díaz Morales, “Hambriento de Pay y Justicia,” *PRE*, 10 Sept. 1929, 1; Manuel G. Matos, “El Cenit de la Miseria en Puerto Rico” and “Un Gobierno Indiferente,” *PRE*, 21 Sept. 1929.



Protestants who, in 1932, criticized Poly at a meeting were two Poly graduates who had received four-year scholarships. Interestingly, those critics included Santiago Cabrera (supporter of the racist nursing-school policy) and Archilla Cabrera (allied with Clara Hazen in the M.N.H. claims-making).<sup>613</sup>

Given the paternalism and power relations intrinsic to the notions of tutelage, Americanization, and religious proselytizing, tensions between metropolitan and island Protestants are not unexpected. Learning, however, precisely how Puerto Rican Protestants managed to embrace some elements of Americanization while simultaneously asserting an insular identity could help us better understand the complex relations between religion and nationalism in a colonial situation. A project examining Puerto Rican Protestants' nationalism and that of nationalists who constructed *puertorriqueñidad* as Catholic and Spanish might provide useful insights into the complexity, fluidity, and politics of identity formation.

As Samuel Silva Gotay has noted, understanding contemporary Puerto Rico is impossible without understanding the Protestant missionary project and its legacies. Over the course of my investigation, I came to see traces of that project in many areas of the Puerto Rican political and cultural landscape. For example, I have pondered why the ideology, practices, and goals associated with Liberation Theology in Latin America manifested in Puerto Rico not among Catholics, but Protestants, many of them supporters of independence and with direct familial ties to the earliest converts and activist Puerto Rican Protestants. What has been the role of Americanization, of the missionaries, in this atypical development? As in other parts of Latin America, fundamental Protestantism has become quite popular in Puerto Rico and attempts another holistic transformation of Puerto Ricans. From its initial entrance into Puerto Rico,

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<sup>613</sup> White Harris, *Diaries*, 7 April 1932; For other examples of anti-Americanism, see entries for 11 Dec. 1931, 8 Oct 1932, 3 Nov. 1932, 10 May 1935.

Puerto Ricans—not mainlanders—led the fundamentalist Protestant movement. Does this key difference communicate something about Puerto Ricans' responses to Americanization?

My work also provoked thinking about matters related to imperialism in general, not just Americanization in Puerto Rico. For example, the multi-directionality of the missionary project, particularly the circulation systems among and between insular and mainland Protestant women, confirmed my understanding of colonizing as a project that constructs identity for not only the colonized, but also the colonizers.

In the Puerto Rican case, the rich sources on the missionaries and their mainland supporters make quite promising a project examining the construction of imperial identities in and by metropolitan women, a construction occurring largely at the grassroots level and outside the formal political realm. Such a study could also take a closer look at the tendency of long-term missionaries to question the civilizing project and the consequences of those changed points of view.

Additionally, Samuel Guy Inman, a high-level missionary bureaucrat cited several times in this work, later advised President Franklin D. Roosevelt on U.S. relations with Latin America and shaped the “Good Neighbor” policy. This again reflects the importance of religion to politics and invites further investigation of the relations of missionary work to the construction of state policies.

Following the trajectories of influential Puerto Rican Protestants (such as the commissioners of education, members of the judiciary, public health reformers, and the dissident youth who became church leaders), their longer term relationships to the colonial state, and their responses to Americanization during the difficult 1930s and 1940s would provide a fuller and perhaps more nuanced understanding of Americanization's outcomes.

This project, though it has delineated more contours in the terrain of Americanization on the ground in Puerto Rico, has produced perhaps more questions than answers. This work thus functions as a reconnaissance into that variegated terrain and I invite all interested parties to join in answering some of the questions it has provoked—and to produce additional ones.

## APPENDIX

### ABBREVIATIONS

ABHS	American Baptist Historical Society
BNM	Board of National Missions (Presbyterian)
CPEPR	Colegio Profesionales Enfermería de Puerto Rico
<i>EE</i>	<i>El Evangelista</i>
<i>EDC</i>	<i>El Defensor Cristiano</i>
<i>ET</i>	<i>El Testigo</i>
<i>ETE</i>	<i>El Testigo Evangélico</i>
<i>ETSS</i>	Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest
<i>LVE</i>	<i>La Voz Evangélica</i>
<i>MNH</i>	Marina Neighborhood House
<i>PHS</i>	Presbyterian Historical Society
<i>PRE</i>	<i>Puerto Rico Evangélico</i>
SEPR-AH	Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, Archivo Histórico
<i>SOM</i>	<i>Spirit of Missions</i>
UI	Universidad Interamericana, San Germán, PR
UI-MH	Universidad Interamericana, Museo Histórico
UPR-RP-CP	University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Colección Puertorriqueña
UPR-RP-CM	UPR-Recinto Ciencias Médicas, Colección Puertorriqueña
WBHM	Woman's Board of Home Missions of Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

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*Juventud Escolar*

*Mefistofeles*

*Polygraph*

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